NOTE: There could be differences between this document and the official printed *Hansard*, Vols. 314 and 315

THURSDAY, 17 MAY 1990

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

HON. E. D. CASEY, TWENTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY AS MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I am pleased to announce that today is the twenty-first anniversary of the member for Mackay joining the Queensland Parliament. He is the father of the House, and I congratulate him on his achievement.

Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

High School, Deception Bay

From **Mr Hayward** (4 275 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland immediately establishes a high school at Deception Bay.

Enforcement of Fisheries Rules

From **Mr Casey** (312 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland appoints more fisheries inspectors and for an increase in penalties for breaches of the rules.

A similar petition was received from Mr Stephan (153 signatories).

Weapon Sales

From **Mr Hayward** (1 737 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland prohibits the sale of weapons from sources other than registered firearm-dealers, that a ten-day cooling off period for sales be instituted and that gun-owners be registered.

Petitions received.

PAPER

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

Report of the Auditor-General for tended 30 June 1989.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Emerald Health Report

Hon. K. V. McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa—Minister for Health) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: Mr Speaker, honorable members of this House will be aware of the long-running saga surrounding aerial spraying in the Central Highlands town of Emerald.

Between 1980 and 1985, eight cases of childhood leukaemia were reported in the region. Those cases became the subject of a 1987 report, which found no link between the use of agricultural chemicals and any disease, although it did make many recommendations, the majority of which are currently being put into place.

Since becoming Health Minister, I have become aware of a group of concerned citizens in Emerald who have been continuing claims of an association between aerial spraying and what they say is an increased prevalence in the town of conditions such as asthma, skin rashes and miscarriages.

As the responsible Minister, I was anxious to have their concerns addressed as quickly as possible. I requested an expert in public health, Dr Gerry Murphy, Assistant Deputy Director (Scientific Support Services) within my department to pay a preliminary visit to Emerald to determine if any urgent action was necessary. This turned out to be unnecessary and time is now being taken to process information and develop objective strategies to provide answers to address the concerns of the residents of Emerald.

The community appears to be highly stressed as a consequence of well-publicised concerns about the health effects of aerial spraying on cotton farms near the town. Although initial inquiries revealed no objective medical evidence to support the claims by the group of concerned citizens in Emerald it is clear that the health concerns of residents and the stress evident in the town need to be addressed by the Health Department.

Dr Murphy is intending to visit Emerald again later this month for further community discussions of the possible actions to be implemented by the Health Department. They include—

- The publication of hospital morbidity and mortality data.
- The collection of data on illness in Emerald in conjunction with the town's medical practitioners, and the ongoing monitoring of illness rates.
- The coordination of air and drinking water sampling programs, with results to be published and collated for expert evaluation.
- The development of a program of education and information about pesticides, exposure data and the scientific evaluation of potential health risks.

In a preliminary report to me, Dr Murphy states that the concerned citizens of Emerald are anxious about the number of residents whom they know to be ill, some with serious disease, and the regular comments they have heard about the prevalence of medical conditions. However, Emerald's general practitioners, and the senior medical officers of the hospital, all say that they have not observed any unusually high occurrence of any medical condition in any age group. It is clear that those medical officers have been discussing this for some time and have been making comparisons of their experience with those of colleagues in other towns.

The purpose of the procedures to be implemented by the Health Department will be to measure in an objective, scientific manner the appropriate data from which definitive conclusions can be reached about the abnormal prevalence of medical conditions in Emerald. It is likely to take at least 12 months for the Health Department's objective, scientific study to be completed, compared with other data and a final report submitted.

The community of Emerald may be seeking an instant answer to their concerns; however, that is just not possible. This has been a long-running issue and I am determined to find solutions which will resolve public concerns. I urge those citizens of Emerald making claims of increased illness in the town to produce hard evidence for the study being undertaken by Dr Murphy. I am aware of the impact that those unsubstantiated claims are having on the town, its businesses and community relations. Many of the town's residents believe that a scare campaign is being conducted with consequent destructive effects on the community. It is also believed that sensationalist reporting by sections of the media is contributing to the siege mentality adopted by many people in the town.

As a starting point for his study, Dr Murphy held discussions with the Emerald Shire Council, its chairman and councillors. He also toured cotton-growing areas with the councillors, the local health inspector and the pesticide monitor scientist from the Department of Primary Industries. Meetings were also held with representatives of the

concerned citizens group, general practitioners, hospital staff and residents interested in the issues confronting their community. Further such activities are planned during a return visit in the near future.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Contamination, Craigslea State School Playground

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Rockhampton—Minister for Education) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: I rise to inform the House of a possibly contaminated school playground at Craigslea State School in Hamilton Road, West Chermside. The matter first came to my attention yesterday at about 1 p.m. Water in the playground of the school had been tested by the Brisbane City Council, and one sample was found to contain arsenic concentrations of 170 parts per billion. This is well above acceptable levels.

On receipt of this information, a meeting of Ministers who would have an interest in this matter was called immediately. They were the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the Minister for Health, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, and myself. We agreed to immediately quarantine the affected area, and officers of the Department of Health will, this morning, begin tests on the soil. I stress that the tests so far have been carried out only on surface water, while the more important indicator is tests on the soil. I have been advised by the Minister for Health that the results of these tests should be available within a week.

Depending on the results of the tests, we have several options, but I assure the House that, if there is a level of arsenic above 50 parts per billion, which is the level deemed safe by the World Health Organisation, we shall remove the soil immediately. Further tests will be carried out in other areas of the school.

I would like to talk briefly about how the Government became informed of this matter. As I said, I became aware of the potential problem yesterday. The method that the Brisbane City Council used to inform the State Government of this potential major health problem was to send us a letter. There was no telephone call, no urgent fax message, not even a personal appearance by the leader of the council herself.

The letter first came into my office yesterday, and I will table it for the information of the House. I draw attention especially to the date—16 May— on which it was received. The Lord Mayor of Brisbane has said that the letter was hand delivered. If it was, it was not delivered directly to my office. The Lord Mayor has stated that she first became aware of the matter on Monday. She claimed on radio this morning that the council tried to contact Ministers' offices on Friday afternoon, yet no member of my staff received any calls or messages from the Lord Mayor's office on Friday. It was 6.15 p.m. when the last member of my staff left the office.

She also says she understood that contact had been made with the Government on an officer-to-officer level. No officers of my department has been informed of the matter by the council. Furthermore, in her letter to me, she says that the principal had also been informed. The first the principal knew of the matter was when the member for Aspley arrived on his doorstep yesterday morning asking what he was going to do about the arsenic in the school. The member for Aspley knew about the matter yesterday morning but, rather than tell the Government, he chose to sit on it. He chose to score cheap political points by yesterday contacting the media rather than Government Ministers, who are in the best position to protect the health of children at the school.

The behaviour of the member for Aspley and the tardy actions of the Lord Mayor do no credit to members of the Liberal Party. Unlike the member for Aspley and the Lord Mayor, the Government is not seeking to make the children of Craigslea State School a token political football. Our concern as a Government in this matter is solely for the health of the children concerned. We have acted swiftly and, in doing so, have been successful in minimising concern among parents, students and local residents.

To recap on the situation—the area in question is secured and tests on the soil are being carried out this morning. Once the results of the tests are received, appropriate action will be taken and members will be advised of further developments.

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

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr COOPER (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 a.m.): I seek leave to move a motion without notice concerning the toxic waste.

Question—That leave be granted—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 30

NOES, 51

DIVISION

Resolved in the negative.

Mr COOPER proceeding to give notice of a motion—

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lockyer will cease interjecting.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Are you gentlemen finished? It is time for answers to questions on the notice paper and I call the honourable member for Callide.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Queensland Medical Board

Mrs McCauley asked the Minister for Health—

"(1) What is the membership of the Queensland Medical Board?

(2) What is their term of office?

(3) What are their qualifications for such membership?

(4) Who are they appointed by?"

Mr McELLIGOTT: (1) Membership of the Medical Board of Queensland is as follows—

Ian Stuart Wilkey, BSc, MBBS(Qld), FRCPA, LLB;

Professor John Sydney Grainge Biggs, MBBS(Melb), MRCOG, FRCOG, MD(Aberd);

Donald Addison Perry-Keene, MBBS(Qld), FRACP;

Frank Kennedy Fry, MBBS(Qld);

John Francis Lee, MBBS(Qld), FRCS(Eng), FRACS;

Graeme Bruce Roberts, MBBS(Qld), FRACGP; and

Lloyd Arthur Toft, MBBS(Qld), FRCS(Edin), FRACS, FRACRH.

(2) The term of office for the present board is for a period of five years from 1 December 1989—that date might be of interest to honourable members.

(3) The constitution of the Medical Board is as set out in section 8 (1) of the Medical Act as follows—

"(i) The Director-General who, subject as provided in subsection 4 of this section shall be ex officio a member of the Board and shall be the president thereof;

(ii) Three members nominated by the Minister to represent the Government, who shall be appointed by the Governor in Council;

(iii) Three members nominated by the association or associations recognised by the Minister as representative of medical practitioners, who shall be appointed by the Governor in Council."

(4) Appointment is made by the Governor in Council.

2. Membership of Queensland Health Council

Mrs McCAULEY asked the Minister for Health—

"(1) Will he explain why it is that the membership of the Queensland Health Council has no community representatives, just representatives of medical, teaching and nursing professions and the Health Department.

(2) Is it significant that there are four union representatives, one from the Australian Workers Union, one from the Miscellaneous Workers Union, one from the Queensland Nurses Union and one from the Professional Officers Association.

(3) Does the Goss Government consider that broad—based community input from users of our health services is unnecessary?

(4) Is this further evidence that when the Government means community consultation it really means consultation with Trades Hall?"

Mr McELLIGOTT: (1) This is an inaccurate claim in that there are community representatives on the Queensland Health Council. These are Dr Richard Copeman, who is secretary of the Australian Community Health Association, Queensland Branch, and Dr Jack Najmann, who is President of the Public Health Association, Queensland Branch.

(2) Yes, it is significant that the Queensland Health Council includes representation of those who provide the health-care services in this State. I make the point that there is probably no better way to represent large community groups than by including union representatives on the council.

(3) This question suggests that the whole purpose in setting up the Queensland Health Council has been missed by the honourable member. The Goss Government considers that community input is most appropriate at the point of delivery of services. That input is currently provided by hospitals boards and will be provided by area health authorities under the proposed Green Paper arrangements, which will expand community participation beyond just hospital-based services to include the total health-care sector.

(4) The honourable member will have to justify to the Australian Medical Association, the Private Hospitals Association, the Faculty of Medicine, the Australian Dental Association, the Rural Doctors Association, and other professional and scientific groups represented on the Queensland Health Council how she—somehow—links them with Trades Hall.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ensham Coal-mining Project

Mr COOPER: I ask the Treasurer and Minister for Regional Development: as the Minister responsible for the foreign investment review secretariat—and I assume that the Ensham project has been passed by the foreign investment review secretariat—will he explain in detail to the House the basis of the Government's decision to award the Ensham coal project to Idemitsu in light of the fact that Idemitsu itself has admitted that at the time of the decision—and, by the company's own admission, it is still the case today—that there were, and are, no contracts for the sale of that coal?

Mr De LACY: I do not know why the member keeps asking me these questions; they are not questions that relate to foreign investment. This matter is being dealt with by the Premier and the Minister for Resource Industries. However, the answer to the question is that the Government has awarded the ATPs to the companies on the basis of information given to us. It will give them the opportunity——

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr De LACY: If the honourable member will only listen, I will tell him the story as well as I know it. The ATPs were awarded on the basis that the parties would be able to proceed with their contracts. The Cabinet decision was made the other day on that basis. If the parties are unable to abide by the terms of the arrangements that were approved by Cabinet, it is up to them to advise the Government that they cannot.

Foreign investment is not an issue. The project has not come to the foreign investment secretariat. As soon as it goes to the FIRB, it will be referred to the Queensland Government for consideration. We do not see it at the initial stages.

For the benefit of Opposition members, let me repeat that this project does not involve a foreign investment issue. It is a development project, and that is the way in which this Government sees it. If the Leader of the Opposition requires any further information on the project, I suggest that he directs questions either to the Minister for Resource Industries or to the Premier.

Mr FitzGerald: The Minister for Resource Industries is overseas.

Mr De LACY: In that case, they should be directed to the Minister who is acting in his stead.

Health Department Investigations into Toxic Waste Sites

Mr COOPER: I ask the Minister for Health: will he outline in detail to the House progress being made in the Health Department's ongoing investigations of more than 100 sites in and around the City of Brisbane that have been identified as sites that have potential health problems associated with toxic waste?

Mr McELLIGOTT: In response to that question, I can only indicate—as I have publicly and as the Leader of the Opposition has indicated by his question—that there is thorough and ongoing consideration being given to potential sites. I make the point that, if the previous Government had had the confidence and the competence to make a decision on this important matter, the present Government would not be placed in this difficult situation.

The facts are that the sites that were identified by reasonable and expert people were rejected by the previous Government on purely political grounds. I can put the matter quite simply by saying that National Party members refused to have those sites located in their electorates. The Labor Government now has to face the difficult task of choosing an appropriate site.

Mr Cooper: But it hasn't.

Mr McELLIGOTT: I have already indicated to the honourable member that expert opinion is being sought. He has also acknowledged that inquiries are being conducted. At the appropriate time, I will report the decision to Parliament.

Ensham Coal-mining Project

Mr PREST: In directing my first question to the Premier, I refer to the National Party's criticism of the State Government's handling of moves to push ahead with development of the Ensham coalmine. Can he advise the House of the National Party Government's attitude towards continuing delays by the previous joint venture parties in developing that coalmine?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Coincidentally, I can advise the House of the attitude of the former National Party Government. Let me refer the House to minutes of a meeting of the Ensham joint venture parties that was held on Wednesday, 18 October 1989. Interestingly enough, this meeting commenced at 3.30 p.m. Typically, the Minister arrived at 4.45 p.m. If a Minister arrived so late for such an important meeting, it could be only one Minister in the Cooper Cabinet. Of course, that was Mr Katter.

In terms of some of the criticism that is coming forward about the actions of this Government in pushing this project along, I refer to what the Treasurer correctly said; that is, that the decision is based on what is essentially a development issue. The decision that has to be made by the Government is whether or not to develop a major Queensland project. This Government took the view that, because the project involves a large number of jobs, massive investment and revenue for this State, it should proceed.

Let me now examine the attitude adopted by the Cooper Government as it is expressed by the "late" Mr Katter. I refer to page 7 of the minutes, which states—

> "The Honourable R. C. Katter, Jnr., M.L.A., Minister for Mines and Energy . . . joined the meeting at 4.45 p.m. and apologised for being late which had been caused by his attendance at an urgent meeting with the Premier.
>
> . . .
>
> The Minister drew to the attention of the meeting the vast reserves of coal. . . He pointed out that unpleasant action had not been taken in the past, but unpleasant decisions were being contemplated.
>
> The Minister said he believed that the successful businessmen at the meeting would not want to progress the project if the figures were not there. He stated he found it hard to accept from Pacific and Agip that the figures were doubtful and added if the project was not given the green light in the next short term period he promised that offensive action would certainly be contemplated. He added he was not going so far as to say it would be carried out, but the matter had already been discussed by the Premier and himself."

The minutes go on to state—

> "The Minister said"—

Mr FitzGerald: You should have read my speech last night.

Mr Gunn: Of course he did.

Mr W. K. GOSS: They are very touchy, Mr Speaker. The minutes also state—

"The Minister said that they could have the area so long as they were going to work it and added they could not be dogs in the manger and not work it, particularly when there were other people willing to work it.

The Minister said he had stated very plainly the Government's case and added that if something unpleasant happened the Government should not be blamed. He added that the State had not had a big development in the past 9 or 10 months and the Ensham Project was one of the biggest developments in the State."

There are more comments to that effect. The clear implication in direct and blunt terms from the Minister, who said that he was disgusted with the Premier, was that, if they did not get on with the——

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have got all day.

Mr Cooper: What is your policy, tell us that. We asked you yesterday.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I gave that yesterday. If the honourable member asks a question, he will get it again in spades.

The clear implication of the approach of the former Premier and former Minister was that the project would go ahead with those parties who were willing to proceed. The difference between this Government and the former Government is that this Government did something about it and the former Government did not. It talked about it, but this Government did it.

PRIVILEGE

Ensham Coal-mining Project

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (10.33 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. The Honourable the Premier alleged that we had not acted on this matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of privilege. The member for Flinders will resume his seat.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Arsenic Contamination at Craigslea State School

Mr PREST: In directing a question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I refer to statements by the Liberal member for Aspley, Mr J. N. Goss, claiming that the State Government should have acted immediately it was notified of the arsenic contamination at Craigslea State School. I refer also to conflicting statements by the Lord Mayor, Sallyanne Atkinson, about her efforts to alert the Government to the problem. I ask: is he satisfied with the actions of the Brisbane City Council in this matter? Does he believe that the criticism by the member for Aspley is justified?

Mr MACKENROTH: No, I do not believe that the criticism is justified. In saying that, I ask members to look back in history to around 1978 when I raised in this Parliament a matter about arsenic-contaminated land in a housing estate in my electorate and asked the Government of the day—it was a joint National/Liberal Party Government—to carry out tests on the site, which in that instance was a school site and sites that were being sold for a housing development.

The Government of the day acted "reasonably" quickly. It took 18 months for it to acknowledge that there may be a problem with arsenic-contaminated land. I had to obtain from America information on how to handle safely arsenic-contaminated land

and what measures were necessary, which I gave to the Health Minister of the time, Sir William Knox. Action was taken on that matter 18 months after I raised it.

I raised the matter continually in this Parliament until such time as action was taken. During the time that I raised it, I was ridiculed by members of the Government of the day, both National and Liberal Party members, and accused of scaremongering and trying to stop development in my electorate. That is the type of action that I received from them. Honourable members should contrast that to the action that the Government has taken.

Mr Cooper: That was your first action, you sacked Sally Leivesley.

Mr MACKENROTH: Let us get it straight: Sally Leivesley is a social worker.

Mr Cooper: It doesn't make any difference.

Mr MACKENROTH: I have seen her credentials. She is a social worker. She has no expertise whatsoever in contaminated land.

Mr Cooper: She has better qualifications for this sort of job than anyone else in the world.

Mr MACKENROTH: That is not true.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that the Minister answer the question.

Mr MACKENROTH: As to what happened this week—yesterday the four Ministers became aware of the result of the Brisbane City Council's carrying out one water test at the Craigslea State School. That emphasises the point that the Brisbane City Council did not raise with any Government Minister that it had been informed that there was some likely contamination. The council went to the principal. I am not criticising that. However, members of the council did not inform the Government that there was likely to be a problem there. Council officers carried out a test. If Mr John Goss wants to criticise the Government about the matter, he should find out when the Brisbane City Council first became aware of the problem and how long it took to get the test done and to inform the Lord Mayor. I would be interested to know the exact dates.

Immediately following question-time yesterday, a meeting was convened between the Minister for Health, the Minister for Environment, the Minister for Education and me to discuss the problem. We decided on a course of action that we could take immediately, which was to cordon off the area and for the Health Minister to arrange for soil tests to be carried out today. I do not believe that we could have acted more quickly than that.

On the radio this morning, the member for Aspley said that he became aware of the problem on Tuesday. Throughout yesterday—Wednesday—and on Tuesday he had the opportunity to walk across this Chamber and speak to any of the four Ministers about that problem.

On the radio this morning, the honourable member said that it is difficult to get through to Ministers to raise a problem; but he did not try. I repeat that he did not try. No member of this Parliament can say that he or she has not been able to walk across this Chamber and raise a problem with me. If the honourable member believed that this was a serious problem, he could have walked across the Chamber and raised it with me.

The honourable member went on to talk about the Lord Mayor and the importance that she placed on this matter. I think what he said was that she did not even stop to get the date typed on the letter; that she stamped it on. On the radio this morning, the Lord Mayor said that she became aware of this problem only on Monday and sent letters to the Government on Monday. Having said that she became aware of the problem only on Monday, she went on to say that she tried to contact the Government last Friday. One can only wonder.

If the Lord Mayor was so worried about this problem, I would like to know why she did not raise it with me on Monday night when we attended a dinner at the Cricketers Club in aid of the flood appeal. The Lord Mayor sat on the seat next to me for some four and a half hours. If she was so concerned about this problem on Monday, why did she not raise the problem with me then? I can tell honourable members that during that four and a half hours, we talked about some rubbish. Nothing was said about the arsenic-contaminated land. If the Lord Mayor was worried about the matter, she should have raised it with me.

In conclusion, I believe that the most important people in this matter are the schoolchildren and their parents. The most effective way to have handled this problem would have been to inform the parents of the problem first, before it became a media issue. At our meeting yesterday afternoon, we discussed that matter, and we said that today we would inform all the parents of the problem. However, instead of raising the problem with the Government, the member for Aspley chose to run to the media. The Government had no option but to have something put in today's newspapers, before it had the opportunity to go ahead and do what I believe is the correct and proper thing, that is, to allay the fears of those parents. They certainly would have been very fearful when they read in this morning's newspapers that there is arsenic contamination at the school that their children attend.

I believe that the member for Aspley and the Lord Mayor have acted very irresponsibly in this matter and that they deserve to be condemned for it.

Coal Freight Rates

Mr BEANLAND: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the answer that he gave me yesterday concerning coal freight rates. He said—

> "There is some merit in the argument of the Queensland Coal Association, namely, that the Government should consider reducing the rate at which the freight or the tax—whatever honourable members want to call it—escalates, that that should be done in exchange for expanded economic activity and that, hopefully, the same overall level of revenue will be able to be generated, based on a smaller take from a bigger cake."

I ask: given, therefore, that Government revenue will be unaffected, what are the supposed budgetary reasons for the delay in finalising the coal freight issue?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am not sure whether I have missed the point of the honourable member's question. I thought I dealt with that matter yesterday when I referred to the formulation of the Budget process commencing about now, continuing through until July, and not being finalised until such time as the Government has the results of the Premiers Conference, which is not to be held until the end of June. I also made the point in relation to the overall situation that not only had that matter to be finalised but also that rail freight revenue is a very substantial part of State revenue and that the Government cannot walk away from it unless alternative sources of revenue can be identified.

This sort of plea keeps being made. It is a plea and point-making exercise without any responsibility being accepted, without any answer being given as to how this matter should be addressed.

Mr Beanland: Isn't it revenue neutral, though? Isn't what you indicated yesterday that the Queensland Coal Association proposal makes no difference to the revenue take?

Mr W. K. GOSS: That is the theoretical argument.

What the Government is still to hear is a substantial argument to satisfy it that in fact it would be revenue neutral. Obviously, the theory is that it is revenue neutral. However, the Government is yet to be satisfied of that, and it is not going to walk away from substantial revenue, which is absolutely essential to provide services in this State,

until it is so satisfied and until it is fully aware of the State's financial position, arising out of the Premiers Conference.

If the honourable member wants to propose revenue cuts without suggesting any alternative source of revenue, without identifying exactly what the cost is going to be, and if he is not prepared to nominate those services that should be cut or those taxes that should be increased, I think the debate is very sterile. It is much more complicated than the A equals B argument that the honourable member is trying to present in this place.

Continuation of Electricity Supply

Mr BEANLAND: In directing a further question to the Premier, I refer to an answer that he gave in the House to the former member for Sherwood on 9 May to the effect that he could give no ironclad guarantee that Queensland electricity consumers will enjoy the same strike-free supply in the future that they have enjoyed for the last five years. I also refer the Premier to an article on page 2 of today's *Courier-Mail* , which states—

> "The State Government and electricity industry unions were close to signing an agreement guaranteeing supply . . ."

I ask the Premier: on 9 May did he deliberately mislead the House when he said that he could give no ironclad guarantee in relation to power supplies, or was he being kept in the dark by his Industrial Relations Minister, Mr Warburton? Had negotiations on this alleged agreement with the power unions started before 9 May? If so, why did the Premier not refer to them in his answer to the former member for Sherwood? Or is this agreement just a public relations gesture, hobbled together in the last seven days because he was embarrassed by his answer that he could not guarantee power supplies? Will the Premier table in this House as soon as possible, if not immediately, the full and complete details of any agreement on electricity supplies that his Government makes with the electricity industry unions?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I thank the honourable member for that electrifying question. However, he is too slick by half. If the honourable member had referred to my entire answer, he would have given this House an accurate representation of what I said. As I recall my answer, it contained a clear reference to the Government's considering other measures or steps that could be taken.

Those negotiations or discussions between the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and representatives of the trade union movement have been continuing for some time. There was no need for an announcement until the situation was clarified and there existed real prospects of obtaining a continuity of supply agreement between the Government and the trade union movement.

As to the honourable member's superficial cliche about ironclad guarantees—as I said to his predecessor, there is no such thing in Queensland or elsewhere. Let the honourable member do what his predecessor failed to do and tell us about the ironclad guarantee that the Liberals in New South Wales have given the people of that State.

As I said in that answer, it comes down to a responsible and positive framework for industrial relations and disputation settling as opposed to the deliberately confrontationist approach which was taken by the previous Government and supported by the de facto Nationals in their closet at the back of the Chamber. It is about time that those people came out of the closet and admitted what they are, namely, de facto Nationals.

As to the cheap shot about my misleading the Parliament—that is unworthy of the honourable member so early in his illustrious career as leader of the gang at the back of the Chamber. My whole answer reveals the truth. This Government is in the process of delivering on those other matters to which I referred in my answer. At the appropriate time, the Minister will make a statement.

Federal National Party Members of Parliament

Mr PALASZCZUK: I ask the Deputy Premier: is he aware that confusion exists amongst Federal National Party members of Parliament about who is in Government in Queensland? Is the Government planning to send copies of the new Queensland Government Directory to the National Party's Federal Leader, Mr Tim Fischer, for distribution amongst his colleagues?

Mr BURNS: A gentleman by the name of Michael Cobb, the Federal member for Parkes, sent a copy of the document *Amalgamation of the National and Liberal Parties* to the Minister for Education, who he thought was still Mr Littleproud. I know that some members of the National Party are pretty slow and that many of them do not realise that the Government in Queensland has changed. However, they should start sending that message to their Federal colleagues.

When Mr Cobb won preselection for the seat of Parkes, he drank a glass of what he claimed was Agent Orange to prove that it was not dangerous. One could say that such a brainy gentleman should be of some value. Mr Cobb said—

> "In Queensland the National Party has lost over 60% of its Federal seats since 1984 and finds itself in the extraordinarily miserable position of only having one member who has previously sat in the House (Ray Braithwaite in Dawson), whose majority is now less than 200 votes".

He said also—

> "The Senate tells a similar story—a story of decline. Today Queensland's Nationals cannot muster even one outright quota . . . "

Mr Cobb further stated—

> "Far from having the prospect of bouncing back up in future elections, the trend looks more likely to continue the other way."

Mr Cobb went on to say how there should be an amalgamation of the parties, and considered new names. He said—

> "Conservative Party, though used by the British, has a certain 'fuddy-duddy' connotation to it.
>
> . . .
>
> Progressive (or Progress) Party, on the other hand, has some other connotations that many would find unsuitable.
>
> . . .
>
> United Party, appears too unimaginative"—

That does not appear to be right, either. Mr Cobb went on to say—

> "National-Liberal Party, or Liberal-National Party, would satisfy both sides as does the name Country-Liberal Party".

He said also—

> "National Party. Were it not for the fact that the smaller of the two intending merging Parties already uses this title . . ."

and went on to suggest—

> "Liberal Party. Many would accept, reluctantly or otherwise, that this would be . . . inevitable."

Further in the discussion paper, Mr Cobb said—

> "Libertarian Party. Though the name accurately depicts a free enterprise philosophy it would be misinterpreted and misunderstood."

Then he said—

> "Freedom Party. Sounds too much like a post-revolution grouping."

Mr Cobb further stated—

"Free Enterprise Party. Okay, but not quite."

Because Mr Cobb drank that glass of Agent Orange and is so perceptive in these matters, perhaps part of the preselection test for National Party members of Parliament in the future should be a glass each of Agent Orange.

Supply of Poker Machines

Mr PALASZCZUK: I ask the Treasurer: will he inform the House of any developments relating to expressions of interest for gaming machines to be supplied to the Queensland Government in its capacity as official supplier to Queensland clubs and hotels?

Mr De LACY: There seems to be some confusion in Opposition ranks about the process that is being followed in the supply of gaming machines. Just to set the matter straight, I shall make a few key points.

A public call has been made for expressions of interest to supply and prepare gaming machines for use in Queensland clubs and hotels. The closing date for responses was 10 May. Thirty responses were received, including 13 to supply machines, 16 to repair and maintain machines and one to provide computerised monitoring equipment. I confirm that Olympic Video Gaming was one of those suppliers who submitted an expression of interest. Analysis of the proposals has only just begun.

Mr Cooper: We know that.

Mr De LACY: The honourable member also talks about a short list.

As yet, those proposals have not been filtered on any criteria, and no short list has been prepared. Each organisation that has taken the opportunity to respond to the public call for expressions of interest will be fully evaluated for its technical compliance with our requirements and our standards of probity and integrity. I make the point that the CJC will be involved in the evaluation process.

It would be premature, and hence inappropriate, to make any comment on any expression of interest received prior to this evaluation. The fact that a company appears on the list of people who have tendered means no more than that it has exercised its right to respond. It implies no endorsement whatsoever of the company and is no indication of the likelihood of that company ultimately being awarded the tender.

Official tenders will not be called until the gaming machine legislation has been passed by Parliament. The Government welcomes the involvement of the Opposition, which has its sleuths out in the community. If the Opposition can provide the Government with any information about these companies, it will be appreciated.

Referral of Ensham Mine Proposal to Foreign Investment Secretariat

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer to the Treasurer's announcement of 14 March of the establishment of a foreign investment secretariat within his department, in line with ALP policy, and I refer specifically to his comments that the secretariat would provide a new focus on this sensitive area of Government policy and I ask him: why was not the question of the 100 per cent foreign ownership of the Ensham mine referred to the secretariat for assessment, in accordance with its responsibilities as announced by the Treasurer in March? Or have we reached the stage in Queensland at which every foreign investment question is now considered a development proposal?

Mr De LACY: The foreign investment secretariat was established to assess the foreign investment proposals that are made in respect of Queensland. The one in relation to the Ensham project will be assessed by the foreign investment secretariat.

Mr Borbidge: You made the decision before the assessment.

Mr De LACY: I note that the Opposition continues to ask questions——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I cannot hear the Treasurer. The honourable member has asked the question and the Treasurer should be permitted to answer it.

PRIVILEGE

Questions to Treasurer

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr SPEAKER: What is the honourable member's matter of privilege?

Mr BORBIDGE: My matter of privilege is that this is the second day running on which I have directed questions to the Treasurer while the Premier has been——

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

Mr BORBIDGE: The Premier has been——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! When I am on my feet, the honourable member will resume his seat. I warn the member for Surfers Paradise that if he continues to disobey my rulings, I will warn him under Standing Order 124. He will resume his seat.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Referral of Ensham Mine Proposal to Foreign Investment Secretariat

Mr De LACY: Mr Speaker, I suggest that you let him go. He makes a fool of himself day after day. He was a member of the most incompetent Government in the history of this Parliament.

The Opposition has asked questions about the Government's policy. I was simply about to make the point that, prior to the election, the Labor Party released a policy. It is headed, "Foreign investment policy under a Goss Government". That policy document was circulated widely in the community and won the hearts and the minds of the people of Queensland prior to the election on 2 December, in which they voted for a Goss Labor Government.

Opposition members have previously asked the Government—and again this morning—about its policy in relation to the mining industry and foreign investment. Yesterday, I explained it to honourable members opposite. This morning I have been asked again, "What is your policy?" So that the members of the Opposition can understand what the policy is, I will read from page 10 of the policy document at paragraph 4.3, which states—

> "Queensland's mining sector, while far from being underdeveloped is nonetheless an industry which by its very nature has demanded high levels of capital investment. Such capital has simply not been available in sufficient quantity on the Australian domestic capital market, necessitating a continuing flow of capital from abroad. This need is likely to continue for the foreseeable future—particularly if we are to succeed in locating more downstream mineral processing in this country rather than having the bulk of processing taken abroad. For this reason, Labor sees no requirements to add to existing F.I.R.B. guidelines for foreign investment for the mining sector."

That document was published, promulgated and circulated throughout the whole of Queensland prior to the election. If the Opposition wants to know what the policy is, there it is.

Foreign Investment Secretariat

Mr BORBIDGE: Following the comments that the Treasurer has just made to the House, I ask further: is it his intention to implement Government policy in a way that enables final decisions in respect of foreign investment matters to be made by the Government prior to any assessment being carried out in accordance with his statement of 14 March, when he announced the establishment of the foreign investment secretariat within his department? What then is the role of the foreign investment secretariat if decisions are going to be made before assessments are made?

Mr De LACY: The answer to the question is that the foreign investment secretariat and my Government will be involved in making decisions and looking at all applications from foreign investors in Queensland. We will contribute to those decisions. The final decision, of course, will be made by the foreign investment secretariat——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr De LACY: I am sorry, the Foreign Investment Review Board in Canberra.

The Government will have its input into those decisions and the Foreign Investment Review Board will take note of that input. The Opposition can be certain that the Government has a policy and that that policy will be implemented. If members of the Opposition want to take a small wager on it, they should wager with me on the issue of Green Island. The Government has a policy on Green Island and that will be the policy that will be implemented. If they want to have a little wager on it, I am prepared to take the wager.

Preference of Imprisonment to Payment of Fine

Mr BRISKEY: I ask the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services: has his attention been drawn to a report in today's newspaper that a person convicted of climbing onto the Story Bridge for a $150 bet has indicated that he will go to gaol for seven days rather than pay the $200 fine imposed by the court?

Mr MILLINER: I did see that statement in this morning's paper about that person who climbed on the Storey Bridge last Friday for a bet of $150 and who, having been convicted in the Magistrates Court, has opted to go to prison for seven days rather than pay the $200 fine.

People going to prison rather than paying a fine has been of great concern to this Government because, when one looks at the cost of providing facilities in corrective services, one can see that they are very expensive. It costs about $500 per week to keep each prisoner in gaol. It is unfortunate that people opt to go to prison rather than pay their fine. The community loses out both ways. Firstly, the Government fails to collect the fine and, secondly, it costs the community $500 per week. Therefore, the community is out of pocket for about $700, which is totally unacceptable to me and to this Government.

This Government is addressing the question of people opting to go to prison rather than pay fines, and already it has issued a Green Paper inviting public submissions on the options that could be available to magistrates when sentencing people. Submissions on that Green Paper close on 1 June this year.

I am of the personal belief that magistrates need to be provided with a range of options so that they can hand down appropriate sentences, rather than be given the sole option of fining them in the knowledge that, if the offenders are not prepared to pay that fine, they will serve a period of time in the State's correctional institutions. As I said, this is a very expensive area of public administration. The Government is doing everything it possibly can to reduce the prison population, and removing from the prison system those people who are there because they choose not to pay fines will go a long way towards achieving that aim.

Waterfront Reform

Mr BRISKEY: In asking a question of the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development, I refer to a report on page 5 of today's *Australian* stating that the Federal Minister for Shipping, Senator Collins, "has sent an early warning to the State and Territory shipping and transport Ministers that they will have to contribute to waterfront reform"? I now ask: can the Minister inform the House of what steps he has taken to fast track the reform program at Queensland ports?

Mr HAMILL: I have not actually seen the newspaper article, but I can report to the House that I have had discussions with Senator Collins on the important area of waterfront reform.

Micro-economic reform in the transport sector has been and will continue to be a very high priority for this Government and for myself as Minister.

Mr Elliott: Are you going to be game to bite the bullet, though?

Mr HAMILL: I take the interjection from the member for Cunningham, who states that the Government has not bitten, or will not bite, the bullet on waterfront reform.

I will inform the House of the initiatives that this Government has taken and contrast those to the approach of the previous Government. When this Government took office, it inherited the former National Party Government's special task force on waterfront reform in Queensland. What was the contribution to waterfront reform of that task force? I recall it well. Its sole contribution was to try to manufacture an industrial dispute on the handling of grain for shipping in Queensland coinciding, incidentally, with the State election. It was all to do with grubby politics and nothing to do with waterfront reform. Of course, it did not work.

The previous Government talked about savings and the promotion of the waterfront and waterfront reform. I show this House an example of one of the important initiatives of the previous Government. I have it with me today. It is a very important initiative—it is a clock. On the face of this clock, which was a major port promotion by the Department of Harbours and Marine, is the photograph of the former Minister for Water Resources and Maritime Services, Mr Don Neal. What was the contribution to waterfront reform and efficiency on the waterfront—a message from the Minister. Foreign delegations that came to look at Queensland's ports were presented with these clocks. Let me quote from the face of the clock—

> "With best wishes on your visit to Queensland. We hope you enjoyed your stay and will find the time to come back soon."

The previous Government talked about cost efficiencies and new initiatives, but this is what it had to offer.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr HAMILL: It is not that the clock is slow, for the National Party it has actually stopped.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Will the Minister answer the question?

Mr HAMILL: In the short time that the Labor Party has been in Government, it has set aside the nonsense that was perpetrated by its predecessor and set in place a range of initiatives which will bring about waterfront reform in this State.

This Government has abandoned the nonsense of confrontation on the waterfront and, consistent with that approach for waterfront reform, I have pledged my support for the WIRA process. I gave that undertaking to the new Federal Minister, as well.

This Government has set up a process of proper consultation with the waterfront unions and supports the initiative to amalgamate the waterfront unions.

Mr Littleproud: What about consulting with industry?

Mr HAMILL: The Government has consulted with industry, as well. In fact, industry is delighted with one of the major initiatives of this Government, the port review. Port-users and port authorities have welcomed the opportunity to have input into the efficiencies on the waterfront and port pricing. I am delighted to report that that document will be in my hands very shortly. The Government has had enormous cooperation from the various port authorities up and down the Queensland coast.

This Government is not just talking about waterfront reform; it is actually getting in and implementing very positive initiatives to bring about lasting benefits for the efficiency of Queensland's waterfront and for the benefit of Queensland's export industries.

Western Queensland Floods, Clean-up by Low Security Gaol Inmates

Mr HOLLIS: I ask the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services: can he inform the House of how the 100 low-security inmates recently sent to Charleville helped with the flood clean-up?

Mr MILLINER: I thank the member for Redcliffe for this question because it is very important to place on record the Government's appreciation to all those who assisted in the clean-up after the Charleville disaster. Other Ministers have singled out their departments. As well as paying tribute to those departmental officers, I pay tribute to both the inmates and the staff of the correctional centres who volunteered to go to Charleville. I understand 101 inmates and 15 staff went to Charleville, and they did a magnificent job assisting to clean up Charleville. Everyone associated with that clean- up, from the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to the local shire chairman, was very appreciative of the work carried out by those people.

I notice the member for Warrego nodding in agreement, and I thank him for that, because it was a very difficult period of time. When the call went out for assistance, 130 people in the State's correctional institutions volunteered. The 101 inmates who were sent did a magnificent job. At present, 10 inmates remain out there working to complete the clean-up. I am hopeful that in the not-too-distant future discussions will be held with the shire chairman with a view to placing more inmates in that area.

Itinerant Tradespeople, Central Queensland

Mr HOLLIS: I ask the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services: is he aware of complaints from central Queensland residents about shoddy work performed by itinerant tradespeople, and what advice can he give people who are approached by such tradespeople?

Mr MILLINER: I thank the honourable member for the question, because we are again having problems with fly-by-night operators in Queensland, and in particular central Queensland. The honourable member for Port Curtis has drawn to my attention the problems that are occurring in the Rockhampton, Gladstone and Mackay areas. I have already had reports of tradespeople being involved in shoddy roof repairs and painting work at overinflated prices. It is an ongoing problem that surfaces every now and again. The type of people they target is unfortunate. They are the less fortunate in the community who are not able to make an appropriate decision on who should be employed to do work. In many cases it is the elderly and infirm who are targeted. It is unfortunate that these tradespeople prey on such people. However, that indicates the sort of people they are.

I wish to make particular reference to a couple of people involved in this practice. They are Michael Caston and Mr Stewart, who are operating in the Banyo and Salisbury areas of Brisbane. They are promising cheap jobs but are using left-over material. It is rather unfortunate that people are involved in that sort of activity.

I suggest to people who have been approached by someone to do work, such as roof repairs or painting, that they check him out carefully and, if they have any suspicions, immediately contact the Consumer Affairs Bureau and inquire as to the reputation of the tradesperson involved. I also suggest to people that, if someone knocks on the door

cold, canvassing for work, they should be very suspicious and take the necessary action to ensure that he is not a rip-off merchant.

Schoolbus Accident, Mount Flora Road

Mr HARPER: I direct a question to the Minister for Transport who would be aware of an accident on the Mount Flora Road yesterday—the good Lord prevailed—when a schoolbus travelling to collect children from Dingo overturned after moving onto the road shoulder to pass a stock transport travelling in the opposite direction. I ask: bearing in mind the circumstances of this accident, the fact that this developmental road is used extensively by both private vehicles and heavy vehicles of all types, including passenger coaches, and the fact that his Government has indicated that the road will not be upgraded before 1994, will he provide details of any approval given to ICI or any other company to transport liquid cyanide on the Mount Flora Road over an extended period? Is it correct that two road tankers will travel from Yarraman to Charters Towers via this road twice daily, seven days a week? Will his Government take action to upgrade this road before any such movement of liquid cyanide is permitted, in order to avoid the possibility of a major disaster in the area?

Mr HAMILL: I thank the honourable member for his question. He flagged his intention to do so during the debate in the House last night. As I indicated to him then, in relation to this and another matter, I will be happy to correspond with him and give a detailed response to the issues raised.

I make one other point in respect of road-funding. The Queensland Government is in a difficult position with respect to road-funding. No thanks can be given to our predecessors for flogging off assets which were generating funds that could have been used as additional funds for spending on Queensland roads. As a consequence of the short-sighted flogging off of assets by the National Party in the run-up to the last State election, we face the situation in which, in real terms, we will have to find an additional $90m in the next financial year if we are to maintain this year's real effort on road construction.

Mr Katter: What absolute rubbish! Talk about the Federal Government which has taken $450m from us.

Mr HAMILL: I enjoy the contributions of the honourable member for Flinders because, in every utterance he makes, he always betrays his total ignorance.

We will certainly put our best effort into maintaining our road network but, unfortunately, we had imposed upon us financial constraints for which honourable members opposite, owing to a Cabinet decision last year, must bear enormous responsibility.

Ensham Coal-mining Project

Mr HARPER: I ask the Premier: have any threats, actual or implied, been made to the CRA subsidiary, Pacific Coal, which has been denied continuing involvement in the Ensham project in central Queensland, to the effect that, if CRA accepts the Government's decision without undue complaint, there will be a special deal on the proposed sale of the Gladstone Power Station to the CRA-owned subsidiary, Comalco.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The short answer is "No". I assume that this is what the Leader of the Opposition was referring to in shouting across the Chamber accusations about pay-offs to Pacific Coal. He apparently did not have the guts to raise the issue himself and passed it down the line.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Leader of the Opposition asked two questions this morning and studiously avoided raising this matter. Instead, he shouted a grubby accusation across the Chamber and passed the question down to the honourable member for Auburn.

