

**NOTE:** There could be differences between this document and the official printed *Hansard*, Vol. 316

**TUESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 1990**

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

**ASSENT TO BILLS**

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr Speaker—

Commercial Arbitration Bill;

Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act Amendment Bill;

State Housing (Validation of Order in Council) Bill;

Trusts Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;

Whistleblowers (Interim Protection) and Miscellaneous Amendments Bill.

**PAPERS PRINTED DURING RECESS**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have to report that the following papers were received in accordance with section 46J (6) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977-1988—

State Service Superannuation Board Annual Report 1989-1990;

Board of Trustees of the Government Officers Superannuation Fund Annual Report 1989-90;

Board of Trustees of the State Public Sector Superannuation Fund Annual Report 1989-90;

Golden Casket Art Union Office Annual Report 1989-90;

Commissioner of Land Tax Annual Report 1989-90;

Nominal Defendant (Queensland) Annual Report 1989-90.

**COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY; SITTING-TIME FOR TUESDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 1990**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! This being the first Tuesday in November, the Committee of Supply will sit until 1.30 p.m. and resume at 3 p.m.

**DISTINGUISHED VISITOR**

**Mr SPEAKER:** I would like to acquaint the House that Mr Bill Wood, member of the ACT Legislative Assembly and a former member of this House, is in the Speaker's gallery.

**Honourable members:** Hear, Hear!

**PETITIONS**

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

**Amalgamation of Board of Nursing Studies and Nurses Registration Board**

From **Ms Warner** (19 signatories) praying that the Minister for Health extend time for consideration of proposals in the Green Paper regarding the amalgamation of the Board of Nursing Studies and the Nurses Registration Board.

**Literature and Films Boards of Review**

From **Mr Barber** (77 signatories) praying for the maintenance of the Literature and Film Boards of Review and for a continuation of controls outlawing the sale of all pornographic matter.

**Middlemount Preschool Playground**

From **Mr Pearce** (113 signatories) praying for a temporary shade area to be erected over the Middlemount preschool playground.

**Rural School Needs**

From **Mr Randell** (125 signatories) praying that community wishes be paramount when assessment of the needs of rural schools is made.

**Taringa CIB Staffing**

From **Mr Beanland** (472 signatories) praying that the Taringa CIB be maintained and its staffing level increased.

**Police Authority to Deal with Juveniles**

From **Mr Beanland** (7 917 signatories) praying that more authority be given to police to deal with offenders under the age of 17 years.

**Fencing of Swimming Pools**

From **Mr Borbidge** (857 signatories) praying that the Parliament will not legislate to force owners of existing swimming pools to separately fence their pool when it is within a residential block with perimeter fencing.

Petitions received.

**PAPERS**

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

Reports for the year ended 30 June 1990—

Department of Transport

Bundaberg Port Authority

Cairns Port Authority

Gladstone Port Authority

Gold Coast Waterways Authority

Mackay Port Authority

Rockhampton Port Authority

Townsville Port Authority

Department of Primary Industries

Council of the Queensland Institute of Medical Research

Queensland Radium Institute.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Reports for the year ended 30 June 1990—

Trustees of the Funeral Benefit Trust Fund

Perpetual Trustees Australia Limited

Perpetual Trustees Queensland Limited and Subsidiary Companies Directors Report

Agricultural Production Group  
Agricultural Marketing and Development Group  
Land Use and Fisheries Group  
Queensland Forest Service  
Water Resources Commission  
Brisbane and Area Water Board  
Queensland Fish Management Authority  
Sugar Experiment Stations Board  
Timber Research and Development Advisory Council of Queensland  
Royal Brisbane Hospital Foundation  
Prince Charles Hospital Foundation  
Princess Alexandra Hospital Research and Development Foundation  
Royal Children's Hospital Foundation  
Townsville General Hospital Foundation  
Chiropractors and Osteopaths Board of Queensland  
Dental Board of Queensland  
Medical Board of Queensland  
Nurses Registration Board of Queensland  
Occupational Therapists Board of Queensland  
Optometrists Board of Queensland  
Pharmacy Board of Queensland  
Physiotherapists Board of Queensland  
Podiatrists Board of Queensland  
Psychologists Board of Queensland  
Speech Therapists Board of Queensland  
Report of the Tobacco Leaf Marketing Board for the year ended 31 December 1989.  
Reports and Balance Sheets for the year ended 30 June 1990—  
North Queensland Racing Association  
Queensland Harness Racing Board  
Totalisator Administration Board of Queensland  
Chairman's Report and Annual Financial Statement for the Trustees of the Willows  
Paceway for the year ended 30 June 1990  
Regulations under—  
Public Trustee Act 1978-1989  
Liquor Act 1912-1990  
Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982-1989  
Hospitals Act 1936-1988  
Proclamations under—  
Trustee Companies Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1989  
Bread Industry Authority Act 1990  
Sugar Acquisition Act 1915-1990  
Orders in Council under—  
Auctioneers and Agents Act 1971-1988  
Canals Act 1958-1989

Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982-1989  
Forestry Act 1959-1990  
Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act 1926-1989  
River Improvement Trust Act 1940-1985 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1989  
Sugar Experiment Stations Act 1900-1990  
Water Resources Act 1989 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1989  
By-laws under—  
Harbours Act 1955-1989  
Harbours Act 1955-1989 and Port of Brisbane Authority Act 1976-1989.

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

#### **Findings of Public Sector Management Commission Review of Premier's Department**

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.10 a.m.) by leave: As honourable members are aware, the Public Sector Management Commission—

**Opposition members:** We can't hear you.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I am not moving out of this seat.

**An Opposition member:** Get another mike.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** If honourable members keep quiet, I will speak up.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I was about to suggest to the Premier that it would be wise if he raised his voice.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** As honourable members are aware, the Public Sector Management Commission was established with a charter to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, economy and impartiality of the public sector, starting with a review of all Government agencies, within a two-year period. I am pleased to report that the first stage of this major review process has been completed and the Government will now begin to implement these recommendations.

The Public Sector Management Commission's first investigations were into the operation of the central agencies of the Department of Economic and Trade Development, including the arts statutory authorities and the Treasury Department, including the Bureau of Regional Development. The Department of Manufacturing and Commerce was also reviewed. Those reviews confirmed what was generally believed in Queensland: that is, that, notwithstanding the commitment and professionalism of the great majority of the staff, there is much room for improvement. The reviews highlight the poor management practices adopted by the previous Government and reflect the years of neglect of significant sections of the State public service during successive Liberal Party and National Party administrations, mainly due to a failure to adopt modern management methods and because of continual political meddling in administrative matters.

I congratulate the Public Sector Management Commission on the thoroughly professional manner in which it prepared its reports, involving wide consultation. At this point, I note that I was disappointed that the National and Liberal Party leaders, who