CRA and Pacific Coal are companies that we respect and wish to have active in Queensland. We would prefer that they were active and involved in the Ensham project. They were given clear indications by the Cooper Government and subsequently by our Government in January, as I have indicated to the House today, that the ATP would be renewed for those parties willing to proceed. The position was clear. It is unfortunate that in l984 the previous Government put together a consortium that did not have a mutually agreed agenda and, in doing so, sowed the seed for the problem that has arisen this year for CRA and Pacific Coal.

The Gladstone Power Station has a different value to the company than it has to the Government. The company's value is based on a project which it would like to undertake and which requires the production of power at a certain cost, and the Government accepts its argument in that regard. The Government's own advisers, who also advised the previous Government—as the people opposite would admit if they were honest enough to do so—advised this Government that the power station is worth substantially more than the figure publicly floated last year, which was of the order of $500m. The company, the previous Government and this Government are in somewhat of an embarrassing or difficult position when it comes to negotiating simply because the then Premier, Mr Ahern, blurted out the figure when there had been no negotiations and in the absence of adequate advice. Poor old Mike did that because he was in a decision-a-day mode. At that time he was being tracked down by the member for Roma and his colleagues, particularly Mr Lester, and he had to try to create the impression that he was doing something. He prematurely blurted out details of the negotiations, which was quite irresponsible, and that has put the previous Government, the company and this Government in a very difficult position. We have to negotiate under the glare of that publicity. The issue of the Gladstone Power Station should be resolved in the next couple of weeks because this Government and the company have found more common ground.

Mr Borbidge: I bet you have.

Mr W. K. GOSS: No. I indicate to the juvenile sceptic from paradise that there is still a gap.

Mr Borbidge: You can't take it. You resort to personal abuse.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Surfers Paradise will cease interjecting.

Mr W. K. GOSS: It amuses me to see the way he lives up to the description every time. There is still a substantial gap and this Government will not——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Time is clicking down.

In conclusion, this Government will make a responsible decision in regard to the Gladstone Power Station and will not use hundreds of millions of dollars of taxpayers' funds to subsidise private interests.

Mr Borbidge: You've been caught out.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: That comment is dishonest and the honourable member has no basis for saying it. It is a serious accusation raised by the member for Roma and the juvenile from paradise, his would-be replacement. If they have any evidence or argument at all, I challenge them to raise it today in this House.

Gold Coast Waterways Authority Funds

Mr SANTORO: I ask the Minister for Transport: will he inform the House if funds held in trust by the now disbanded Gold Coast Waterways Authority totalling nearly $4m, and further revenue of nearly $1m generated each year from seabed leases, will be

spent on the Gold Coast to provide channel maintenance and improved boating facilities, or has that money been lost within the consolidated revenue of his department?

Mr HAMILL: The member for Merthyr is misinformed. The Gold Coast Waterways Authority has not yet been disbanded.

Diversionary Centre in Townsville

Mr BREDHAUER: I ask the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs: is she aware of criticism in the Townsville media by the former Aboriginal Affairs Minister and member for Flinders, Mr Katter, attacking the Government for its failure to follow through the idea of a diversionary centre for Townsville? Also, can she inform the House of the reasons for the decision? Further, I ask: what initiatives are planned to deal with alcohol abuse in major Aboriginal population centres in Queensland?

Mr Katter: This is my question.

Ms WARNER: As the member for Flinders quite rightly points out, this should be his question, and I have been waiting for some time for him to ask it. The honourable member has been trying in Townsville to make out that this Government has somehow stopped another one of his very good ideas, that is, the location of a diversionary centre at Black River.

Both before the election and since, questions have been raised about the appropriateness of the centre that the honourable member conceived—a bit like his brick. For a number of reasons, the whole scheme appears to have been devised by the National Party to avoid a proper response to black deaths in custody. The location of the centre at Black River was motivated only by a lucrative land swap for a member of the National Party, Margaret Srebniak. None of this is new, but there were some concerns.

Mr Katter: Have you checked Gerry Hand's comments about this?

Ms WARNER: Yes, I have checked them. The Commonwealth had some very serious concerns about the appropriateness of that centre and whether or not it fulfilled the need.

As to black deaths in custody—this Government has finally negotiated a $2.6m deal with the Commonwealth, which is something that the National Party Government was unable to do for the whole of last year because of its dithering about and poor motives.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. Clearly the Minister is misleading the House on the fact that we were dithering about. Gerald Hand knocked back——

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

Ms WARNER: He knocked back the National Party's proposal because it was clearly inappropriate.

PRIVILEGE

Point of Order Raised by Member for Lockyer

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (11.22 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. The point raised by the honourable member for Lockyer is certainly a point of order. He said that Gerry Hand cut off the money to the National Party Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Flinders will resume his seat. It was definitely not a point of order, and I do not appreciate the member for Flinders trying to lecture the Chair. I suggest that he holds short of doing so in the future.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr J. N. GOSS (Aspley) (11.23 a.m.), by leave: The first I knew about the possibility of there being arsenic at the Craigslea State School and at the Craigslea State High School was at about 9 p.m. or 10 p.m. on Tuesday night, when a person who lives locally and near to the school telephoned me at Parliament House. I left the Chamber to take what turned out to be an urgent call and the person asked me what I knew about it.

At that time, I knew nothing about the matter. Early on Wednesday morning, I called in at the school and asked the principal about it. He showed me where the council officer had been and the place from which the water sample had been taken, which was quite close to the school itself and near a place where children play cricket.

I have now been able to secure a rough copy of the Lord Mayor's letter. I inform the House that it was addressed to the four Ministers responsible and that it was delivered urgently by hand. It was not posted. The letter was dated 14 May and it went out from the council on that day. The point has been made that the letter should have been faxed but, as you would know, Mr Speaker, the fax system is not always reliable.

The Minister for Emergency Services admitted yesterday that he knew about it and that he had told his colleagues. By his own admission, the Minister obviously knew the details long before I had the information.

ENSHAM COAL-MINING PROJECT

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (11.24 a.m.), by leave: I move—

> "That so much of Standing Orders be suspended that would prevent either the Leader of the Opposition or the member for Auburn presenting to this House evidence of any connection, improper or otherwise, between the granting of the authority to prospect for the Ensham coal-mine and the proposed sale of the Gladstone Power Station."

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (11.25 a.m.): I appreciate the opportunity afforded by the Premier but, as the Leader of the Opposition is not present in the Chamber, that opportunity cannot be taken at this time.

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (11.25 a.m.), in reply: In response to the vicious attack made by the Opposition and the mountain of evidence that has been presented, let me condemn members of the National Party and show them for what they are before I resume my seat.

Members of the Opposition have claimed that some improper activity has been engaged in. That is a grubby, dishonest and false accusation, and I want to nail it here and now. I challenged the member for Auburn. He is the one who asked the question. By his failure to speak up, he indicates quite clearly that he asked the question without any evidence whatsoever to support it. Furthermore, the Leader of the Opposition was shouting accusations across the Chamber and he did so quite dishonestly and quite falsely. They have squibbed on the debate. The debate will now conclude because not one member of the Opposition can stand and deliver.

I challenge the Leader of the Opposition, or any other member of the Opposition, to table in this Parliament today details or any evidence whatsoever that will support the grubby, dishonest and false accusations that have been made.

Mr HARPER: If the Honourable the Premier was not so sensitive——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Auburn is out of order. He has been given an opportunity to speak and he has already done so. He is not entitled to speak again during the debate. I presume that the debate is now finished, and I call the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations.

PRIVILEGE

Comments Made by the Premier

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (11.26 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege in regard to comments made by the Honourable the Premier. I believe that he made comments that are offensive to me. On that basis, I seek the leave of the House to point out——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Firstly, that is not a matter of privilege. Secondly, it is not appropriate for the member to speak at this time. It is now time for Government business to take precedence.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS BILL

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (11.27 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide with respect to industrial relations in Queensland and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

Mr SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending the necessary appropriation.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Warburton, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (11.28 a.m.): I move—

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

The regulation of employment conditions and relations between employers and employees by an independent tribunal has been a feature of Australian life since the turn of the century. The system operating in Queensland was established in 1916 when a Labor Government, under the great reformer, T. J. Ryan, legislated to create an equitable and just basis for the regulation of employment relations in Queensland. In 1990, a Labor Government is legislating to restore such a basis and to ensure that the State's industrial relations system is suited to the task of developing Queensland's industrial base as we face the twenty-first century.

In recent years, the industrial relations landscape in Queensland has been fragmented by divisive and confrontationist-style legislation, which simply has no place in a forward-looking industrial relations system based on equity and fairness. Accordingly, this Bill will repeal the obnoxious legislative relics of the Bjelke-Petersen past.

Mr Speaker, the reforms we are introducing have the broad support of all the industrial parties and are largely based on the report of the committee of inquiry into the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of Queensland. That committee, which was headed by Mr Ian Hanger, QC, was appointed in July 1987 by the previous Government to report on the operations and effectiveness of the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act.

The committee received more than 50 submissions and took oral evidence from more than 40 organisations and individuals. In November 1988, it reported to the Government and its major findings were accepted by employer and union organisations. They also had the support of the then Labor Opposition. Although the previous Government paid lip-service in public to Mr Hanger's conclusions, the report and the draft reform Bill it contained, in reality, were shelved. Some preliminary work was done within the then Department of Industrial Affairs, but the political will was simply not there. Those who now sit opposite could not countenance implementing a report that recognised the role of the industrial commission as an independent umpire, that recognised workers organisations as having a legitimate place in the industrial system and that recognised the potential for damage to the social fabric its anti-union legislative machinations posed.

My Government is not similarly blighted by ideological bias. We accepted the broad thrust of Mr Hanger's report when it was first released, and we have used it as the basis for the legislation before the House today.

In order to ensure that new and emerging industrial relations issues were covered, I reconvened the Hanger committee in January this year. The committee reported in April, and its findings once again received the broad support of the major employer organisations and union bodies.

There are some matters on which the Government has reserved its right to differ from the legislation proposed in the committee's reports. Many of these are minor in nature. Inherent in the report are a number of key principles which are embraced in this Bill. Those are—

- retention of the system of conciliation and arbitration;
- recognition of representative organisations of employers and employees;
- compliance with decisions of the tribunal; and
- the need for greater flexibility.

I turn now to the most significant features of the Bill.

Objects of the Act

The current Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act does not contain an initial section which reflects the purpose and philosophy of the legislation. However, the objects of this new legislation are clearly set out. They are—

- to create a framework for the orderly conduct of industrial relations in Queensland and for adaptation to changing social, economic and technological circumstances;
- to encourage and facilitate conciliation in industrial disputes, and arbitration where it is necessary;
- to ensure that tribunal decisions are respected;
- to encourage the formation of representative employee and employer organisations; and
- to encourage the democratic control of industrial organisations.

Role and Powers of the Commission

The new legislation will preserve the commission as created under the current Act but will change its title to the Industrial Relations Commission in recognition of its broader functions and responsibilities.

As recommended by the Hanger report, there will be scope for the appointment of more than the current six commissioners and for the appointment of acting commissioners as circumstances dictate. Also, one of the commissioners will be appointed as chief industrial commissioner, with responsibility for the day-to-day administration and allocation of the work of the commission. Those changes recognise the vastly increased and more complex workload that the commission has to deal with since the last relevant amendment to the Act.

The wages system under which we are now operating—notably the second tier and the current structural efficiency rounds—has contributed greatly to the increased complexity of the commission's work. Accordingly, the commission is required to have regard to the economic impact of its decisions. It is also required to take into consideration the public interest, having particular regard to the state of the economy and the likely effects of any decision on the economy, industry in general and the particular industry concerned.

The commission's reinstatement powers in cases of unfair dismissal will be enhanced to allow it to order compensation in cases in which the employment relationship is found to have broken down. It will also have enhanced powers that will enable it to prescribe permanent solutions to demarcation disputes. Those new powers, which will be along lines similar to those of the Federal industrial tribunal, will enable the commission to address both the immediate and the longer-term issues relating to the demarcation of specific work. It will be able to make orders as to coverage and to change union rules to give effect to its decisions, thereby ensuring lasting relief.

These new provisions mirror those contained within section 118 of the Federal Act. Responses to the reconvened Hanger committee from unions and employer organisations indicated a high level of support for those provisions to be included in the Queensland legislation.

The commission's powers will be extended to give it greater control over the employment relationship between the Crown and its employees under the Bill before us. In legislating for this, we have very much in mind that the Government, as an employer, should be as accountable to an outside, independent body as are private employers.

The Queensland commission will continue as principally a lay tribunal. The existing legislation excludes legal representation in the commission except where the parties consent. Although the Hanger report recommended that lawyers be given rights of appearance in a number of commission matters, the Government has decided, in the main, to leave the existing situation unchanged.

To accord with the shift in emphasis of matters relating to rules of industrial organisations from the industrial registrar to the Industrial Commission, the Bill provides that the commission may allow legal representation when considering such matters. There are sound reasons against permitting unrestricted legal representation before the commission. Those include—

- the commission has developed historically as a lay tribunal;
- legal representation escalates an adversarial approach, where what is needed in industrial relations is a conciliatory one;
- commission hearings deal predominantly with industrial and economic matters, not legal ones; and
- technicalities should be kept to a minimum to allow the facts to emerge, disputes to be settled quickly, and awards to be drawn up in simple terms.

The principal organisations which submitted that legal representations be permitted were the Bar Association of Queensland and the Queensland Law Society. The major users of the system—unions and employer organisations-were of the opposite view, and the Government has concurred with the view of the major users.

Flexibility

The current Act inhibits the commission's jurisdiction in making awards and agreements that cater to the optimum degree for the specific needs of individual enterprises. It does so by providing that every award and industrial agreement must contain specific prescriptions in respect of standard working hours, overtime, rest pauses, payment for public holidays, sick leave and annual leave.

These provisions setting minimum standards are steeped in the history of Queensland industrial legislation. Yet, as the Hanger committee concluded, the pace of economic

and technological change is such that industrial relations legislation must be flexible enough to enable the commission—and the parties themselves—to make decisions as to minimum conditions of employment.

In line with the committee's recommendations, the Bill retains current legislative standards as basic provisions, while providing for alternative approaches to be agreed by the parties or arbitrated by the commission.

The Government is confident that these new provisions will provide industry with the flexibility in working arrangements required to meet modern requirements. They will also allow the process of award restructuring to be pursued to its full potential. Accordingly, the Bill does not include those sections of the current Act which allow for voluntary employment agreements.

Compliance and sanctions

The sanctions provisions of the Bill represent a balanced and rational approach to compliance within the industrial relations system.

The Bill broadens the range of remedies available within the system and removes a number of items of extraneous legislation— namely, the Essential Services Act 1979, the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act 1984, the Electricity (Continuity of Supply) Act 1985 and the Electricity Authorities (Industrial Causes) Act 1985—brought in by the previous regime with the express purpose of muddying the industrial relations waters.

The Bill repeals the cumbersome compliance provisions of the current Act and replaces them with streamlined procedures for the automatic enforcement of the commission's orders. Henceforth, when making an order, a commissioner will specify a time within which it must be obeyed. The parties will be required to file an affidavit with the registrar at the specified time, stating what steps have been taken to comply with the order. The registrar, if not satisfied that there has been compliance with the order, will call upon the organisation to show cause before the Full Industrial Court why it should not be deregistered. In hearing the case, the Full Industrial Court will have power to not only deregister or fine the organisation but also to make orders for sale of the organisation's property, suspend the operation of awards, alter the registration of the organisation in respect of particular callings, rescind or delay wage increases, or, if it sees fit, make no order.

These are, intentionally, very stringent provisions. As the Hanger committee said, sanctions are the ultimate power that the State has over the community. They are an integral part of the legal process, and no legal system can operate effectively without legal sanctions to back up its decisions.

Political Objects Fund

It should be noted that the Political Objects Fund provisions inserted into the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act in 1983 by the Liberal/National Party coalition Government do not appear in the Bill before the House.

There can be no doubt that the previous Government's aim was to intrude into the internal affairs of unions for purely political purposes. It was seen by many that the main desire was to cut off the payment of affiliation fees by unions to the Australian Labor Party. The provisions do not achieve this, as legal opinion holds that the payment of an affiliation fee is not a political object under the Act.

Like most of the repressive, punitive pieces of legislation made famous by the National Party, the Political Objects Fund provision has never been used in any action against an industrial organisation. In summary, it is an unworkable nonsense and has no part in the new Act.

The Bill does, however, provide that industrial organisations are required to notify the registrar of particulars of loans, grants and donations exceeding amounts specified in the Bill.

Co-operation with other tribunals

Two significant new arrangements for cooperation with other tribunals are introduced in this Bill. First, provision is made for joint sittings of the Queensland commission and the industrial tribunals of other States. Secondly, it will be possible for a State commissioner to hold a dual appointment as a member of the Australian Industrial Relations Commission, and vice versa.

Dual appointments are provided for in the Federal Industrial Relations Act, and other States are moving to pass complementary reciprocal legislation. These arrangements will do much to facilitate consistency and cooperation in tribunal decisions without, I hasten to add, diminishing the power of the State commission in any way.

Appeals

At present there is no right of appeal from decisions of the commission except on matters of law or jurisdiction. The Hanger committee regarded this as somewhat anomalous and recommended that there be an avenue of appeal from a single commissioner on other than legal grounds, provided it is a matter of public importance.

The report recommended that such appeals should be heard by the Full Industrial Court, that is, the President sitting with two commissioners. As these matters concern issues of merit from an industrial relations standpoint, however, it has been suggested by the industrial relations community that such appeals should be heard by a Full Bench of the Industrial Relations Commission. This is because it is the commission which is involved in the day-to-day operation of industrial relations and, therefore, it is the tribunal best suited to hear appeals on merit. The Bill so provides.

Appeals on grounds of law or excess of jurisdiction will continue to be heard by the President of the Industrial Court.

Grievance procedures

As recommended by Hanger, the Bill provides for the mandatory insertion of grievance procedures in awards. If a dispute arises at the workplace, there should be proper channels to ensure that every effort is made to deal with that grievance at the workplace, without any stoppage of work and without immediate recourse to arbitration.

If the parties cannot agree on the procedure to be inserted into an award, there is provision for insertion of appropriate clauses by the Industrial Relations Commission.

Superannuation

In the current legislation, any person who defaults in making occupational superannuation contributions as required by an award is liable only to prosecution for breach of the award. There is no provision for the payment of unpaid contributions to be ordered.

Detailed provisions aimed at remedying this deficiency were recommended by a tripartite committee and supported by the reconvened Hanger committee. They are included in the Bill.

Amalgamations

In keeping with changes at the Federal level, the new Act will make it simpler, easier and quicker for union amalgamations to occur. Therefore, where unions satisfy the commission's community of interest test, a simple majority of votes cast in favour will approve the amalgamation. Where no community of interest criterion applies, at least a quarter of eligible members of the organisations concerned will be required to vote with a simple majority of those votes being necessary to approve the amalgamation.

In conclusion, industrial relations legislation should reflect changing times. I am confident that the Bill before the House is more than adequate for the needs of employers and unions in 1990. To ensure that this legislation continues to be attuned to those needs, it has enshrined within it provision for the establishment of a tripartite consultative

committee to give ongoing advice to the Government on further changes to the State's industrial relations framework which may be required from time to time. This means that, for the first time ever in Queensland, organisations representing employers and employees will have a direct say on, and direct input into, legislative provisions relating to the very important area of industrial relations.

The economic well-being of our State is to a very large extent dependent on an industrial relations system that has the respect of the community. For that respect to be forthcoming, the legislation needs to fit with the requirements of the users of the day. It needs to provide for a system of conciliation and arbitration that works well and works quickly. I am confident that the provisions in this Bill fit those requirements.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Harper, adjourned.

TRADING HOURS BILL

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (11.48 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to regulate the trading hours of shops, to amend the Factories and Shops Act 1960-1988, the Anzac Day Act 1921-1987 and the Holidays Act 1983-1989, each in certain particulars, to repeal the Trading Hours Act 1987 and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Warburton, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (11.49 a.m.): I move—

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

The various pieces of legislation administered by my Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations which regulate the trading hours of shops are the Factories and Shops Act, the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act, the Holidays Act and the Anzac Day Act. Accordingly, it is necessary to consult a number of Acts and trading hours orders of the Industrial Commission to determine the correct trading hours of shops. That practice has created complications, with much confusion being experienced by the general public, occupiers of shops and the legal profession in interpreting the legislation.

In essence, this Bill will consolidate into a single Act all trading hours legislation administered by my department, with no alterations to the framework under which the present system operates. The consolidation will continue to provide the three classifications of shops relative to trading hours, namely, an exempt shop, an independent retail shop and a non-exempt shop. A list of exempt shops is provided for in the Bill.

An exempt shop will have no trading restrictions, as at present. An independent retail shop will have the same meaning assigned to it as at present except for two important amendments. Those amendments are provided to prevent occupiers of non-exempt shops leasing their premises to others outside of lawful trading hours to form independent retail shops and subdividing their premises into a series of independent retail shops. Both of those practices are designed to create smaller independent retail shops so as to avoid trading hours restrictions. Such measures are detrimental to small businesses and other large businesses which do not adopt those practices.

These amendments will strengthen the legislation to assist small business. The trading hours restrictions which currently exist for an independent retail shop will

continue to apply. The Industrial Commission will be preserved as the tribunal fixed with the authority to determine the trading hours of non-exempt shops. This Government respects the impartiality and ability of the commission in its role as an independent trading hours tribunal.

In providing the consolidation, certain additional amendments have been considered necessary. These include—

- the penalty provisions being made uniform but being no different from what presently exists for non-compliance of trading hours orders of the Industrial Commission;
- the power presently provided for the Governor in Council to declare shops to be exempt shops being extended to include authority to declare shops to be exempt in any specified area of the State, in addition to the whole of the State if so desired;
- injunctions for compliance with trading hours orders being made by a single industrial commissioner in lieu of a Full Bench as at present;
- offences for the non-compliance of injunctions being heard before the Industrial Court, not the Full Industrial Court, as at present;
- the Industrial Commission declaring a statement of policy, in lieu of a general ruling as at present, for special exhibitions and special displays of relative goods;
- directors of companies and those who manage or control the companies' business becoming liable for a breach of the trading hours legislation; and
- the existing provision in the Factories and Shops Act enabling exempt shops to form agreements with the approval of the Minister so as to place restrictions on the hours in which they may open, not be included in this Bill.

The amendments contained in the Bill have been discussed with all sectors of the community that have an interest in trading hours, and no objections were raised to their implementation. Arising out of those discussions was unanimous agreement that the trading hours legislation be consolidated into a single piece of legislation.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Harper, adjourned.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 May (see p. 1354).

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (11.53 a.m.): As honourable members will be aware, the amendments proposed by this legislation are very sensitive issues for some of the people who may be affected by them. Consequently, we, as members of the National Party, have been treading very carefully down the path towards the legislation that is now before the House. But we have taken that path in recognition of changing attitudes within society. As the Minister has indicated, in 1987, the National Party Government established the adoption contact register, which has served a purpose but will now be repealed under this legislation. That was foreshadowed some time ago by my party. The legislation before the House is essentially the legislation that the National Party was developing. Consequently, the Opposition supports it.

However, in its development, some reservations were expressed in relation to the privacy of those who do not want their names to be made available, particularly in relation to the privacy of a natural mother who, at the time of relinquishing her child, was doing so in the knowledge that her name would be kept secret and that it would never be disclosed. Similarly, the people who were to adopt the child did so, at the time, in the knowledge that their names were to be kept secret and that the natural mother could not make contact with the adopted child.

Recognising that this situation existed, we have been very cautious in our approach to this Bill. We recognise that the Government has also acknowledged this point in providing for objections to be lodged against contact being made. The question is whether this legislation adequately covers the situation to which I have just referred.

The Government is proposing an advertising campaign to alert people to the provisions of this legislation and to encourage those who object to contact being made to register their objection with the department. Once that objection has been registered, it then becomes an offence for contact to be made. How effective that will be is open to question. Consequently, the Opposition has some reservations about this provision being adequate, but it cannot come up with a better suggestion.

It has been suggested that, when an application is made for information under this Act, the person to whom the information refers should be actually contacted and permission obtained for contact to be made. In theory, that is okay. But there would be several pitfalls, such as difficulties in contact being made, as no doubt many people are not at their original address or do not have the same name as they had previously.

If contact was to be by letter, it is possible that someone else could open the letter. As honourable members would be aware, that could cause all sorts of problems. Consequently, bearing in mind the effectiveness of Jigsaw and the problems of someone landing on some unsuspecting person's doorway—of which there have been some instances—in these circumstances, the Opposition supports that provision in the legislation. However, the problems that may arise from it must be recognised and a very sensitive approach will need to be taken by the Minister and her department to the issues raised. I am aware of the Minister's concerns in this direction. The Opposition understands and shares those concerns.

The other point that I wish to address is in relation to the demand for this legislation. There is no doubt that in the community there are many adopted young adults who wish to know who their natural parents are. There is also no doubt that there are many natural parents out there who wish to know who and where their sons or daughters are whom they had adopted. These people have been vocal in pressing for this legislation. Although I mentioned young people, much older people are also concerned. One person in my electorate has approached me in regard to this matter. However, we have no way of measuring the number of people, such as the adopted parents, the adopted people and the natural parents, who do not want this legislation. Their desire for anonymity in itself precludes them from making any objection. I suspect that there are more in this category than we realise. Decisions have been made in the past and they do not wish to be confronted with the personal conflict to which this Bill will expose them.

There is no doubt that this Bill will tax some emotions and that fears of insecurity and fears of rejection will be aroused. In this regard, we appreciate the Minister's commitment to providing counselling services. We also recognise the experiences of people who have been affected by similar legislation in other States, where quite positive benefits have come from the effects of the legislation, and the apprehensions of many were found to be groundless and family relationships had actually been strengthened.

The Opposition is particularly pleased that the Minister has not elected to go down the path followed by some of the other States that have introduced similar legislation, in so much that while provision is to be made for people to register their particulars with the department to facilitate contact, if a request is made for the particulars which are to be made available, the department is not to act as an agent to facilitate contact. My understanding is that, when departments have attempted to fulfil this role in other States, it has created a massive workload and the time lag has been in the order of 18 months or more.

Another question raised relates to a woman who previously had a child and had that child adopted. Would that same woman today, in similar circumstances, now knowing that at some time in the future contact could be made between the two, elect to have that child adopted or seek an abortion? Obviously, that is only for the woman to answer, and she is the only person qualified to give an answer. However, we can

speculate on this. The advice from the people who work in this field is that, in this day and age when the stigma of illegitimacy has largely disappeared, the woman is more likely to carry the child and have it adopted, knowing that at some time in the future she may again see the child, rather than to take the other questionable course.

Taking all those points into consideration, the Opposition believes that the benefits of this legislation outweigh the negatives, and that the fears and reservations of those people affected can be effectively overcome, provided that they do not over-react, and that an understanding, positive and rational approach is taken to the provisions of the Bill.

The Opposition welcomes the other provisions of the Bill as being practical, particularly when taken in conjunction with the main thrust of the Bill. If that information is to be made available to the people concerned, it is only natural they should have the right to give or receive benefits under a will or receive benefits from an estate.

In relation to the provisions for adoptions arranged outside the department and effected overseas—the requirement that people who adopt children in such circumstances be required to have lived in the country for at least 12 months is reasonable and should overcome some of the problems that have developed.

Finally, I thank the Minister for her preparedness to brief me and other members of the Opposition on all aspects of this legislation. It helps to avoid uninformed misinformation circulating in the community that could only lead to the stirring of emotions and the possible creation of unnecessary divisions on this sensitive issue.

My intention has always been to be constructive and to avoid unnecessary, unproductive confrontation. Mutual cooperation should help to alleviate some of the fears that surround this legislation.

I support the Bill.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (12.01 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak in the debate on the Adoption of Children Act Amendment Bill.

Under this new legislation, adoptees will be free to obtain information that belongs to most of us by right, information that is essential to their understanding of who they are and the names of their birth parents.

Generally, the amendments have been welcomed by the parties involved, and I am pleased that the Opposition recognises that. However, concerns exist in the community about the impact of the proposed changes and the provision of identifying information. I wish to speak about those concerns, and the protections and safeguards in the Bill.

Firstly, I will address the motivations and concerns of three of the parties involved in an adoption—the adoptee, the birth parents and the adoptive parents. Secondly, I will outline how each of those parties will be affected by the proposed amendments and the safeguards that will protect them. Finally, I will address the impact of this legislation on those parties in future adoptions.

Most adopted people become driven by a need for information about their birth and adoption. Rarely is this the result of their rejecting their adoptive families. Many who love and are happy in their adoptive families also search desperately for their origins. This search is often sparked by a life crisis—marriage, the death of a parent or the birth of a child.

Adopted people lack those things that many people take for granted—a physical, mental or aptitudinal likeness to parents, and a place within the heritage of a family—all intangible things, but far more compelling and less easy to comfort than a lack of food, shelter or other material needs.

The lack of this information is traumatic for the adoptee. It often results in insecurity, poor self-image and depression. Research shows that some adopted persons, who do not know of their origins, have difficulty in maintaining long-term relationships.

Adopted people argue that their birth information should be theirs by right, as it is for other adults. As they were not party to the decision to keep the adoption information a secret, they do not feel bound by it. Yet, in spite of this compelling need, few adoptees pursue lengthy contact with birth parents. Many are content knowing their birth parents' names and their birth details. Others, and these cases appear frequently in newspaper articles, just want to meet their mothers. Those people are not looking for emotional reunions. They want only to know if they have something in common with their parents.

Birth parents, particularly relinquishing mothers, also suffer trauma because of present adoption procedures. The work of Jigsaw, ARMS—the Australian Society for Relinquishing Mothers—and other adoption search organisations, indicates the extent of their distress. A national survey found that relinquishing mothers suffer a sense of loss that remains constant or increases for up to 30 years. This sense of loss is particularly great on birthdays, Mother's Day and other family days.

The birth mother suffers constant stress from a sense of loss and from a sense of guilt about giving up the child, and from not knowing how that child is coping. A common sentiment is, "If anyone could guarantee that my son is safe and healthy, I'd be happy." As a mother, I empathise with the feelings that those women experience.

Although most birth mothers will welcome the amendments that make identifying information available to their adult birth child, there will be some objections. Some birth parents have not told family members that they once gave up a child for adoption. Although, as the member for Burnett rightly claims, giving birth outside marriage no longer has the same social stigma that it once did, those parents may still wish to keep that information from their families and may not want contact with their adult son or daughter.

Those unwilling birth parents constitute only a small percentage of relinquishing mothers. Bryan Cussen, the director of Birthlink, a Melbourne adoption counselling and search service, has found that 90 per cent of natural mothers welcome approaches by their relinquished children. Mrs Roselyn Jones of ARMS said that of the 2 000-3 000 mothers she has spoken to over the years, only one did not want contact with her child.

Most of the concerns about access to identifying information and contact with birth relatives have been raised by adoptive parents. Not all adoptive parents find this objectionable. Many are happy for their adoptive children to have access to this information.

The concerns of adoptive parents appear to be based on fear; fear that the birth parents will re-enter their adopted child's life and seduce him or her away from them. Some interpret the adopted person's search for his or her origins as evidence of their failure as a parent. Research indicates that this is not so. Even when the adoptees know of their birth origins, they still regard their adoptive parents as their true mum and dad. This relationship is not usually adversely affected. Many statistics have shown that 50 per cent of adoptees who find out their identifying birth information feel no need to make contact with their birth parents.

However, one problem is that some adoptive parents have not told their adult sons and daughters of their adoption. Since the late 1960s, adoptive parents have been encouraged to tell their children of their adoption at an early age. Fortunately, it is only a few who have not done so, usually because they believed it was in the child's interest to be given a fresh start in life.

Some adoptive parents have expressed concerns with the proposed amendments. They are concerned because they believed that they had a legal contract which entitled them to forever keep the adoption a secret. They are concerned because they were given assurances that the birth mother had no rights after consenting to the child's adoption, and the possibility that the contact by the birth mother may infringe on their rights as adoptive parents. They are concerned that they may lose the affection of their sons or daughters. They are concerned that their adoptive sons or daughters will not be protected

from interference in their daily lives by birth relatives and that they may discover harmful or painful information about their natural families.

There is no doubt that these parents will face a painful dilemma when the legislation is changed. The amendments are clearly based on the assumption that people are entitled to know of their adopted status, but the situation where adoptive parents have not told their children has been recognised.

The Act will provide for a six-month period before any identifying information can be disclosed. This will provide an opportunity for parents to broach the subject with their sons and daughters in a planned way rather than allow trauma to result from adult adoptees suddenly discovering their adoption after contact by birth relatives. Of course, adoptees have always been at risk of making the traumatic discovery about their adoptive status, for instance, from a well-meaning aunt or friend, when obtaining a copy of a birth certificate or on the death of their adoptive parents. The amendments proposed today should encourage adoptive parents to discuss their children's status with them so that this type of trauma may never be allowed to occur.

These adoptive parents will be able to consult approved adoption counsellors, many of whom have personal experience as adoptive parents or adopted persons. These counsellors will be able to help adoptive parents find the best way to tell their adult children of their adoption.

The incidence of adoptees being unaware of their adopted status is low. Only about 2 per cent have not been told by their parents. Departmental experience is that, even when parents have not told their children of their adoption, they become aware of it by other means. Many adopted persons in this situation do not want to hurt their parents by telling them that they know.

A 1989 New Zealand study found that many adoptees previously unaware of their adopted status were delighted to learn of it. For some, it confirmed feelings and beliefs that they had about their status. Furthermore, even when adopted persons were initially angry that they had not been told, in nearly all cases their relationships with their adoptive parents were fully restored after open and honest discussions.

I have outlined the motivations for and the possible objections to contact by these parties. I will now briefly address how the amendments will affect each party, and outline the protections and safeguards. As honourable members know, the current provisions for identifying information centre around the adoption contact register, with the emphasis on reunions between birth parents and adult adoptees. These reunions require the birth parents, the adoptees and the adoptive parents to sign the register.

Under the new legislation, access to identifying information will be available to both birth parents and the adopted person, once that person attains the age of majority. Nothing will be required of the adoptive parents for this to happen. Previously they could deny their adopted sons or daughters access to this information.

These amendments will allow adult adoptees the same rights as those enjoyed by other adults, such as the right to identifying information and the right to agree or object to contact with their birth relatives. As neither birth relatives nor adoptees have access to identifying information or contact until the adopted person turns 18, the reasonable rights of the adoptive parents will not be infringed.

The Bill provides adult adopted persons and birth parents with an entitlement to identifying information. However, it recognises that both adopted persons and birth parents should have the right to object to contact. The following safeguards have been included to protect both parties from undesired contact: the right to object to contact and penalties for persons who breach this objection. Both birth parents and adoptees may register their objection to contact. This objection is valid for a period of five years and may be renewed or revoked at any time by the person who lodged it. This recognises each party's right to change his or her mind. This safeguard is further enhanced by the provision of a six-month period during which objections to contact may be registered before any identifying information is disclosed to any person.

Any person who knows that an objection to contact has been lodged and still makes contact or attempts to make contact with that person will be committing an offence against the Act. Substantial penalties of up to $6,000 will be incurred. The likelihood of many offences of this nature occurring is slim. Research indicates that many adopted persons do not proceed to search for their birth relatives. They are content to know their birth name and the name of their natural mother.

The legislation will be different for future adoptions. For all adoptions occurring after the proclamation date, no objection to contact may be lodged after the adopted person turns 18 years of age. Naturally, both parties—adoptees and birth relatives—will be able to make or deny contact in the same way as other adults can. Although this Bill may be a cause of anxiety for some people, similar legislation has been in place in some overseas countries such as Scotland for many years and in other States for some years. The introduction of legislation of this nature is an overwhelmingly positive experience for most adopted persons, their adoptive parents and their birth parents.

The provision of identifying information often enhances rather than detracts from existing family relationships. Furthermore, available data suggests that the vast majority of people act sensitively in any approaches made to birth relatives, and they will not make contact unless this is clearly desired by both parties. The safeguards provided in this legislation will protect the rights of all parties.

I support the Bill.

Mr COOMBER (Currumbin) (12.16 p.m.): These amendments to the Adoption of Children Act will provide the greatest changes to adoption information in this State for 50 years. In the past, adopted children and their natural parents have been afforded a form of anonymity. This anonymity has, by virtue of community moral standards, been necessary to remove the stigma of adoption, unwanted pregnancies, illegitimacy and infertility. In recent years society has moderated its views on these matters and these issues are discussed frankly and openly in our community.

It is the natural instinct of all men and women to bear and raise children. To the majority, the ability to bear and raise children is a God-given blessing. To a few, but an increasing number, infertility destroys the joy of natural childbirth and parenthood. In the case of infertile couples, the adoption of children into families provides the joy of raising children. In general, families are thankful that unplanned pregnancies provide children available for adoption. In Queensland the number of children available for adoption is minimal. In 1986, only 171 children were placed; in 1987, a total of 167; and in 1988, a total of 173. The average waiting time in this State for potential adoptive parents is four years. One can see that the small number of adopted children are taken into the cream of families in Queensland. On average, adoptive families provide a higher than usual standard of living. The family environment is stable and healthy.

The amendments before the House are like a can of worms, but the can is worth opening. With proper structures in place, these amendments will make the information that is available to adopted children and natural parents useful. It is healthy and right for a person to know his or her own identity. The psychology of self needs a person to know his or her own identity. However, the problem always exists of how to determine the rights of one person over another. Most adoptive parents tell their children as soon as is reasonable about their natural mother. The children in the adoptive family must develop faith and trust in their adoptive parents. In researching this Bill I have found that the children develop a sense of having a double family and their natural parents become part of their world. Children like to meet their mother simply to satisfy their own feelings and desires. The opposite reaction is also evident; I found adopted children with absolutely no interest in their natural parent, who were quite aggressive towards their natural parent. In these cases, feelings of rejection, desertion, among others, were evident.

The proposed amendment, as it applies to adopted children over the age of 18 years, will mean that information will be provided by the department to biological

parents on application to the department by the natural parent. By this amendment, the adopted child has forfeited the right to remain anonymous. On request, the information will provide the name of the adopted person, the name of the adoptive parents at the time of adoption, a certificate entitling them to receive a copy of the adopted person's amended birth entry and the original birth certificate and, if the adult adopted person agrees in writing, his or her current name and address may also be provided to the birth parent. The only protection—if that is the right word—is that, under these amendments, after notifying the relevant department, the adult adopted child may object to contact with his or her natural parents. These amendments provide a window period of six months in which to register an objection to contact.

The reality is that, firstly, the adopted child has lost his or her anonymity retrospectively and, secondly, in some instances against his or her will the adopted child will be contacted by the natural parent, even though the child has fulfilled the objection to the contact provisions of the Act and has also remembered to renew his or her objection each five years. I wish to demonstrate the impact of the proposed amendments. On hearing of these amendments, a 37-year-old adopted lady contacted my office. She has no desire to contact her natural mother and, furthermore, has no desire to have her natural mother contact her. This lady has lost the right to veto possible contact by her natural mother.

These amendments include provisions to charge persons who contact a birth relative despite their objection. The penalties of two years gaol and a fine of up to $6,000 are suitable, but, in my opinion, would be applied only in the extreme. Restraining orders or orders of the court are hard to invoke and, in a few instances, the harassment of birth relatives will be the end result. Added to this, the action of restraining or taking legal action against flesh and blood will cause emotional and physical stress. The possibility of invasion of the adoptive family unit by a birth parent is real and is not addressed in these amendments.

I have examined sections 93, 94, 95 and 96 of the Victorian Adoption Act 1984, which provide safeguards to both the adopted child and the birth parent, and would satisfy members of the public who wish to retain anonymity.

At this point I wish to enlarge on the impact of these amendments. I believe that the Minister feels that more people wish to know about their ancestors, or where their children or parents are, than wish to retain their anonymity. If laws are made for the benefit of the majority, they must also address the identity of children born in the in vitro fertilisation, donor sperm or donor egg programs. In her second-reading speech the Minister stated—

> "The firm principle on which this Bill is based is that all adult persons have the right to know their identity or the identity of their child. That is, while individuals have a right to privacy, they do not have the right to prevent people from knowing about their identity."

The implications for the medical profession are immense. Because IVF technology is changing, donor sperm and donor eggs will require identification to allow each child born as a result of the program to know its identity. The need to know the identity of brothers and sisters also may be necessary for other medical grounds; for example, bone-marrow transplants for leukaemia patients are possible between compatible brothers and sisters. Genetic tracing may be necessary and ancestral information may help. These amendments will allow for those actions to occur. If the number of adoptions maintain a steady rate, the possibility of brothers and sisters marrying is increasing.

In conclusion, I acknowledge that the amendments allow information that is useful to the majority of affected people to be made available. The possibility of abuse of that information exists, and that has only marginally been addressed by these amendments. The change to adoption laws in Queensland will benefit the majority, but this Parliament will undoubtedly witness the injustice of these amendments when the decision to retain anonymity, which was made many years ago, impacts on a family or individuals. In many cases, that was the only reason a mother walked away from her child.

The other provisions of the Bill are welcomed by the Liberal Party in handling this very sensitive issue. The Liberal Party supports these amendments.

Debate, on motion of Mr Goss, adjourned.

ENSHAM COAL-MINING PROJECT; SALE OF GLADSTONE POWER STATION

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (12.25 p.m.), by leave: I move—

> "That so much of Standing Orders be suspended that would prevent the Leader of the Opposition from laying on the table of the House any documents or other evidence, or providing to the House any other evidence, that could connect the awarding of the authority to prospect the Ensham coal deposit and the proposed sale of the Gladstone Power Station."

Mr COOPER (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (12.25 p.m.): This time, I am present in the Chamber, which makes a difference.

Mr W. K. Goss: Let's see the evidence.

Mr COOPER: The Premier has had his run. He made an idiot of himself. He made a theatrical and very agitated response to a perfectly legitimate question—a question for which he did not have the answer.

I make the point that earlier, after I had left the Chamber, the Premier moved a motion for the suspension of Standing Orders. I would have thought that if the Premier was a fair dinkum person and if he really had respect for this institution, he would have at least informed me that the motion was going to be brought on so that I could have been in the Chamber. I am perfectly prepared to discuss the matter to a point, but I also wish to make a personal explanation in relation to the actions that have been taken by the Premier. I seek your permission, Mr Speaker, to make that personal explanation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition has the floor. He can say anything he likes that is relevant to the subject matter of the debate.

Mr COOPER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I sought your approval because, otherwise, it would have meant——

Mr Palaszczuk: You have 19 minutes. Come on!

Mr COOPER: I will speak as long as I like and when I like. It has nothing to do with the member for Archerfield.

I point out that this morning the Premier moved a motion to suspend Standing Orders. The motion called on me and the member for Auburn to respond to certain allegations that the Premier claimed had been made during question-time. A question was asked in relation to Ensham and Pacific Coal—details of which were embodied in the question—for the purpose of eliciting an answer. That is the reason why the Opposition asked the question.

The Opposition did not ask the question because it already knew the answer. If the Opposition already had the answer, what would have been the point of asking the question? The question was asked because the Opposition believes that it is in the public interest that an answer be provided. No answer was given. If a member of the Opposition cannot rise and ask a question during question-time, that is an abuse of question-time. If the Premier has to rise and seek the suspension of Standing Orders so that the Opposition can be gagged in relation to this matter, that constitutes a complete abrogation of question-time.

Mr Mackenroth: We didn't gag you.

Mr COOPER: The Leader of the House wanted the Opposition to come into the Chamber and table information.

Mr W. K. Goss: Where is your evidence?

Mr COOPER: Whatever information we have is entirely our affair. The Opposition asked a question for the purpose of eliciting an answer that we believed should have been given in the public interest. In the public interest, an answer should be provided. The Opposition did not receive an answer. Instead, we received a very agitated response from a very, very guilty person.

Government members: Oh!

Mr COOPER: It is perfectly obvious. However, I will continue with my personal explanation.

I first heard of the cowardly abuse of suspension of Standing Orders when I returned to my office. Why did the Premier not tell the Opposition beforehand?

Mr W. K. Goss: Because you ran out. You ran out the door.

Mr COOPER: What did the Premier have to hide?

Mr W. K. Goss: You should have been here.

Mr COOPER: That is absolute rot. The Opposition would have been perfectly happy to take up this issue, especially at question-time, because that is what the Opposition is here for. The Opposition's task is to ask questions during question-time for the purpose of eliciting answers that we believe should be given in the public interest. The Premier ducked the question. He has ducked so many questions that it is not funny.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr COOPER: Even little "Donald Duck" would not know how to answer a question. Every time he is asked a question, he ducks or slides, he says that he does not know, or he folds up. He never comes up with an answer, in spite of the fact that the questions are well within his field of responsibility. The matters relate to his portfolio and he is responsible for them. He rises and says, "Why don't you ask the Premier or someone else?"

Before members of the Opposition ask a question, the matter is researched to make sure that it relates to the Treasurer's area of responsibility. Even so, he rises and says, "I don't know how to answer it." Wham, down he goes! His performance is pathetic and it is widely recognised to be so.

The first that I heard of the cowardly abuse of the legitimate right of the member for Auburn to ask a question was when I returned to my office and heard Mr Speaker sit down the member for Auburn who was taking a point of order. I understand that an opportunity was given to the Opposition to debate the matter, but no-one in the Opposition expected a motion to be moved to enable it to do so. If Opposition members had known that such a motion was to be moved, they would have been here.

Mr Mackenroth: Oh!

Mr COOPER: This morning, I informed the Leader of the House that I intended to move a motion without notice about the toxic waste issue. I did the decent and proper thing. The next time that the Government intends to move a motion similar to the one that it moved today, I ask it to inform the Opposition of its intention.

Mr W. K. Goss: Do you have any evidence to back up your claim? You claimed a pay-off. Put up!

Mr COOPER: The Opposition asked the question in order to elicit an answer from the Government. If the Opposition had the answer, does the Premier think that it would ask the question?

Mr Palaszczuk: Yes.

Mr COOPER: If that is the case, the Premier is quite stupid. If we had the answer, does he think that we would ask him the question? I am afraid that he cannot give us the answer.

Mr W. K. Goss: Tell us. Tell the House.

Mr COOPER: I am pretty sure that the Premier knows behind the scenes where the question came from.

Mr W. K. Goss: It is not true.

Mr COOPER: No doubt the Premier has instigated an immediate witch-hunt to discover where that information came from. The Opposition has found that the Premier is pretty good at conducting witch-hunts.

I return to my personal explanation. The member for Auburn was sat down on that point of order. I point out to the Premier that question-time is specifically for questioning him or his Ministers on matters that relate to their portfolios. That is the way in which the Opposition has been proceeding. Opposition members ask questions to elicit answers so that the people of Queensland can be informed.

Mr De Lacy: You haven't asked an intelligent question.

Mr COOPER: The poor, silly-looking Minister does not have the intelligence to answer the questions. He is pathetic! Every time he opens his mouth, he puts his foot in it. When Parliament resumes the week after next, Opposition members will ask him some more questions. They will be well researched and will relate to his portfolio. I know what sort of answers we will receive. The honourable member will duck, dodge and weave, because he is not capable of answering them.

The Premier failed to answer the specific question and was obviously agitated because he knew that it was soundly based. I strongly suspect that he also knows where the question originated.

Mr W. K. Goss: I don't. I challenge you to tell the House. Tell the House.

Mr COOPER: The Premier is about to find out. I also point out to the Premier that the Opposition's parliamentary agenda will not be dictated by him or any other Government member. Opposition members reserve the right——

Mr W. K. Goss: You've made an accusation.

Mr COOPER: We asked the question. There were no accusations.

Mr W. K. Goss: You claimed there was a pay-off.

Mr COOPER: It was a legitimate question, and the Premier got his knickers in a knot and really got stirred up. He got down into the gutter again, which is what he does when he gets stirred up. He should keep the tone of the debate above that. He should give us legitimate answers in the public interest. That is all we ask.

Opposition members will not be dictated to by the Government. They will ask the questions that they believe should be asked. They will not be intimidated. We believe that we have utilised question-time in a most responsible manner.

When the Government was in Opposition, its members asked questions that were intended either to embarrass or to catch someone out. That is part of the Opposition's role. However, it is supposed to be in the public interest, which is how we intend to keep it.

Opposition members will continue to research questions. We believe that many questions about the Ensham coal issue must be answered. The means by which we should elicit answers is by asking questions at question-time in this place. Therefore, whether we receive answers or not, we intend to continue our line of questioning. We believe that we have a right and a duty to do that in the public interest. We will not

be intimidated or put off the course that we have embarked upon either on this issue or on any other issue.

Previously, Opposition members have received threats and been asked not to ask questions on particular subjects. We will not be intimidated in any way, shape or form.

The people of Queensland, regardless of political colour, would expect Opposition members to do exactly what we are doing. It is our legitimate role. Every day in Parliament, a specific period is allotted for question-time. Opposition members will not be intimidated or put off.

We believe that the people of Queensland want an alternative Government—an Opposition that questions the Government thoroughly, even if it upsets Government members. We intend to pursue that course.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.36 p.m.): I sincerely believe that, when the Premier reads *Hansard* tomorrow, he will regret that he decided to bring on this debate today. I will look coolly, in the calm light of day, at what happened to create this enormous excitement in the mind of the Premier. I make the point that, when the Premier was Leader of the Opposition, he never let up on any of the Ministers or the Premier of the day. He exercised his democratic right at question-time to put pressure on Ministers and on the Premier of the day.

Mr Hobbs: He can't take criticism.

Mr BORBIDGE: For the benefit of the member for Warrego, I point out that questions have been asked in this House that have upset the Premier. The last time that occurred, because he was so sensitive about ministerial expenses, we ended up having a conference in the Premier's office. I cannot understand the sensitivity and the overreaction of the Premier on this occasion.

Honourable members should examine the wording of the question directed to the Premier by the member for Auburn. How anyone could say that the question was unreasonable or out of order is totally beyond comprehension.

Mr W. K. Goss: I agree with that.

Mr BORBIDGE: I say to the Premier: read *Hansard* tomorrow. I believe that he has acted immaturely and irrationally.

Mr W. K. Goss: You have acted dishonestly.

Mr BORBIDGE: No. The Premier should read *Hansard* tomorrow.

Today, honourable members have witnessed the incredible spectacle of the Premier making allegations against himself. That is what has happened. He had a massive overreaction to a legitimate question. The Opposition can rightfully ask: why is the Premier so sensitive? Why is he so touchy? He is the member who, during the course of question-time, read into an Opposition question inferences that were not necessarily in it. Why is the Premier so touchy when from time to time the Opposition can score a point?

The Parliament is days behind in its legislative program. The Government cannot get its legislation through. Because the Premier does not like a question that he is asked by a member of the Opposition, he suspends Standing Orders so that he can abuse the Leader of the Opposition. It is a blatant abuse of the forms and the practices of this House. When the Premier reads *Hansard* tomorrow——

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: For the benefit of the honourable member who is interjecting, I repeat that when the Premier reads *Hansard* tomorrow, he will find that it is he who made the allegations—not the member for Auburn, not the Leader of the Opposition, not the Deputy Leader of the Opposition or any other member sitting on the Opposition

front bench. The Premier was the person who took great exception—"in the process of negotiation", I think he said in his answer—to the fact that there may have been some intermingling of the two major development issues confronting the Goss Government at present.

Mr W. K. Goss: You've been caught out.

Mr BORBIDGE: Members of the Opposition know why the Premier is so desperate.

Mr W. K. Goss interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: The Premier will just have to sit and cop it.

Members of the Opposition know why the Premier is so desperate.

Government members interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I am happy to stand here all day.

The fact is that since 2 December there has not been one major announcement of economic significance by the Goss Government, and now it is desperate. This Government is so desperate that it will break its own policy on foreign investment. It will discard the Foreign Investment Review Service within the Treasury Department. When members of the Opposition ask a question relating to Gladstone, they get this incredible, massive overreaction.

What did the Premier do? As is typical of his vindictive nature, the Premier of this State took great exception to a member of the Opposition asking him a question, and he resorted to personal abuse. He has done it every time the pressure has been on, in a way that does nothing for the office of Premier of this State.

The Opposition suggests that the Premier did not adequately answer that question this morning. The Opposition has a line of information in respect of very major issues in this State—not just on this matter—and the Opposition, in the first instance, reserves its right in question-time—as the Premier did when he was the Leader of the Opposition—to ask questions and to try to solicit answers. It is the legitimate role of the National Party in Opposition—just as it was the legitimate role of the Labor Party when in Opposition—to monitor the standards and the propriety of Government.

Mr Smyth interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that that point about the right of members of the Opposition to ask questions was canvassed at some length by the Leader of the Opposition and then by him. I suggest that he discuss something more substantive in relation to the motion. The honourable member is becoming quite tedious.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, I bow to your ruling. However, can I say that my comments in respect to question-time were in response to interjections from the Government back bench, with which you had decided not to deal.

I am sure that any reasonable person watching these proceedings would agree that the Opposition sets its own timetable. The Opposition has the right to determine what questions it will ask and when it will ask them, what notices of motion it will put on the notice paper and what action it may take both inside and outside the Parliament.

Mr Speaker, with respect, I conclude my remarks by stating quite clearly that the Government will not set the Opposition's agenda inside this Parliament or outside it. With respect to the Premier, I believe that when he reads *Hansard* tomorrow and when he analyses the content of the question asked of him by the member for Auburn, he will regret his overreaction and the sensitivity that he has displayed today.

The National Party, as an Opposition, has every right to set its own timetable—and will continue to do so—and, when it thinks that it is necessary, to raise issues of

concern. Needless to say, because of the interest that has been generated in this issue—which, quite frankly, has surprised members of the Opposition—and because of the Premier's actions today, the Opposition has been given added incentive to make further inquiries.

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (12.44 p.m.), in reply: At the outset, let me make it plain that I have no objection to genuine questions being asked, and I accept the question from the member for Auburn. The question carried with it certain implications which I thought were offensive. Nevertheless, it is his right as a member of this Parliament to ask that question, and despite the claims by the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy that the question was not answered, or that the Government had no answer, let me remind them and the House that the answer I gave was, "No." I said, "The answer is, 'No'." It was a straight-out denial, and I went on to expand on that in detail. The answer was, "No", so the question was answered.

I did not take exception to the question by the member for Auburn. There has been this false debate put forward by the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy that this is somehow all about the right of members of the Opposition to ask a question, whereas in fact it is not, as they well know.

Prior to the question being asked, the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy deliberately and repeatedly—for the benefit of people in the press gallery and the public gallery and other honourable members—shouted allegations across the Chamber. What I took offence at—and what I am entitled to take offence at—was the allegation that I, or a member of this Government, had been involved in a pay-off. Unlike its predecessors, this Government has a reputation for honesty, and it will protect and defend it.

The Leader of the Opposition and his sidekick alleged a pay-off across the Chamber. It should be noted that, after the answer was given to the member for Auburn, those members maintained the allegation of a pay-off. I stress that that is a dishonest and false slur on the Government and the company involved. Neither this Government nor that company would engage in any trade-off in respect of those two issues. It is an unreasonable and false slur on the Government and the company.

Mr Borbidge: Read the *Hansard*.

Mr Cooper: Read the question.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I hear boyish protestations that it was an innocent question. Because those honourable members were prepared to make false claims across the Chamber, it was not an innocent question.

The Government rejects those comments as offensive, false and dishonest. Let me point out some of the comments made by those two members. They deny that they have made allegations of corruption or improper conduct and claim that it was an innocent question. The Leader of the Opposition said, "Whatever information we have is our affair." Is that the contemptuous way in which Opposition members treat the Parliament and the public? They seek to say, "It is an innocent question. We have really got some secret information about improper behaviour, but it is our affair." That exposes their dishonesty and the superficiality of their situation.

I refer also to a comment by the posturer from "paradise". He said, "The Opposition has a line of information." Both the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy made repeated references to guilt or guilty knowledge on the Government side of the House. During an answer to the member for Auburn, that claim was rejected and given a straight-out denial.

The Government objects to, finds offensive and will never accept from the most corrupt bunch of individuals that this Parliament has ever seen snide references to pay-offs. Members of the Opposition have made the clear allegation that the Government has demonstrated impromptu, improper or corrupt conduct. I now challenge those members: do they withdraw that allegation, or do they have evidence?

Mr Cooper: What are you hiding?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The honourable member has been caught out. I am hiding nothing.

Either those members have information and evidence or they do not. If they have information or evidence, they should back it up and put it on the table of the House. If they have made those allegations without any evidence whatsoever, they are dishonest, they have abused the privileges of this forum and they stand condemned as desperate, dishonest men who were given an opportunity to back up their claims and failed to do so. In short, they have been caught out.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Auburn.

Mr MACKENROTH: Mr Speaker, I believe that the debate has been closed.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Yes, it has. I am sorry. I cannot call the member for Auburn. I have to put the question.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.49 p.m.): I move—

"That the member for Auburn be now heard."

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. We are not dealing with Government business.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to Standing Orders 107 and 108. I am entitled to move that the member for Auburn be now heard.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is not entitled to move that. He will resume his seat. I make a firm ruling that it is out of order for the member to move, "That the member for Auburn be now heard." The debate has been closed. The question is that the Premier's motion be agreed to. Those of that opinion say "Aye", to the contrary "No". I think the "Ayes" have it.

Mr Borbidge: What is the motion?

Mr Stephan: Read the motion. What is the motion?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! When a long motion has been moved, it is normal procedure for the Speaker to put the question, "That the motion be agreed to."

Mr Stephan: What is the motion?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am quite happy to read it out. The Premier's motion was—

"I move that so much of Standing Orders be suspended that would prevent the Leader of the Opposition from laying on the table of the House any documents or other evidence or providing to the Parliament evidence that could connect the awarding of the authority to prospect the Ensham coal deposit and the proposed sale of the Gladstone Power Station."

Motion agreed to.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. With respect, Mr Speaker, I ask you to consider the application of Standing Orders 107 and 108, which deal with when a member may move that another member, that member himself or herself may be heard or that another member be not heard.

When I raised this matter yesterday, I meant no disrespect. Mr Speaker, I well appreciate that, where Government business takes precedence, your ruling was correct.

However, I draw to your attention that it was my understanding that, on at least one previous occasion, the House was still dealing with general business. With respect, Mr Speaker, I request that you consider the application of those particular Standing Orders.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I inform the member for Surfers Paradise that I did not accept that motion because the debate had been closed. I made a mistake in calling the member for Auburn. I realised that the debate had been closed. At that stage, all I was entitled to do was put the substantive motion.

ADOPTION OF CHILDREN ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed (see p. 1660).

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (12. 53 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join this debate on the Adoption of Children Act Amendment Bill. I wish to discuss the clauses pertaining to overseas adoption.

Over the years, I have personally observed overseas adoption and the extent of public furore over several mishaps in that regard. One of the most spectacular cases involving overseas adoption was the baby Kajal case in 1987. In that case, a couple from Victoria, Mr and Mrs Wagner, were approved to receive placement of an Indian child. They had been assessed by and involved in the Victorian adoption agency's information program. A year after being approved for placement, Mr and Mrs Wagner were advised that baby Kajal would be placed with them.

Victoria's Adoption Act 1984 prohibits the making of an adoption order until 12 months after the placement. In November 1988, the Indian courts made an order giving custody of baby Kajal to them. She was placed in their care at the end of January 1989. The statutory guardian was the Community Services of Victoria. This is a normal practice.

In February 1989, a social worker with the Community Services of Victoria discovered that Mrs Wagner had become pregnant in October 1988. The rest of the story is now well-known history. Baby Kajal was taken from the Wagners and placed with another couple. The blaze of publicity following this decision resulted in the establishment of a Commonwealth/State committee to inquire into the case. The result was that on 28 April 1989, the Minister announced that baby Kajal would be returned to the Wagners.

Only recently here in Queensland we have read of the case regarding the adoption of a Chilean baby by a Miss Juliet Phillips. Today, I do not intend to pursue the rights or wrongs of either of these cases or others. But I would point out that in all cases in which adoption procedures go wrong it is the child who suffers most.

Although the cases mentioned do not fall into the area of adoption procedures that are suspect, it is evident that children in Third World countries were being sold to satisfy the parental desires of white Australians. In some parts of the world it can be very easy to buy a child. Health professionals have been known to collude to present a woman with a dead baby. They then would sell her live baby.

Over the years, my belief has strengthened that if these children were assisted by aid programs to allow them to grow up in their own cultures and, with that assistance, create a society, there would never again be a market in human misery. The major problems, of course, with private overseas adoption is the criteria applied to adoptive parents.

In South Australia I have a nephew who was adopted in Sri Lanka in 1976. When I rang my brother about the adoption procedures, I was interested to learn that he arranged this adoption under a private adoption program called ASIAC. I asked him what sort of screening process was undertaken before the adoption of this child in Sri

Lanka. In those days—1976—all that was required of the adoptive parents was simply an attendance at a couple of group meetings, and a cursory police check was carried out on them. The prospective parent then flew to Sri Lanka and picked up a child. That is a pretty simple way of doing things, but it could be disastrous for the child.

I am not condemning the ASIAC group who at that time probably thought they were doing all they could for the undernourished, impoverished and often abandoned children. They provided in Sri Lanka a hospital funded by Australians and overseas donors. They cared for these children and I am sure often saved their lives.

The assumption that there is an infinite number of overseas children, victims of poverty, war or some other upheaval, needing families and available for adoption is a mistaken one. There is a scarcity of children for adoption in all developed countries. As a result, this creates fierce competition for available children from developing countries. These developing countries are extremely secretive about the need to release their children for placement overseas and they react strongly to evidence or allegations of malpractice. Conditions of poverty and deprivation within the countries, allied to the greed of operators and the desperation of some overseas adoptees, provide a rich breeding ground for corruption.

A major New South Wales program, also from Sri Lanka, closed in 1987 following public disclosure of a baby-farming racket involving placements with couples from West Germany. Despite the fact that complete satisfaction has been expressed by the Sri Lankan authorities with Australian procedures and with how well their children have fared in Australia, the ban remains.

The problem of overseas adoption is indeed a complex one. Only this year I read comments by the New South Wales Welfare Minister, Ms Chadwick, that she knew of at least 800 children in one Romanian orphanage who had been the victims of oppression of the regime of the former dictator Nicholae Ceausescu. Thousands of unwanted children are believed to have been born during the 22 years that contraception was banned by that regime's edict.

Ms Chadwick is investigating the possibility of adopting children from that country. I am glad that the member for Callide is in the House at present. When I read of that investigation, I thought perhaps Ms Chadwick should be introduced to the member for Callide, Di McCauley. She could go to that country and tell those people what she told this House on Tuesday. She said that young people are old enough to copulate but cannot accept the responsibilities. We should hire her out to these dictator regimes. Perhaps we could also send the member for Fassifern. I am sure that this would assist in our balance of payments.

What is often forgotten is that intercountry adoptions are, and must be seen as being, in adoption programs. It is not a humanitarian program or a service for infertile couples as such. Both of these aspects may be desirable consequences of the program, but they are not characteristics of it. The interests of the child are paramount, and high standards and practices must apply. International adoption associations share our view that the idea of irresponsible adoption to suit personal needs can lead to an illicit trade in babies, which is morally repugnant.

A recent report commissioned by the Western Australian Government has recommended that all mixed-race adoptions in that State be banned. This committee noted that many Government and international aid agencies believed that, even for displaced orphan children in the refugee camps of Asia and Africa, "transracial and transcultural is not considered to be in the best interests of the child".

Although some concerns on this matter have been expressed in Western Australia, the department in this State deals very sensitively with getting each family wishing to adopt to examine the reasons why they wish to do so.

Returning to the Western Australian report—a further recommendation of that committee states that arrangements will only be made for children living in overseas

countries to be adopted in Australia in cases in which the prospective adoptive parents share the same broad ethnic and cultural background.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr HOLLIS: If that recommendation was accepted by the Western Australian Government, it would be the only State in Australia to outlaw inter-country adoption.

Over the past six years, the number of overseas adoptions in Queensland has not caused this area to be one of great pressure. In 1984-85, 20 overseas adoptions occurred; in 1985-86, 13; in 1986-87, 16; and in 1987-88, 19. At this stage, the department is unaware of any failed foreign-country adoptions in this State. I support the legislation before the House because, even though there are not many overseas adoptions, it provides for the safety and well-being of the children being adopted.

I refer to private overseas adoptions in Queensland. It is proposed to reintroduce a provision repealed in 1982 which requires, as one of the conditions of recognition of a foreign adoption, that the adoptive parents be resident or domiciled in the country of adoption for a continuous period of 12 months before applying to adopt in that country. All other Australian States and Territories are introducing similar provisions as a means of discouraging people from making illegal arrangements for the adoption of foreign children.

When Queensland's Department of Family Services arranges an adoption, it does so carefully and takes great care in monitoring the family. When a child from an overseas country enters Australia for the purpose of adoption, the entry is under the Immigration (Guardianship of Children) Act with the Minister for Immigration as the child's guardian until an adoption order is made, which in Queensland usually is within a period of 12 months.

The matters that I have addressed in this debate are an integral part of what is the most compassionate, caring and progressive legislation brought forward in the area of adoption for many years. I congratulate the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, Anne Warner, and the dedicated people in her department on their efforts.

I support the Bill before the House.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (2.33 p.m.): The Opposition welcomes this legislation, which I am sure the Minister will acknowledge is effectively the legislation proposed by the previous Government. It is based on the right of adult people to know about their background. That is a very basic right, and it is one that this legislation recognises with appropriate safeguards surrounding the deep sensitivities involved in the adoption process.

Three previous National Party Ministers for Family Services—Peter McKechnie, Craig Sherrin and Beryce Nelson—were all deeply involved in the development of the concept, with great help and guidance from within their department and from many interested groups and individuals outside.

That the whole question of adoption is charged with emotion is obviously a truism. Not so long ago, it was also associated with a stigma. During my own childhood, I remember my grandparents discussing the child next door, who was adopted, and I was not quite sure what that meant. However, I remember that it was something that my grandparents did not consider a good thing. It was different. There was a stigma.

As recently as the early seventies, the number of adoptions in Queensland was more than 2 000 a year, and at that time there was a deep concern for the privacy for all parties. This attitude reflected the social mores of the time, and was reflected in the way Government agencies disseminated information to the various parties to adoptions. That exchange of information was extremely limited and, in fact, there were secrecy provisions.

At that time, the community held the view that to give up a child for adoption was somehow a shameful act and, further, that adoptive parents should have the right to keep the issue secret, if they so chose, from their adopted children. Since then, major

changes have occurred in community opinion generally on the entire topic. Now, it is widely accepted that, for a number of reasons, secrecy is not wise. The basic human right to know is the most powerful of all. Also, the fact is that most adoptive children find out, anyway. Any professional working in the field knows that, and the practice of professionals to encourage people to maintain secrecy with their adoptive children has long gone.

Now, the widely held view is that openness is most appropriate, and that reflects the openness of most relationships these days. Also, the view now is that Government agencies ought not stand in the way of people who have made discoveries about their past. To date, those people have been largely frustrated, rather than assisted, which has compounded the impact of the emotional questions to which they seek answers. For many people, those questions have remained with them, unanswered, all their lives.

For a period, a half-way house operated in Queensland with an adoption contact register which met some, but by no means all, of the requirements of the parties to adoptions. That information was shared only when the adoptive parents, the natural parents and the adoptive child had all registered their interest. That adoption contact register was surprisingly successful in leading to reunions, but fell short of what was desired by most people.

The point has now been reached in this very emotion-laden area where the right of people to know each other, or at least to know of each other, and to share basic information is very widely recognised indeed. This legislation meets that need in a sensitive way. It has benefited from schemes operating in other States and around the world.

Provision is made for a suitable phase-in period where the flow of information will be limited, and there will be the opportunity for veto so that those people who adopted at a time when they were promised secrecy can either object to the information being made available or can come to terms with the spirit of this legislation. However, the time will come when all future adoptions will be carried out under the auspices of this legislation and there will no longer be the heartbreak that has afflicted so many people for so long.

Mothers who have gone through the trauma of giving up a child for adoption and who have then worked hard and long simply to find out what happened to that child will have a much simplified task. I know in my own heart that, had this happened to me, I would be moving heaven and earth to find my child.

So will adopted children, in adulthood, have a much simplified task in tracing their birth parents. The legislation does not mean that their tasks will not involve a lot of detective work still, and it will not guarantee success, but it will give them a chance, and it will give them the right to such basic information as the identity of their birth parent or, on the other side of the equation, the identity of their child.

For many people, just to know is enough. By precedent elsewhere, not all, not even most, will actually seek a reunion. But they will know, and that will be a great chasm filled. I was very interested to read that one of the world's most famous adoptees, Kiri Te Kanawa, was not in the slightest interested in finding out who her parents were. She was not concerned by that lack of information and was not interested in finding out.

I think that this legislation is as good as it can be, but there is one particular group of people out there who will deserve great consideration as this legislation becomes law. They are those adoptive parents whose children are now mostly adult but have never told their adoptive children that they are in fact adopted and still find that task too daunting. As I have said before, the reality is that most adopted children—the greater proportion—do indeed discover some time during their childhood or teenage years that they are adopted. Professionals in the field tell me that it is not then uncommon for those children in turn to keep that knowledge secret from their adoptive parents, out of respect for their feelings. That is a very loving decision to make and I think it underlines

that all parties are better off with openness. Still, there are emotional issues to be dealt with and they deserve our respect and understanding.

It could be said that this legislation is a major piece of civil rights legislation, and many people deserve to be recognised for their role in it. It is landmark legislation for Queensland that is the result of a very exhaustive consultative process. I have mentioned the previous National Party Ministers who played a role, and the current Minister also deserves congratulations on bringing it to the House early in the term of her Government. Others are, frankly, too numerous to mention, but the organisation Jigsaw should be mentioned; so should Mary Twomey, whose depth of experience in the field and the depth of her concern about the emotional milieu of adoption have been of great assistance to successive Ministers.

This legislation will help in the establishment of roots by people who have a great and basic reason to know their roots. While I acknowledge the concerns of the Liberal Party and understand those concerns—and they raised some very good points—on the whole, I support the legislation wholeheartedly and will follow its progressive impact with great interest.

Mrs WOODGATE (Pine Rivers) (2.41 p.m.): I am pleased to be able to speak to this Bill to amend the Adoption of Children Act. As the mother of a daughter who has, during the past year, become an adoptive parent, I find that this is one area that is very close to my heart.

This is a good Bill. I believe that we have come full circle since 1879, the year in which the matter of adoption was first given legislative status in this State. At last we will have an Act which, hopefully, will satisfy all persons involved in the matter of adoption—the adoptees, the adoptive parents and the birth parents.

The background to adoptions in Queensland is colourful and interesting. Let me take honourable members on a journey down the years since the first Act in 1879. In that year, the Orphanages Act, administered by the Department of Public Instruction, allowed for a form of adoption but it was not the legal adoption of today. Although the child usually took his adoptive parents' name, the department maintained an active interest in the child's welfare, and the child was visited regularly until 16 years of age and, later, 18 years of age. The adoptive parents' obligations, such as school attendance, religious training and personal behaviour, were set out in detail.

Once the child attained the age of 12 years, the adoptive parents had to pay the child wages comparable to those paid to a hired-out child. The child's name was not legally changed or registered and this often led to complications later if the child was unaware of his adoption. Rights of inheritance within the family did not apply to the adopted child. In order to prevent exploitation for cheap labour, the maximum age for adoption was lowered to five years in 1885.

Then, in 1905, the Infant Life Protection Act came into play. This Act was administered by the Police Department until 1918, after which it was administered by the State Children's Department, and provided the first adoption in Queensland to be subject to any form of statutory regulation. It also provided for the adoption of illegitimate children.

Prior to 1921, many adoptions were private arrangements. Private agreements were signed by the parties concerned, with solicitors making contracts or articles of adoption. Adoptions were notified to the Commission of Police—after 1918, to the Director, State Children's Department—who then issued a deed of adoption. Advertisements were sometimes placed in newspapers seeking adoptive parents.

In 1921, the Infant Life Protection Act was amended and made provision for the legal adoption of children under the age of 10 years. The birth parents were required to sign a consent form renouncing any claim upon the child. The prospective adoptive parents had to apply to the State Children's Department and be deemed fit and proper persons to have the care and custody of a child. The deed of adoption was issued by the director and subsequently lodged with the Registrar-General. A birth certificate sought

after this time was issued in the child's new name, a provision that had not previously existed. Legal rights of succession were not conferred by the adoption.

A most comprehensive Adoption of Children Act was enacted in 1935 after an exhaustive study of similar Acts in practically all English-speaking countries. Adoption was made an administrative procedure with the Director, State Children's Department, making the adoption order. This Act established the department as the sole agency through which adoptions could be made. A child could be adopted up to 21 years of age but, if over 12 years of age, the child was required to consent to the adoption. The adopted child was given the same rights as a natural child in terms of name, care, custody and, to some extent, rights of inheritance. The adoptive parents received a copy of the adoption order which included the name of the birth parents who signed the consent.

In the 1960s an effort was made to have uniform adoption laws throughout the whole of Australia. In Queensland this resulted in the Adoption of Children Act 1964. This Act and its regulations provided for total anonymity between the birth parents and the adoptive parents. Under the previous Act and regulations, adoptive parents received a copy of the adoption order and were aware of the name of the birth parents of the child. The objectives advanced to justify the concept of total confidentiality were: firstly, to protect adopted persons from the stigma of illegitimacy; secondly, to protect the anonymity of the birth parents, who could forget about their mistake—if I can put it that way—and get on with life in the hope that one day they would get married and have children within marriage; thirdly, to protect the adoptive parents from public focus on their infertility and from intrusion by the birth parents; and, finally, to allow the adoptive parents to raise that child as though it had been born to them in lawful wedlock.

This Act was amended in 1967 to clarify the rights of an adopted child to participate in the transfer of property in the case of intestacy. In 1974 the maximum age for adoption was reduced to 18 years. In 1978 the word "illegitimate" was eliminated from the Adoption of Children Act by the Status of Children Act.

That brings me to the present time. Through amendments to the Adoption of Children Act, Queensland has the adoption contact register, which was established in 1987. As honourable members know, this enables the reunion of adopted persons and birth parents following matched listings of all eligible parties. The eligible parties are an adopted person over the age of 18 years, the adoptive parents and the birth parents who were required to sign the adoption consent. These amendments, although welcomed by many people in that they provided for the establishment of the adoption contact register, did not in my opinion go far enough.

The primary aim of this register is to enable reunions between birth parents and adult adopted persons, but one drawback is that there is a constraint to receiving identifying information. Generally, these reunions cannot occur unless the adoptive parents register their consent, also. Many adult adopted persons object to having to obtain parental permission to obtain information which most people would regard as their entitlement. Furthermore, the emphasis of the register is arranging reunions, rather than the provision of identifying information. This is most unsatisfactory for two reasons. Firstly, many people wish to know the names of their birth relatives without necessarily pursuing contact with those relatives at that time, and, secondly, for many older adoptees, whose birth parents are probably dead, there is no mechanism to permit the disclosure of the names of those birth parents.

It is now 25 years since the introduction of the current Adoption of Children Act which introduced the principle of anonymity between birth parents and adoptive parents for the reasons I have mentioned previously. Today, changes in community attitudes and experience with the concept of secrecy support moves towards a more open form of adoption. These developments can be briefly looked at in respect of the various parties to the adoption process.

I wish to talk about the three categories of persons who could be affected by this Bill, namely adopted persons, birth parents and adoptive parents. Firstly, I address the

adopted person. Most adopted people—including those who love and want to maintain their relationship with their adoptive families—become anxious for information about their birth and adoption. This search for origins is frequently sparked by a life-crisis, such as the death of a parent, marriage, the birth of a child, divorce, etc. Their quest is not a vindictive venture, but a natural and healthy need relating to their identity. This need often becomes obvious during adolescence, with the teenage struggle to establish an individual identity. I am sure that most members present in this Chamber could relate at least one instance of having been approached by a constituent in their electorates who is seeking assistance in obtaining information about the birth mother of an adopted teenage child who is going through a particularly distressing stage and who frequently makes reference to the fact that he or she is an adopted person and would like to find out more about his or her birth parents.

Adopted people lack intangible things which most people take for granted, for example, a physical, mental, temperamental or aptitudinal likeness to parents, a place within the heritage and history of a family and a sense of belonging to a family in time. Research has shown that this can result in insecurity, poor self-image, depression and failure to establish lasting and meaningful relationships. Adopted people argue that they have a right to their birth information, as is the case with other adults. They argue also that they were not party to the decision that adoption information would remain secret, and do not feel bound by it, particularly when it involves an issue of profound importance to them. Also, the welfare and interests of the adopted person are considered to be paramount in the adoption.

Secondly, I turn to the birth parents. Giving birth to a child outside marriage no longer brings the same degree of social shame as it did in years gone by. Increasing tolerance within society has brought financial and related support for sole parents. The Status of Children Act, which, as I mentioned previously, was enacted in 1978, has abolished the notion of illegitimacy, equating the relationship between an ex-nuptial child and its parents to that of a nuptial child/parent relationship.

As female members in this House who have mothered children would agree, the reality of growing a child within one's body and giving birth to that child creates an emotional relationship which cannot be easily forgotten by the birth mother. The national survey to which the member for Mount Gravatt referred has indicated that relinquishing mothers reported a sense of loss which either remained constant or increased for up to 30 years, with this being worse on birthdays, Mother's Day, Christmas Day, etc. Research has also revealed the long-term and negative effects of adoption on relinquishing parents. Relinquishing mothers, when compared with a carefully matched group of women, had significantly more problems in psychological adjustment.

Last, but certainly not least, I will consider the adoptive parents. The concerns of some adoptive parents to allow their adopted children and birth parents access to identifying information appear to be based on the fear that the birth parents will re-enter the adopted person's life and seduce him or her away from the adoptive family. Also, some adoptive parents may interpret the adopted person's search for knowledge of his or her origins as evidence of failure in their parenting and even as rejection by the adopted person.

These fears are not supported by research and experience. Even when birth origins become known, adopted persons still regard their adopted parents as their true mother and father, and the adoptive parent/child relationship appears not to be supplanted or adversely affected. A loving, caring, two-way relationship between parents and children cannot be swept away overnight. The emphasis in this Bill is on adult adoptive persons, and one would think that adults cannot turn off and on, at will, their love and affection for their adoptive parents which has grown and blossomed over the years. There is now overwhelming evidence from research and practice in many countries that adopted people have a need to know their origins. As I said earlier, the wheel has now turned full circle since the first Orphanages Act of 1879.

Honourable members have before them today legislation that should satisfy all parties. The initial six-month period for lodging objections against contact gives the safeguard of confidentiality to those not wishing to be contacted. After that period, the adoptive parents and birth parents who enter into the adoption process in this State will be fully aware of the avenues available from which to obtain identifying information when the adoptee attains adulthood.

Adoption can be a wonderful thing. I can speak with first-hand experience as a member of a family who welcomed an adopted child into her family last December. The happiness of all concerned was a joy to behold. For my daughter, Mary Jane, and her husband, Mark, there was great happiness in knowing that their years of waiting to welcome a child into their family had finally come to an end. They also have the knowledge that they have given a child from Brazil a chance to have a better life-style than he possibly could have expected to have had in the slums of that Third World country. The birth mother can be comforted by the knowledge that her son has been given the promise of a future that she could not possibly provide in that country. As for my husband and I—the adoptive grandparents—we are happy for our daughter and her husband and are full of admiration for the birth mother.

There will be no secrecy in our family circle about baby Joseph's origins. When he is older, he will be told of the unselfish act of his birth mother in her part of the adoption process. As for Joseph, the adoptee, he will be given hope, promise and love unlimited, but no secrecy. I commend the member for Callide for her remarks on secrecy and appreciate the stand she has taken.

Secrecy promotes unhealthy fantasies and induces guilt. Secrecy also promotes exploitation, distortions and deceptions. Secrecy has caused complications in the daily lives, not only of adopted persons but also of adoptive parents and birth parents. I am more than happy to support this Bill.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (2.56 p.m.): In rising to support this legislation, I note that the Minister and I are the only two people who are on the list of speakers who debated the previous legislation, which came before the Parliament in 1986. I can remember that the debate at that time was based on personal opinion and conscience rather than on party lines, and I am pleased to note that the same type of debate is taking place today. Some excellent contributions have been made.

I cast my mind back to the days when I was a member of the ministerial committee that was responsible for preparation of that legislation. I am reminded that at that time the Government was pressing for change to the fullest extent possible. If one were to look back over the legislation that has been referred to by the member for Pine Rivers, one would discover that the history of this legislation reflects changes in the opinion of society. Legislation has been brought forward to match those changes.

Legislators will always be confronted with the problem of whether legislation should effect change before it becomes well established as public opinion, or whether legislation should reflect changes that are already present in society. In my opinion, a balance has been struck in the debates in which I have been involved. The stage has been reached at which the Government is now moving towards further progress that will reflect community opinion.

Earlier legislation involved lengthy discussion, well before the legislation was drafted, with the three parties involved in the adoption process, that is, relinquishing parents, adoptive parents and adoptees. Even in the party room, often stiff opposition was raised by people who had been members of Parliament for a much longer period than I had been at that particular time. They mentioned the fact that, in the past, legislation had enshrined confidentiality and that assurances of confidentiality had been given. We struggled for a long time to ensure that any new legislation would not breach promises of confidentiality, and I am sure that that issue has exercised the minds of the people who have been responsible for preparing this legislation.

It seems to me that a change in emphasis has occurred. As I recall the arguments and the manner in which thoughts were formulated while preparing the previous legislation, I am conscious that there now seems to be an overemphasis on the rights and confidentiality of the birth parents and of the adoptive parents. The member for Callide has pointed out that society has now adopted the mode of civil rights and that the rights of the individual—that is, all three parties—are now being emphasised. Perhaps that reflects the more enlightened attitude that presently exists in the community as a whole.

This legislation will go a long way towards soothing the frustration felt by the people involved in the adoption process. The Bill was prepared after a great deal of careful thought had been given to the issues. Honourable members must always bear in mind that this is a very sensitive issue. I would like to think that the comment made by the member for Pine Rivers—that this Bill will satisfy everyone—is absolutely correct. I am a bit suspicious that there will always be a certain element in the community who are not always satisfied. Perhaps the legislation may offend someone's sense of conservatism or perhaps some people may be offended because the legislation does not go far enough.

Mr Hayward: They are called constituents, aren't they?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I apologise. I was concentrating on the main topic and I was not thinking very much about the words. If I needed correction, I accept it.

I believe that this is one of those rare debates engaged in in this House. Members have joined in the debate with goodwill and have exercised their minds in considering the issues. We genuinely hope that the measures that will be put in place will bring about the type of happiness that the member for Pine Rivers has described from first-hand experience. I take great delight in supporting this Bill in the same way as I supported the Bill that was presented in 1986.

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (3 p.m.): I am honoured to speak in support of the Bill, which shows that the Government is committed to the concept of social justice and to bringing Queensland into line with other States. In future, I would like to see Queensland ahead of the other States.

The Government has demonstrated a commitment to liaise with the community and to consult with the people involved—not force half-thought, half-baked ideas onto them.

This new legislation is a turnabout of ideas and principles which have surfaced over the past 25 years since the last major change in the legislation—25 years ago! The major concern that the Bill addresses is the need of the adopted child to trace his birth details; the anxiety for information to enable him to establish an individual identity and to find a place in this world for himself and, in the future, for his children. Adopted people can suffer from insecurity, poor self-image, depression and a failure to establish long-term relationships. But that would occur only in a minority of cases. The primary concern in any adoption system should be the welfare and interest of the individual involved.

This Bill does not make counselling mandatory for all people seeking information. The reason for that is that not all people who seek information require counselling. At some time during their lives, all people in the community will experience a range of personal changes or crises. Those crises can include the death of a family member, serious illness or a traumatic experience such as the recent western Queensland floods. Crises can also come in the form of marriage, moving from home or buying a car. Do people undergoing those crises need counselling? People involved in adoption are no different from other people in the community in their capacity to deal with and resolve personal issues, whether over time or with assistance.

Experience in other States and other countries has shown that mandatory counselling is inappropriate and demeaning for adults seeking merely to satisfy a quite natural and

healthy desire for information about themselves. Previously, it has been stated that adopted people are merely trying to satisfy a need to trace their past.

If the person in question does not wish to be counselled, compulsory counselling serves no purpose. From that point of view, mandatory counselling for all people represents a wasteful consumption of resources. Experience has shown that people will use counselling services without being compelled to do so.

The department will train and approve a number of counsellors throughout the State, many of whom will be adult adopted persons, birth parents or adoptive parents. If people require assistance, those counsellors will be available. Counselling may merely involve presenting an opportunity for people to talk things through.

I support the Bill before the House.

Ms POWER (Mansfield) (3.04 p.m.): I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak in this debate to amend the Adoption of Children Act in certain particulars. The amendments constitute the most extensive changes to adoption legislation since 1935. They are welcomed throughout the community and are seen as being progressive and as creating a more relaxed environment for adoption procedures.

Over the years—especially since 1964, when amendments attempted to standardise adoption laws throughout Australia—the Act has created a total void between birth parents and adoptive parents. The objectives of that total confidentiality were basically to protect the interests of the parent groups rather than those of the child. It did, in part, protect the interests of children by providing them with security during childhood.

It is important that we examine the societal context in which this legislation will operate. I wish to examine the changes that are taking place in society, how they affect adoption and, therefore, why this legislation is so necessary.

During the past 20 years, the major change in adoption procedures has been the dramatic decline in the number of healthy babies available for adoption. In 1971-72, there were 1 359 babies adopted; however, in 1988-89, there were only 96 babies adopted. That decrease can be attributed to a range of changes in society.

The stigma attached to giving birth to a child outside marriage has now faded. As well, children born out of wedlock are no longer shamed with illegitimacy. The introduction of social security benefits in 1974 for supporting parents also affected the circumstances of relinquishing parents. Financial considerations were—and often

remain—the major factor in the decision to relinquish a child.

As Queensland's society has become more tolerant, unmarried mothers have elected to keep their babies, thus decreasing the number of children available for adoption. Advances in science and technology have allowed women the ability to control their fertility. The issue of whether birth control is morally right is not part of the debate, but recognition of its existence is. The increased availability of contraceptives and abortion has decreased the number of unwanted pregnancies and, hence, the number of babies given up for adoption.

Reproductive technology has also been placed on the agenda and impacts on the adoption legislation. Many infertile couples now seek IVF programs and other such programs before choosing adoption.

Queensland is not the only State in which those changes have occurred. Similar changes have been apparent throughout all Western countries. What is important is that Governments recognise those changes and how they impact on present legislation. This Government has done that, found the legislation wanting and developed suitable amendments.

Contrary to the Opposition's belief, as stated by the honourable member for Burnett, a relaxation of the legislation may encourage single mothers to continue their pregnancy, rather than elect to have an abortion, and give the child up for adoption at birth. The

relinquishing mother will be more willing if she knows that she will have access to some knowledge about her child at some later stage.

As a consequence of the shortage of healthy babies available for adoption in Queensland, there has been an increasing interest in the adoption of children from Third World countries. For Australians, that largely started at the end of the war in Vietnam. Subsequently, children have also been adopted from countries such as Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, India, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Fiji and, more recently, some South American countries. This development must be addressed in legislation to protect both child and adult and to discourage people from making illegal arrangements for the adoption of foreign children.

This Bill allows the Director-General of the Family Services Department to accept from the Minister for Immigration a transfer of guardianship of foreign children adopted into Australia. It will introduce a provision that one of the conditions of recognition of any intercountry adoption by the adoptive parents be that they are resident or domiciled in the country of adoption for a period of at least 12 months before applying to adopt.

Despite these safeguards, the number of children available for adoption from overseas is diminishing. Since late in 1988, many of these countries have indicated an increasing embarrassment at what they regard as the export of their children overseas, and efforts are being directed towards finding acceptable domestic alternatives for these children. As a result of this concern, many countries from which children have been adopted have either temporarily closed their programs to new applicants or indicated that their programs are winding down. Although Queensland will still process applications for foreign country adoption as long as necessary, the availability of those children is lessening.

An area of adoption that is developing is special needs adoption. I refer to the adoption of older children or children who have physical or intellectual disabilities. It is often difficult to find adoptive parents for such children, and many of them grow up in foster care or in institutions. As the number of healthy babies available for adoption has decreased, people wishing to adopt have had to consider other options. The efforts of the department specialists during the last 10 years to place many of these children in loving families is to be applauded. The easing of legislative constraints to allow knowledge access will facilitate the process further.

Although the nature of adoption services is changing dramatically, there will continue to be a demand in the community for these services, as there will always be some children who require a permanent, loving family by adoption. One possible trend for the future is that, after the provisions to allow identifying information have been proclaimed, there could be a slight increase in the number of babies made available for adoption. Birth parents may then consider adoption as a viable option, among the others which they may choose, knowing that they need not go through life without any knowledge of their child.

I support the Bill.

Mr BRISKEY (Redlands) (3.11 p.m.): I am extremely pleased to join this debate, as it is concerned with the welfare and interests of the child. It is a Bill that, among other things, amends the Act to allow all people the right to know their identity. It will also allow birth parents to identify their adopted children.

I would like to commend you, Mr Speaker, for your role in championing adoption law reforms whilst you were Opposition spokesperson for Welfare Services. I note that you raised in this House as early as May 1981, the issue of the need for a contact register. On 24 May 1983, in a comprehensive speech on adoption, you urged the then Minister for Welfare Services, Mr Terry White, to set up a select committee of this House to examine adoption issues such as access provisions in a bipartisan and objective way—unfortunately, to no avail. The inability of the then Bjelke-Petersen Government to understand that select committees can and ought to play meaningful roles in addressing social issues that are not of a party political nature can be labelled as reprehensible. In fact, in 1981, the Victorian Parliament set up such a select committee which contributed

largely to that State being the first State to provide full access provisions to adoption information.

On a number of occasions in 1984, the then Queensland Minister for Welfare Services, Mr Terry White, publicly promised a contact register. Mr White took a submission to Cabinet. When he did that, there is no doubt that he would have been armed with the information that contact registers overseas and in two Australian States—New South Wales and South Australia—were proving tremendous successes and were creating no difficulties whatsoever. Typically, Mr White's submission for a contact register was rejected by the Bjelke-Petersen Cabinet.

On 6 November 1985, when commenting on this pathetic dithering, you, Mr Speaker, stated in this House —

> "Mr White was left with the unenviable task of explaining his inability to deliver even a 'safe' reform such as a contact register. To his total discredit, Mr White then publicly supported the Cabinet rejection of a contact register on the basis that it had many dangers in it. Poppycock!"

This about-face was all the more disgraceful in that the Liberal Party had, at a previous State convention, passed a motion supporting the setting-up of a contact register.

During 1985, you, Mr Speaker, were involved in the setting-up of ACIS—the Adoption Contact Information Service—which is an umbrella organisation representing adoptees, natural parents and adoptive parents—the three arms of the adoption triangle. ACIS threatened to set up its own contact register if the Government did not guarantee to introduce legislation. Such a register would have been illegal. For such normally law-abiding citizens to be forced into a position of breaking the law is undoubtedly a symptom of their extreme frustration at the Government's dithering on such a simple issue. ACIS, however, strongly lobbied each member of the National Party Government, and this resulted in that party's belated response to set up the contact register in 1987.

The ability to obtain identifying information is a right. Mr Speaker, I am pleased that, on 24 February 1983 in this House, during the second-reading debate on the Adoption of Children Act Amendment Bill, you referred to that issue and said—

> " . . . some initiative should be taken in the legislation to do something about the welfare of children. One of those initiatives ought to be the availability of identifying information."

Mr Speaker, I commend you for your foresight and your obvious concern for the welfare and rights of children, adoptive parents and birth parents. Unfortunately, the coalition Government at that time did not heed your suggestion. It took a change of Government to a caring, Labor Government in Queensland for that most obvious change to take place.

Mr Speaker, I should say that I am shocked and astounded that that coalition Government did not take your advice and introduce the necessary legislative changes. However, because of the many backward-thinking actions of the coalition and National Party Governments during the eighties, I cannot say that I am shocked and astounded. Their inaction in that respect is another example of why, in the eyes of the rest of Australia, Queensland was seen to be living in the past. The standard joke was that, as soon as one crossed the border into Queensland, one had to turn back his clocks by 10 years. I am pleased that, with a Goss-led Labor Government, that is no longer the case.

As the Honourable Minister stated in her second-reading speech, changes in the adoption law in 1964 were an attempt to standardise adoption laws across Australia. Those adoption laws were based on what Dickey referred to in his book *Family Law 1985* as the "clean break" principle, namely, that adoption should normally involve a complete break between a child and its former parents.

Much has changed since 1964. The past 26 years were a period of rapid change, and the family has not been immune to the effects of that rapid change. No longer does any stigma attach to illegitimacy. Children are now cared for and raised by single mothers

and fathers. With change comes the need for legislative changes. Some of those very important changes are encompassed in this Bill.

I cite the case of a woman who, at a young age, gave birth to a child out of wedlock. That occurred during the 1940s. As was often the case in those days, her parents advised her to give up that child for adoption. Later, the woman met and married an American and went to live in the United States. Unfortunately, that couple were unable to have a child of their own.

On three occasions, that woman has returned to Australia to look for her child. She has contacted Government Ministers and many other people in an endeavour to locate her child so that she may leave her estate to that child. Because of the secrecy provisions of the present law, which precluded her from knowing the identity of her child, that woman has been extremely frustrated. This legislation will allow her to know the identity of that child. This Bill places the rights of the child where they should rightly be, namely, as the No.1 priority.

Mr Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to quote once again from your speech in this House on 24 February 1983. You said also—

> "Adoption legislation should incorporate the concept that adoption is a service primarily for adoptees and that their rights and interests have to be given paramount consideration . . . "

Adoption is about finding families for children, not children for families. As I stated earlier, this Bill will allow an adopted person to gain access to information that will enable that person to gain a sense of identity. The ability to access information regarding the identity of an adopted person's natural parents has rightly been the major concern of adoption law reform. That sense of identity is extremely important, especially for an adolescent who is in search of his or her own identity.

I cite Australia as an example of that. One looks to the past for a sense of some Australian identity. One considers the ANZAC tradition, the First Fleet, the free settlers and the events at Eureka. In other words, one looks to the significant events in Australia's white history. People need that information to build a self-image. So, too, do adopted persons need information about their parents to build a complete picture of themselves. It is their right to have access to that information.

This Bill is about social reform. As such, it is an extremely important piece of legislation. It reflects the enormous changes that have occurred in relation to adoption and public attitudes to it. This legislation is a sensitive, humanitarian response to community groups such as Jigsaw that have fought long and hard for the right to access that information. Because this Bill provides that right to adopted persons, I have much pleasure in supporting it. I know that interested community groups will welcome the reforms contained within it.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (3.22 p.m.): This Bill seeks to balance the rights and needs of all parties who constitute the adoption triangle. Four common myths relate to the process of adoption. They are—

(1) that the mother did not really care about her child when she offered it up for adoption;

(2) that with the passage of time, the natural parents are able to forget their unwanted offspring;

(3) that it is essential that the whole process be shrouded in secrecy in order to protect all parties; and

(4) that if the adoptee sought out his or her natural parents, that was an admission of a lack of love for the adoptive family.

There is no doubt in my mind that the perpetuation of those myths has resulted in a great deal of distress for the adoptee and the natural and adoptive parents.

This Bill is clear in its adherence to a firm principle that all adult persons have the fundamental right to have access to knowledge about their own identity, in the case of an adoptee, or of the identity of their child, in the case of natural parents. Thankfully, in recent years, community attitudes have shifted significantly to the extent that society no longer demands that illegitimate children be given away to protect the family from stigma, disgrace and ostracism. This primitive attitude was further exacerbated because of the lack of single parents' benefits, which in this day and age ease some of the burden associated with bringing up a child on one's own.

Another pleasing trend has been the increased willingness on the part of the adoptive families to discuss more openly with their adopted child the fact that the child is indeed adopted. Research has shown that the fears of adoptive parents that the relationship they have developed with their adopted child may in some way be usurped by the appearance on the scene of the natural parents are largely groundless.

The amendments contained in this Bill will bring Queensland into line with other Australian States in so much as they reflect a nationwide realisation that the demystification of the adoption process is necessary in a modern society. In 1964, standardisation was also in the minds of legislators as changes were introduced to alter the Act. The Act was first established in 1935, when the State took control of adoptions by vesting in the State Children's Department the sole responsibility for overseeing the adoption process.

The 1964 Act introduced further measures, the net result of which placed the natural parents and the adoptive parents at the focus of concern. It would be fair to say that the Act quite clearly protected adoptive parents and in doing so took away the rights of the most vulnerable members in the equation—the adopted child and the natural mother who had relinquished her child.

It was assumed, no doubt, that the interests of the relinquishing mother would best be served by executing a structure which afforded her anonymity. In this way, perhaps, she would at some later stage be able to marry and raise a family within that marriage. Honourable though these intentions may have been, they failed to take into account the mental anguish that accompanied the yearning to find out what had become of the child given up for adoption. This yearning for the truth was obviously just as strong in the case of the child itself.

With the passage of this Bill, the agony of the unknown will be over for thousands of adopted children and their biological parents. The provisions of the Bill will allow an adopted child, upon attaining the age of 18, to have access to certain information about his or her background. By having been granted an unqualified right to original birth certificates, adopted children will be able to establish their origin and identity at birth and the identity of their natural parents.

Similarly, the biological parents also, upon application to the Department of Family Services, will be able to elicit certain information. Provided the adopted person has attained the age of 18, the biological parent can ascertain the names of the adoptive parents, as well as receive a copy of the amended birth entry and the original birth certificate.

Although the Bill ensures that certain factual details are made freely available to the concerned parties, it does afford a measure of protection against unwanted contact. Contact between the adult adoptee and a natural parent may go a long way towards helping the adoptee overcome feelings of rejection. At the same time, the grief and pain felt by the relinquishing mother may also be addressed. There still remains, though, the difficulties a reunion can bring for the adoptive parents who have been responsible over a number of years for the nurturing and caring of the adopted child.

Members will be aware that in 1987 an Adoption Contact Register was established in order to facilitate reunions between adoptees and their biological parents. In her second-reading speech, the Minister clearly enunciated the problems attached to this procedure and I have no intention of repeating them at this time. Suffice to say, though,

that I find ludicrous the need for an adult to have to obtain the permission of one's parents to have made available to him basic "of right" information.

The Bill sets out to repeal those provisions which relate to the Adoption Contact Register. This is a realisation that in this, the last decade of the twentieth century, an adult citizen who is an adoptee should have the same rights as other adult citizens. There exists under the Bill the opportunity for an adult adoptee or a birth parent to lodge an objection to contact. Such objection may be lodged within the six-month period 1 September 1990 to 1 March 1991, and will continue afterwards. Disclosure of identifying information commences after 1 March 1991. The Bill stipulates clearly that an offence will be committed against the Act should a contact or attempted contact of a birth relative be made after the lodging of such an objection.

I fully support the Bill before the House. It will bring adoption procedures in Queensland into line with those in other States and it reflects this Government's commitment to protecting the rights of this State's citizens.

Hon. A. M. WARNER (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (3.28 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for the contributions that they have made in this debate. I will take up the very few points that have been raised as matters for debate rather than go through all the complimentary statements that have been made and which do not require repeating.

I thank the honourable member for Burnett for his very considered support of this fairly sensitive social issue and the understanding that he has displayed for the emotive force of the legislation. I thank him also for realising that departmental involvement in facilitating contact between the parties is onerous and probably unnecessary and that where such a scheme does exist, such as in Victoria, there is in fact a waiting-time of 11 years, which makes the operation of the Act a little bit difficult.

The member for Mount Gravatt made a very well considered speech which was well researched and contained concise arguments.

I was a little disappointed with the speech made by the member for Currumbin. Although he was supporting the Bill, it seemed to me that he had a very superficial understanding of the matter that was being debated. For a start, he seemed to be under the impression that the Family Services Department runs an adoption service for the sole benefit of infertile couples. That is not the case. My department's concern is for the welfare and well-being of children, and adoption is a mechanism by which we can secure safe and good homes for children. It is not a service for infertility, and in fact in no way addresses itself to the medical problem of infertility.

The member for Currumbin's speech was, in the main, negative and unhelpful to all the parties in the adoption triangle, as it has been referred to. He fell into the trap of believing that the number of women who will be willing to give up children for adoption will decrease as a result of these legislative changes.

Experience in other States indicates that, when the expectation is that information will become available when the adoptee reaches the age of adulthood, there was a very small increase in the number of women who were prepared to relinquish their children for adoption because they understood that it was not a life sentence, that they were placing their child in the care of someone for a period of time, but that at some stage their maternal interests would be fulfilled and that they would be able to find out about the well-being of their child. Consequently, they were a little bit more relaxed about the adoption of the child. It was not so much that they would be throwing the child away, but just placing the child in someone else's care for some time.

The remarks by the member for Currumbin seemed to me to be full of dark and unfounded forebodings of traumatic contact occurring between all parties at all times. His reaction was fairly excessive and did nothing to allay those fears that have been referred to by many of the members who have participated in the debate.

Fear is one of the major problems that will have to be overcome in those people who feel that any change may be detrimental to their current safety and position. All members of this House will be approached in their electorate offices by large numbers of people asking what this legislation means for them personally. Members can approach that in one of two ways. One is by being negative and saying to those people, "Yes, I can understand why you would be fearful." The other way is to be a little more responsible and a little more socially effective by trying to allay those fears and trying to help those people solve their problems, not just exacerbate them, as I believe some of the remarks by the member for Currumbin would.

His concerns about in vitro fertilisation children were confused, but there is no doubt that the experience that adoptees have had of lack of knowledge about their origins may very well be experienced by those children who are born of the IVF process, if indeed the genetic material that the embryos are made of is unidentifiable.

That is a social problem that will have to be faced by the next generation if this generation does not introduce some form of regulation of IVF procedures within a very short time. I believe that that debate should be conducted upon non-partisan lines and that there is a community feeling that both sides of the House has to take notice of. I will certainly be very interested in the submissions of those interest groups who are asking that this Government introduce some form of regulation.

The member for Currumbin's lack of understanding of the social issue involved may very well be indicative of the failure of the Liberal Party to come to grips with the existing social realities and will probably be one of the reasons why it will remain a political rump for the foreseeable future. I, therefore, believe that Queenslanders will not have to worry too much about the member's lack of coherence on this subject. The member for Callide made a number of good points that were obviously very well received by the interest groups that are in the gallery at the moment, who I also commend for their part in the development of this legislation. However, one or two points made by the honourable member need to be addressed. One is that the legislation that is currently proposed is essentially the same as that which was proposed by the National Party Government. It is not.

The National Party had a watered-down version of this legislation. Around about the middle of last year, a consultative process occurred with all the interest groups. What Mr Sherrin was proposing at that time fell short of what they were asking for in terms of having the right to information. The former Minister was suggesting that there could be a veto on information. That was not accepted by the interest groups at the time, and they said so.

When the Labor Party became the Government, I looked again at that issue and took the remarks made at that time into account. Honourable members would be aware that this Bill rests upon the premise that people have the right to information. Previously, secrecy had been imposed by legislation, and this Government is changing the principle from one of legislatively protected secrecy to, as the honourable member for Callide so rightly said, civil rights legislation that allows for a right to information. The only aspect that can be objected to in this Bill is contact, not information. I wanted to clarify that issue.

It is important to place any debate about adoption legislation in an historical context. Since the legislation providing for adoption was first passed in 1905, almost 50 000 adoptions occurred in Queensland. Given that each of those adoptions directly involves birth parents, adoptive parents and an adopted person, and indirectly involves many other family members, the lives of an enormous number of Queenslanders have been affected by adoption.

The primary purpose of the Bill is to enhance access to identifying information by adult adopted persons and birth parents. Those persons will have an unqualified entitlement to such information upon request to the department. The rights of adult adopted persons and birth parents to privacy are provided for in the legislative provisions that deal with objections to contact.

The Bill also provides a qualified entitlement to identifying information by relatives and adoptive parents. Their entitlement is limited to situations where the birth parent or the adult adopted person is dead or permanently unable to make an application for identifying information. This was done to ensure that no identifying information would be disclosed to any person contrary to the expressed wishes of an adult adopted person or birth parent, and in the recognition that it is primarily the provision of information about the parent-child relationship which has been severed by adoption that this legislation seeks to ensure.

The philosophy underlying this legislation is distinctly different from that in previous legislation in two major areas. Firstly, the new legislation establishes the right of adult adoptive persons and birth parents to identifying information. The current legislation requires that, under normal circumstances, the adult adopted person, adoptive parents and birth parent or parents must all register before identifying information may be disclosed.

Thus, currently, access to identifying information is seen essentially as a privilege which may generally be exercised only in the limited circumstances of all parties being alive and agreeing to the disclosure. Therefore, access to identifying information is largely determined by the luck of the draw. If the birth mother has died, for example, there is no mechanism to disclose information.

The new legislation differs substantially in that it creates an entitlement to identifying information which is not dependent on the approval of any person other than the person requesting the information and which extends beyond the death of any party. This is where I found the remarks of the honourable member for Currumbin to be rather strange. He seems to be saying that people should be protected about information on themselves. I had a view of a schizophrenic personality that he was trying to conjure up. This is a major problem. It further recognises that the desire to seek identifying information is as normal and healthy an impulse as is the researching of family trees by other community members.

Secondly, the new legislation reverses the current onus with respect to privacy. Currently, adoption legislation assumes that secrecy should generally be maintained and should be departed from only under explicit and limited conditions. Therefore, as secrecy is the norm, people need take no action to ensure privacy. The new legislation is based on the philosophy that, once an adopted person becomes an adult, openness about information should be the norm.

A minority of persons will wish to prevent contact from occurring. To do so, they will need to take action to ensure this by notifying the department of their objection to contact. People who do not object to contact need take no further action. Where contact is actively sought by both parties, the legislation will enable people to provide details of their current names and addresses which, at their request, may be passed on to the other party by the department.

It is vital that the House understand that this legislation is not the product of public service or political imagination; rather, it has its origins in the expressed wishes and desires of many thousands of Queenslanders whose lives have been directly affected by adoption. These people have made numerous representations over the years to various Ministers and to the department, have lobbied their local members of Parliament and have expressed their views in the media with one clear goal in mind—legislation which gives adults who have been adopted or who have themselves made the painful decision to have a child adopted the right to gain identifying information.

The consultation process to which I referred last year was held with representatives of adoption interest groups and, as I say, we fixed up the watered-down version of the proposal at that stage and have come to an arrangement with the groups. All their requests have been answered in this piece of legislation.

In conclusion—the House must agree that this legislation is long overdue. I digress for a moment and conjecture why it has taken so long. Why has it been that, with so

much community agreement and community acceptance of the basic principles of this legislation, it has been put off and put off by successive Ministers? May I say it is because a number of people have preferred to be narrow-minded and overly cautious rather than make a brave attempt to fix up the problem so that those people who have been affected by the secrecy could have the change that they have so ardently desired. It costs no money and it is not a big drama. I just fail to understand why it has taken so long. I will be very happy if any honourable member could tell me.

For adopted persons, secrecy has often promoted unhealthy fantasies about birth parents or fears that their parents must be very bad people to warrant their origins being cloaked in secrecy. These fears and fantasies can only be addressed through facts, not therapy as is so often promoted.

Further, the desire for information does not diminish with age. The current adoption contact register has a 74-year-old adopted person registered to receive information. Victoria has reported a reunion between a 70-year-old adopted person and his 100-year-old birth mother.

Birth parents were often encouraged to treat the birth of an ex-nuptial child as a secret, with the adoption of that child allowing them to go on with their lives as though nothing had happened. I urge honourable members to take to heart the experience of many birth mothers in years gone by. These women were not allowed to see their babies after birth, let alone hold them and care for them. They were actively advised not to name their babies. Many women were not informed that they had a choice about the adoption of their babies and some were simply presented with a consent form, the contents of which were covered up except for the space for their signature. In those dark days, most received no counselling.

The physical and emotional reality of their motherhood was denied by the people around them. They were encouraged to forget that they had even given birth to a child. Any expressed desire by the child's mother to keep her baby was regarded as selfishness and a denial of the child's opportunity to be part of a "proper" family. We know now, through experience, that birth mothers do not forget and many have continued to grieve for their children for the rest of their lives.

For many years, it was assumed that, in giving up the legal rights of parenthood, a woman also willingly abandoned any wish to have information about the child, including knowledge of the child's well-being. Because we now know that women cannot simply turn off their emotions for the convenience of others, this legislation will provide access to the information they have been denied as of right for so long.

Finally, adoption is a service for children who need families. For the first time, this legislation recognised that adult adopted persons should no longer be second-class citizens but should share the same entitlements to information about their birth origins that other citizens in the community take for granted.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 26, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Ms Warner, by leave, read a third time.

QUEENSLAND GRAIN HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 20 March (see p. 474).

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (3.48 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Queensland Grain Handling Act Amendment Bill this afternoon, I wish to state initially that the Opposition

does not oppose this legislation completely, but believes that it could be considerably improved.

It appears from the Minister's second-reading speech that part of the legislation is based on consultation that has taken place with the grain industry. The Minister claims that he has drafted a Bill which meets the requirements of the grain industry. I know that the Minister has had consultations with the Queensland Grain Handling Authority and possibly with the other institutions which are part of the grain industry. However, I do not think that the Minister has had sufficient consultation with the rank-and-file grain-grower. Under this legislation, grain-producers will have less representation on the board than they did under the old Act. I know that the board will include three elected grower representatives, but these three people are not compelled to attend grain-growers' meetings and are only compelled to attend the board meetings. However, unless we are very unlucky, I am inclined to think that they would be prepared to report to grain-growers' meetings. Nevertheless, there is considerable risk that this will not occur. During the Committee stage I intend to move an amendment that will ensure that one person from the Queensland Graingrowers Association is included on that board. This is not a fiddley little amendment, but is an effort by the Opposition to include a far-reaching amendment in the Bill.

The Queensland Grain Handling Authority has considerable debts. The Minister has offered some support if it can arrange a certain amount of finance itself. The authority will not be in a position to argue with the Minister to any great extent. I am not saying that the Minister will lean on it to get what he wants, but it is possible that the authority has been easier to deal with because it believes it will get some support for its debt structure.

The reason the Minister gives for the removal of representation on the board by the Queensland Graingrowers Association is that it is not directly involved in the marketing of grain. It does not operate as a grain-marketer or grain-buyer; nevertheless, it is the only representation that the grain-seller has in the industry. Over the years, I have often heard it said that farmers are not price-makers; they are price-takers. The taking away of their representation will cause problems.

I am not trying to knock the Minister in his efforts to break down the debt burden to some extent, because it is large—somewhere in the vicinity of $87m or a little more. For every tonne of grain that passes through the Bulk Grains handling operation, approximately $8 per tonne goes towards meeting the interest burden. I will commend the Minister if he can do anything to lighten that burden. I am concerned about the grain industry putting up $25m or $30m towards the redemption of this debt in an effort to reduce the authority's operating costs. That will clean out the industry's reserves, which is not a good idea.

In his second-reading speech the Minister stated—

> "Basically, I have asked the industry to take a strategic approach and decide where it wants to be in five to 10 years' time and what structure needs to be put in place to best achieve that objective."

That is a high-sounding statement, but it is difficult to foresee the future. If one looks at the grain industry back over the years—although not back as far as the real history-making days—one would be surprised at some of the things that have happened in the industry which could not have been foreseen. If one goes back almost 10 years and looks at the pricing structure, one finds that many farmers were getting the same price for their product then as they are today. Taking the inflation rate into consideration, in real terms they are getting only 50 per cent of the old price. That is one of the reasons why they are struggling so hard to meet their commitments. I will not knock everything that the Minister has done, but I am worried about some of the things that are happening.

Perhaps the Minister is beginning to think that a greater emphasis should be placed on competitiveness and that less involvement of organised marketing procedures is the way to go. I am greatly worried about that idea because, if the Minister were to cast his

mind back to some of the large crops that were grown over the last 10 years, he would realise that it would have been quite impossible for a commercial enterprise—or anyone else, for that matter—to have handled the tonnage. Only Bulk Grains Queensland was able to handle the large crops. For that reason, I believe that the Government should retain the Queensland Grain Handling Authority so that, as much as possible, the industry is kept under the control of the producers. I say that because, if the yield exceeds expectations, the expertise of the Queensland Grain Handling Authority will be needed. It may be okay to say that the industry can handle large crops no matter what the circumstances, but the risk is that much of the crop could be lost if it rots and producers could be placed in the position of having the crop purchased for a very low price.

Mr Beattie: We do not disagree with you on any of this, you now.

Mr BOOTH: I am not trying to preach to the converted. I am pleased to note that the honourable member accepts that I know all about this matter. If he sits and quietly listens, he will improve his knowledge.

Mr Beattie: That is why I am listening to you so intently.

Mr BOOTH: I thank the honourable member. I was not expecting a great deal of opposition to what I have said.

The Government must ensure that, if a large crop is grown, it will be in a position to properly handle the tonnage. If my memory serves me correctly, 1978 was the last occasion on which a very large crop was grown. There is no doubt in my mind that if the Queensland Grain Handling Authority had not managed the marketing, a considerable amount of the barley crop and half the wheat crop would have rotted. On that occasion, emergency storage facilities had to be erected, which was not carried out without difficulty. The Queensland Grain Handling Authority had to find people who had the know-how and were available to do it.

Having stated that I do not want producer representation to be reduced, I point out that I do not advocate that the board should comprise 13 members. Perhaps the Minister thought that, by reducing the size of the board, he could cut costs and improve the operations of the industry; but I believe that one more representative on the board—which would bring representation up to 11 members—is necessary.

Mr Beattie: Only one more?

Mr BOOTH: I am advocating one member more than the Minister recommends.

Mr Beattie: One more than we advocated?

Mr BOOTH: Yes. There is not much at stake. I think that if the Minister was in the Chamber, he would give in. However, he is not presently in the Chamber.

Mr Beattie: Here he is now.

Mr BOOTH: He is just in time to say that he will allow an additional member to be appointed to the board.

I turn now to discuss representation on the board. Proposed new section 7 states in part—

"(a) a person who is either the chairman or an elected member of the State Wheat Board, nominated by that Board;

(b) a person who is an elected member of The Barley Marketing Board, nominated by that Board;

(c) a person who is an elected member of The Central Queensland Grain Sorghum Marketing Board, nominated by that Board;

(d) three persons, each of whom is a grower in Queensland, elected by growers in Queensland in the prescribed manner;"

I agree with proposed new subsections (a), (b), and (c), and I am prepared to accept that proposed new subsection (d) contains a reasonable suggestion. However, the next proposed new subsection states—

"(e) a person who is a grower in Queensland, nominated by the Minister after consultation with the bodies referred to in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) and the Queensland Grain Growers Association, who shall be the chairman of the board;"

That is a bit wider.

Proposed new subsection (f) is a cause of minor concern. I suppose that the Minister is advocating the appointment of a grain marketing expert as a representative on the board—at least, that is the rumour. The representation referred to in the proposed new subsection has been left open. It states—

"(f) two persons nominated by the Minister on the basis of special qualifications or experience in grain marketing, grain handling, finance, business administration or industrial relations, of whom one shall be representative of the grain merchants . . ."

I believe that it may be too soon to include in representation on the board a grain marketing manager. I am prepared to accept that it may be necessary, but I am not so sure about a person who has had industrial experience. I do not know whether his appointment to the board will be to start a strike or not. However, because the list includes other fields of expertise, the appointee does not have to be someone who has qualifications or experience in industrial relations .

Mr Beattie: That is all right.

Mr BOOTH: I have said that the grain marketing manager is acceptable, but the industrial relations appointee would be accepted with much reluctance. Perhaps the Minister will state that the appointee will have a financial background.

The next proposed new subsection states—

"(g) the person who, for the time being, holds the position of Director of Marketing in the Department of Primary Industries or other department of government of the State responsible to the Minister in respect of the administration of this Act, or his nominee appointed in writing who shall be a member ex officio."

That is a standard provision relating to boards, and I have no quarrel with it. However, I believe that included on the board should be another representative who is directly connected to the Queensland Graingrowers Association and who will report back to that organisation. I believe that that appointee should be a grower who is a director of the Queensland Graingrowers Association, and who is nominated by that association. Perhaps the Minister will state that he can see no reason why that additional representative should be appointed, but I cannot believe that any of the other three people would go to the trouble of attending grain-growers' meetings and reporting back to the Queensland Grain Handling Authority. They might, of course; but, then again, they might not. The person I have in mind would have to report to the executive, which would be an excellent idea.

I am unsure about the appointment of a member who has a background in industrial relations. I am not in favour of that.

Mr Beattie: You said before that you supported it.

Mr BOOTH: I did not say that I supported it. I said that I could probably wear it, but I do not think that such an appointment would contribute much to the effectiveness of the board. If the appointee was someone who had experience in industrial relations and was also someone who had experience in grain handling, perhaps that would not be quite so bad. However, if the appointee was—to use one of the member for Brisbane Central's own expressions—a party hack, he might not contribute much to the board.

In conclusion, I acknowledge that the Minister has probably tried to improve the legislation that applies to grain handling. However, I think he has taken away too much

of the producers' representation. I wish that he would lean more towards the suggestions I have made and appoint an additional member who would be nominated by the Queensland Graingrowers Association. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that the Minister's second-reading speech was quite reasonable and that it contained some reasons for the Minister's actions. The Minister was not present in the Chamber when I referred earlier to the Queensland Grain Handling Authority's debt, but at least he referred to it in his second-reading speech. He stated—

> "With the approval of the Premier and the Treasurer, I have also established a task force comprising representatives of Bulk Grains Queensland, the Treasury, the Premier's Department and the Department of Primary Industries to look at options for Government assistance to restructure Bulk Grains' debt position."

I would be foolish if I attempted to stop that initiative. Before the Minister entered the Chamber, I expressed concern that, if the grain industry had to match the amount of money contributed by the Treasury, it might deplete its reserves, which would be disastrous.

The debt developed in the grain industry following a series of four or five bad seasons. If another one million tonnes of grain had been produced in each of those five years, it is quite possible that the debt would not exist, or at least it would be very small.

The Minister stated that he would like to know what the position of the industry will be in 5 or 10 years. I maintain that if one attempts to make a projection, that is far better than making no attempt at all. However, some years ago, it would have been difficult for the grain industry to know that a series of bad seasons would cause its debt to increase rapidly and create the problems that are facing the industry today. I believe in all sincerity that, at the time when the port facilities to handle grain were put in place, it was felt that that would be in the best interests of the grain industry. I dare say that it was, but it has contributed to the accumulation of a huge debt, which concerns all farmers. The additional levy of $8 a tonne that was imposed to manage that debt has not helped current grain prices. To enable the production of grain to be a viable proposition, its price should be increased by $40 or $50 a tonne. The levy of $8 a tonne is important, because it is reduced the amount that is currently being paid to the growers.

I commend the Minister on the initiatives that he has taken in an attempt to improve the debt structure of the industry. Perhaps everyone does not agree with those initiatives, but he is at least attempting to take steps to alleviate the debt.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister asserted that the Queensland Graingrowers Association is no longer directly involved in marketing. To a large extent, that is correct.

Mr Casey: They might have been before, and they are going back into it again.

Mr BOOTH: That may well be so. I realise that the Minister is reminding me that some problems exist. I take some of that on board.

I am concerned that the only watchdog in the grain industry is the Queensland Graingrowers Association. I beg the Minister to support the Opposition amendment and include on the board another representative from the Queensland Graingrowers Association, who must report directly to the association. The three directly elected grower representatives may attend meetings that concern the grain industry and they may report; however, they are not compelled to do that. I would like to see a representative on the board from the Queensland Graingrowers Association, who is compelled to report back to that association.

As I said earlier, I am not completely opposed to the Bill, nor do I believe that the grain-growers are. However, the grain-growers are worried people. Five or six years ago, the majority of grain-growers believed that they were viable and could make a good livelihood. At present, a large proportion of grain-growers—and general farmers as well—are worried that they will be forced to sell their properties to redeem whatever funds they can. The Minister probably has greater access to those figures than I have. However, we both know that many people are in that position.

I foreshadow that I will move an amendment to attempt to install an additional grain-grower on the board. The Opposition is not bitterly opposed to the Bill. However, it is a little worried about it. It is worried about the predicament in which the grain-growers find themselves.

The Opposition is pleased that the Minister, in conjunction with Treasury officials and the Treasurer, is examining the debt position. The Treasurer is not in the Chamber at the moment, but the Opposition is pleased that he is investigating the matter.

I have covered most of the points that I intended to address in the Bill. The Opposition supports the Bill, but it would like to see one more representative on the board representing the Queensland Graingrowers Association.

Mr HAYWARD (Caboolture) (4.07 p.m.): The honourable member for Warwick made it very clear that he does not oppose the Bill. He concentrated in great detail on his concern that an additional industry representative should be put on the board, and he made it clear that he will move an amendment to that effect.

He focused on some important issues. One of those issues was the debt issue, which is a real problem for Bulk Grains. Later, I will deal with that.

The honourable member made the point that many people in the grain industry are worried. Because of the way in which the Queensland economy is structured, when people in the grain industry are having problems in remaining viable, it reflects on the whole economy of the State. In that sense, if the position in the grain industry does not improve, most people in Queensland will encounter problems.

When the Minister introduced the Bill, he clearly spelt out its purpose, which was to reduce the size of the board from 13 members to 10. He argued that there should be two new members on the board with special qualifications, one of them to be a representative of the grain merchants. Last year, Mr Casey and I had the pleasure of meeting a number of people in Toowoomba who were involved in merchandising grain. That was a progressive step on behalf of the Minister. In his second-reading speech, he stated that he had not finalised what the special qualifications of the other member would be, but that his preference was for a person with a recognised financial background or an industrial relations background.

Mr Booth commented on the appointment to the board of someone who has an industrial relations background. In view of the way in which Bulk Grains Queensland operates, I think it probably is important that any person who is appointed does have an industrial relations background. I expect that a number of the Opposition speakers who will follow Mr Booth will talk about such issues as micro-economic reform, bashing the wharfies, and so on. I can see them warming up for it now. Mr Booth also said that he wanted to see eliminated the risk of political interference in the affairs of the authority. I agree with him on that. He meant that he wants to see the elimination of party politics. Mr Booth also mentioned that the Bill will disqualify a person from the board if that person is elected to the Queensland Parliament or the Commonwealth Parliament. Obviously, all honourable members would agree with that.

As I have said—and Mr Booth hinted at it—grain-trading in Queensland vitally affects everyone in this State. Queensland produces 22.6 per cent of Australia's primary produce. In 1989, the amount involved was $4.4 billion. Grain production generated $616m; beef production, $1.4 billion; sugar production, $720m; and wool production, half a billion dollars. Grain production comprises one-seventh of total primary production in this State. That is a very significant amount. Those four products represent 67 per cent of the value of Queensland's agricultural production.

What Mr Booth was saying, and what Mr Casey has said, is that the grain industry is vital for the economy of this State and for the future of this State. I am sure that over the next couple of years some real problems will be experienced in primary production. One only has to listen to the radio to hear of issues such as those currently affecting the wool industry. I refer to the floor price decrease. Wool is presently bringing 870c a kilogram. Allegations of a buyer's cartel have been made. A wool tax has been

imposed on growers, and there have been problems in relation to wool storage facilities for the storing of wool that has been purchased by the authority.

There are problems internationally with the European Economic Community and the United States, which is imposing barriers against grain being imported from Australia. Because Queensland lacks a manufacturing base, we are not in a position to diversify when a downturn takes place in primary industry. I think that later tonight there will be some debate on micro-economic reform. In its annual report, the Grain Handling Authority alludes very clearly to that when it talks about such issues as waterfront reform and award restructuring. Bulk Grains Queensland is aware of that. That is why I found it interesting that Mr Booth should dismiss so quickly the idea that someone on the board should have an industrial relations background. Personally, I reject his contention that that should not be the case.

The problems that primary industries are experiencing will ultimately affect everybody because they will lead to a lack of provision of services for the people of this State. The income source of Queensland will naturally be reduced. It is a problem that will ultimately affect honourable members electorally.

Bulk Grains Queensland is the registered trading name of the statutory body called the Queensland Grain Handling Authority. Its operations include grain handling, storage, shipping and complementary bulk commodity services. It is spelt out very clearly in its sixth annual report, which states—

> "In accordance with the Act, the authority has the power to receive, store, handle and act as a storage and handling agent on behalf of any marketing body, grower or merchant in respect of grain, and any person in respect of other commodities."

A little later I will say something about some of the other commodities in which Bulk Grains Queensland has been involved.

I think that honourable members would agree that life certainly has not been easy for the Queensland Grain Handling Authority. Mr Booth certainly alluded to that. During 1986-87, a drought was experienced throughout most of the grain-growing areas of Queensland, and that adversely affected production. In 1988, the wet weather due to cyclone Charlie caused significant downgrading in the quality of crops, in particular grain sorghum. Bulk Grains Queensland was faced with poor prices and poor seasons, and that caused a number of growers to diversify into other products such as stock—in fact, anything other than grain. Poor seasons worsened the financial position of Queensland grain-growers. That worsening position is reflected throughout the period that Bulk Grains Queensland has been operating. Since it was first set up in 1983, the total volume of grain handled by the central storage system has fallen dramatically from 3.9 million tonnes to 2.5 million tonnes. It has also had to face other problems. It has had to face problems associated with the push for deregulation in Queensland and, indeed, throughout Australia. I have worked with Mr Booth, and I know that he has very definite views about deregulation. I am aware that he is not overly in favour of it. However, the push for deregulation of the storage, handling and transport of grain has placed further pressure on Bulk Grains Queensland.

The Industries Assistance Commission conducted an inquiry into grain handling in Australia. A royal commission was also held in relation to the handling and transport of grain. Bulk Grains Queensland has been placed in the position in which it must ensure that storage and handling charges are attractive and competitive. That is very difficult. It has been forced into the position of having to market its services. If someone is trying to get people to supply him with grain, he is then faced with the need to develop a country depot to which the grain can be delivered. That means having to build bulk export terminals, which are very costly. Bulk Grains Queensland now has 86 country depots at which it can receive grain. Its bulk export terminals in Mackay, Gladstone and Brisbane represent a huge capital investment. In addition, Bulk Grains Queensland had to diversify its operations because of the downturn in grain production in Queensland.

Bulk Grains Queensland is now handling silica sand, which is being exported through the port of Brisbane to provide throughput for its storage facilities. As well, I understand that it will use its facilities for woodchips and imported fertiliser. Bulk Grains Queensland has faced many unavoidable pressures that might be expected in primary production. There is nothing that anyone can do about poor seasons, droughts and cyclones. Those pressures have reduced the volume of throughput. As a result, Bulk Grains Queensland has had to construct more depots and seek more supplies. That has created burgeoning costs. The problems of Bulk Grains Queensland are illustrated clearly in its annual reports.

As to its grain-handling activities and trading position—during its first year of operation in 1983-84, Bulk Grains Queensland made a profit of $23m. During 1984-85, its profit fell to $17m, and in 1985-86 its profit was $14m. Because of seasonal problems in 1986-87, the company suffered a loss of $2.6m, and in 1987-88 it faced a loss of $6.6m. Fortunately, last year the situation improved. Because of the hard work that it had done during 1988-89, the company achieved a profit of $7.6m, which has placed it in a much better position. Last year, Mr Casey, Mr Palaszczuk, Mr Campbell and I went to Toowoomba and had meetings with members of the board of Bulk Grains Queensland, who explained clearly the problems that they were experiencing.

Members of this House must understand that Bulk Grains Queensland has a significant capital investment of $120m in land, buildings and storage facilities. It cannot operate without that capital investment in those facilities. The company is funded by loans from the State Treasury of $52m, which Mr Casey and Mr Booth have already mentioned. In the future, that issue will have to be addressed one way or another.

Last year, Bulk Grains Queensland faced interest charges of $8.1m, which create another burden to add to the cost pressures of unfavourable seasons, which are clearly obvious. As the situation became more difficult, the regional storage facilities had to search for more grain and find weighing and carting facilities for that grain. That increased significantly the debt pressures of Bulk Grains Queensland, which is a capital-hungry organisation.

The Minister has informed the Parliament that a working party within the industry will consider many of these issues, such as corporate restructuring, the amalgamation of grain-marketing boards and industry relief of the debt burden, which Mr Booth has already mentioned. A task force will be established to consider options for Government assistance to restructure the debt position of Bulk Grains Queensland. Because that aspect is important, I will come back to it.

The Minister has obtained approval for the Australian Wheat Board to become involved in the marketing of non-statutory grains, including grain sorghum, oilseeds and legume crops. The Minister said that that will be done through Bulk Grains Queensland's joint venture with the State Wheat Board.

Since 1983, the Queensland Grain Handling Authority, which is probably better known as Bulk Grains Queensland, has suffered a decline in its trading activity, which has created a problem with its future industry competitiveness.

Similar problems have been experienced in New South Wales, where the Grain Corporation had a debt of $320m written off. As a result, it did not have to face the problems of an interest burden. However, Bulk Grains Queensland still has a $52m debt. I am sure that it will be applying significant pressure to remove that debt so that it can be made more competitive.

Mr Littleproud: We were attracting New South Wales grain through the Queensland system because our freight rate was cheaper.

Mr HAYWARD: Yes. There is no doubt that the situation could quickly be reversed, especially when one considers the amount of wheat grown in the border areas of New South Wales and Queensland. The Grain Corporation in New South Wales no longer has a $320m debt, which has been forgiven.

As to the handling and storage of grain—the establishment of new depots for the receival and storage of grain involves constant capital investment. Bulk Grains Queensland will have to develop new products to maintain full storage facilities.

The flooding of the border areas of New South Wales and Queensland will reduce the potential throughput of grain for the Queensland Grain Handling Authority. During the past year, Bulk Grains Queensland has transferred its $52m debt to the Queensland Treasury Corporation, which has provided some benefits through an improved cash flow and a marginally cheaper debt.

That operation has many things in its favour. Bulk Grains is in a very strong liquidity position. Its ratio of current assets to current liabilities is 7.6 to 1. As was alluded to before, its 1988-89 trading year was good. It allowed a small transfer to be made to reserves and a significant build-up in the equity of Bulk Grains. It has a satisfactory ratio of fixed assets to debt. With its capital equipment, namely, the storage facilities, it has fixed assets of $120m. Its overall debt is $64m, of which $52m is held through the Queensland Treasury Corporation.

According to the annual report, last year, Bulk Grains, after recognising its problems, devised what it called strategies and an action plan. At least it has considered a few things that it can do. It looked at the issue of marketing. It developed and concentrated on market research, which is obviously important. It concentrated also on an area which I would imagine would be a strong growth area, namely, feedlots and the supply of grain to them. Apparently, Bulk Grains focused particularly on the intended deregulation of the Japanese beef market. Because of my knowledge of how that market operates, I would be very surprised if that amounts to anything. Nevertheless, that is an issue that Bulk Grains is looking at.

Mr Littleproud: They want to act as a warehouse for the storage of that grain.

Mr HAYWARD: Yes.

Bulk Grains looked also at the joint venture about which I spoke before. It is also very important to recognise that it has some facilities for handling other products. It has been reasonably successful in handling fertiliser, woodchips and silica sand and it has been able to use some of the surplus capacity at the port.

All in all, I listened to what the Minister said in his second-reading speech and to what Mr Booth said. I am pleased that he is supporting the Bill. It is an important Bill. It is very important for Queensland. This State has an enormous investment in the assets that have been developed by Bulk Grains. It is important to the future of Queensland that primary industries maintain themselves as an active, viable part of the economy of Queensland. Along with a number of other primary products, grain makes up a significant proportion of the Queensland economy.

The Minister's suggestion for depoliticising the board, reducing the board's numbers and recognising the necessity that a new member of the board should be someone who has a financial and/or industrial relations background is a forward-thinking one. I certainly have great pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr KING (Nicklin) (4.27 p.m.): In rising to speak in this debate, I indicate that the Liberal Party does not oppose the restructuring of the board. We in the party understand that as time goes by things change and boards often need to be restructured. We certainly do not oppose the reduction in the number of board members. Sometimes, boards that have few members operate more efficiently than other boards with a greater number of members.

However, there are some matters in the Bill that concern us. We support the comments made by the member for Warwick about the absence of a Queensland Graingrowers Association representative on the board. We will be supporting the amendment that will be moved at the Committee stage.

Because the Liberal Party has had contact with people in the industry, it is concerned about proposed new section 7 (f), which deals with the appointment of various board members by the Minister.

I foreshadow that the Liberal Party will move an amendment to clause 6. If our amendment is not accepted, then we will not be supporting the Bill in order to record the strength of feeling of those people in the industry concerned about the clause.

In reviewing the second-reading speech of the Minister, I note that it is his intention to establish a task force, and that one of its primary functions will be to look at restructuring the debt of Bulk Grains Queensland. The Liberal Party applauds that initiative. I understand that the actual amount involved is close to $80m rather than the $52m mentioned by the honourable member——

Mr Hayward: The corporation debt is $52m.

Mr KING: I thank the honourable member.

That debt was not incurred by any bad business decision made on behalf of the industry but by the hard-nosed deregulation of the industry throughout Queensland and Australia by the Federal Government. The industry certainly needs help in restructuring that debt.

In common with the previous speaker, my conviction is that the people in the industry have adopted every initiative they can in an endeavour to get themselves out of this problem, but the debt is so large that the industry needs help to restructure it.

People in the grain industry have advised me that the task force also needs to review other aspects of the industry, and place on its agenda items such as a full-scale review of general farming practices, the need for further dollar support in the pipe scheme to help farmers build up or get out of farming as is happening in Canada, New Zealand and Victoria, and the need for farmers to obtain and have access to better financial management education. Those areas could be reviewed by the Minister's task force.

Returning to the specific objections of the Liberal Party to this Bill, what is happening in this industry is similar to what has happened in the sugar industry and the bread industry. Ministerial appointments are being made to boards that are being restructured. Perhaps the Liberal Party is a little bit suspicious in nature, but it is reflecting not only its feelings but also those of the people in the industry.

I refer this House to page 2 of the Minister's second-reading speech, particularly the last two paragraphs, in which he stated—

> "Turning to the text of the Bill itself—the substantive provision is clause 6"—

that is true—

> "with most of the remaining provisions dealing with consequential matters. However, I also draw the attention of the House to clauses 8 and 11. These provisions are designed to eliminate the risk of political interference in the affairs of the authority and it is my intention that similar provisions will be progressively inserted in other primary industry Acts as they come before the Parliament."

Certainly when one looks at those provisions that refer to members of the State or Federal Parliament, the Liberal Party agrees that they should not be on the boards. Nevertheless, when talking about political interference, is there any difference when so many of these board members are being politically appointed by the Minister?

The Labor Party has opposed the political appointments of previous Governments to quangos. Is this proposal any different from what happened in the past?

It is also likely that the Minister will have an unduly heavy influence on the control of these boards. The chairman of the board will be appointed by the Minister. That chairman is only one person, but he will have two votes, and also a great degree of influence over other board members. People in the industry are making such comments, and saying also that there is a risk of other non-industry employees being appointed to

board positions. Those same people are saying that this will probably be more jobs for the boys and that "Yes, Minister" types will be appointed to those boards.

Later today, the member for Nerang will be highlighting this aspect and will draw other comparisons that I believe are relevant.

Proposed new section 7 (f) states—

> "two persons nominated by the Minister on the basis of special qualifications or experience in grain marketing"—

the Liberal Party certainly disagrees with that part of the clause—

> "grain handling, finance, business administration"—

those are qualities that would be appreciated on the board—

> "or industrial relations"—

the Liberal Party does not go along with that part—

> "of whom one shall be representative of the grain merchants and traders operating in Queensland;".

Mr Casey: I thought your party was a free-enterprise party. Why would it object to having somebody who knows a little bit about marketing on such a board?

Mr KING: I am sorry, but it is the grain merchant's representative to whom I am particularly opposed.

Mr Casey: They are free-enterprise businesspeople.

Mr KING: That might be so, but can the Minister tell me how his Government can justify putting a person into the confidentiality of a board room where market forces, the availability of grain and the pressures to sell are being discussed, and then allowing that very same person to walk out the door and walk into his own office and not expect him to make use of the confidential information that he has obtained as a member of that board?

Mr Casey interjected

Mr KING: That may be so, but that is the way that I and members of the industry see the position.

The omission of representation from the Queensland Graingrowers Association has been commented upon. I accept that a representative of that organisation should be on the board. That organisation will not be as easy to get along with as the coastal cane-farmers. They are not prepared to give up without a fight. That is how strongly they feel about this matter.

The union representation on the board is not wanted by the industry. The grain merchants are not wanted by the industry. The industry considers that an incredible inclusion, and the Liberal Party will be attempting to resolve that problem with its foreshadowed amendment at the Committee stage.

The Liberal Party is concerned for the feelings of the people within this primary industry. It will be looked to in the future to further represent and support people in the primary industries and it will not be letting them down on this issue today.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (4.36 p.m.): I support the common-sense remarks of the National Party's spokesman on Primary Industries, the member for Warwick.

I would like to refer to the historical background of this industry so that members will understand why it is in the position it is today.

I commend the Minister on what he is attempting to achieve by this legislation. He is trying genuinely to do something useful, not only for the industry by improving the efficiency of the board, but also, and this is appreciated, together with the Treasurer he is looking at the debt problem.

One needs to understand what has happened in New South Wales. The Greiner Government was faced with a grain-handling authority that had a debt of approximately $280m, of which the Government was prepared to pay only $200m. On the surface, that looks great for the grain-handling authority and for the growers in New South Wales, but if one traces the history of this industry—as a grain-grower myself for many years, I can do so—one realises that the growers, by way of levy, put their own money up front to build those facilities. After all, they belong to the industry. It is unfortunate that in the past the industry did not develop a system, such as the bean growers cooperative, in which shares are held by the growers of navy beans. Although it was a cooperative, it became a private-enterprise operation. It is unfortunate that no recognition was given to the growers' contributions in building those facilities. It was not public money. At times, people are confused about who built those storages and whose money was used.

The best analogy would be with water boards. Private water boards received similar Government-guaranteed loan assistance to raise funds. No-one suggests that any Government of either left or right intent would tramp all over the rights of the people who built the water facilities under those circumstances. This is no different. That should be kept in the back of our minds.

Because of a series of droughts, things are tough at present. Anyone who wants to argue with that would only have to look at the balance sheet on my farming operations and he would see what a disaster the last five years have been. Some areas of Queensland have done well. If the conditions had been anywhere near normal, the position of the bulk grain growers would be different. But we cannot really say that all is lost. It is something like the wool argument at the moment and the decision whether to drop the floor price.

Let me deal with some of the factors involved. The future is not rosy for the bulk handling of coarse grains. What is happening and what will continue to happen is that the feedlot industry is expanding and will continue to expand. There will be more feedlots and they will be bigger. Another one near Millmerran has been approved for 30 000 head. It is quite simple, depending on whether the cattle are fed for100 days for the local trade or 180 days for the Japanese ox trade, to calculate how many tonnes of grain will be required.

Mr Comben: Do they eat tonnes of grain?

Mr ELLIOTT: In time they do, yes, particularly the bigger cattle going to the Jap ox trade.

Mr Littleproud: A tonne a beast.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes, even for the shorter period they would eat a tonne a beast.

There has also been a tremendous proliferation of opportunity feedlots. Many people have mistakenly seen a tremendous opportunity to make a killing in the sorghum market. They think that a large number of cattle will be brought from the west to the feedlots, but many of the channel country cattle cannot be moved until about September because of the floods and the problems connected with physically moving them in. In addition, following the floods there will be a tremendous amount of feed in the west and the cattle will be fed in the channel country.

More of the coarse grains such as sorghum and barley will be used where they are grown on the Darling Downs, the western downs and, to a lesser degree, central Queensland. It is good sense economically to move grain to the nearest feedlot two miles down the road from my farm rather than to send it to the handling authority, which would send it to a feedlot. Common sense and private enterprise will ensure that that happens. I do not see any great escalation in the movement of the coarse grains.

Many other factors have a bearing on the grain industry. The first is the value of the dollar. If all of the wheelers and dealers decide to run the dollar down instead of keeping it up, the value of the dollar will drop. If that happens, I will be the first to sell

my sorghum on the export market. I will sell it forward—I will sell it on the futures market. I will enter a back-to-back contract with someone on the Chicago futures and I will sell next year's crop. Then that grain might go through the system and out through the port. However, the possibility of that happening rather than its being used in house, as it were, in the feedlots is not as great.

The wheat industry is continually moving further west. Fewer people in my area grow wheat and barley to be handled through the board. Wheat-growing is moving into the Goondiwindi area. The big successful growers are now to be found in the electorates of my colleagues the honourable member for Balonne and the honourable member for Condamine. Comparatively, I am a mickey mouse grower.

A Government member interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: There are some pretty good growers out there. In the old days, when they first changed from running cattle, there were some pretty wild shows out there. I have seen them using bulldozers to roll up fences. However, I had better not disclose too much about that. Because of the seasons, there are big fluctuations in crops. Some of the land returns four crops in five years and some returns three crops in five years. There will be large escalations and peaks and troughs in production which will in turn affect the throughput at Bulk Grains Queensland.

Definitely more grain is being grown by farmers and, if the crisis in the wool industry continues, many growers who moved away from wheat-growing and into sheep-farming—and there are a few sitting in this Chamber not too far away from me—will probably move back to grain-growing.

Mr Beattie: You would be doing it.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes, that is true. That is the reality, and the Minister needs to be aware of those factors.

What is happening on the Queensland/New South Wales boarder is a very real problem and it is important that the Minister continues to look at the overall position with regard to Bulk Grains Queensland's debt. Greiner paid $200m out of a total of $280m that was owed by the industry in that State and this has put the whole equation out of kilter. The industry was operating on borrowed funds and its costs were very high. Even though the Queensland authority has a problem, its costs were low. The Queensland Government bit the bullet long before the New South Wales Government did. At the time, I backed that decision and do not walk away from it now. In the long term, it will prove to have been the right decision for the State and the nation. That gave Queensland an advantage because it was more economic for those growers along the Queensland/New South Wales border to bring their grain to Goondiwindi to market. It was then sold through Brisbane. That resulted in a financial advantage to Queensland that resulted from waterside problems in various ports in New South Wales.

It is important also to look at the costs incurred from the farm gate onwards. Honourable members have heard me talk about this matter before, and I do not want to labour the point. It is important for the Government to consider these costs, because that is where Australia is inefficient when compared with other countries. Australia can match it with the best countries in the world when it comes to producing grain, but some countries still have problems matching us when the grain gets on the boat. Big problems occur in the industry during the time the grain leaves the farm gate and is loaded onto a boat for export.

Mr Milliner: We are pretty efficient with headers.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes, we are not bad with headers. We have big, efficient headers and we get out there and do it well. The Minister can make no mistake about that.

Mr Beattie: Is this a statement?

Mr ELLIOTT: No, that is a general statement.

Mr Beattie: What would you do to improve that?

Mr ELLIOTT: I do not want to get sidetracked. The House has a limited amount of time for this debate and I do not want to take up too much time.

All the problems must be examined. A different equation has now been created. Queensland did have the advantage, because it was more efficient for New South Wales growers along the border to market their wheat through Goondiwindi. However, because of an artificial situation created by the New South Wales Government when it picked up the industry's debt in New South Wales, the equation has now been reversed. Unless Queensland levels the playing field, it will have a real problem. Throughput will be lost, and that will exacerbate the problem.

I turn now to look at the change in the structure of the board. It is the Minister's right to change the board in consultation with the industry in the way that he sees fit. I have no argument with that. As to merchants—perhaps I agree more with the Minister than the Opposition spokesman on Primary Industries, the honourable member for Warwick. I do not see the difficulty envisaged by my colleague. Over the years, I have come to realise that not having input from a merchant on a board has created bad relations between the two groups. That bad relationship and friction between the two groups has not been in the long-term interests of the grain-growers of this State. A representative needs to be appointed to the board, but it is very important that that person is the most honourable person who can be found.

Mr Casey: Are you saying there are dishonourable grain-growers?

Mr ELLIOTT: I am simply saying that, no matter what group is being talked about, it is important that honourable people are appointed to boards.

This representative will be in a very difficult position because he must be 100 per cent ethical in his attitude. The same requirement applies to other people; it is not unique. Members in this House or people outside may be appointed to boards of companies. If a person is dishonourable and uses information gained from board meetings, regardless of how the information is used, that is called insider trading.

Mr Beattie: It is a criminal offence.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes, it is a criminal offence.

If information from such a board was used incorrectly, it would be just as unethical. The Government must think very seriously about who is put on the board. Honest people are available, but I will not try to tell the Minister how to suck eggs. I am sure that he is receiving the best advice possible and that he will select an honourable person. I do not share the same fear as the honourable member for Warwick about that appointment to the board. I believe that gradually the grain-growers have come to accept that decision. I do not say that they are madly enthusiastic about it, but they realise it is a good point.

The other side of the equation which must be addressed and which is very important is grain-grower representation. The grain-growers must feel that they are directly represented. The Labor Government side of politics, whether it be Federal or State, has always been prepared to accept the issues from the industry's point of view. When the Labor Party was in Opposition, I heard the present Minister state a dozen times how important it was for the Government to listen to the industry. On this occasion I urge the Minister to listen to industry and to accept my colleague's recommendation that a direct representative from the Queensland Graingrowers Association be appointed to the board. If there is no representative of the association on the board, in the future there will always be a possibility—although it will not happen right now—that there will be no feedback to the grain-growers.

While I respect the Liberal Party spokesman's suggestion about reducing representation from two persons to one, that could result in the worst of all worlds, particularly if the amendment suggested by the Opposition's spokesman is not accepted. The result may

be that a merchant would be appointed to the board and that no counterbalancing representation would be included. Alternatively, the Minister could also appoint a representative who did not have the support of everyone in the industry, which could also lead to an imbalance.

The position outlined by the Opposition's spokesman is reasonable. Basically, the Opposition supports the Bill and is not attempting to play party politics. We are trying to develop some type of unity in respect of the legislation that is presently before the House.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (4.55 p.m.): I rise to make a few comments on the legislation, which the Opposition spokesman for Primary Industries has indicated has the broad support of the Opposition. As the Minister would know, I have had detailed discussions in relation to this legislation and last year, when I had the responsibilities presently held by the Minister, I was in a position to develop some of its provisions. I am quite conversant with the matters that are being dealt with, and the reasons why they have been included in the legislation.

I note the inclusion—in line with the custom of the present Government—of provisions that will enable representation on the board by persons who have had experience or who are skilled in industrial relations. Not unnaturally, the concern of the Opposition is that the appointee will be a "party hack"—at least, I believe that that was the expression used by the Opposition spokesman. I would hope that the Minister would look further afield, if he intends to appoint to the board a person who has experience in industrial relations. Although such an appointment may be appropriate, it would not want to be made in respect of a trade union official who simply happens to be looking for a job to fill in some of the hours when he would otherwise have his feet up.

Mr Casey: That is unkind and unfair of you to say that.

Mr HARPER: On the contrary, I am suggesting that a trade union official who has very little to do now—other than thinking about what he can do to protect his job—might be so eager to do some work that he might be lobbying for a position on the board. If the Minister appoints someone with a trade union background, I am sure that he will select someone who has genuine skills in industrial relations that are recognised by people on both sides of the fence.

I note also the inclusion of representation from grain merchants and traders. As the member for Cunningham observed, that section of the industry has long sought a place on the State Wheat Board or on the Queensland Grain Handling Authority. I have difficulty in accepting that a person representing grain merchants and traders can do so with impunity. When I say that, I do not cast aspersions on members because, undoubtedly, some representatives of grain merchants and traders would be people whose integrity would be beyond doubt and beyond question. I realise that, but I think that all honourable members must recognise the confidentiality of the information that would be available to a director on that board—indeed, on any board.

I point out that, under corporate law, it is an offence to disclose information that becomes available to a director. I think that many people who accept positions as directors on large and small companies—but particularly small companies—and on entities such as the Queensland Grain Handling Authority fail to realise that the criminal law prohibits disclosure of information that they may obtain. It seems to me that an appointee who represents the merchants and traders on the board will be placed in a somewhat invidious position, irrespective of how honourable he or she may be. The Bill does not contain any provisions that would prevent a lady being appointed to the position.

Irrespective of how honourable an appointee is or how pure the appointee's integrity is, there will surely be times when people pursuing their own vested interests will spread all types of rumour and innuendo, suggesting that information has been made available through that particular appointee. For that reason and because it would give them an inside running, I always hesitated to accept suggestions of appointing merchants and

traders to boards that are essentially grain-growers' organisations. I will bet my socks that before too long, other grain merchants and traders will claim that the appointee—whoever he is—has had an inside running.

I make it quite clear that the Opposition feels strongly about the need to retain autonomy and integrity in the grain industry in Queensland, including the Queensland Grain Handling Authority. Although the Government has the numbers at the moment, the Opposition will not stand by and witness destruction of the industry's autonomy. I am sure that this Government will listen to the wisdom of the industry and recognise that the autonomy and integrity of the Queensland Grain Handling Authority must be maintained. It cannot become simply another pawn of the bureaucracy or of the centralist Federal Government.

The member for Cunningham mentioned costs associated with the industry. He referred to the skills of growers and to the fact that grain-growers in Australia are amongst the forefront of growers throughout the world. That is indisputable. However, they are hampered by high costs and by tariff barriers on imported machinery. It is well known that people in primary industry have long said that, if all protection were lifted, they would more than stand on their own feet. However, while protection is given to secondary industry and to other sectors, and while our competitors and potential exporters to Australia are provided with protection, subsidisation and even facilities for dumping through backdoor methods, it is most essential that we recognise the cost factors associated with our own primary industries.

The Minister for Administrative Services is not present in the Chamber. If he hears my remarks, I am sure that he will be in here very quickly breathing fire and brimstone. However, no-one is in a better position to understand what I am saying than the Minister who has the carriage of this Bill. In Mackay, we saw that eventually reason prevailed and the cost of loading grain at the waterfront was minimised. Those costs could be reduced further yet. The outcome of the incident in Mackay should give the lead not only to the other ports in Queensland—in particular, Brisbane—but throughout Australia. I commend the people who were responsible for that favourable outcome.

Mr Casey: You know who was responsible—the Waterside Workers Federation in Mackay, in partnership with the stevedores.

Mr HARPER: Credit has not been given to those who really were responsible. Many people's names have been bandied about, but I am in a position to say without doubt that it was the Chairman of the Queensland Grain Handling Authority and the officers of that authority who really were responsible for the achievements that were gained at that time. Not enough credit has been given to the people who deserve it. They are people who do not seek credit; they get on with it and do their job. However, as the Minister indicated, that was an achievement. That action must be followed elsewhere.

In the port of Brisbane, we set out to achieve those benefits, but we were frustrated in our efforts. Until such time as the waterfront of Australia—this does not refer only to grain—is able to handle grain economically and in a manner that will allow our exporters to compete on more even terms with our international competitors, we will always face this frustration—this difficulty—and our growers will be faced with high costs at that level.

I appreciate that the Opposition has foreshadowed an amendment. However, it is important that the points that I have made are placed on the record.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (5.04 p.m.): The Liberal Party generally supports the Bill. It will also support the amendments foreshadowed by the honourable member for Warwick.

I will be fair dinkum about what the legislation will achieve. It will get rid of one lot of jobs for the boys and replace them with other jobs for the boys.

Mr Elder: How much will it cost?

Mr CONNOR: That is what I was just about to ask the Minister.

Mr Hayward: Do you think if that was true that these people over here would say that?

Mr CONNOR: That is exactly why they have not said it.

The real issues in the legislation concern the representatives on the board and, in particular, proposed new section 7 (f). It is a load of rubbish to include on the board two persons nominated by the Minister on the basis of special qualifications or experience in grain-marketing—we do not like that—grain-handling, finance, business administration or industrial relations. Why do you need someone with experience in industrial relations?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): Order! The honourable member will address his comments through the Chair.

Mr CONNOR: I am sorry, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Earlier today, a Bill repealing the essential services legislation was presented to the House. What can Queensland look forward to in future?

Mrs Woodgate: Better days.

Mr CONNOR: I do not agree with that.

This legislation is the shape of things to come. Every quango in Queensland will have an industrial relations expert on it, whether he is needed or not. The Bread Industry Authority Bill also contains a clause which provides that industrial relations experts will be on that board.

Mr Beattie: There is no grain of truth in it.

Mr CONNOR: I do not agree with that.

This legislation is simply about providing jobs for the boys. The Minister might include some of his old comrades. The cat is out of the bag.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that there was no room for party politics and that clauses 8 and 11 preclude current members of Parliament or someone who becomes a member of Parliament from being represented on the board. Of course, there is nothing to stop the amateur politicians, the ones coming up through the union ranks, from being appointed to that board. How many members on the Government side have had previous jobs in the unions? Is it a training ground?

Mr Welford: I will tell you what, there are not too many used car salesmen.

Mr CONNOR: That was original. I think that the member for Stafford might have done one too many laps in the pool and the chlorine is affecting his brain.

I know that the Bread Industry Authority Bill has not yet been debated, but it also has a clause——

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): Order! I ask the honourable member to keep his comments pertinent to the Bill under discussion.

Mr CONNOR: The Bread Industry Authority Bill is very pertinent to this Bill because it contains a clause that is very similar to a clause in the Bill under discussion. In addition, the bread industry and the grain industry are very much related. All honourable members are aware of what bread is made from. I think that reference to the Bread Industry Authority Bill is pertinent.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr CONNOR: I do not think there is any need to discuss what bread is made from.

Mr Beattie: Tell us, how much experience do you have in this area?

Mr CONNOR: In industrial relations?

Mr Beattie: No. I know you have no experience in that. I am talking about grain.

Mr CONNOR: That takes me back to the nineteenth century and to a quote by Benjamin Disraeli. I must apologise to Benjamin Disraeli for saying this, but he must have been thinking of the member for Brisbane Central when he was defining the difference between a misfortune and a calamity.

Mr WELFORD: I rise to a point of order. I do not know about grain, but the honourable member is giving me a migraine.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! That was a frivolous point of order. However, I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill, and I ask him to cease taking interjections. It is just taking up the time of the House.

Mr CONNOR: I will take your advice, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Clause 3.17 of the Bread Industry Authority Bill is very similar to a clause in this Bill. The Liberal Party believes that there is no place for industrial relations union hacks in this industry, either. The Liberal Party believes that the stage will be reached at which unionists will completely replace the National Party cronies on these boards.

Mr Casey: You may as well sit down in silence as stand up in silence.

Mr Beattie: He is lost for words.

Mr CONNOR: I must say that the Deputy Speaker put me off my train of thought.

The Liberal Party believes that the proposal in this Bill is purely part of the Labor Party's hidden agenda. Which industry will be next? Will it be newsagents, the dairy industry, the sugar industry, or the eggs, beef, lamb and poultry industries?

Mr Welford: Used cars.

Mr CONNOR: We must not forget taxis and hire cars. I cannot take interjections.

Many weeks ago, I sent a letter to the Minister asking him how much the new bread industry quango would cost. I still have not received a reply to that letter.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members are not debating the Bread Industry Authority Bill. I ask the honourable member to speak to the Queensland Grain Handling Act Amendment Bill.

Mr CONNOR: I will take your advice, Mr Deputy Speaker.

The Minister's silence on the wheat and grain industry is deafening. I ask again: can the Minister guarantee the supply of bread?

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine) (5.13 p.m.): I recognise that in introducing this Bill, the Minister is reacting to a request from Bulk Grains Queensland. I join my colleague and Opposition spokesman, the member for Warwick, in supporting the Bill. However, there are some comments that I want to make.

In 1983, when I was first elected to this Parliament, the grain industry was tremendously prosperous. My electorate of Condamine is in the heart of the grain country. At that time, it was a very prosperous and progressive place. In the seven short years since then, I have seen a great turn-around. When I travelled around the State as a Minister, I could not help but notice that what was once one of the most progressive parts of the State had been transformed into one of the most depressed. That has a big bearing on the requests that are now coming forth from the grain industry. I am pleased that the present Government is recognising the contribution that the grain industry has made, and will continue to make, to Queensland. It is also recognising that something has to be done about the debts of Bulk Grains Queensland and the efficiencies of its operations.

There are probably three things that contribute to difficult times for the grain industry. They are: poor seasons, poor prices and high interest rates. Any one on its own creates problems. At the end of 1985, all three impacted at once. The stage was reached at which probably some of the best farmers in the grain industry had already made a decision to expand. All of a sudden they ran into problems. Poor seasons meant low production. Prices were down because of the state of world markets. In addition, interest rates climbed alarmingly. Some of the very best and most aggressive farmers in Queensland found themselves in difficulties from which they have never recovered. In fact, some have sold up.

The problems of high interest rates and low world prices continue. However, there is a new factor now, which will plague the Minister. I refer to the fact that the Federal Minister for Primary Industries, John Kerin, has acted rather unilaterally against the grain industry. I am sorry to say that I am sure that that will have an impact on the way in which the Minister operates. There is probably some suspicion in the grain industry because the members of that industry associate the Minister with the Federal Labor Government and Mr Kerin's actions. The Minister is probably coming to terms with that. However, it is still a very real factor.

As a result of all these pressures, the grain industry is undergoing tremendous changes. I refer to farmers leaving the industry, the aggregation of farms, new cropping techniques, the indebtedness of farmers and the way in which that affects their approach to farming, and the introduction of new crops.

Because the grain industry is an export industry, of central importance is its transport and shipping system. This Bill addresses the problems within that system. My colleague the member for Cunningham spoke about the facilities in the various grain-growing areas throughout Queensland. Those facilities were established by the people within the industry. In the past, people who delivered crops into the system were levied. From time to time, the organisations in charge of transportation and shipping obtained Government loans and Government guarantees. But by and large, that finance was provided by the industry itself.

Depots at various railheads, loop lines and port facilities throughout the State have been provided at growers' expense. The world grain trade has changed to such an extent that bigger ships are now necessary if organisations within the market are to achieve greater efficiency.

During the 1960s, the Government decided to develop Fisherman Islands and established a grain-handling facility there. Although that made the industry more competitive, it created another debt. At that time, Bulk Grains Queensland was established.

Because growers have been contributing funds to Bulk Grains Queensland, it is very difficult to identify their equity. Some growers contributed for a long time, then stopped farming and dropped out of the industry. Others have been contributing for a long time. Some farmers use the bulk grain system but also sell their produce privately, while others have only recently entered the market. When one considers a problem as big as this, one understands why it is difficult to identify equity.

The industry is now calling upon the Minister and the Government to inject some Government money to remove the debt of Bulk Grains Queensland. I hasten to add that it should not be misconstrued that the industry is asking for public money, which would mean an automatic surrender of control to the State.

It is important to recognise that the grain industry is important to this State. It is important also to recognise that the facilities within the industry are owned by the growers, who have expressed the desire to maintain as much control as possible. However, they certainly do not want their facilities to be regarded as the public property of the State. Although those facilities are owned by the growers, a problem exists with the identity of equity.

People in agro-political organisations that are associated with the grain industry are in a state of flux. Unit costs are associated with that debt, and people are saying, "I can

deliver my grain to the port by my private truck at a cheaper rate than I can if I use the bulk grain system." As more people opt to do that, that places a higher unit burden on the people who remain within the system. As well, I acknowledge that an increasing number of growers are choosing to become private traders or end users in their own right.

In the past, almost all grain-growers wanted to belong to the Queensland Graingrowers Association because it has a very strong involvement with orderly marketing. However, a larger proportion of farmers now want more options, including free trading, and fewer of them are fully supportive of the orderly marketing system.

The grain industry is considering that problem. A working party is trying to establish a new peak organisation. Grain-growers recognise that it would be far better to establish an organisation that is representative of all interests than to have the present situation which creates the impression that the Queensland Graingrowers Association tends to be composed of people who are strictly in favour of orderly marketing. It is unfortunate that that state of flux exists.

Mr Casey: You must admit it is a good initiative of the Labor Government.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No, that is not an initiative of the Labor Government. It is driven by the industry, which wants to reorganise itself.

Bulk Grains Queensland has requested the Minister to reduce the size of its board. The member for Caboolture paid tribute to the efforts of that organisation in trying to become more efficient by handling other commodities through the system. Bulk Grains Queensland recognises that its board would be more workable if its shape were changed.

Although the board might not have voiced this opinion, it is certainly suspicious that, because Mr Kerin has acted unilaterally, the Minister will use some leverage to say, "I will get my way on the shape of the new board by saying that I will provide some funding if I get my way." I hope that that does not happen. At the moment, the industry needs an injection of Government money to ensure that it survives.

Mr Kerin sent Mr McColl around Australia to talk to representatives of the grain industry and to provide a report on his findings. Supposedly, Mr McColl was to listen to the needs of the industry with regard to the marketing of grain Australiawide. I attended a public meeting in Dalby. It was attended by approximately 300 growers. Only two of the people at that meeting voted in favour of Mr McColl's proposition. Similar voting patterns were reflected across Australia. However, when Mr McColl reported to Mr Kerin, he took no notice of the needs of the grain-growers of Australia.

Mr Kerin adopted a similar course with the sugar industry. When the former Minister for Primary Industries, the member for Auburn, was overseas, I acted in his stead and took part in a delegation to Canberra to discuss with Mr Kerin and the Prime Minister the removal of the sugar embargo. I remember clearly that Mike Ahern, who was then the Premier of Queensland, spoke about the importance of the sugar industry and complained about the lack of consultation with the industry before the decision was made to remove the sugar embargo. After Mr Ahern had finished speaking, the Prime Minister turned to John Kerin and asked, "What do you have to say about that?" John Kerin's answer was as blunt as this: "We didn't talk to representatives of the sugar industry. We knew that they wouldn't agree with it, so what was the point?" The removal of the sugar embargo was a tragic mistake. It is reflected in the thinking of people who are involved in primary industries.

Mr Harper: It is the attitude of the Labor Party.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It is the attitude of the Labor Party. Unless Mr Casey can prove otherwise, people will retain those suspicions and that preconceived idea.

Mr Beattie: A cheap shot!

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It is not a cheap shot, it is a reality.

I appreciate that representatives of Bulk Grains Queensland approached the Minister and requested him to reduce the size of their board. As a person who is involved in the Queensland Graingrowers Association and as a member of the industry, I point out that there is a very strong desire that, as much as possible, grower control should be retained on the board. The people involved in the industry recognise that people with other expertise could be included on the board. The National Party's Primary Industries spokesman, the member for Warwick, has already foreshadowed an amendment, of which I am very much in favour. I ask the Minister to take note of people's perceptions and suspicions.

Other members have spoken at great length about other aspects of marketing, but this legislation is all about the shaping of the board. It is important that grower control is maximised. The board of Bulk Grains Queensland has certainly been innovative and has tried to reduce its debt. It has been maximising its earning capacity. However, it has reached the stage at which an injection of Government funds is needed desperately to safeguard a major industry of Queensland. At the same time, the board has to be shaped in such a manner that it has the confidence of the industry itself.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Carnarvon) (5.24 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I participate in this debate. I welcome the Bill's various provisions, and I support the majority of them. However, later on I will outline my reservations about a few matters and hopefully I will be able to articulate them from an industry point of view.

Before so doing, I want to refer to some statistics that involve Australia's rural industries, more particularly the grain industries. In 1980-81, the overseas market was paying US$174.74 a tonne for wheat. In 1898-90, it was US$176. As can be seen from those figures, a great advantage has been gained by the importers who, as is always the case, buy in US dollars.

I will now make a comparison in Australian-dollar terms. In 1980-81, the market was paying $152.05 a tonne. In 1989-90, it was paying $227.10. That illustrates some of the problems that rural industries in Australia are presently facing.

I refer now to the other non-statutory grains such as sorghum and maize. In 1980-81, in Australian-dollar terms, sorghum sold for $135.41 a tonne and in 1989-90 it sold for $147 a tonne. In relation to maize—in 1980-81, it sold for $169.22 a tonne, while in 1989-90, it sold for $165. In some cases, there has been a decline, not only in real terms but also in money terms.

I now point out some of the major production cost factors with regard to primary industry. This relates to the index of prices paid by farmers for equipment and supplies. Since 1980, those prices have risen by 187 per cent. The index of prices received by farmers has increased by 157 per cent.

When referring to the following statistics, I will refer to unit prices laid down by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. From 1981-82 to 1988-89, fertiliser costs have increased from 112 to 174. During that same period, fuel and lubricants increased from 109 to 145. Machinery, equipment and motor vehicles increased from 111 to 205.

Recently, I read that, from 1980 to 1990, Australia's interest rates rose approximately 200 per cent. From those figures that I have cited, I hope that some of the difficulties faced by rural Australia can be appreciated.

On the weekend, I heard a very, very apt quote that I think summed up the situation we are facing with regard to our overseas competitors who, because of their massive size—and I am talking about the EC and the United States—can afford to grow grain at a cost of $100 a tonne and give it away for $10 a tonne. I know that is exaggerating a little bit, but that is almost the situation we are facing. Because Australian primary producers have to be so competitive, they are faced with extremely limited cost/price margins.

On the weekend, somebody told me that when an American farmer dies he is buried two feet under so that he can still stick his hand out. I think that is a very, very apt

comment. I am sure that if American and European farmers were operating in Australia, they would not be able to compete with us.

I want to take up with the Minister a couple of matters to which he referred in his second-reading speech. He pointed out that two board positions would be appointed by the Minister, at least one requiring special qualifications. Perhaps that person may be from the industrial relations field. As I see it, that might not be too bad. As can be appreciated, over the past few years the problem with regard to sending our commodities overseas has been what happens to them from the time they leave the farm gate to the time they are loaded on the ship. That is where the cost margin seems to increase.

I welcome the commitment made today by the Minister for Transport to moves are being taken to clean up some of the waterfront practices. I hope that the Minister is succeessful in his endeavour. I will be supporting him 100 per cent. I am sure that, just like me, he appreciates that that is where the majority of the problems seem to lie these days.

Mr Hamill: I am reassured by your support.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the Minister. I am not just taking a broadside at the ALP.

Some of the representatives from the Queensland Graingrowers Association to whom I have spoken over the last couple of months have told me that originally they supported the concept that a representative from their association would not be appointed to the restructured board. I do not know how I should put this, but amongst many grain-growers there is an inherent fear of grain merchants. I think that that fear dates back to perhaps even before the 1930s.

Through my experience with grain merchants, I have come to exactly the same opinion as the honourable member for Cunningham. I have not had the experiences that many people in the grain industry have highlighted to me. However, I say to the Minister that, if he decides not to adopt the National Party's recommendation through its amendment tonight, the Government will have to get out and hard-sell this legislation to those people involved in the grain-growing industry because they do not trust having on this new, restructured board a member representing the seed and grain merchants. The Minister will have to watch that aspect.

Mr Hayward: There's only one, though.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, there is only one, and in light of that fact the industry is willing to compromise.

The industry would like to think that that remaining position could go to a representative from the Queensland Graingrowers Association. That association is also of the view that those two special representatives with the special qualifications should be appointed by the board, not necessarily by the Minister.

I have agreed to raise certain matters on behalf of the honourable member for Callide. She dropped this note on my desk before leaving for another engagement. These views are not necessarily mine. They come from industry people in her electorate. The note refers to the special provisions in the Bill for the two persons with special qualifications and states—

> "This is contrary to the wishes of both the QGGA and Bulk Grains Queensland. The industry requested up to two appointments upon the need arising. Casey has had the seed and produce merchants at his back door and has caved in to their requests. They should be challenged to declare how much grain they have put through BGQ. It would be more appropriate to have appointments from Queensland Treasury Corporation"——

A Government member interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: That is very interesting, but I would like the Minister's comments on this.

The industry makes those comments in light of the fact that the Queensland Treasury Corporation has agreed to finance Bulk Grains Queensland. The second appointment could come from the Queensland Railways.

The honourable member for Callide's note further states—

> "I understand the above amendment is being debated hence the memo. Contact me for more information."

I would appreciate the Minister's comments on that.

I will now refer to those areas in this Bill on which I do support the Minister. The Minister is attempting to eradicate political patronage on the board. I have always supported the idea of doing away with political patronage on boards, whether it is Labor, Liberal or National Party, particularly where those appointees may have a vested interest. I applaud the Minister's endeavours.

Mr Welford: You're going to get disendorsed.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I do not think so. I think it is extremely refreshing, and I am expressing the views of the majority of my party's members, just as I believe that I am expressing the views of the majority of the members of the Labor Party, who do not like political patronage. It has happened in the past, but I am trying to get rid of it.

Mr McGrady interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: No, in a few years' time when the Labor Party and the honourable member for Mount Isa will probably be on this side of the House.

Another aspect of the Minister's second-reading speech that I applaud is his concern for the industry, which is suffering dire economic problems with its production cost-price margins and with its export costs and marketing. The Minister states that he has called together key people to look at the industry's future for the next 5 to 10 years. I applaud the Minister for that approach. That is the way to go in the future. The industry has to sit down and work out where it is going and not make decisions with scant regard for the future.

I ask members opposite to seriously consider the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Warwick to increase the size of the board to 11 members, with a representative from the Queensland Graingrowers Association. It has been stated that, because the Queensland Graingrowers Association is no longer involved in marketing, it should not have a representative on the board of Bulk Grains Queensland. That is not necessarily the case. That association has been involved in an advisory role and has lined up sales on behalf of Elders since that organisation took over when the Queensland Graingrowers Association had financial difficulties a few years ago.

My attention has also been drawn to the fact that in the near future Elders will be selling that contract, and that the Queensland Graingrowers Association might still be involved in marketing, either in an advisory capacity or in selling. I ask that the Minister address that aspect, also.

The Minister should also remember that the Queensland Graingrowers Association has 4 000 to 5 000 members in Queensland. That is a substantial number of members for any association. Those members are involved in a great percentage of grain-growing in Queensland, and I believe that they would feel uncertain and sceptical if the Minister did not address the issues raised by me tonight.

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (5.37 p.m.), in reply: I thank those members who have contributed to this debate on one of this State's most important industries, the grain industry, and on the way it has been handled in the past and will be handled in the future under this legislation.

I will address a few points raised by some honourable members. I will deal firstly with the most unusual request that came through the member for Carnarvon on behalf of the member for Callide. As was pointed out by the Speaker this morning, the member for Carnarvon is a young man who has wide knowledge and interests. I have been in Parliament for as many years as he has lived. That may explain why he carried out such an unusual request.

I have a very simple answer for him to pass on to the member for Callide, whose name never at any stage, either last week or this week, appeared on the list of speakers for this debate, that the representations that she so rudely passed on to the member for Carnarvon ought to be placed back into one of her pigeonholes, preferably one where the pigeons camp.

During the past 21 years, I have been in this House with many members. It has taken me 21 years to find a hopeless dill in this place but I did during the contribution of the honourable member for Nerang.

Over those years, judging by the quality of the 200 members with whom I have served, I have found that most electorates try to send to this place a representative who can do something for them, but I am afraid that Nerang has definitely missed out on this occasion. The member for Nerang was absolutely ill-prepared. He has no knowledge of the industry. His contribution was shockingly presented. All that anyone who wants to campaign against him in Nerang needs to do is send a copy of his speech to all the electors in Nerang so they know what he is really like.

Another Opposition member felt that there was great suspicion in the grain industry that I might be aligned with John Kerin. I am aligned with John Kerin. He is the Federal Minister for Primary Industries and I am the State Minister for Primary Industries. Together, he and I will work in the best interests of the grain industry, the sugar industry and every other primary industry in this State. If there is any conflict of interest between us, John Kerin knows and this House can be assured that I will be in there fighting on behalf of the Queensland industry. Unquestionably, that will be my primary responsibility.

However, it will not come to that situation because there is a sense of cooperation between John Kerin and me, as opposed to the confrontation that existed under previous Ministers. That is why they are sitting in Opposition today. They were determined to have confrontation with whomever they choose, whenever and however they like. We have moved away from that situation totally and there will be cooperation with the Federal Government and with other States. Foremost in that cooperation and in those negotiations and discussions will be the Queensland industry. The honourable member for Condamine is well and truly out of kilter with Queensland Federal members who openly and honestly say that John Kerin is the best Federal Minister for Primary Industries whom they have ever seen in Canberra. There is no question about that.

Mr Elliott: How does he compare with Senator Wreidt?

Mr CASEY: Senator Wreidt was a fine man and another good personal friend of mine, but I think that John Kerin, because of his experience and his length of time in the job, has a proven track record. However, I do not want to be drawn into that during this debate.

I compliment the honourable member for Caboolture for his contribution. As he said, some 12 to 18 months ago, he, the honourable member for Archerfield, the honourable member for Bundaberg, who is now Chairman of Committees, and I undertook a comprehensive tour through the grain areas of this State. We met, sat down with and talked with grain industry leaders, grain-growers, commodity people and grain-traders and merchants. We learnt that some unfair things were happening in this industry. We made a determined move to change our party's policy. It was changed and put through convention so that we could stand proudly today and introduce this Bill, which will give a fair go to the Produce, Seed and Grain Merchants Association of Queensland and the grain-traders, who are very much a part of this industry. That is why I was

absolutely surprised to hear the honourable member for Nerang—not Nerang; he is the boofhead—the honourable member for Nicklin say that the Liberal Party——

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. I find the Minister's remarks offensive and ask him to withdraw them.

Mr Casey: Which one?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Woodgate): Order! The Minister called him a boofhead. I ask the Minister to withdraw.

Mr CASEY: I could say a lot more but I withdraw anything he found offensive. That would be rather unusual, I think, but I hope that that suits him.

The grain-traders are very much a part of private industry in this State. They are part of the so-called free enterprise that the Liberal Party expounds everywhere it goes. It says that it was a free-enterprise Government. Yet it wants to toss out the provisions in this Bill to make it open to other people who have a big stake—a total stake—in the industry, just as the grain-growers have a stake in the industry. They want to get on together and see the industry develop and prosper. That is all that the Government is doing with this legislation, and we will continue to do it. The honourable member for Caboolture assisted me to get this legislation into place.

Finally, I return to the Opposition spokesman, the honourable member for Warwick, and his foreshadowed amendment. He is very well known through the industry and he is a very good contributor to the debates in this House. He wants an additional member from the Queensland Graingrowers Association appointed to the board. I point out, as was pointed out by the honourable member for Auburn, that the negotiations for the restructuring of Bulk Grains Queensland commenced under the previous Government. Agreements were reached on certain aspects by the previous Government. I am not welshing on any of those agreements. As soon as this was presented to me on my appointment as Minister for Primary Industries, I spoke to the industry. There was harmony in the industry, and that is the way it wanted to go. I explained right at the outset that one of the two members with special qualifications whom I would appoint would be from the grain-traders. So the structure has been in place right from the time we took Government. The structure was in place prior to our taking Government. The Queensland grain-growers' position was well known right throughout the industry at that time.

I shall quote a comment from the *Queensland Graingrower*, which is not exactly a promotional newspaper for the Labor Government. It is dated 25 April, which was only a few weeks ago, and it states—

> "In an endeavour to show the lead to ensure that the board was as small and efficient as possible, the QGGA agreed not to press for a representative on the BGQ board.
>
> If there was a need for a member from the grain merchants/traders or from the QGGA then these two 'extra' expertise seats would cater for this."

I am quoting Mr Don McKechnie, the President of the Queensland Graingrowers Association.

Mr Harper: At the moment.

Mr CASEY: The honourable member for Auburn says, "At the moment." I assume that he is making a move to try to knock off Mr McKechnie as President of the Queensland Graingrowers Association. That is the evil intent behind the foreshadowed amendment!

Some of the members on the opposite side of the House not only cannot take being thrown out of Government, but also they cannot accept the fact that, irrespective of which party is in Government in this State, the representatives of the grain, sugar, beef and other primary industries in this State have a responsibility to talk with the Government. They have talked with me from day one of my taking over this portfolio. This is exactly what

is wrong with the National Party at this time; its members are most upset because industry representatives are talking to the Labor Party as a Government. People in the industry find this Government to be comfortable and acceptable to talk to because its Ministers do not have the same autocratic attitude as the previous Ministers for Primary Industries. We are prepared to listen to the grain-growers and all the other primary producers in Queensland. This is another hallmark of our Government.

I give the following undertaking to this House—one that I have given to Mr McKechnie personally and which I again give to him this evening—that the second person with special expertise who will be appointed to the board will not be appointed until such time as I have had full discussions with Mr McKechnie and the Queensland Graingrowers Association. I will give them the opportunity to present to me the names of the people who possess the necessary expertise that is spelt out in this Bill. I can do no more than that and the member for Cunningham—who is nodding his head—fully agrees that that is the way to go. Because that is the course I propose to follow, there is no necessity whatsoever for the National Party to move their foreshadowed amendment this evening.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

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

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

Mr BOOTH (5.49 p.m.): I wish to take this opportunity to reply to a couple of matters raised by Mr Casey in his reply to the second-reading debate. The National Party has no grouch against Mr McKechnie. At any time during my dealings with him I have always been received civilly. He is a pretty good man. I am certainly not behind any move to unseat him. I will leave that to the grain-growers.

I accept the Minister's explanation that whilst he holds this portfolio there will be fair play in the appointment of people to the board. However, all men are mortal—even I am—and the Minister could be moved to another portfolio. The Minister might do so well in this portfolio that the Premier moves him upwards.

Mr Littleproud: He might shift the Premier off.

Mr BOOTH: One never knows. After the bad position the Premier was in today, perhaps he will.

Mr FitzGerald: He might like that seat.

Mr BOOTH: The National Party believes that it is practical to have an additional member appointed to the board. He will report directly to the grain-growers. There will be no bias. It will give the producers another person on that board to attempt to keep control on their behalf. The Opposition has no animosity towards the Minister or Mr McKechnie.

I move the following amendment—

"At page 3, line 6, omit—

'10'

and insert—

'11'";

"At page 3, after line 31, add—

'(h) a person who is a grower and a director of the Queensland Graingrowers' Association, nominated by that Association.' "

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I support the comments of the honourable member for Warwick, who expressed confidence in the Minister because he has given his word that he will ensure that there is consultation. I point out that that assurance is not contained in the Bill itself, which is the reason why the Opposition has moved this amendment.

I take this opportunity to specifically mention the QGGA. It must be borne in mind that, because of the negotiations that are currently going on within the industry, the Queensland Graingrowers Association may in fact disappear as an association representing growers and another association may be put in its place. It would be a simple matter of amending the legislation and substituting the name of the new organisation. I accept the Minister's assurance that he will go through those negotiations with the industry body, but I would feel safer if it were written into the Bill by means of an amendment such as the one proposed by the honourable member for Warwick.

Mr HARPER: I take this opportunity to point out to the Minister that I have certainly no intention of leading any coup. The Minister would be aware of many people within the Queensland Graingrowers Association who have expressed dissatisfaction with some of the more recent actions taken by their current president. It was in that light that I made that brief interjection previously.

Proposed new section 7 nominates 10 members to the board of the authority. One point which has not yet been raised, but which is worthy of note—if for no other reason than to be recorded in *Hansard*—is that under this Bill the quorum of the authority will be reduced. The quorum will actually be six out of a 10-member board, which is quite significant when grower representation on this board is considered.

Mr ELLIOTT: I wish to state briefly that, obviously, I support the amendment put forward by the shadow Minister. I also state that I have no intention of becoming involved in the politics of the grain-growers. I must place that matter on record, because I would not wish anyone to go outside Parliament and misrepresent me. The other day, I was nearly in trouble with the Speaker because of what I may or may not have said in relation to another matter, which only goes to show how easily a member can get into trouble.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: It is suggested that the things I have done in the past are merely catching up with me, and perhaps that is true. I am not trying to be frivolous.

I simply state that it is obviously important to look to the future. I thank the Minister for his gesture, but point out that it is important to look ahead. Who knows who will be the Minister in years to come? Even Ministers in National Party Governments have a habit of changing. Having made those few comments, I simply reiterate my support for the amendment moved by the shadow Minister.

Mr KING: As I indicated previously, I support the amendment. However, I indicate to the Minister that I am extremely surprised to hear him read out the article he referred to earlier. I say that because, on Monday, 23 April at approximately 4 p.m., I attended the growers' board meeting that the Minister mentioned. I wrote down the following statement, which was made to me at the meeting—

> "We don't want a produce merchant representative, but since there is, we want a rep from our association and will fight for one."

I find it very hard to believe——

Mr Casey: Who are you quoting?

Mr KING: I know. I simply want to state that——

Mr Casey: You are quoting some unknown person?

Mr KING: I am quoting the chairman of the board, Mr McKechnie.

Mr Casey: The chairman of the Bulk Grains board?

Mr KING: No, Mr Don McKechnie.

I find it difficult to understand why there is such a big hassle over one additional board member who is representative of an important organisation. Even if the appointment were made at the expense of one of the single grower bodies—and three of them will be represented--it would not hurt to include representation from such an important association.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I wish to say that I am very heartened by comments made by the Minister. Although I am not trying to have an action replay, I point out that the Minister said he would leave one of the remaining positions open at least for negotiation after the Bill is passed by the Parliament.

The reason that I support the amendment is that it will guarantee that a representative from the Queensland Graingrowers Association will be included on the restructured board of Bulk Grains Queensland, which is an important issue. The member for Nicklin has said that some people have changed their views since the article cited by the Minister was published. I am sure that the Minister is aware of that, and is also aware that people involved in the hierarchy of the Queensland Graingrowers Association——

Mr Casey: He quoted a meeting held two days before that article that I quoted from.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I apologise, and I withdraw my comments.

I wish to refer to an incident that occurred approximately a week later. I also wish to refer to discussions I have had with people from the Queensland Graingrowers Association. I have spoken to two people who are members of the hierarchy of the association and who are involved in policy. I do not think it would be right for me to defame them by mentioning their names, but I must inform the Committee that they are very concerned that they will not be members of the restructured board of Bulk Grains Queensland. That is the reason why I support the amendment and, in the same breath, welcome the guarantees that have been given by the Minister.

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

AYES, 41

NOES, 24

DIVISION

Resolved in the affirmative.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The other amendment is consequential; therefore it is out of order.

Clause 6, as read, agreed to.

Sitting suspended from 6.06 to 7.30 p.m.

Clauses 7 to 13, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

GOLD COAST WATERWAYS AUTHORITY ACT REPEAL BILL

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (7.32 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to repeal the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 1979-1989, to provide for The Harbours Corporation of Queensland to take over the assets and liabilities of the Authority and to assume certain functions and powers of the Authority, to provide continuity of employment for employees of the Authority and for related purposes."

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) (7.33 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill will repeal the Gold Coast Waterways Authority Act 1979-1989. Such a move is long overdue and will be welcomed by everybody who has an interest in the long-term future of the Gold Coast waterways.

A number of benefits will come from this move. Firstly, it will provide for consistency throughout Queensland in relation to the development of our waterways. The same standards will apply across-the-board. Such a step is sure to please prospective developers, who will know that the same set of procedures and standards that apply throughout the rest of the State will now apply to the Gold Coast. That, too, will mean a more streamlined administration of waterways throughout the State and is in line with the Government's transport integration policy.

In future, the Gold Coast waterways will be managed by the Harbours Corporation of Queensland. That corporation has proven itself as an effective and efficient body for the management of ports and boat harbours in Queensland.

The Harbours Corporation currently manages six ports and five boat harbours, and its overall expertise will enhance the operations of the Gold Coast waterways area. The Harbours Corporation is staffed by Department of Transport officers and, as such, a close working relationship can be built between the Gold Coast waterways management group and other functions undertaken by the Marine and Ports Division and the wider Department of Transport.

When the Gold Coast Waterways Authority was established, it was provided with the same powers as other port authorities under the Harbours Act 1955-1989. But there were two important additional powers. The first related to the leasing of property. I believe that is one area in which the Harbours Corporation has the ability to apply a

policy Statewide relating to the use of all harbour land. The second additional power was that the authority was the approving agent for the erection of structures and the placement of moorings below high-water mark within the defined limits of the Gold Coast waterways.

Under this Bill, all construction approvals on the Gold Coast will have to be processed by the Department of Environment and Heritage and approved by the Governor in Council before work can proceed. By bringing the Gold Coast into line with the rest of Queensland, the Government is ensuring that our waterways as one will be managed more effectively and efficiently than in the past.

Another benefit of the Bill will be the input that we can expect from the Gold Coast City Council and interested community groups. For years, the views of council in the development taking place on its waterways were ignored. Now they, and the environment and interest groups who have a genuine desire for sensible, beneficial, long-term development, will be heard.

This Bill provides for the transfer of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority's assets and liabilities to the Harbours Corporation. I can assure this House that all current employees of the authority will be fairly treated. My director-general has been to the Gold Coast and spoken to them about their ongoing roles in the department.

The Bill also provides for the continuation of effective by-laws on the Gold Coast waterways.

Existing boundaries of control of the authority will be defined as a harbour, and existing by-laws which remain consistent with the Harbours Act 1955-1989 and the Marine Act 1958-1989 will remain in force until they are required to be amended.

As I have pointed out, this Bill will bring the Gold Coast waterways area under the control of the Department of Transport. I am confident that such a move will not only benefit the Gold Coast but will lead to the more efficient administration of all waterways throughout Queensland.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Harper, adjourned.

PICTURE THEATRES AND FILMS ACT REPEAL AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (7.36 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to repeal the Picture Theatres and Films Act 1946-1978 and to amend certain other Acts in related particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Burns, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (7.37 p.m.): I move—

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

Members will be aware that a major initiative of the Goss Labor Government has been to examine the number and the responsibilities of statutory bodies which flourished under the previous Government. Included in that examination was a review of the provisions of the Picture Theatres and Films Act.

This Act provides for the constitution of a Picture Theatres and Films Commission which is charged with control over the establishment and erection of picture theatres. The Act also contains certain provisions which specify procedures to be followed by film distributors and exhibitors when entering into contractual agreements for the hiring of films.

When the legislation was enacted in 1946, it was designed as a means for the Government to monitor and control a fast-growing and competitive picture theatre industry. With the advent of modern town-planning and building requirements governing the location and construction of buildings such as picture theatres, the responsibilities and functions of the Picture Theatres and Films Commission have been greatly eroded, leaving the regulation of the industry largely to local authorities and market forces.

In the circumstances, there is very little valid argument to justify the continued existence of the commission or the Act. Accordingly, the Bill repeals the Picture Theatres and Films Act. Additionally, however, it has been necessary to include in the Bill minor housekeeping amendments to the Censorship of Films Act and the Films Review Act as a result of the repeal.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Harper, adjourned.

HERITAGE BUILDINGS PROTECTION BILL

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (7.38 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for the listing and protection of heritage buildings and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr Comben, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (7.39 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill is an historic Bill. Its introduction in this historical House is a milestone for Queensland and the Goss Labor Government. It is the first time that Queensland has had meaningful heritage legislation.

The intent of the Heritage Buildings Protection Bill is to provide urgent but interim protection for significant items of Queensland's built heritage environment until the introduction of comprehensive built heritage legislation later this year, after full public consultation and comment.

In drafting this legislation, the need to provide urgent protection has been paramount. The provisions of the Bill came into effect on the date on which I announced that interim legislation would be introduced, 11 March 1990, and from that date properties on the Schedule to the Bill were covered. This urgency was necessary because there were no means, under Queensland legislation, to prevent destruction of important heritage items. The people of Queensland need only go back to the days of the infamous destruction of the Commonwealth Bank building to recall that.

The previous National/Liberal Party Governments had no interest in protecting Queensland's heritage, and certainly lacked the courage to implement proper heritage legislation. After 32 years of watching our precious past tumble under the demolition

ball, the Goss Government moved immediately to protect our heritage, and within six months of coming to power, it has ensured protection of more than 1 000 heritage places throughout the State of Queensland.

The introduction of this Bill to Parliament indicates that the Government is firm on its stated commitment to preserve Queensland's built heritage. Our Government has proven that it can make the tough decisions—the tough decisions which scared off the previous administration, leaving Queensland's heritage vulnerable and threatened. Those days are now over. This Bill, to be reinforced by the comprehensive legislation expected later this year, protects not only the heritage for all Queenslanders and, indeed, all Australians, but also the rights of those who own the heritage property.

This legislation effectively ends the era of midnight demolitions for which Brisbane unfortunately became infamous. The destruction of some of our finest and well-loved heritage buildings under the cover of darkness was nothing to be proud of, and the previous conservative Governments stand condemned for their failure to protect our historic environment.

The places listed on the Schedule are among the most important in Queensland in terms of their heritage value and community identity. The legislation does not set out to freeze development on every old property site or, indeed, stop legitimate development of listed properties. What the legislation does stop is unnecessary destruction of buildings and places which have an emotional and historic value to the community.

To further explain the intent of this Bill, I will give honourable members an example. If, for example, a private individual bought Government House, he or she would not be allowed under any circumstances to tear it down and replace it with a modern high rise. However, a redevelopment proposal for an old people's home, in comparison, is likely to be approved.

My point is simply this: this Government is not about tying up our heritage so that it becomes a static museum exhibit. This Government wants people to enjoy and live amongst their heritage, for heritage itself is a very living thing.

This historic Queensland legislation requires owners of heritage properties to gain approval before significantly altering the property, and that includes demolishing their property. Protected sites are listed in a three-part Schedule attached to the Bill. The Schedule is divided into Commonwealth-owned properties, State-owned properties and the residual properties.

Permits or applications for permits for demolition, development or subdivision of scheduled buildings issued or applied for prior to 11 March 1990, to the extent only of the approvals issued or issued thereon subsequent to that date, are not covered by the legislation.

Any application to demolish, develop or subdivide after 11 March must be considered by a heritage committee, established under this Bill. The committee comprises eight representatives of the architectural and engineering professions, local government, the National Trust of Queensland, the building industry and property-owners and managers.

A nominee of the Minister is the presiding officer. Other members are to be residents of Queensland who have a demonstrated ability or interest in building and construction, planning and heritage.

This committee will be required to consider applications for heritage certificates covering demolition, development or subdivision on or affecting heritage buildings. Such certificates will be an additional requirement over any approvals or conditions imposed by local authorities or other public authorities involved in processing such applications.

The Bill sets out the obligations upon owners of heritage buildings who propose to undertake demolition, development or subdivision of them and the procedure for obtaining a heritage certificate. It also prescribes the heritage committee's obligations in dealing with applications for heritage certificates. Put simply, the committee can reject an application, approve it, or approve it with conditions. Heritage certificates will provide

the means by which the legislation will be enforced. Without a heritage certificate it will be illegal to demolish or undertake any significant work.

If an application is made to a local authority and that application is not accompanied by a heritage certificate, then the local authority is obliged to submit a copy of the application to the presiding officer of the heritage committee, and it will be illegal for the local authority to issue any approval until a heritage certificate is issued.

The legislation also provides for the situation in which the heritage committee fails to issue a decision on an application within the prescribed time of 30 days. In these circumstances, the heritage committee will be obliged to issue a heritage certificate.

If an applicant is dissatisfied with a decision of the heritage committee, he or she may seek to have the decision reviewed by the committee and, if still dissatisfied, it may be taken on appeal to the Minister.

There are substantial penalties for offences as prescribed under the Bill—up to $1m—and it will rest with the District Court to set the level of fine. Further fines may be set for continuing offences. In addition, the legislation provides for restoration orders, which may be made by the Minister. Again, the penalty for non-compliance with such an order may be substantial—up to $1m. This maximum fine will only be applicable in the case of an ongoing offence or major offence.

It is appropriate that honourable members think of what a major offence may be. I am not talking about $1m fines for wrongly painting a house or pulling down one wall. I am talking about the sort of offences that could occur in relation to heritage buildings in the heart of the central business district.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr COMBEN: It will cover all of Queensland, including the area that the honourable member for Mirani represents. It does not cover World Heritage areas.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr COMBEN: If they are on the National Trust list or the Australian Heritage Commission list, they will be covered by this legislation. Although I appreciate that that might not be a totally comprehensive list, it is the best that is available to the Government at present. It is appropriate that the Government adopt a list such as that, which is so well accepted.

This legislation certainly covers areas outside Brisbane. Whilst the central business district and certain buildings therein were threatened, I appreciate the vast range of heritage in the western and northern areas of the State.

Another disincentive penalty under the Bill is a non-dealing order. Such an order may be prescribed at any time and may be applied to limit dealing with a scheduled property for periods up to 10 years. The legislation makes provision for such orders to be varied or lifted where circumstances warrant. It is intended that such orders be applied as a deterrent against action that is deemed likely to contribute to demolition, interference or neglect of a heritage building.

Because of the urgency with which the Bill has been drafted, it relies on properties that have been assessed by the National Trust of Queensland or the Australian Heritage Commission and are included on the National Estate Register. It is appreciated that those lists may contain some buildings which, after more thorough scrutiny, should be deleted. Likewise, the schedule is not likely to be fully comprehensive. It is the best list that is now available to this Government under the time restrictions.

In the future, under our comprehensive heritage legislation, the issue of a continually updated and evaluated schedule will be addressed. The Crown will be bound by the provisions of the legislation, but because some State-owned properties are already carefully managed by competent architects who appreciate the significance of the property and are eminently qualified to undertake restoration work, the Bill contains provision for

the Minister to waive the obligation for a heritage certificate to be obtained. Under such circumstances, the chief executive of the department responsible may apply to the Minister.

It is stressed that the Bill is an interim measure only and will expire on 10 March 1992, or sooner, when the long-term legislation is complete. Public comment on this legislation will be welcome as an input into the drafting of the long-term legislation, for which discussion papers are being prepared. They will be followed by a Green Paper, which is expected to be released in August.

It is intended that the discussion papers and the Green Paper will look much more comprehensively at the criteria to be used in assessing the heritage significance of properties and at ways and means of adding or deleting properties from the schedule. It will consider alternative arrangements for appeals to a tribunal or court against conditional approvals or refusals to demolish, develop or subdivide heritage buildings. The paper will discuss compensation for injurious affection.

However, the essential element of the present Bill, which any long-term legislation will aim to preserve, will be protection through listing and regulation of any acts of interference with the important heritage values of the particular item and, as a deterrent, very stiff penalties.

I commend this Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Harper, adjourned.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION CENTRES BILL

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—Attorney-General) (7.50 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for the establishment and operation of Dispute Resolution Centres, to provide mediation services in connexion with certain disputes and to amend certain Acts in related respects."

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) (7.51 p.m.): I move—

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

Disputes and conflict between human beings have plagued the human race throughout history, whether it be the existence of a state of war between nations or the minor wars which occur every day in interpersonal relationships between people.

Throughout the ages, various means of dealing with and resolving conflict have been devised. While the formal legal system which has been developed in this country and other English speaking countries provides appropriate dispute resolution methods for most issues, it does not deal adequately with others. It is recognised that the conventional court system is not always equipped to provide lasting resolution of disputes between people in continuing relationships.

Domestic disputes, disputes between employees and neighbourhood disputes relating to such issues as overhanging tree branches, dividing fences, barking dogs, smoke, noise and other nuisances are occurring continually in the community. While those domestic or "backyarder" disputes are often treated as minor matters, if left unresolved they can develop into very serious situations and, tragically, can result in the commission of violent crimes. Whilst the present legal system can deal with those issues while they are

still minor problems, the result is not always the lasting resolution of the dispute. The objective of this Bill is to encourage disputants to discuss their differences at an early stage before they escalate into far more serious problems.

Under the proposed legislation, dispute resolution centres may be established at which mediation services will be provided in a non-coercive, voluntary forum where, with the help of trained mediators, the disputants will be assisted towards their own solutions to their disputes, thereby ensuring that the result is acceptable to the parties.

It is proposed also to operate a network centre by the use of an 008 telephone number as a means for people in more remote areas to access the mediation service. When a person has contacted the network centre using the 008 number, the officers of the centre will contact the disputants and the mediators and arrange a time and venue for the conduct of the mediation sessions.

Mediators will be mostly lay people who are recruited from a wide cross-section of the community and who have been fully trained and accredited. Those mediators will provide a pool from which pairs of mediators are selected for each mediation session. The mediators will be matched as nearly as possible to the disputants, having regard to age, gender, ethnicity and other factors.

The main features of mediation sessions are—

- attendance of both parties at mediation sessions is voluntary;
- a party may withdraw at any time;
- mediation sessions will be conducted with as little formality and technicality as possible;
- the rules of evidence will not apply;
- any agreement reached is not enforceable in any court; although it could be made so if the parties chose to proceed that way; and
- the provisions of the Act do not affect any rights or remedies that a party to a dispute has apart from the Act.

In order to function effectively, the confidentiality of the services provided for under the Act must be adequately protected. The Bill exempts the dispute resolution centres council and members, the director and the director's staff and the mediators from liability in respect of acts and omissions if done in good faith for the purposes of the Act.

The Bill also confers privilege with respect to defamation concerning publication of documents or communications relating to mediation sessions. Evidence of anything said or any admission made at mediation sessions and documents prepared in respect thereof are not admissible in evidence.

Mediators will be required to take an oath or make an affirmation, undertaking to maintain secrecy with respect to information obtained in the performance of their functions under the Act.

The Bill amends the Justices Act, authorising justices to order matters to be referred to mediation, with the consent of the complainant, instead of issuing a summons. It also authorises justices to grant an adjournment for the purpose of referring the matter of a complaint to mediation.

The Bill also amends the Parliamentary Commissioner Act to circumscribe the authority of the commissioner—the Ombudsman—to investigate any administrative action taken by a mediator at a mediation session.

The Dispute Resolution Centres Bill is patterned on the New South Wales model, which has been very successful and has proven itself to be a truly effective means whereby citizens can seek a speedy resolution to disputes they might have with neighbours, family members, employees and others, in an informal atmosphere, at no charge to the disputants.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

SUGAR ACQUISITION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 May (see p. 1355).

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (7.56 p.m.): I do not intend to speak at length on this Bill, which is effectively a machinery Bill supported by the Opposition. However, I take the opportunity to endorse the intent of the Minister in seeking to extend for a further year the operation of the present sugar-marketing arrangements.

It is important that these arrangements continue, just as it is important to the future of the industry that there be no change to the point of acquisition of the sugar crop. I trust that the Minister will take on board the Opposition's view, which I believe correctly and accurately reflects the view of the sugar industry, that it is most important to ensure that the point of acquisition remains unaltered. In some quarters, there are suggestions and thoughts that that point of acquisition should be altered.

It is not surprising that the sugar industry feels uneasy when changes are being mooted and when there is a suggestion in the community along those lines.

Mr Casey: This is a change they urged you to make. You put the restriction on them.

Mr HARPER: I appreciate that the Minister was otherwise engaged with his colleague when I was making the point that the Opposition wholeheartedly supports the intent of this legislation. However, I take the opportunity to indicate the Opposition's concern at any suggestion that the point of acquisition should be altered.

I make the point again that it is understandable that the industry should feel a degree of uneasiness. All of us remember what Labor did to overcome a waterfront dispute in Melbourne at the end of 1988. Rather than offend some special mates, it opened the door to foreign sugar.

During the Christmas period, when there was a great difficulty in communicating with the courts, the then National Party Government endeavoured to take action to stop the introduction of foreign sugar in order merely to overcome a waterfront dispute which could have been resolved quite easily if, as was suggested recently by a member of the Federal Government, someone or other had a spine transplant. I indicate to the Minister that I am not referring to John Kerin, nor am I referring to him; the Minister did not live in Melbourne at the time. It was a dispute concerning Melbourne. I found John Kerin was an excellent person with whom to deal.

Mr Casey: You disagree with the member for Condamine, then.

Mr HARPER: I certainly disagreed with some of the philosophies put forward by Mr Kerin. He and I never quibbled about putting forward our own philosophical views. As I said, I found him an excellent person with whom to deal. I hope that I will be able to deal with him again.

The fact of the matter is, of course, that at that time the Government in Canberra was not prepared to take the action that should have been taken to bring into line some of its waterfront mates and some of the union officials. As a result, the doors were opened to the introduction of foreign sugar. Action of that type tends to confirm the unease that is felt from time to time, not only in the sugar industry at the present time but also, since the McColl inquiry, in the grain industry. In light of the recent actions of the Federal Labor Party, it is no wonder that cane-growers and grain-growers have a degree of mistrust. I deliberately place that blame on the Labor Party, not on an individual Minister.

The Opposition supports the Bill.

Mr KING (Nicklin) (8.01 p.m.): The members of the Liberal Party have a serious problem with this piece of legislation.

Mr Casey: Oh, no. You don't understand it. Is that what it is?

Mr KING: No. Search as we could, we could not find anything in it to be suspicious about. Under those circumstances, the Liberal Party will have to support the legislation.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr KING: Yes. One of the Liberal Party's friends in the National Party has still to speak, so there is a chance that he might come up with something.

The Liberal Party has checked this legislation with members of the industry, who have no problem at all with it. Consequently, I will not take up the time of the House. The Liberal Party supports the legislation.

A Government member: Come on, Jim, do likewise!

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (8.02 p.m.): The honourable member might be disappointed.

As the National Party member who spoke before me indicated, the National Party supports this Bill because it believes that it is in the interests of the sugar industry to do so.

Mr Casey: You have a vested interest. You shouldn't be allowed to speak.

Mr RANDELL: I don't know about that. The Minister has sugar in his tea, too, and so has a vested interest. However, I want to be quick, so Government members should not interject too much or I will take longer.

I take this opportunity to deal with a few matters that I believe are relevant to the industry. I will list them and I would like some answers from the Minister. I welcome the Minister's assurance in his second-reading speech that it is his Government's intention to continue the practice of State Government acquisition of the raw sugar produced by the Queensland sugarcane industry.

Unlike the previous Liberal speaker, I am a little suspicious of the following words in the Minister's second-reading speech—

". . . as long as it remains important for the effective marketing of the State's sugar crop."

I hope that the Minister's words are not a cop-out for some plans that his Government has for changes to clearly stated policy and the practice of the orderly acquisition of the sugar crop.

Mr Casey: No way. It won't be changed.

Mr RANDELL: Just let me go on.

Perhaps the Minister will say that I am overly suspicious, but others in the industry are also very worried about the future of acquisition and whether there will be any changes. Strong rumours have been floating around that sections of the milling fraternity have already had discussions with the Minister with a view to changes in the acquisition of the sugarcane crop.

If those rumours are correct and changes are made, there should be no need to tell the Minister of the far-reaching consequences that that move could have on the finances of cane-growers in this State. If the Minister is not aware, I warn him that future moves by his Government are being watched very, very closely. If there are any moves to change the point of acquisition, the sugarcane-growers in this State will rise up in unity and with total concern. I think the Minister knows that. I put these questions straight to the Minister.

Mr Casey: But I have answered them. I have given a pledge everywhere that we support acquisition.

Mr RANDELL: Okay. No, that is not it.

Mr Casey: We always have. We introduced the legislation. We set it up.

Mr RANDELL: All right.

I ask the Minister: firstly, has he had any discussions with milling groups who are pressing for a change to acquisition which would be to the detriment of every cane-grower in this State? Secondly, has he any intention of changing the method of acquisition and the point of delivery of acquisition? I do not want any ducking and weaving. I would like a straight answer to those questions, and many people will be awaiting those answers with interest and concern. I would like the Minister to answer those questions without saying that he is waiting for the report of the sugar industry working party.

That leads me on to another matter. The sugar industry working party is composed of very reputable people, and I congratulate the Minister on his selections. That working party is presently investigating the administration of the sugar industry, but I wonder where that report will go. I believe the Minister has said it will go back to the industry for comment. I am hopeful that it will not be referred to another committee for a further review. I believe that the Minister will take cognisance of the wishes of the total sugar industry.

Everyone knows that the Queensland sugar industry is a world leader and a model for sugar industries in other countries. It more than holds its own with any competition from any other country, provided they do not get unfair financial assistance or subsidy from their Governments. Many industries in other countries receive assistance; in contrast, the sugar industry in Queensland receives no assistance from the Federal Government—in fact, the opposite is the case, as the Honourable Neville Harper stated.

High taxes, exorbitant interest rates, high charges and the abolition of the sugar embargo are all matters creating an air of uncertainty and apprehension. The Queensland sugar industry does not want change for the sake of change. It must be remembered that Queensland has built up an industry which is a world leader in most aspects, with regulations and rules that have been in place for decades. I know that the industry has to have change to meet changing needs, but it should ensure it is for the better. I hope the Minister takes heed of that statement. If the Government is going to make a change, it should ensure that it will be better than what is in place now.

When the Minister was in Opposition, he created the impression that he backed the rules and regulations of the sugar industry introduced by the Labor Party. One needs to be careful of any changes.

I am concerned that there is a growing tendency for outside interests and outside people to be always telling the Queensland sugar industry where it is going and what it should be doing. Practical leaders and practical decisions are nearly always better than academics and academic reasoning. I fully support the QCGC decision to ask for a policy council to administer the activities of the growers and the millers in this State, particularly in the matter of acquisition. Such a council would be composed of three growers, three millers and an alternating chairman without a casting vote. In a practical way, the industry would have a body making decisions to influence its own future. The members of the sugar industry can run their own industry if given the chance and, more importantly, they can run it efficiently and properly.

My only other comment on this matter is that all of those members should be accountable to representatives of the official bodies representing millers and growers in Queensland. In no way should any body be allowed to grow into an old boys' club and go on indefinitely. They have to be accountable to the people whom they are there to represent.

Earlier this week I spoke briefly in this House on the matter of CSR establishing a sugar refinery in north Queensland. At that time, I mentioned the need for full investigation and consultation with cane-growers in this State before a decision is made as to where that facility should be sited. The industry will be looking at the acquisition

of sugar from that facility. At that time, I also put in a plug for Mackay, and I know that the Minister fully backs any such decision. It is an ideal site with a reliable and stable sugar production, excellent port facilities, a good work force and many other natural assets.

At present, there is a strong rumour around that Townsville will be the favoured site. I have no argument with that, provided that all other areas have been looked at honestly and fairly. I have no reason to doubt that this will not be done. Perhaps it is a coincidence that CSR has four sugar mills in the Burdekin, namely, Kalamia, Invicta, Pioneer and Inkerman, and Victoria and Macknade in the Herbert region. I understand that the refinery will initially have a capacity of approximately 650 000 to 700 000 tonnes. I would not like to be held to those figures, but they are the figures that I have heard along the grapevine. This is to be expanded to 1 million tonnes in the future.

The concern for me and for the industry generally is that in any future expansion in Queensland favoured treatment could be given to the Burdekin area. In the immediate past, we have heard statements from prominent Labor people in Canberra that the Burdekin should be given favoured treatment to take advantage of the water from the Burdekin Dam. I think Mr Kerin has said quite often, and I do not doubt that at one stage Mr Hawke has said, that, as so much money had been spent in the Burdekin, that area should be used more for sugar or for another crop to recoup the amount spent. I will never accept that proposition and I tell the House that I will fight with everything I have to stop it happening.

Productivity and markets have been built up by the total industry—by the tenacity and hard work of cane-growers and by the innovation of both growers and millers. They have to share and share equally in the rewards of expansion. Every mill area has the right to take up its share of any expansion. Any shortfalls should then be taken up by all mill areas if they can possibly take it.

In case members of this House believe that land is available only in the Burdekin region, let me give some figures. The northern area has 59 000 hectares available; the Burdekin has 45 797 hectares available; the Mackay area, which is represented by both the Minister and me, has 62 118 hectares available, of which, in my own area, Plane Creek has 17 570 hectares; and the southern area has 32 939 hectares available, making a grand total of 199 854 hectares available for sugar expansion. There is no way in the world that the Burdekin should be allowed to say that it has the land and the water and should be given favoured treatment. All growers have helped to build up the sugar industry and I hope that the Minister will be looking after Mackay.

I am in no way advocating that the Burdekin area should not get its share of expansion. As a matter of fact, if it did not, I would be the first to stand up and say so, but it should get only its share. Perhaps the Minister can give me his thoughts on the matter that I have just mentioned.

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (8.10 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to this debate. As was suggested by the honourable member for Auburn, the Bill contains a machinery amendment to ensure that the Sugar Board retains its full marketing powers for the next financial year.

Everybody in the industry knows that I decided to set up a working party, and the honourable member for Mirani has agreed fully with its membership. That has been the reception throughout the industry. The chairman of the party is a very prominent person. He was a member of the Savage committee which contributed greatly to the sugar industry.

The honourable member for Nicklin said that he had trouble with the legislation because he could not find anything wrong with it. He would be doing pretty well if he could find anything wrong with changing the year from 1990 to 1991.

It is an essential piece of legislation, and I thank all members for their cooperation in ensuring its passage.

I deal now with the contribution of the honourable member for Mirani. Again, as with the previous Bill that we discussed, there was talk of suspicion. Every Opposition member who spoke to the Queensland Grain Handling Act Amendment Bill or on the Sugar Experiment Stations Act Amendment Bill said that he trusted me. I ask Opposition members to continue to trust me because, during the long time that I have been a member of this House, not one member could claim that I have not been open and honest in the House and that I have not been prepared to stand and put my action where my mouth is. So there should be no expression of suspicion in these matters.

I have had discussions with all groups in the industry, and so has the working party. I think it is doing an excellent job. It has come back to me in recent weeks to see whether there are any other matters that should be referred to it before it has final discussions and gets the final report to me. It should be available by the end of the month, or shortly after. As I have said previously, as soon as I have it, I will get out and talk to the industry about the recommendations.

As I have so often said in this House, the sugar industry is the most important agricultural industry in Queensland. Because of the manufacture of raw sugar, it is also the most important secondary industry in Queensland. It has always been my expressed desire, and it is now my very great honour, to be involved with various groups of people to talk about the refining of sugar, particularly in north Queensland where the sugar is grown. In this way we will add value to the sugar industry. The few years ahead will be an exciting period.

I inform the House officially that I have received, from the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, its recommendations on the expansion of the industry. Without revealing the full extent of its recommendations, let me say that, during the past week, I have had discussions with a number of grower and miller organisations. I can tell the honourable member for Mirani that the Labor Party has never had anything but a commitment to acquisition. I do not know why there is any suspicion, because that has always been the Labor Party's commitment. During the past week, I have talked on a confidential basis with people in the sugar industry, and I will continue to talk with them over the coming weekend so that, hopefully by next Monday, I will be in a position to make a major declaration on expansion in the sugar industry.

Mr Randell: At what point will that happen?

Mr CASEY: The point of acquisition so far as the sugar industry is concerned will remain where it has always been, which is the object of the Bill before the House this evening. The legislation ensures that it will remain in place for the next 12 months to give the Government time to get hold of the recommendations of the sugar industry working party. When the Government is able to assess these recommendations, it will be necessary to introduce major alterations to the sugar industry legislation during the next parliamentary session. However, it will not and should not affect acquisition legislation, which has been the keystone of the sugar industry since 1915 when it was introduced by a Labor Government in this State, but thankfully this legislation was never interfered with by the National Party Government during its 32 years of office. The National Party recognised the value to the sugar industry of that legislation and maintained it throughout its period in office.

I return to the point I was making before Mr Randell's interjection. Expansion in the industry will mean change. In the future, there will be a increase in the growing of sugarcane in certain areas. A determination will not be made that gives an unfair advantage to one particular region. My advice to Mr Randell, who is a sugarcane-grower and a part of the industry, is, "Clean your plough down, Jim, and warm up your tractor. Get ready to get out there and start planting if you want to have a decent crop in 1991."

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

RECREATION AREAS MANAGEMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 29 March (see p. 1051).

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (8.20 p.m.): This is a Claytons repeal of legislation, because before the election Government members stomped the length and breadth of this State telling everyone how they would repeal the Recreation Areas Management Act. However, in the clear light of Government, they have suddenly realised that perhaps this legislation is not all bad. The Opposition has no real argument with that because that is the Government's prerogative.

There are some great national parks throughout the world, such as Yellowstone national park on the west coast of America, which are a real asset to the public. They are well looked after and managed. I hope that the Government will not take the provisions of this legislation to an illogical conclusion by excluding people from national parks and merely providing walking tracks. This would not make full use of the parks, although I am against our national parks being abused, overused or in any way denigrated.

There appears to be some confusion as to what is the National Party's policy. The National Party believes in the use and enjoyment by the public of recreation facilities, accommodation and all the facilities of national parks and forestry areas and recreational areas which have been created round dams, etc. However, the National Party does not support the commercialisation of such areas. That is the National Party's official position. I do not have any argument with that philosophy. Tourist facilities or resorts can be created in an intelligent way in national parks and can enhance them—in other words, development that is below tree-top level, blended into the environment and totally aesthetically compatible with an area would be acceptable.

A considerable amount of travelling was undertaken to examine the compatibility of developments with the environment and the effects of covenants that were put on land in respect of the Q-zoo proposal. Although the Minister would know, many other Government members would not know that the last Budget allocated $180,000 for a Q-zoo concept. That money was set aside to employ environmental consultants to begin evaluation of sites and then to advise the Government as to the suitability of the proposal and the justification of it in terms of public interest. Other consultants were examining the commercial viability of the proposal and the ability of private enterprise to become involved in it.

The Q-zoo concept is very different from the conventional zoo concept. When the word "zoo" is mentioned, people immediately think of a place where people look at animals in cages, but that does not apply to the Q-zoo concept, which is designed to bring people to see the animals rather than bring the animals to the people in the conventional manner. The concept provides an opportunity to create a number of new national parks. I realise that that is part of the ALP's policy and that the Government intends to increase the percentage area of national parks in this State.

Mr Foley: Hear, hear!

Mr ELLIOTT: Members of the Government should not try to prosecute a quarrel. I am simply pointing out that the legislation is in line with that philosophy. If members of the Government would only listen, they may learn something.

Mr Comben: Before the election, your leader said that he would have increased it from 2 per cent to 5 per cent.

Mr ELLIOTT: I want to get on with what we are trying to do now.

This legislation provides the Government with an opportunity to embark, at no cost to the public, upon a whole new concept of environmental conservation as well as begin a whole new thrust towards environmental education. The Minister never stops talking about environmental education, and with some justification. Recently, I was at Currumbin when the Governor opened the new wildlife centre. I applaud that type of development and I would like to see more of those types of projects.

The Q-zoo concept provides an opportunity to educate the young people of Queensland and generally bring to the public a whole new concept in environmental education. If the Government fails to grasp that opportunity because it wants to play party politics, it will be the loser. People involved in national parks and other recreational areas realise the tremendous benefits that can be gained by adopting the Q-zoo proposal.

The Minister should also realise that the Q-zoo concept will be a boost for tourism. People travel from other parts of the State to visit the new types of recreation areas, and overseas tourists travel to this State to see the natural attractions that the Queensland environment has to offer. It should be remembered that overseas tourists can provide this State with valuable tourism revenue which will assist in improving Australia's balance of trade.

When I was Minister for Tourism, National Parks, Sport and the Arts for a period of approximately three years, the message was loud and clear that people did not travel to Queensland from overseas to see high-rise buildings. When a person has seen one high-rise building, he has seen them all. I will admit that some exceptions can be found in the world—there are some buildings that simply take one's breath away—but, generally speaking, high-rise metropolitan areas throughout the world are all very similar, and there is not much value in looking at cities that all seem to be the same.

Overseas visitors come to Queensland to visit rainforest areas and the outback and to see the unique flora and fauna of those areas. The Queensland Government has the opportunity to develop the tremendous potential that exists in this State, and, without despoiling or adversely affecting it, show it to the world. I am staggered that this Government has not taken up the issue and run with it. The homework has already been done because, as I said earlier, $180,000 was allocated in the Budget to begin the project at no cost to the general public.

The previous Government was aware that a developer intended to purchase one of two available sites. The first site that was available was located in north Queensland and the other one was situated at the southern end of the State. At the same time, another exercise was under way, but I do not wish to reveal its details. At this stage, it may not be public knowledge and I certainly do not wish to reveal any confidential information that would cause embarrassment for the Government. However, if that proposal had been developed, it would have provided this State with what could have been described as the embryonic stage of educating young children to appreciate their environment. Schoolchildren could have been guided through a complex that would have increased their awareness and understanding of what the Q-zoo concept was all about.

When I visited the San Diego Zoo in California, I noticed that the schoolchildren in Years 3 and 4 were being conducted on a tour of the zoo free of charge. The guides pointed out the features of the zoo and explained the concept to the children. The children learned a great deal. It was not only educational but also evoked a proprietary response from the children who lived in the area. The San Diego Zoo has been established for many years. Children who were part of the environmental awareness program 20 years ago are now members of corporate boards that are providing financial support for these types of concepts. The magnitude of corporate support that can now only be dreamed of in Australia is a reality in California.

No-one in this country has come to grips with that concept. We have an opportunity to achieve it. The people who are responsible for managing zoos in the United States are staggered at the opportunities that we have in Australia. We do not have a Victorian menagerie, with all the old buildings that people claim cannot be touched. We do not

have people claiming that, because an old house has been built for 105 years, it cannot be altered or touched. In Queensland, we have the ability to start a totally new concept utilising nature and to present it to the people from this State, from other States in the nation and from overseas. It is important that the Government grasps that concept and runs with it. I urge the Government to give that concept serious thought.

I have endeavoured not to play politics on the issue. I have had discussions with the Minister. To date, I have not made a public fuss about it. I urge the Minister to evaluate the closest site and make up his own mind on it. I will show him how that concept can be achieved without affecting his budget. He could then go to private enterprise and obtain expressions of interest to run the Q-zoo concept.

Those sites must be viable in their own right. However, the total concept must be a marketable commodity. Souvenirs should be offered for sale. Members might think, "Yuk, souvenirs. Must we have tin whistles and plates with photographs on them?"

Mr Schwarten: Clocks.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes, clocks. We saw a few clocks today.

It is a matter of horses for courses. In certain circumstances, one thing is applicable and another is not. When one is dealing with the environment, one must have souvenirs that are appropriate.

If honourable members visited the zoos at San Diego or the Bronx, or the national zoo in Washington, they would be impressed. Those zoos display small souvenirs worth a couple of dollars through to porcelain jaguars worth up to $8,000. It is staggering to see what has been done in the United States. Their corporate marketing is out of this world. It is done tastefully and makes money for the environment. It protects and enhances their programs. I urge the Minister to consider seriously that concept.

I am pleased to see that the Bill recognises the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Had I realised I would be speaking in this debate, I would have worn my blue National Parks and Wildlife Service tie. I was horrified when the National Parks and Wildlife Service logo was changed and its identity was submerged into a department. That was a tragedy. The National Parks and Wildlife Service had some of the best people in Australia working for it. Some of them came from the Primary Industries Department, some from the Forestry Department and some from other areas. They felt passionately about national parks and about protecting the environment. What is more, most of them were practical people. They could work with their hands and build things. They just went out and did their jobs, and they did them for little money. They were paid a pittance compared with what they were worth and what they could have demanded in the private-enterprise arena. They worked for the Government and the people of this State and received very little reward for it. But they really enjoyed what they did. They built information centres, stores and all sorts of fantastic things. Their whole identity was crushed and submerged, which was an absolute disaster.

At one stage, the officers of the National Parks and Wildlife Service felt that they were being pulled in two different directions. They felt that the tourist industry was important, but perhaps it was detracting from the environment. The staff underwent a program to involve them in their work. I decided that, if I wanted those officers to undergo the course, I should be prepared to do it myself. So I did. I took the same course as those officers. We had seminars at places such as Binna Burra and we achieved something together that made me feel proud. I felt that the course was worth while and I enjoyed it. I hope that most of those officers felt the same.

I urge the Minister to promote good feeling within the National Parks and Wildlife Service and make the officers feel good about themselves. They are performing one of the most important tasks in Australia. They should never feel badly about themselves.

I urge the Minister not to allow internal departmental politics to be practised. It is rubbish and should not be allowed. Those officers should be promoted on the basis of merit, not on whether they have a particular degree. When I was in charge of that

portfolio, I implemented a scheme by which people were promoted according to merit. It is important that people upgrade their qualifications—most of those officers were doing that—but we should not have cliques in the Department of Primary Industries, the Queensland Forest Service or the National Parks and Wildlife Service to be a member of which officers have to have a particular qualification to be promoted to a higher position. Unfortunately, that has occurred in the past.

I am pleased to see that the Minister is recognising the National Parks and Wildlife Service. He is putting the Director of National Parks and Wildlife back in control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, which is where he should have been all along.

There should be support for the various levels of accommodation within these recreational areas, whether they be in national parks, forestry areas or the camping grounds near some of the dams. The Government needs to obtain top advice in this matter. It needs to ensure that what it is proposing for these different areas is in harmony with the environment. There are some brilliant environmental architects available, some of whom have advised this Government and the previous National Party Government. If that sort of advice is obtained, the Government will really be able to put together something that is very worth while.

The Opposition will support this Bill. It is surprised that before the election the Government did not have the foresight to recognise that there are good recreation areas around and to come out and admit it.

Mrs Bird: What happened with Lindeman Island?

Mr ELLIOTT: That is the sort of vitriolic comment that is so often made in this House. If the honourable member knew the history of politics in Queensland, she would know that the member for Southport, the member for Toowong——

Mr Katter: And yourself.

Mr ELLIOTT: Yes, and Mr Bailey and other honourable members stood up and were counted on that issue. We stopped that proposal dead in its tracks—at some considerable personal cost, I might add.

As I have said, the Opposition is prepared to support this Bill. However, it urges the Government not to get carried away and fall into the trap of purely and simply looking at something and saying, "This is for the birds and the bees and so on." After all, national parks are for people. It is very, very important that that be borne in mind.

Mrs WOODGATE (Pine Rivers) (8.40 p.m.): I am pleased to support this Recreation Areas Management Act Amendment Bill.

As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, the Recreation Areas Management Act attracted a substantial amount of public criticism and debate, both before and after its passage through Parliament in 1988.

The three major objectives of the Recreation Areas Management Act are, firstly, to provide, coordinate, integrate and improve recreational planning, recreational facilities and recreational management on recreation areas; secondly, to provide for joint management of any recreation area where necessary or desirable; and, thirdly, to provide for the collection of funds from the users of the recreational facilities and services provided within recreation areas. These three objectives are likely to remain relevant in the long term, even though the Recreation Areas Management Act is presently under review. The first stage of the review has just been completed and involved a number of amendments, as an interim measure, to address the most pressing problems with the existing Act.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister also advised the House that, in line with a pre-election promise of the Australian Labor Party, the Recreation Areas Management Act would be repealed. However, it is necessary to undertake this repeal process in two stages, and this Bill completes the first stage. This is an interim measure designed to address the most pressing problems with the Act. The second stage of the review is

presently being undertaken by the Queensland Forest Service and the National Parks and Wildlife Service and will fully address the concerns expressed by both land-holders and the public. It is being oriented towards maximising land-holders' control of recreational management on recreation areas.

The three interim amendments contained in this piece of legislation are as follows—

- to provide for the continuing operation of the Fraser Island recreation area;
- to facilitate the completion of Brisbane forest park's transition to recreation areas status; and
- to address pressing recreation management problems in other areas of the State, such as Moreton Island and Green Island.

It is about the second interim amendment, that is the facilitating of the completion of Brisbane forest park's transition to recreation areas status, that I wish to speak.

Part 12 of the Recreation Areas Management Act dealt with the repeal of the Brisbane Forest Park Act 1977-88. This part of the Act was never proclaimed. Therefore, the Brisbane Forest Park Act is still valid. The reasons why that part of the Act was not proclaimed are, firstly, that the priority was to transfer Fraser Island to the new Act first, commencing with the new financial year 1989-90, and, secondly, that Brisbane forest park is a cooperative venture between two State Government agencies—the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Queensland Forest Service—and the Brisbane City Council owns 25 per cent of the parklands. Given this, and the fact that the Brisbane City Council had some significant concerns about the Act, no move was made to transfer Brisbane forest park prior to detailed negotiations with the Brisbane City Council.

With the passing of these amendments, it will be possible to commence negotiations with the council on the transfer of Brisbane forest park from its own legislation to the Recreation Areas Management Act. No doubt the council will also want to have input into the second stage review of the Act at the stage at which the Green Paper is published.

Brisbane forest park comprises one of the truly great beauty spots in my electorate of Pine Rivers. Stretching from Mount Coot-tha to past Mount Glorious, the park conserves natural bushland on the north-western outskirts of Brisbane. Open eucalyptus forest on deeply dissected ridges characterises the protected sites and better soils. Rainforest patches occur. Twenty-six creeks drain the park. Most of these watercourses are small and rocky, with intermittent flow occurring only after rain. Three of the creeks have been dammed, forming Lake Manchester, Enoggera Reservoir and Gold Creek Reservoir. Nearly all of the creeks and rivers contribute to town water supply storages serving Brisbane, Ipswich, Redcliffe, Moreton, Albert and Beaudesert.

Brisbane forest park consists of land under the control of the State Government in the proportion of 75 per cent, of which the State forests have 70 per cent and the national parks have 5 per cent, and the Brisbane City Council, whose 25 per cent share is made up of 20 per cent freehold and 3 per cent water purposes reserve. The council also has a deed of grant in trust of 2 per cent.

The State forests have been permanently reserved for the purpose of producing timber and associated products in perpetuity. These areas are managed to conserve the forest environment and all forest values. The national parklands have been reserved for permanent preservation, to the greatest extent possible, in their natural condition. Brisbane City Council areas are managed primarily for water-catchment purposes and recreation.

Apart from Cooloola national park, Brisbane forest park is the largest park in south-east Queensland. It is the largest park bordering a capital city in Australia. Its combination of size, proximity to the greater Brisbane area, its land tenures and diverse biological communities make the park an important component in the spectrum of recreation opportunities that are available to the surrounding community.

In my capacity as a Pine Rivers Shire councillor, and many times privately when my children were much younger, I visited Brisbane forest park. In fact, as recently as

last Friday morning I spent approximately four and a half hours driving through the area with Mr David Morgans, the manager of the park. We visited the four national parks that are included in the national park, namely, Jolly's Lookout, Boombana, Manorina and Maila. Those small national parks were traditionally set aside from State forests for their scenic values and to provide for the recreational needs of the visiting public. Today, far greater emphasis is placed on the nature conservation values of an area when it is considered for national park declaration, although scenic and recreational values are also important.

In close consultation and cooperation with the land-holders, the Brisbane Forest Park Administration Authority is responsible for the management of the lands forming the park for nature-based recreation purposes by the general public. Nature-based recreation covers a broad cross-section of activities. Facilities and programs provided at Brisbane forest park include 14 picnic areas, one formal camping area and opportunities for back country hiking and camping, and graded walking tracks.

The "Go Bush" nature-based activities program, which provides approximately 200 separate activities throughout the year, is led by expert convenors with back-up assistance from the park's band of dedicated bush volunteers. Its activities include bushwalks, spotlighting, special children's activities, flora and fauna appreciation. I understand that between 5 000 and 6 000 people participate annually in the "Go Bush" program.

Special education programs are available for primary and secondary schools. They include talks and activities that are designed to utilise the park as an outdoor class room. The value of Brisbane forest park as an educational resource is evidenced by the fact that the Education Department has appointed a full-time teacher at the park to develop programs and educational materials so that schools can better utilise the park and its resources.

Bush Ranger Tours, which provides four-wheel-drive and minibus tours of the park, offer locals and visitors to Brisbane the opportunity to experience the delights of the Australian bush.

Two weeks ago, I attended the official opening of Walk-About Creek and the Freshwater Study Centre in Brisbane forest park. It was opened by the Premier, Mr Wayne Goss, in company with the Honourable Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Ed Casey, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Mr Pat Comben, and the Speaker, Mr Jim Fouras. I strongly urge any honourable members of this House who have not visited that remarkable facility to do so. It is well worth a visit.

The facility at Walk-About Creek is a two-storey building. The lower level is the Walk-About Creek/Freshwater Study Centre, and the upper level is the Walk-About Creek Restaurant. The cost of the centre was approximately $550,000, which was funded from park development funds and a repayable loan through the Queensland Treasury. Lease payments from the restaurant and receipts from entry charges to the Freshwater Study Centre are expected to eventually cover loan repayments and the complete running costs of the facility. Although the Freshwater Study Centre and the restaurant are separate operations, they are expected to feed from each other by providing clientele for each other.

The Freshwater Study Centre is a re-creation of a freshwater stream which appears to flow through the building, highlighting the wide variety of flora and fauna that exists within freshwater environments. Wildlife, which is displayed in natural settings, includes turtles, frogs, snakes and lizards.

Mr Comben: Western swamp turtles?

Mrs WOODGATE: No, there are no swamp turtles, only special turtles and many varieties of fish, including the prehistoric lungfish.

Extensive interpretive signage is used to provide both an interesting and educational view of life in a freshwater creek. I am proud to say that the study centre is the only one of its type in Queensland. It was designed to cater for a broad cross-section of the

community. School groups can utilise the centre as an important component of biological and zoological studies, providing an additional element to the already wide use of the park for educational purposes.

As to tourism—the centre can provide interstate and international visitors with a rare insight into the intriguing life of an Australian creek.

As for the locals—the self-guiding design of the centre enables the general public to view the displays at their leisure, and represents a unique addition to the already broad range of nature-based recreation opportunities that are provided in the park.

Another initiative of Brisbane forest park which is soon to be available to the public is the Northbrook Parkway, over which I travelled last Friday. It is a 22-kilometre tourist road linking Mount Glorious with Lake Wivenhoe in the Brisbane Valley. Apart from providing better access to Brisbane forest park from the west, that road will link two of the region's major recreation resources, namely, Brisbane forest park and Lake Wivenhoe. As well, it will expand the outdoor recreation opportunities for the people of, and visitors to, Brisbane. It is expected that the parkway will be open to traffic by the end of next month.

In conjunction with the Queensland Forestry Service, Brisbane forest park is currently developing a range of recreation facilities along the road, including picnic and camping areas and walking and horse trails.

I am pleased that this legislation encourages cooperation between land-holders, encourages professional standards of management, encourages the raising of public awareness of the environment and, above all, protects those environments that have been set aside for conservation and recreation. I am very pleased to support the Bill.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.52 p.m.): I am disappointed with the Minister's amendments. Those members who were present in the Chamber in 1988 when the Act was first debated might well remember the words of members of the ALP in relation to the Recreation Areas Management Act. This Bill represents a patch-up and a big back-down. At that time, the Liberal Party—for the edification of the ALP—strenuously opposed the legislation. In fact, the Liberal Party led the fight against the legislation in its original form.

It was Angus Innes, as Leader of the Liberal Party, who first raised publicly the shortcomings of the Recreation Areas Management Act. At some later stage this matter was taken up by other groups in the community. As the historical records show, it was the Liberal Party that first opposed the Bill.

I think this legislation is a patch-up job. It is certainly a big back-down. Although some of the controversial sections of the Act are being amended, it is nevertheless an Act which the ALP said it would repeal. I think it was probably the Minister himself who said that when he was in Opposition.

Mr Comben: I said in the second-reading speech that it shall be repealed—and it shall be.

Mr BEANLAND: It is very good that it will be repealed. Of course, the question is: why is it not being done now? The Government has had more than five months in which to do something.

Mr Comben: These things take a while.

Mr BEANLAND: I am glad that the Minister is finding out what being in Government is all about. Government also requires decision-making. The Government does not know what decision-making is all about. Yet it used to berate the previous Government over the same matter.

Government members interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: Honourable members opposite should not get excited. I suggest that they all go back to sleep again.

According to *Hansard* of 24 November 1988, Mr Comben said—

> "At the present time, this piece of obscure legal drafting, the Recreation Areas Management Bill, has an unequalled reputation. It is the most draconian piece of environmental legislation that the Opposition has ever seen introduced into this House. It overturns 80 years of national park protection and legislation in Queensland."

I do not disagree with those terms. As I indicated, the Liberal Party strenuously opposed the legislation.

However, after studying this Bill very closely, I believe that the Act has not been patched up nearly enough. These amendments still contain too many wide-open gaps. What we are probably seeing is another sell-out, another back-room deal. At least that is what a number of environmental and conservation groups indicated to me when I spoke to them about it. They indicated how disgusted they were in relation to this matter.

Mr Comben: Name them!

Mr BEANLAND: I will get around to that in a minute. The honourable member should not get excited. It is marvellous how quickly Opposition members become excited when they are caught out. They have been caught out on this one. Even the National Party member who spoke on this Bill mentioned that the Government has been caught out. He remembers how members of the Government, when they were in Opposition, berated the previous Government about this matter and said that this legislation would be fixed up immediately they took office. The Opposition should not jump around about it.

I want to refer to this legislation clause by clause. Even if these amendments are introduced, development could still be authorised by the Government. It does not matter how many patch-up jobs the Minister has done on the legislation—as I indicated, he has not gone far enough—there is still the ability to get around the amendments. In fact, major developments can be carried out in national parks.

My statement is supported by some legal advice that I sought in relation to the legislation. For example, the legislation contains no definition of "recreation" or "recreational facilities". The expression "recreational facilities" means an area through which one can sail the Queen Mary; it is a wide-open gap. I am sure that the Minister is very much aware of that. I would have thought that, in bringing forward this legislation, he would have gone to the core of the matter and inserted in the legislation some definitions to close the gate and lock it.

According to the Macquarie dictionary, a "facility" is "a building or complex of buildings, designed for a specific purpose". Its definition of "recreation" is "a pastime, diversion, exercise, or other resource affording relaxation and enjoyment". It also means "pertaining to an area, room, etc., set aside for recreation". When one looks at those definitions, I think it is quite fair and reasonable for one to say that, because no definitions are contained in the Act, it is in fact possible for major development to occur in these particular areas.

Certainly, the Minister has deleted from the legislation the words "commerce" and "commercial". But it needs to be taken a step further. The Act should spell out what is meant by the terms "recreation" and "recreational facilities". The door should not be left wide open.

Some changes have also been made to the term "recreational objectives". But that does not overcome the matter that I am raising. Clause 8 of the Bill amends section 18 of the Act. Proposed new paragraph (b) of section l8 (4) of the Act states—

> " to grant on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit any person the right or privilege to carry on any recreation related activities in a Recreation Area including the right to operate a concession or franchise;".

The legislation contains no definitions. Thereby, terms such as "concession" and "franchise" leave the door wide open to allow commercial operators in on a major scale.

When I think of a concession or franchise—and I am sure most other members would do likewise—I think of the setting-up of some small kiosk or some other small undertaking that is operated either by a concessionaire or by someone who is given a franchise. There is nothing to say that it will be a small undertaking in keeping with what we might believe would be appropriate in the national park concerned. The Government could end up with a major undertaking being let out on a franchise or concession basis. When one ties that in with the other definitions, one sees that it is possible to do so.

I believe that I should again read clause 8. The Government proposes to delete the previous subsection and substitute—

> "to provide, coordinate, integrate and improve recreational planning, recreational facilities and recreational management of Recreation Areas"—

I point out that a definition of "recreation areas" is already included in the Act—

> "taking into account their conservation, recreation, education and production values and the interests of the proprietors;".

The Minister may seek all the advice he wishes. I suggest that he consult all his legal advisers, but he will find that it is still possible for the Government to allow major developments within the park if the Government of the day so decides.

Mr Comben may say to me, as the previous Minister, Mr Muntz, said in this House over and over again to the present Minister, that he is not going to allow this to happen. However, Queenslanders do not know that. Mr Comben might not always be the Minister for Environment and Heritage and assume responsibility for this legislation. He might not always be the Minister for Environment and Heritage in the present Government. In a few months' time, he might be replaced by someone else.

Mr Foley interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: Is the honourable member not listening to this debate?

Mr Foley: Do you say that is possible within the national park?

Mr BEANLAND: Yes, it certainly is. Do not bother waving your head. The honourable member can give me all the drum he likes. I am advising him that it is possible because the Government has allowed gaps.

Mr Casey: That has been amended.

Mr BEANLAND: I know what the Government has amended. I have been all through the amendments, but the amendments do not close off all the possibilities.

Mr Foley: What about the provision for the supremacy of the national parks legislation?

Mr BEANLAND: I will come to that in a moment. Mr Foley should not get excited. This House has to come to all those clauses. This will be the Lindeman Island case all over again, as the honourable member will hear in a moment.

It is still possible for the Government to do this. I did not say "the Director of National Parks", I said "the Government", and that means the Governor in Council—the Cabinet. I am not talking about the director. I am well aware of the definition, the terms and rights of the Director for National Parks. I will come to him in a moment.

Mr Foley interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: Just a moment. Do not jump the gun.

As I mentioned earlier, section 18, which refers to functions and powers, provides for restrictions to those functions and powers. Because the definition of "recreational facilities" or "recreation" is not contained in the Act, it is possible for major developments to be undertaken within national parks.

If one cares to move to proposed section 3 (a), which is what I believe Mr Foley, the member for Yeronga, refers to——

Mr Foley: No.

Mr BEANLAND: It is proposed section 3 (b), Objectives of Act, which states—

"to provide for joint management of any Recreation Area where necessary or desirable without derogating from the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities of—

(i) the Director of National Parks and Wildlife under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1989;"

I am well aware of that proposed subsection. If one cares to look at some of the responsibilities under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, one will see that section 25 on page 16 of that Act states—

"Principle of management of National Parks. The cardinal principle to be observed in the management of National Parks shall be the permanent preservation, to the greatest possible extent, of their natural condition and the Director shall exercise his powers under this Act in such manner as appears to him most appropriate to achieve this objective."

Keeping that principle in mind, one can well understand that the director of the national park is not going to approve a major development within a national park. I accept that. I understand that that is what happened with Lindeman Island. The director said, "No way are we going to allow this major development to occur in this national park." However, all honourable members know that the Government of the day attempted to override the Director of National Parks and Wildlife.

Mr Foley: But that's under the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Mr BEANLAND: Just a moment.

The matter then proceeded. As the member for Cunningham, Mr Elliott, stated, he, a number of his colleagues and Liberal members fought that proposal. I accept what Mr Elliott said, that he fought very hard to stop that proposal going ahead. Nevertheless, the point is that the Government of the day overrode the Director of National Parks. It is quite clear that that clause was contained in the National Parks and Wildlife Act. That does not get away from the fact that there is no provision in the Recreation Areas Management Act Amendment Bill stopping the Government of the day from overriding the Director of National Parks and allowing a major development within a national park.

It does not matter how much an honourable member claims it cannot be done, the fact is that the Government of the day can certainly do it because it has not closed off all the options.

Mr Foley: You are confusing this Bill with the National Parks and Wildlife Act.

Mr BEANLAND: With respect, I am not confusing any Bill.

The fact is that various people under the Recreation Areas Management Act Amendment Bill cannot override the Director of National Parks, but it does not stop the Government of the day from doing so.

Mr Foley: Under the National Parks and Wildlife Act, it says in (b) that it does not derogate from that.

Mr BEANLAND: I am well aware that the Bill says it does not derogate. I am talking about the director. Of course it does not derogate from the director's responsibility, but the director is not the Government. Quite clearly, the Government of the day—not the director or a public servant in the employ of the Government—can override the National Parks and Wildlife Act and this amendment.

Mr Comben: Mr Beanland?

Mr BEANLAND: I have accepted a whole host of interjections from the Minister. What is his point?

Mr Comben: What is there to stop any Government, whatever provisions we put in here, just coming in and abolishing any Act at any time? That is the result of your point.

Mr BEANLAND: It is not quite as simple as that. He is going back on his previous arguments. If the Government intends to amend legislation, it certainly can do so. No-one denies that. The Government is doing that tonight. The Minister is trying to simplify the situation and is drawing a red herring across the trail. Without coming into this place the Government can go off under its own steam and do it.

Mr Foley: What about clause 4 (b)?

Mr BEANLAND: I am not missing the point in clause 4 (b), neither do other people who have read it. They know what clause 4 (b) means, what the National Parks and Wildlife Service is and the loopholes that the Government is allowing to remain in this legislation. There is no point in referring me to clause 4 (b) all the time. I have looked at it and so have a lot of other people. They are quite clear on what clause 4 (b) means and does not mean. The big issue is that it does not stop the Government of the day from deciding that it wants to override the director and carry out some major development. One of the main reasons it can do that is that it has not prescribed definitions.

Mr Comben: Table your opinion. I tabled three in the debate last time. If you table it we will look at it. I will not listen to you; I will listen to Mr Foley.

Mr BEANLAND: The Minister can listen to whoever he likes. That is his prerogative. We know when he is drawing red herrings in front of us. The community out there knows that he is trying to con them with this exercise. He got rolled in Cabinet and that is his affair. He should not come in here complaining about it now. I am very disappointed that the right amendments are not being moved tonight. The Minister knows that. He should be including amendments to the terms "recreation" and "recreation facilities" and locking it up. That is what the Minister should be doing. He should be tying it up.

Mr Comben: The moment I did that you would say that I am locking up Queensland and I would be on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*.

Mr BEANLAND: The Minister is having two-bob each way. Just because he got rolled, he is taking it out on me. He should not take it out on me. He should take it out on his Cabinet colleagues such as Mr Goss. There is nothing stopping the Government from overriding the director. The whole thing brings back memories of what happened with LIndeman Island.

I will not say anything more about the National Parks and Wildlife Act. It is quite clear, under the terms of that Act, that it is possible for the Government of the day to override that Act without having any further amendments made to it. That could have been stopped had the proper amendments been brought forward tonight. I trust that the Minister will——

Mr Foley: You concede that the power to override the director is the power under the National Parks and Wildlife Act?

Mr BEANLAND: There is power under both Acts for the Government to override as far as I can see.

Mr Foley: Well, say what the source of the power is under this Bill.

Mr BEANLAND: There is no problem in relation to that.

Mr Foley: Can you say where there is a source of power under this Bill to override the director?

Mr BEANLAND: It is just hopeless. Yes, I can. I will have to turn up the main Act and go through it. That is where it is. The honourable member should not get carried away. He should go back to the main Act himself and check up to see what the words are and he will learn about it very quickly.

The problem is that the Bill provides a way out for the Government. When last in this Chamber the Minister——

Mr Schwarten: You are droning on.

Mr BEANLAND: It is not a case of raving on. The case is that the Government has been caught out. It is marvellous how all the little hounds and little fox terriers on the other side open up when their Ministers get into trouble. We are used to that. The previous Government had its hounds and fox terriers and they used to be turned loose and the members of the Liberal Party used to sit here and complain about the same thing.

Let me move on to something else—section 42 of the Recreation Areas Management Act. As this matter of police powers was last debated on 24 November 1988, I would have thought amendments would have been made tonight, but none have come forward. A great deal of time was spent in 1988 discussing those powers. Clearly there are no amendments and it is disappointing that that is the case.

Section 8 (1) of that Act has not been amended. The Deputy Premier was very concerned about it when this legislation was last debated. He was concerned about the charges that might apply to fishing. I accept the point that he made because it was fairly valid. Mr Muntz protested vigorously that he would not apply a charge to fishermen in Moreton Bay. He said that recreational fishermen would be able to go out there and fish. Again, there are no amendments to that section. I suppose the present Minister will tell me that as he will continue as Minister there will be no problems and that he will not apply any charge, but that is what the previous Minister said. It was not accepted then and it is not acceptable now.

I wish to speak briefly about the Cape York land management inquiry, which I thought would have commenced by now. It is an important inquiry. There have been long delays in discussions between the State Government and the Federal Government about this joint inquiry. Its commencement is long overdue. I hope that it commences in the near future so that further development does not take place. The longer the delay, the fewer the opportunities will be to enlarge the area of national park in the Cape York area. I trust that the Minister will talk to his Federal colleagues and advise the House as to the reasons for the delay. Recently, nothing much has been said about it.

Mr Comben: I will tell you in my reply.

Mr BEANLAND: I thank the Minister. I hope the progress will be swift, because the longer the delay is, the more opportunities there are for other developments to occur in that region. I believe that the Government should include more of that Cape York area in a national park and that it should get that inquiry under way as soon as possible.

To conclude, it is very disappointing that the Act is not repealed by this legislation. I accept that the Minister has indicated that he hopes to repeal it later on this year. However, it may not come back to this House for repeal, and I would have preferred that tonight the Act was repealed by this legislation. I am disappointed with these amendments, because many more could have been included in the legislation.

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (9.17 p.m.): It is a pleasure for me to rise to speak in this debate because I do not have the same reservations as the honourable member for Toowong. Government members have tried to point out to him his muddled thinking on this issue, and my colleague for Yeronga will finish the job more adequately when he is given the chance to speak in this debate. It will be shown quite clearly just how

muddled the honourable member for Toowong's thinking is. The intention of the Government is exactly as laid down in the Bill and it will achieve the ends which the Government intends it to achieve.

This seems to be the week in Parliament when some of the wrongs of the past are being put right. Social justice has finally arrived for the SEQEB workers, because they will finally receive the superannuation due to them.

Mr Connor: That they didn't pay for.

Dr CLARK: Yes, they certainly did.

Another piece of legislation that I am pleased to see passed through this House is the Drugs Misuse Act Amendment Bill. This week the Act was amended so that the sentencing powers go back to the judiciary. This is the week for beginning to right some of the wrongs of the past. In addition, it is the beginning of the righting of the wrongs that have been done to the environment.

When the Recreation Areas Management Act was introduced, its critics realised very quickly just what was intended by it. Clearly, the Act was designed to allow the white-shoe brigade to get one of those white shoes into the doors of Queensland's national parks. I am pleased that the Liberal Party was critical of that Act and the previous Leader of the Liberal Party, Angus Innes, believed that there could be water-slides, golf courses and all sorts of other things in national parks. The Act was roundly condemned by conservationists and at that time the present Minister, Pat Comben, argued exhaustively for the Act to be abandoned, because it was so draconian.

It is possible that some of the members of the Liberal Party and other members who were not here at the time do need to be convinced that this was the National Party's intention. I ask them to consider the following questions: why does this Act consistently refer to the fact that the commercial value of national parks should be taken into account in formulating management plans, and specifically allows for permits for commercial activities? I was pleased that the member for Cunningham said that he does not support commercialisation of national parks. It is a pity that he could not prevail upon his colleagues at the time who seemed hell-bent on allowing it. I also ask: why else was the power of the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service—who determines what happens in national parks—removed? Why was that power given to two bureaucrats—two departmental yes-men—and to the Minister, who incidentally was Minister for Environment, Conservation and Tourism at the time? This always was a very strange mix. Why else was the legislation framed so that the Act could take precedence over the National Parks and Wildlife Act? The last question was the crux of much legal debate at the time. It was clearly stated that there was legal opinion to suggest that that Act could be overruled. The National Parks and Wildlife Act has as its cardinal principle that national parks should be permanently preserved in their natural condition, which clearly is not in the interests of the white-shoe brigade.

The section of the Act that this House has heard about tonight clearly showed to me what a carte blanche this Act provided. Section 18 (4) (b) stated that under the Act the board could grant on such terms and conditions as it thought fit any person the right or privilege to do any specified thing in a recreation area. How is that for a catch-all or carte blanche? Just in case the National Party had not made it clear enough to its friends that they could do what they liked, it simply popped in another little section like that which allowed them to do just what they liked.

Members will note that this Bill addresses all of these concerns contained in the Act. It will be a great disappointment to those people who had great plans to establish commercial activities in our national parks. This legislation gives back the authority to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife Service and returns precedence to the National Parks and Wildlife Act. As a result, Queensland's national parks will be protected and be kept in their natural state. I do not believe the member for Toowong when he says that that is not the case. Members have heard already how he cannot

answer questions put to him. He is confusing what is contained in this Bill with the National Parks and Wildlife Act itself, which will be shown to him very clearly.

Finally, and most importantly, this Bill deletes totally any reference to commercial activities that would threaten the integrity of the parks. Once these amendments have been made, the legislation will be appropriate for the interim measure for which it is designed and for that period it will enable this Government to manage—as it was designed to do—areas with a complex pattern of recreational uses within areas of overlapping administration and tenure.

I acknowledge that the concept behind the legislation had some merit. It recognised the value of jointly managing national parks and forestry areas, if appropriate supporting legislation was available. It is for this reason that this amending legislation contains provisions that will control the development of Green Island in far-north Queensland as a recreational area. Because the surrounding waters and the area of land on Green Island have a number of different tenures—for example, national park areas, leasehold areas for various purposes, and public esplanade—this Bill is a suitable management device. Presently, the activities of the island are administered by a variety of Government departments, including the Department of Lands and the Department of Environment and Heritage; at the local government level, the Cairns City Council; and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Unfortunately, in the past, Green Island suffered neglect at the hands of the National Party. A management plan that was introduced in 1980 has never been implemented. The island still has an antiquated sewerage system that provides only primary sewerage treatment. Even at this stage, that sewerage system is still sending out into the waters surrounding the island and onto the reef a very nutrient rich "soup" that encourages vigorous growth of seagrass beds around the island—much to the detriment of the coral reef. I understand that that is part of the erosion problem that exists. The island has not recovered from damage that was caused in the past, and erosion remains a problem.

The 1980 plan recommended that only 1 000 people a day should have access to the island. It became apparent that no mechanism existed to control the number of visitors to the island. Earlier this year, the problem was highlighted when a company, Sunlover Cruises, exploited a loophole in the marine park legislation which allowed the tourism operator to arrive at the island at any time and bring any number of people, without first having to obtain a permit. Green Island was faced with the prospect of having thousands of visitors on any day.

What advantages will this legislation bring to Green Island? First and foremost, this amending legislation will allow formulation of a management plan—following public comment—that will control the activities undertaken on the island. This is the first time that the authorities will be given an opportunity to control tourism activities in the interests of preserving the conservation values of the island. In particular, for the first time, access to the island will be regulated and the number of visitors will be controlled. By virtue of this legislation, the conservation values of the island will be able to be preserved and people who visit the island will be able to enjoy the type of quality experience that they deserve, instead of being placed cheek by jowl with hundreds of other people. Tourists will be able to enjoy a unique experience and will take home with them memories of a tropical coral cay.

The legislation also provides control over the type and design of facilities that can be constructed on the island. Honourable members may recall that when Dreamworld owned the island, the proprietors promoted an intensive form of development, including the construction of 82 units, swimming pools and the whole works. It was an enormously intensive development that would have intruded on one of the only parts of primary forest that remain on leasehold land on the island. Under the provisions of this Bill, implementation of the management plan will afford a greater input into the types of facilities that can be built there. Generally speaking, the activities of visitors to the island will be able to be regulated in a manner that has not been possible in the past. More importantly, the management plan will have legal force. Regulations and by-laws will

apply to the island and will have to be enforced. No matter who holds a lease on Green Island, they will have to conform to the management plan. It gives me great pleasure to support the Bill.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Carnarvon) (9.28 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to support the philosophy of appropriate environmental management. I suppose one could say that I am from the same mould as that of the honourable member for Cunningham, because I am very much against commercialisation of recreational areas and very much in favour of long-term planning and capable management.

Mr Welford: You're a socialist.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I would not think so. I would simply say that the honourable member is a quasi-conservative.

This legislation has to be considered in the context of Australia truly being one of the most amazing nations on this earth. This country is the earth's oldest land mass and is estimated to be approximately two billion years old. In addition, Australia has some of the most marvellous species of animals in the world, for example, the echidna.

Mr Comben: Some of them are in this House, too.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, and I must say that the Minister would be one of the rare species. I must be careful not to chase some of the wild life out of his beard. However, that is enough frivolity.

As I was saying, Australia has some of the most marvellous recreational areas of any country in the world. I believe that the only way to preserve them for future generations is to continue what the National Party Government started, that is, management of recreation areas—including national parks and environmental parks—as appropriately as possible, and in accordance with the best available environmental model.

I am fortunate that two extremely attractive recreational areas are situated in my electorate. I refer to the Girraween national park and the Sundown management area. They are two areas that I hope to be able to visit often in the future.

Mr Comben: After the next election, we will be looking for rangers at Carnarvon.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Would it be presumptuous of me to think that the Minister is suggesting that the Labor Party will represent the area surrounding the Carnarvon electorate after the redistribution? Perhaps that would be a bit presumptuous.

I appreciate why it is so necessary for us to be able to preserve and to manage those recreation areas as appropriately as we can. Approximately a month ago, I was fortunate to be able to visit Fraser Island, which is in the electorates of Isis and Maryborough. We inspected the management program carried out on the island with a view to making a submission to the Fitzgerald inquiry into the long-term management of Fraser Island. It became abundantly clear to me that Governments can make mistakes with planning of recreation areas. They must be adept in designing and laying down guidelines to allow an integrated approach. Appropriate facilities, such as amenities and cabins, should fit in with the environment.

On Fraser Island, I was alarmed at the number of small children playing on sand dunes while four-wheel-drive vehicles travelled along the beach at 100 kilometres an hour. I am sure that the honourable member for Isis and the honourable member for Maryborough would appreciate that point. For the life of me, I cannot understand how no child or adult has not come to grief as a result of that traffic. There is background noise from the surf and there is the noise of children playing and people talking, and the vehicles charge across in front of them. I hope that regulations will be framed to control that.

I pay tribute to the wonderful work carried out by the Queensland Forest Service in managing areas such as Central Station on Fraser Island. I do not know how many honourable members have been to Central Station, but I must say that it is the epitome

of what I would expect to be an environmental recreation area contained within an environmental park. It fits in so extremely well. That facility is managed by the Queensland Forest Service. I ask the Minister not to exclude the idea that the Queensland Forest Service might be the best manager of some of those recreation areas.

On Fraser Island, people can take walks beside beautiful streams. The scenery is as good as I have seen anywhere. In fact, I imagine that I may not see such magnificent scenery elsewhere.

Mr Welford: I see.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Perhaps I can take the honourable member for Stafford with me the next time I visit Fraser Island. It might open his eyes.

While I am talking about recreation areas, I would like to pay tribute to some people who have their own private recreation areas. At least one of those areas is in my electorate. In reality, there may be many more. Graziers and farmers set aside areas that tourists from the city or people who are looking for that wilderness experience enjoy visiting. I do not know how much of a wilderness experience one can have on a developed property, but some people enjoy the experience of shearing a sheep, picking up some wool, canoeing on a river, doing some bushwalking, and even catching a fish. Those activities must be encouraged.

Contrary to what some honourable members might think, farmers and graziers are not necessarily troglodytes when it comes to care for the environment. If honourable members view them objectively, most farmers and graziers have a sense of environmental awareness. They know that they cannot destroy their land. They know that, once they destroy the land or lose the topsoil, it never returns; it is not there for the future.

I ask the Minister and Government members to realise that great work is being carried out by people on the land with regard to environmental awareness and their own private recreation areas.

Mr Pearce: There are some renegades, though, aren't there?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, and there are some renegades in the union movement. There are renegades everywhere.

Farmers and graziers should receive some credit from the Government, and perhaps even the Democrats and the Liberals, with whom, at times, they have fallen out.

Before I conclude, I raise the point that there may be an abolition of regional tourism areas.

Mr Comben: Come on! You've had your go.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I realise that this topic is not within the Minister's portfolio, but I believe it should be tied in with the long-term recreation area management that I am talking about. From Warwick to Inglewood, which is the southern downs tourism area——

Mr Comben: Come on!

Mr SPRINGBORG: The Minister would do well to listen to my comments on this matter. By abolishing the regional tourism areas he might put the kybosh——

Mr COMBEN: I rise to a point of order. I would like to know what regional tourism areas have to do with the Recreation Areas Management Act. Mr Speaker, I ask you to sit the honourable member down.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Some of the people who might wish to invest in the facilities in national parks or in environmental areas——

Mr Comben: What facilities? There will not be investment facilities in national parks.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I hope that the Minister does that. That is what I was talking about earlier.

Mr Comben: Is that your environmental policy?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes. As the honourable member for Cunningham pointed out, the Opposition is against commercialisation and it is for good, positive management of these recreation areas.

I will sum up what I have been saying. We must look at the long-term impact of some of these initiatives. In the past, we have found in Queensland and in the rest of Australia that all of the subordinate aspects that are included in Government legislation might affect a good policy in future. If the Government talks of abolishing the regional tourist areas, it may not find people who are willing to invest in environmentally appropriate facilities for some of the recreation areas.

Although I believe that the Government is on the right track, I see very many policy areas in this Bill. I just hope that the Government can keep going the way that it is without being too extreme.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (9.39 p.m.): I support the Bill, which seeks to amend the Recreation Areas Management Act of 1988. That amendments should be required so early in the life of the implementation of the Act is testimony to the fact that it was introduced in haste and against the wishes of the community at large.

Under the legislation as it now stands, no national park in Queensland is safe from commercial development. The only protection that the people of Queensland currently have in this respect lies in the knowledge that the Minister—who is a responsible Minister—has the environmental heritage of this State at heart. As part of a Labor Government, he will put the preservation of our environment ahead of quick and easy commercial gain.

Over the last 75 years, this State has built a superb system of national parks, preserving the best of the State's scenery and the unique richness of our flora and fauna. Until 1988, this preservation was guaranteed by the will of Parliament. The very foundations of the National Parks and Wildlife Service were enshrined in section 25 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, which states—

> "The cardinal principle to be observed in the management of National Parks shall be the permanent preservation, to the greatest possible extent, of their natural condition . . . "

Only Parliament could overturn this very specific charter. Only Parliament could override those provisions of the Act which were intended to protect our national parks and maintain their inherent natural qualities.

I refer to section 6 of the Recreation Areas Management Act, which the previous Government claimed would protect national parks. It states—

> "Subject to this Act, the provisions of this Act shall be read and construed with and in addition to—
>
> (a) The Forestry Act 1959-1987, the Land Act 1962-1988 and the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1984;
>
> . . .
>
> and do not derogate from acts referred to in provision (a) . . . "

Legal opinion at the time indicated that the phrase "Subject to this Act" could be construed to mean that specific provisions of the Act would, in essence, usurp provisions contained in earlier Acts. Clearly, the provisions which allow for the granting of a permit for commercial activity would be general enough to be interpreted as overriding the specifics of earlier Acts.

Once a national park had been declared a recreation area, there was no further need for any reference to be made to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife in relation

to the management of the park. I venture to say that the Act gave unlimited power to the board which was to be set up to control recreation areas.

Section 18(4) of the Act clearly states that the board has the power "to grant on such terms and conditions as it thinks fit, any person the right or privilege to do any specified thing in a Recreation Area including the right to operate a concession or franchise". Under the Act, this board was not required to gazette or give public notice of its intentions. In other words, it is not accountable to the public or the Parliament. Just who was to sit on this all-powerful board? This enormous power was to be vested in just two people—the Conservator of Forests and the Under Secretary of the then Department of Environment, Conservation and Tourism. The Director of National Parks and Wildlife—the director of the organisation charged with the preservation of our natural heritage—did not get a look-in.

Little wonder then that ordinary Queenslanders were fearful that the aims of developers would be achieved overnight. There would be no need for them to face the scrutiny of Parliament or public opinion. There is no doubt in my mind that this was the intent of the Minister of the day. Obviously, commercial considerations were to have a prominent place in those matters to be dealt with by the board.

Claims were made by Mr Muntz that the Act would have no effect on national parks and that its only concern was with recreation. Why was it then that those sections dealing with the objectives of the Act and the powers of the board made reference to "commercial and production values"? I refer specifically to sections 3 and 18 respectively.

The powers of the board in respect to permits could, under section 19, be delegated to any person or persons. This raised the spectre of the board delegating its powers to grant permits to the manager of a tourist resort on or near a national park which is part of a recreation area. The manager could then instruct his employees or other contracted individuals to do the work to construct buildings, establish golf courses, carry out a quarrying operation or cut timber. All of this could be done on a national park without any reference to the Director of National Parks and Wildlife.

Like the majority of thinking Queenslanders, people in the Mulgrave electorate were horrified at the possible ramifications of the Recreation Areas Management Act. Over the years, many approaches had been made to the local authority—the Mulgrave Shire Council—by developers eager to establish tourist and quarrying activities in the Goldsborough—the upper reaches of the Mulgrave River. The existence of adjacent forestry reserves and national parks had provided council with cause to take stock. This Act would have clearly emasculated the local authority's capacity to regulate development in this sensitive and beautiful area. This Act would have robbed local people of their right of access to a recreation area that they had long enjoyed free from commercial activity.

At the time, strong objections were also lodged by the Aboriginal community. Their organisation, Mullen Budda, had made application to the Government for preservation of sites of significance. These included a bora ring and cave paintings, as well as burial grounds. It was pointed out to me that they were concerned that the Government may use the powers of the Act to give the area over to commercial interests, who would exploit rather than preserve their heritage. Worse still, they feared that a developer could destroy that which can never be replaced.

Along with other community members, I raised my voice in protest and requested—as did many others—that the Bill, as it was then, lay on the table for detailed examination and eventual amendment. Such protests were to no avail. In the last days of that parliamentary sitting, the Bill was rushed through with indecent haste against the wishes of a wide-ranging coalition of concerned citizens.

It is significant that many members of the Government had serious reservations about this Act. They stand condemned, though, for not blocking its passage through this House.

I support the amendments contained in this Bill. They will remove immediately the most odious aspects of the Act in preparation for its eventual repeal.

I support the Bill.

Mr ARDILL (Salisbury) (9.46 p.m.): This Bill is the result of a very unsavoury and contentious chapter in the history of this House. I refer to the disastrous situation in 1988 when, despite the opposition of almost the entire population of Queensland, the anti-environment Minister, Mr Muntz, steamrollered the parent Bill through the Parliament.

The present Minister for Environment and Heritage, Mr Pat Comben, the then Leader of the Liberal Party, Angus Innes, and I opposed the passage of this Bill through the House from 3 p.m. until almost midnight. I do not think that we won any friends amongst those members on what was then the National Party Government side of the House. We fought the legislation clause by clause. On that particular afternoon and night, the only other speaker who opposed the legislation was Mr De Lacy. Where was the member for Toowong? He might have spent some time in the House during that debate. However, from what he said tonight, I doubt it. He does not seem to remember anything about that Bill. He is now totally confused about what it did and is even more confused about what this Bill does.

On that particular night there were plenty of opportunities for members to voice their opposition to that Bill. Mr Beanland took no part in that debate. He made not even so much as an interjection. I have the *Hansard* for that day, which was the last day of sitting of this House for the 1988 session. The record of the debate took up almost half of the *Hansard* of that day. Honourable members will probably well remember that they were all eagerly waiting to attend the function afterwards so that they could have their drinks and bickies. Unfortunately, Mr Comben, Mr Innes and I kept honourable members here until almost midnight. Nobody other than the public of Queensland thanked us for that. Although we did not win the day, tonight we have won the battle. Mr Muntz will go down in history as an example of putting the fox in charge of the henhouse, except that foxes are generally credited with having some intelligence as well as animal cunning.

This Bill is intended as the first stage of the abolition of this anti-environment Act, which is known as the RAM Act. I welcome the defining of "planning", "facilities" and "management", which have replaced the word "development" in the parent Act. That is very important. Clearly, what the National Party Government had in mind at that time was what the penultimate speaker mentioned, namely, the location of development in national parks. There is no doubt whatever that that is what Mr Muntz had in mind.

This Bill will have three effects. Firstly, it will provide for the continuing operation of the Fraser Island recreation area. Secondly, it will facilitate the completion of the transition of Brisbane forest park to recreation area status and will recognise initiatives that have already been taken, including the recent Walk-About Creek system and restaurant. Thirdly, it will provide a platform to attend to urgent management problems on Green Island, Moreton Island and similar areas.

Mr Veivers: What do you think Binna Burra Lodge and O'Reilly's Lodge are? They are sitting in the heart of national parks. Aren't they developments?

Mr ARDILL: No, Mr Veivers, they are not sitting in the heart of national parks.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! The honourable member will address his remarks through the Chair.

Mr Veivers: Well, what are they?

Mr ARDILL: Mr Veivers is joshing, because he knows the history of the area just as well as I do. The O'Reillys were there long before the area became a national park. They established themselves in that area, and the park grew around them.

Romeo Lahey and the Grooms of Binna Burra built on the edge of the park. That is not what Mr Muntz had in mind. He wanted to establish development within national

parks, including on the islands of what is loosely termed the Barrier Reef. This Bill ensures that that is no longer possible. Clause 4 of this Bill clearly gives back to the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service the right of veto over any sort of development.

I am closely acquainted with the problems of Green Island and Moreton Island. In fact, I can claim to be one of the first protectors of Moreton Island. I wrote the initial motion which took Moreton Island out of the area that this Government wanted, namely, an extractive industry zone.

In 1974, when the National Party Government proposed that all of Moreton Island be given over to sand-mining, I wrote the amendment which took the area out of that zoning and put it into open-space zoning, which was the forerunner of the present national park that covers a fair proportion of the island. I know a fair bit about Moreton Island.

According to recent newspaper reports, Moreton Island still has problems with idiots who go there and shoot birds or run over them. Other people drive vehicles along the beaches at breakneck speed. All of those problems have to be addressed. This Bill represents the first stage of the process to allow that to take place. Because it will enable proper discussion to occur with the Brisbane City Council, I very much welcome that.

I turn now to the establishment of proper recreation areas in forest parks. Brisbane forest park is a wonderful park area on the north-western side of Brisbane. It is a great credit to the people who were involved in its establishment, including the Forestry Department, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Brisbane City Council and individual land-holders.

The south side of Brisbane has nothing whatever to compare with that. I look forward to the day when this Government will be involved in the proper management of Toohey forest. The Government now owns 25 hectares—or 63 acres—of land in Toohey forest. That is something for which I fought for years. I was supported by the local people and eventually by a National Party member, who took steps to negate the idiotic suggestion of the Liberal city council to enable that land to be developed.

Mr Katter: Shame!

Mr ARDILL: It was a disgraceful act by the council of which Mr Beanland was the deputy leader.

To the credit of the National Party, that land has now been acquired by the Government. I believe that it gives this Government some say in the overall total management of Toohey forest. Toohey forest is a vital area to Brisbane. It is a green area. It is an area that is elevated above the surrounding suburbs. It is very important to the people of Brisbane, not only to those who live on the south side but also to those in the rest of Brisbane, because it constitutes part of the dress circle of green hills which are a feature of Brisbane. This city does not have a harbour, but it has a marvellous circle of green hills from the Enoggera rifle range to Mount Gravatt, Mount Cotton and Mount Petrie. Toohey forest is a major part of that dress circle of hills.

Another proposal that I put forward when I was a member of the council, and on which I took action, was the acquisition, at my insistence, of 100 hectares in the Karawatha forest to the south of the Sunnybank area. When I left the Brisbane City Council, it was proposing to acquire approximately another 75 hectares to make that a reasonable forest park. Unfortunately, again, the council of which Mr Beanland was the deputy leader reneged and failed to take the action to acquire the land which was then available to it from a Mr Paratz.

I hope that this Government will take part in encouraging the Brisbane City Council to do something about reserving that marvellous area of Karawatha. It is a magnificent area. It is of even greater significance than Toohey forest, apart from the fact that Toohey forest fits into the dress circle of hills. I hope that when funds become available the

Government will be able to assist so that it can take part in a management plan for Karawatha in association with Toohey forest.

Following the actions of the disastrous Mr Muntz, this Government and this Minister have taken steps as quickly as possible to rewrite the history of environment in Queensland. I can sympathise with the member for Cunningham in his attitude to national parks, to the environment in general and to the heritage of this State. I am well aware of his interest in it and what he tried to do against the odds of an uncaring, red-neck leadership in the National Party and people who supinely followed that red-neck support.

Mr Katter: You are being tough. That's strong.

Mr ARDILL: The honourable member was not there, but others were. The member for Cunningham must have had marvellous optimism if he thought he could overcome the type of leadership that the National Party had.

Mr Comben is in a different position. He is in a party which has a feeling for the environment, and he will achieve.

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (9.58 p.m.): The essence of this Bill is to reform a great injustice that was done to the people of Queensland and a great injustice that was done to the environment in Queensland. The essence of this Bill is to reassert the supremacy of conservation values and of the security of our national parks in the face of legislation which attacked those values. That reform is to the great credit of the Minister. This House owes the Minister a debt of gratitude in acting to bring this legislation forward in the early stages of this Government.

For many years, Queensland has had legislation to protect national parks. In particular, the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1984 went some way to doing that. It set out certain principles, which could well be strengthened. Nevertheless, it set out some important principles. Those principles were attacked by the Recreation Areas Management Act of 1988.

What principles were they? First of all is the cardinal principle, a principle of management, set out in section 25 of the National Parks and Wildlife Act as follows—

> "The cardinal principle to be observed in the management of National Parks shall be the permanent preservation, to the greatest possible extent of their natural condition and the Director shall exercise his powers under this Act in such manner as appears to him most appropriate to achieve this objective."

That was clustered round with a power under section 22 which forbade the Government of the day from alienating certain parts of the national park except in accordance with certain procedures that are set out in section 24. In other words, up until 1988, we had in place some statutory protection, set out in particular in section 22.

Mr Elliott: That's section 24 of the old National Parks and Wildlife Act, you mean?

Mr FOLEY: Yes.

That Act may be said to have had its defects, but at least there was some statutory scheme, and at least there was some protection at law which could not be overridden by a mere exercise of some official issuing a permit.

The essential evil of the Recreation Areas Management Act was that it made that Act have paramountcy over the National Parks and Wildlife Act. That caused the great outrage that the community saw amongst the environmental groups of Queensland who have guarded jealously the national parks of this State, and well might they do so.

That Act was clumsy. It was a piece of legislation that did not benefit from any process of adequate community consultation and, as a result, it was a piece of legislation that caused horror amongst environmentalists and widespread alarm amongst the community of Queensland.

By this Bill, the Legislature is reasserting the paramountcy of the National Parks and Wildlife Act over the Recreation Areas Management Act. It does it in plain terms by removing from section 6 of the Act the words "Subject to this Act", which will be disposed of pursuant to clause 6 of this Bill. It also does it by the amendment in clause 4 (b) which provides that——

Mr Elliott: That is clause 4 (b) of the new Act?

Mr FOLEY: Clause 4 (b) of the new Bill.

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr FOLEY: Yes, which amends section 3 of the principal Act.

Mr Elliott: The Recreation Areas Management Act?

Mr FOLEY: Correct.

That amendment is of great importance because it authorises—

" . . . joint management of any Recreation Area where necessary or desirable without derogating from the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities of—"—

and then it lists three people—

"(i) the Director of National Parks and Wildlife under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1989;

or

(ii) the Conservator of Forests under the Forestry Act 1959-1987;

or

(iii) any other proprietor in relation to a Recreation Area."

In short, that re-established the supremacy of the National Parks and Wildlife Act in the management of national parks. It restored what should always have been there.

It is for that reason that this Minister principally deserves great credit. It might be said by those who uphold the rights and the sanctity, as it is sometimes said, of private property, that the Minister should be congratulated further because clause 4 (b) (iii) actually elevates the rights of private owners.

Be that as it may, that is the central significance of this Bill.

Mr Elliott: How does it do that? I am just trying to understand what you mean there in clause 4 (b) (iii).

Mr FOLEY: I am happy to explain it to the member for Cunningham.

It clarifies that the power for management under the Recreation Areas Management Act is a power which must be exercised responsibly without taking away or derogating from the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities of any other proprietor in relation to a recreation area. For example, say that one has a private land-owner whose area is part of a recreation area duly approved and authorised and that once the management plan was in force it was not clear under the existing Recreation Areas Management Act whether the common law rights—the property law rights—of the private owner were to be still respected or whether they were to be overridden by the new Act. It is ironic that this Bill should fall from this side of the House, but it just goes to show the sort of mistakes that can be made when people hasten into legislation without adequate consultation. That is an interesting sideline, but I return to the central theme.

The people of Queensland owe a debt of great thanks to this Minister and to this Government for restoring the central sanctity of Queensland's national parks.

I turn to the extraordinarily confusing contribution to this debate by the member for Toowong. At a time when one might think that the members of this House could acknowledge and give credit where credit is due, and at a time when one might think that a degree of statespersonship would compel any honourable member of this House

to acknowledge freely and fairly that this is important reform legislation, one sees a dismal attempt to mount an attack upon the Bill in a form which is, in part, confusing and, in part, plainly wrong.

In answer to persistent interjections, the honourable member for Toowong was drawn to say that this Bill still left a power under the Recreation Areas Management Act for the Government of the day to proceed to development authorised by the Government. The central fallacy of that assertion may be simply demonstrated; that is, that this amending Bill makes the Act again, as it was prior to 1988, subject to the National Parks and Wildlife Act. In other words, if there is to be any alienation from a national park, if there is to be an attack upon it, then the Government of the day cannot go anywhere without having gone through those statutory restrictions set out in the National Parks and Wildlife Act. It is sad to see that that attack was mounted at a time when it is important that community groups should work together to re-establish the spirit of reform which is so necessary if we are to make the Queensland environment even better than the very fine environment which it is.

The honourable member for Toowong simply was wrong. He did not grasp, in his contribution to this debate, the significance of the amendments in this Bill to make the Recreation Areas Management Act, in the case of national parks, subject to the operations of the National Parks and Wildlife Act. The most penetrating contribution that could be offered was the need for further definition of "recreation" or "recreation facilities". That would add not a jot to the solution of the problem on which the honourable member was pressed during the course of his speech. It would add some greater legal precision, but it would do so in the case of those areas which are subject to the Recreation Areas Management Act. Take, for example, the case of private land in an area in which a recreation area management plan is in operation and it is decided to propose some recreational development. Whatever be the case of the private owner or other proprietor, if anybody, any entrepreneur or the Government of the day—the Governor in Council with all the Governor in Council's horses and all the Governor in Council's men and women—were to embark upon a desire for recreational facilities in a national park, there is but one source of authority by which it can alienate that land from the national park to do same and that is the National Parks and Wildlife Act. Accordingly, the need to pour scorn upon this important piece of legislation is unfortunate and, in a number of important respects, incorrect.

Mr De Lacy: It was a poor performance by Mr Beanland.

Mr FOLEY: Well, let me turn to the positive. The positive opportunity that this Bill presents is this: the example given by the honourable member for Salisbury of Toohey forest is a case in point. It is an island of great beauty in the urban jungle of Brisbane. It is well beloved of the constituents of my own electorate of Yeronga. The people of Tarragindi, Moorooka and Ekibin, in particular, have a very earnest desire to ensure that there is in place proper management for Toohey forest.

There is, as the honourable member observed, land held in Toohey forest by the Brisbane City Council, by the State Government and, indeed, by Griffith University. Whatever management plan the Brisbane City Council may come up with has the force of law in relation to the land owned by the Brisbane City Council. So, if one is to achieve an integrated plan for the whole of the forest, one needs some management plan with the force of law capable of applying, with the consent of the proprietors involved, to the whole of the forest. If there is one thing we have learned from modern ecology it is that one must look at the whole of the ecosystem and not look at——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr FOLEY: The mere mention of the word "ecosystem" brought a response of great magnitude.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Yeronga is making an excellent address, and I would like to hear it.

Mr FOLEY: I think, Mr Speaker, if ever one wanted an example of the response of what the ancient Greeks called Gaea—what in modern terms we call "Mother Earth"—to an important point, we have seen it in the magnificent natural electricity continuity of supply with exquisite variations under this Government.

I return to the central point of this Bill.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr FOLEY: I am delighted that the honourable member is spellbound. Living on the Gold Coast he probably envies that great island of natural beauty—Toohey forest—of which I am proud to have a share in Yeronga.

Mr Katter: Len Ardill has a share in it.

Mr FOLEY: History books will record Len Ardill as a man who, in this House and in the Brisbane City Council, has for years fought for Toohey forest. His name is renowned throughout the suburbs of Brisbane as the man who has kept Toohey forest for this generation and for future generations.

What we need, in plain terms, is a scheme of law which includes a management plan that brings together the Brisbane City Council, the State Government and a private proprietor such as Griffith University. There is no way in the world that the previous Recreation Areas Management Act——

Mr Mackenroth: You are doing well, Mr Foley.

Mr FOLEY: I am delighted that the learned Leader of the House is so moved by the speech that he feels that to add to it would be superfluous. Notwithstanding that fine compliment from the Leader of the House, I want to make this plain point: the people who live in Tarragindi and Moorooka are entitled to know what this Government and this Parliament have in mind. They have in mind a sensible and well-respected scheme of management plans that, hopefully, in the future, will be able to do away with the Recreation Areas Management Act. This is the first important step towards getting some credibility back into management schemes for conservation by abolishing those repugnant provisions and putting back some decent law.

When there is a credible piece of legislation under which a relevant management scheme could be obtained with the consent of each of those parties, there will be the opportunity to have a properly researched and environmentally sound management plan which will enable Toohey forest to be handed on to future generations who so richly deserve to have that island of beauty on their doorstep. I support the Bill before the House.

Hon. P. COMBEN (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (10.17 p.m.), in reply: I give my thanks to all honourable members for their support of the Bill. However, it is appropriate on an important piece of legislation such as this that I reiterate, firstly, this Government's intention to repeal this Act and, secondly, the purpose of this amending legislation.

The purpose of the legislation is to ensure the paramountcy of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, that there is no provision for anyone to build five-star, five-storey hotels in Queensland's national parks, and to reinstate the Director of the National Parks and Wildlife Service within the planning process of recreational areas. This Government gave a commitment that this Act would be repealed, and it will be repealed. However, we face the reality that, in many areas, we need to have this Act for certain purposes, primarily Moreton Island. There is not one Brisbane-based member who does not know the problems on Moreton Island. Now that there will be no five-star, five-storey hotels across Moreton Island, this amended Act can be used. If the Lord Mayor of Brisbane decides to start talking to the Cabinet of this State, the Government will be

able to devise a decent recreation plan for Moreton Island that will ensure that the beaches do not continue to be used as dangerous roads and that we can control camping, illicit dumping of litter and what people do on the island, in the same way as is done on Fraser Island.

In the short term this will give the Government an Act that it can use. It could not have used the old Recreation Areas Management Act. I commend the officers of my department, together with Mr Casey's forestry officers, for bringing these amendments into this House so that we can continue to plan for the environmental and recreational use of a number of places in Queensland. That is the paramount purpose of this amending legislation. That is what this Government set out to do and that is what it has achieved. Later this year Mr Casey will bring down a Green Paper which will have, as its prime intent, the replacement of the Recreation Areas Management Act. However, this Government wants to have full public consultation. The Government has not had the opportunity to have that consultation, and it is not the style of this Government to bring down such major legislation without proper consultation.

I will briefly address the comments made by each honourable member. The member for Cunningham, Mr Elliott, said that he expected the Act to be repealed under this legislation, but it is not. Obviously, the Act will be repealed. The Government will use the amended legislation, especially in the important area of Moreton Island. His speech was a Claytons speech. It was a speech about what this Government should do about the Q-zoo, when there is really no legislation to establish a Q-zoo. I have heard that the honourable member will be asking me questions about the Q-zoo, but he has not asked any. I will go to Darling Downs and have a look at that site.

The honourable member said that private enterprise will take on this marvellous project on five different campuses across Queensland and that this Government simply needs to give a little support. If this proposal is so good, private enterprise will take it on. If private enterprise wants to take it on, the Government will lay down the rules, set the standards and let them get on with it. We have no difficulty cooperating with private enterprise. However, when the reality is that there is a massive amount of money to be spent by the State Government, our priority is in national park research and acquisition. That is what the Government will concentrate on.

Queensland's flora and fauna need the bio-diverse integrity of their areas. It is this Government's prime objective to include that in the national park estate. The honourable member mentioned one zoo in this State, Fleays Fauna Centre on the Gold Coast, but that centre loses $200,000 a year. That is a legacy left to me by the previous Government. Yet the honourable member wants me to spend $180,000 initially, and then about $15m over the next three years! I am sorry, but it is not on the top of the agenda. I will look at the Darling Downs proposal again, but I have great difficulty in believing that it will go anywhere. However, I notice the honourable member got a nice trip out of examining those overseas zoos.

The Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service has indeed been reinstated in this State and morale is lifting rapidly. I will certainly circulate the honourable member's comments about what should be occurring on the staff. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is the greatest service in Australia. The staff of that service are a great band of men and women. These people go out there for too little money and very long hours, and in many areas they are not received as well as they should be. They were forgotten under the National Party Government and did not know where they were going. The research arm of the service was destroyed. It is time that the National Parks land Wildlife Service was reinstated as the premier service in Australia. This Government will do that without hesitation. Honourable members will have seen in the weekend papers that this Government has reinstated the research grant, which is only one of a number of initiatives that it will be taking. I thank the honourable member for Cunningham for his support of the Bill.

I turn now to the contribution made by Mrs Woodgate, the honourable member for Pine Rivers. Her love of the Brisbane forest park was plain to see. I enjoyed seeing

her a fortnight ago at the opening at the Brisbane forest park. The work that she put into this project before the election when she was a councillor is a tribute to her. If the honourable member wants some turtles in the region, in 20 years time we can probably import a few from the west. I know that the honourable member has seen them and thinks that they are great turtles.

The Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Beanland, believes that, because the House has just lost one lawyer, he will be the next. His standing as a lawyer was shown up well by the member for Yeronga, who destroyed his legal argument. The member for Toowong is not presently in the Chamber, but he is not another Angus Innes or Sir Samuel Walker Griffith. Typical of the members of the Liberal Party in this place, he is a faceless person. There are nine of them; these days they do not even make up a party.

Government members: Eight.

Mr COMBEN: I am sorry. There are only eight of them so they do not even have party status any more. I hope that he is not riding around in a chauffeur-driven car or enjoying the benefits of expert staff—but, of course, I am not vicious or vitriolic about these matters!

The point I make is that Mr Beanland said not one word when Mr Ardill, I and one other honourable member talked ourselves hoarse in opposing the legislation. It was a "great" night. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon on the last day of that sitting of Parliament, I spoke for 90 minutes. Members of the conservation movement were present in the gallery and cheered our efforts. It was a sad day when that Bill was passed. We lost the battle on that day, but the war was definitely won, and victory was sweet. The victory means that the Labor Party will govern for the next 12 years or so.

Mr Borbidge: You're a joke.

Mr COMBEN: It is not a joke. The Labor Party won the war over conservation issues, and part of the reason for the Labor victory was the introduction by the National Party of regressive environmental legislation.

The member for Toowong said that the conservationists to whom he had spoken regard this amending legislation as unacceptable. I challenged him to give the names of the people to whom he had spoken, but what did he say? He said, "I'll name them in a minute." I sat here and listened intently, but not one name came forward. The reality is that this legislation has been discussed and full consultation has been engaged in between the Government and the environmental movement. The members of conservation organisations realise the constraints that confront the Government, but they want to ensure that this legislation will work. This legislation can be compared to the curate's egg, because there is a lot of good in it. However, the curate's egg has now become completely sound and can be eaten for breakfast.

I thank the member for Barron River, Dr Lesley Clark, for the contribution she made to the debate.

Mr Borbidge: Who?

Mr COMBEN: Dr Lesley Clark—the member who replaced Martin Tenni. He was the man who used to eat crocodiles.

Mr Borbidge: No-one knows it yet.

Mr COMBEN: Dr Lesley Clark would be well known in this State. She brings to this House a great reputation among members of the environmental movement. She is a former leader of the environmental movement in north Queensland. Since she has been a member of this Parliament, I have very much appreciated her advice and assistance. She is a member of my legislation committee. Tonight, she has demonstrated her skill and knowledge of environmental matters. I appreciate very much the contribution she has made.

I thank the member for Mulgrave, Mr Pitt, for the support that he has given me in the past. Tonight, he shares with me the realisation that this is a great night for environmental protection. This Bill is the first of many pieces of amending legislation.

I have already referred to the contribution made by the member for Salisbury, Mr Ardill. Tonight, he has the Tommy Burns smile on his face. He is enjoying the fruits of victory that are very sweet indeed. I thank him for his assistance. Both he and the member for Yeronga, Mr Foley, mentioned the Toohey forest park proposal. I inform the House that by virtue of legislation that will be introduced by the Minister for Primary Industries, this Government will be taking steps to protect Toohey forest and similar areas. I can assure the House that the legislation that will be brought forward by Mr Casey will include provisions for a management plan that will have the force of law behind it. The Government expects to bring forward that legislation with the consent of the land-owners so that the entire area can be properly managed. That is what this Labor Government is all about, and that is the type of legislation that I expect to see introduced later this year. In recent years, Toohey forest has been mismanaged by the Brisbane City Council.

In conclusion, I thank the member for Yeronga, Mr Foley , who spoke of the evils contained in the Act. In outlining the evils contained in the Act, Mr Foley really only touched on the problems inherent in all environmental legislation that applies in Queensland. Not one of the 22 Acts that I administer could be described as even a reasonable piece of legislation. All the Acts are deficient. For example, not one successful prosecution under the provisions of the Clean Waters Act has been recorded in 16 years. The Fauna Conservation Act is virtually inoperable, and the Native Plants Protection Act is just a joke. If I say to my departmental officers, "Well, we could look at the Native Plants Protection Act", they fall off their chairs laughing, which illustrates the state of environmental legislation in Queensland.

This Bill represents the first in a series of changes that will be presented to this Parliament. Over the next two years, this Government will undertake a total review of all environmental legislation.

Mr Borbidge: It is your incompetence, not the Act.

Mr COMBEN: It is not about incompetence; it is about incomplete legislation.

I thank all honourable members who support this amending legislation. It is a step in the right direction. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. P. Comben (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

Mr ELLIOTT (10.30 p.m.): I wish to mention a few matters that relate to this clause, and I seek the Minister's explanation on them. I refer to the legislation and to the management of Green Island and draw the attention of the Minister to the problems associated with challenges to the validity of the Federal legislation governing the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Will this legislation apply to Green Island?

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Minister is behaving in much the same way as his leader behaved this morning while prompting the Treasurer.

Mr Casey: Get on with the job.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Minister was the one who interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr ELLIOTT: I apologise, Mr Chairman. This is a serious proposition. I ask the Minister to inform the Committee of the position in relation to Green Island, taking into account the problems associated with the Great Barrier Marine Park Authority. I want to know whether or not this legislation will overcome those problems?

Mr COMBEN: The Green Island problem is complex. We face the same problems in interpretation as the Federal legislation and by-laws under the GBRMPA Act faced when the magistrate interpreted "carrying for recreation purposes" as being not something which ferries do. I am not sure of the exact words. I am obviously not briefed on the matter. I could certainly give the honourable member a briefing tomorrow. However, we face a problem with it. We are not sure that we can successfully prosecute, if need be. At the moment, we are waiting for the amendments to go through the Federal House. Because it is the Great Barrier Reef, we believe that it is appropriate that they be Federal prosecutions. If the Federal Government fails again, we are ready and willing to have a go under the legislation, but there are some legal problems.

Mr ELLIOTT: The Minister raised the subject of Fleays Fauna Centre. I understand that he was talking to ICI about sponsorship. I do not have any argument with that. Fleays Fauna Centre has great potential for sponsorship. That is what I was talking about earlier when I referred to the San Diego zoo, where sponsorship was used to enhance the environment.

The Minister stated that it is costing the Government money to operate Fleays Fauna Centre. The former Government knew that that would be the position. I make no bones about the fact that I was responsible for purchasing that reserve. I do not apologise for it. I believe it was one of the most important initiatives that the former Government took. At the time, there was a lack of recreation areas and green areas on the Gold Coast. Unfortunately, in early days, not enough forethought was given to planning for the future. Now there is too much development in relation to the number of green areas that have been provided.

This Bill presents the Minister with an opportunity. I am not opposing the Bill, but perhaps the Minister is being hypocritical when he states that sponsorship should not be used. I would like the Minister to clarify his attitude on that matter.

Mr COMBEN: I am not certain what the honourable member is referring to when he talks about my attitude on the matter. However, because it is a matter that should concern most members, I will discuss Fleays Fauna Centre. It was given to the Government by the great Dr David Fleay. It really deserves to be a massive educational institution on the coast. It should also be covering its costs. However, because the former Government only ever really completed the first half of Stage 1—one of three stages—the centre has never achieved its potential. There is a natural area and there are some boardwalks. It does not have a decent kiosk and has nothing that is definitely Fleay's—no theme.

Mr Borbidge: It is still a very good facility.

Mr COMBEN: It is a very good facility. I am not going to knock it.

Mr Borbidge: You just did.

Mr COMBEN: Hang on. It is a very good facility. It is a great monument to Dr David Fleay, whom I met last Friday and with whom I had a great discussion. We talked about continuing the development of the centre through all stages. Only half of Stage 1 was ever completed. We cannot afford both in educational terms and in financial terms to have a facility where the real estate is worth about $8m and improvements worth about $500,000 have been made to boardwalks, yet the attraction is still losing money. I have made a personal commitment to have that reserve paying for itself within two years.

Mr Katter: You haven't answered his question, though.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If honourable members want to interject, they shall do so from their correct seat.

Mr Katter: Oh, sorry, Mr——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That is a reflection on the Chair. I warn the honourable member under Standing Order 123A.

Mr COMBEN: The Government will use sponsorship. It has no hesitation in using sponsorship or private enterprise. At present, I am investigating a variety of options to ensure that Fleay's has a unique theme so that it is seen as being something totally different on the coast. One option is to make the reserve a centre of excellence for research. That is only one of a multiplicity of options available to us. We intend to ensure that Fleay's has a decent kiosk which will make money, and that it has a unique theme. A research centre seems to be an option that is achievable and which would give the reserve a great competitive advantage.

Mr ELLIOTT: The former Government paid approximately $280,000 for Fleay's. The Minister just said that it is now worth approximately $8m. Earlier, the Minister said that the previous Government showed no foresight in acquiring that facility. I suggest that it showed great foresight.

I would also like to place on record that the reserve was acquired through David Fleay's good offices. He understood how important it was. He and I had a good rapport and he offered the reserve to the former Government at a reasonable price. It was a good acquisition.

Mr COMBEN: I do not dispute anything that the honourable member said. It is a great acquisition. The former Government showed great foresight in purchasing it. Where it went wrong was that it did not complete the plan that it designed. It got halfway through the first half of the first stage of a three-stage plan and then gave it away. As a result, the reserve has now started to go downhill in terms of the costs involved.

Mr Borbidge: It has not.

Mr COMBEN: No. The costs involved——

Mr Borbidge: Are you saying it has gone downhill?

Mr COMBEN: No. It has gone downhill in terms of the costs involved. The place is a great facility.

What the former Government did was not adequate.

Mr Borbidge: You said it had gone downhill.

Mr COMBEN: In terms of the loss that is being incurred. Each year, it is losing more and more, because there is no development and no continuation of the three stages. It is a great facility.

Mr Borbidge: It is less than 12 months since the last facilities were opened down there.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, a bit more of the boardwark and the theatre were opened. As well, the fibreglass trees from the Expo site have been installed. The former Government could not think of anywhere else to put them.

I agree that the reserve is a great facility. However, the former Government was not willing to find the money——

Mr Borbidge: You're talking it down.

Mr COMBEN: No, I am talking it up.

Mr Borbidge: You are rubbishing it.

Mr COMBEN: If the honourable member gives us another month, he will see that we are not talking it down; it is actually going up. At present, the Government is taking steps to spend a lot of money there.

Mr Veivers: How much?

Mr COMBEN: A lot of money.

The Government is taking steps to ensure that the project continues. It will make it into a great educational facility and also ensure that it has a unique theme. There is nothing that I would talk down about Fleay's. It is a great monument. In future, it will be a great facility. At present, it has not reached its potential. Fleays Fauna Centre has not reached anywhere near its potential. The result is that the Government has got to spend a lot of money on it—money that I would prefer to spend on the acquisition of national parks. However, a facility such as that, which has such great potential, must be allowed to reach its full potential. I would say that it will have reached its full potential in about two years.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—

Mr ELLIOTT (10.39 p.m.): I thank the Minister for saying that he would be prepared to inspect the possible site for a Q-zoo at Millmerran.

I think that the Minister is under a misapprehension as to just what members of the Opposition are talking about. They are not talking about it costing the Government $15m or anything like that. Initially, the idea was to purchase those lands and then have private enterprise get involved. There was no suggestion that it would be anything other than a nature conservation operation. The idea was to use National Parks and Wildlife Service rangers. Their salaries were to be paid by the private-enterprise operators.

I think that the Minister is looking at this in a different light from members of the Opposition. I will not bore the House by going on about it tonight. However, I think it is important that the Minister understands exactly where the Opposition is coming from. He does not understand the whole proposition at all. I would love the Minister to spend some time talking with Hugh Lavery, who understands the whole concept much better than anyone else. The Minister would then be in a better position to truly understand where the Opposition is coming from.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 10 to 13, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

REVOCATION OF STATE FOREST AREAS

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.42 p.m.): I move—

"(1) That this House agrees that the Proposal by the Governor in Council to revoke the setting apart and declaration as State Forest under the Forestry Act of all those parts of State Forest 3, parishes of Bowarrady and Moonbi described as Areas 'A' and 'B' as shown on plan FTY 1566 prepared under the authority of the Conservator of Forests, Department of Primary Industries and containing in total an area of about 190,824 hectares, be carried out.

(2) That Mr Speaker convey a copy of this Resolution to the Minister for submission to His Excellency the Governor in Council."

This proposal makes provision for the excision of areas totalling about 19 824 hectares from State Forest 3 on Fraser Island to permit the major portion to be added to the Great Sandy national park—a momentous motion before this House.

The area proposed for national park purposes, comprising some 19 700 hectares, contains the last major virgin block of tall satiny forest and rainforest south of Lake Bowarrady and inland from the Corrigin Sand Blow. The western portion includes large tracts of shrubland, heathland and swamp, which are inhabited by the endangered ground parrot.

Addition of the area to the national park estate will ensure the conservation of this environment and overcome a deficiency in the existing park, which contains limited representations of satiny and rainforest. This action is consistent with this Government's stated commitment to extend and increase in its first term the national park system in Queensland from the current 2 per cent of the State to 4 per cent.

Agreement has been reached between the Queensland Forest Service and the National Parks and Wildlife Service on a suitable State forest/national park boundary design. With the excision of areas of production forest for inclusion in the expanded national park and the significant additions to the network of scientific and feature protection areas proposed for the State forest, sustained yield will be recalculated and a reduced annual allocation determined. However, much of this is dependent upon the report of Mr Tony Fitzgerald, who is currently investigating this matter for and on behalf of the people of Queensland.

In conjunction with this action, the remaining area of about 124 hectares is to be made available for road purposes. The Hervey Bay City Council has offered no objection to this road dedication proposal.

I also want to put to rest the suggestion that logging has been carried out on block 17 on Fraser Island since the decision to expand this area of national park. Prior to the announcement by my colleague Mr Comben on 12 January 1990, parts of the area of national park on Fraser Island to which I have referred—some 30 to 40 hectares—had already been logged as routine practice. Current sales from block 17, which is within the proposed extension, were immediately cancelled after the announcement. There has been no cutting since that date on block 17, nor will any be permitted, as the area is to become national park upon the passage of this motion.

I strongly support the revocation proposal and commend it for approval by the House.

Mr ELLIOTT (10.45 p.m.): The Opposition does not wish to obstruct the passage of this revocation. However, I think it is important that all honourable members understand exactly what is going on. Today I took the trouble to buy a map, which enables one to understand exactly what is going on over on Fraser Island.

The other day in this House I asked a question in respect of area 17. For the benefit of those honourable members who are interested, I point out that area 17 is one of our more environmentally important areas. I am pointing to the boundary of national park No. 16, which is the Great Sandy national park. I asked whether in fact the cutting had continued till 20 March. If what the Minister has said tonight is in fact the case, why was the Minister responsible for national parks unable to tell me that?

Mr Casey: Because he is not the Minister for Primary Industries, and I am.

Mr ELLIOTT: It is interesting to note that, during the election campaign, the Labor Party announced that, when it came to office, it would declare Fraser Island as a national park. Since then, it has decided to change that a little bit. I have no argument with the Government of the day making decisions.

The Labor Party's announcement was almost like a company issuing a prospectus to see if people will buy shares in it. Basically, the people of Queensland considered the prospectus and said, "It looks very good." On that basis, those who were or were not in support of Fraser Island being included in a national park made a decision about whether or not to vote for the Labor Party. However, following the election, they discovered that the prospectus was not really issued by an honourable broker.

Mr Katter: I was pleased, though, that Mr Casey rolled Mr Comben on this one.

Mr ELLIOTT: Some people, including some members of the ALP who are in the Chamber tonight, probably would share that opinion.

People should not view this issue frivolously. Some parts of Fraser Island that the Government has chosen to include in national park areas are interesting. Some of those proposals were already in the pipeline prior to the change of Government. Fraser Island has a large area of heathland. Other genuinely attractive areas exist, including large areas of satinay. It is important to consider the possibilities of utilising for basic tourist purposes some of the access tracks that have been made in the past but are not being used at present. I am not suggesting that any of those tracks should necessarily be excluded from the national park. However, some tourist operators might be able to use them. It is important that many of the big trees are not cut down. In the past, many trees were ringbarked for timber or to clear areas on which to run cattle.

Mr Dollin: Silviculture.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is the word I was looking for—silviculture. I needed an old forester to help me out.

Mr Dollin: He doesn't know what he is talking about.

Mr ELLIOTT: He is doing well. Unlike some Government members who do not like to accept advice, I am amenable to accepting advice. I am not too proud to take advice from people who know what they are talking about.

Mr Borbidge: The member for Maryborough spent most of the election campaign fighting with Mr Comben.

Mr ELLIOTT: Is that what he did? I suppose he will do some more fighting with him yet.

Perhaps there is some merit in allowing those tracks through areas of large trees to be utilised for tourist purposes. Many people find those giant satinays appealing. I do not believe that the cutting of tracks through those areas would have a tremendously detrimental effect on the timber industry. I realise that some people in the industry would say, "If you give an inch, they will take a mile." I realise that some of the more extremist conservationists are like that and they will endeavour to do that. However, there needs to be a balance.

The National Party has not established a definite position on this issue. It spent some time with its committee on Fraser Island, talking to conservationists, people involved in the timber-processing industry and tourist operators. The National Party will be submitting a report to the Fitzgerald inquiry on Fraser Island. Members of the Labor Party seem unable to make a decision on this issue without Mr Fitzgerald holding their hands. That is their right. However, it would be better if they made the hard decisions rather than leave them to committees.

One of the members who spoke during this debate mentioned Cape York. If it is going to take the Government four years to make a decision about that region, quite frankly, we will be upstaged by Hawaii or some other place.

I do not wish to take up any more time at the House. I support the proposal.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.50 p.m.): The Liberal Party is pleased to support the proposal to include this part of Fraser Island in a national

park. Fraser Island is magnificent, particularly the area that the Minister proposes to take out of the forestry area and put into a national park.

As the Minister said, the area contains some magnificent, tall trees, including satinays and tallowwoods. All honourable members can be proud of this proposal, which the Liberal Party has pleasure to support.

Motion agreed to.

ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE AND SELECT COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Resignation of Member

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have received a letter from the honourable member for Toowong advising his resignation from the Electoral and Administrative Review Committee and the Select Committee of Privileges.

ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Appointment of Mr R. J. Quinn

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.51 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That Mr Bob Quinn be appointed a member of the Electoral and Administrative Review Committee in the place of Mr Beanland."

Motion agreed to.

SELECT COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Appointment of Dr D. J. H. Watson

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.51 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That Dr David Watson be appointed a member of the Select Committee of Privileges in the place of Mr Beanland."

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.52 p.m.): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 29 May 1990."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.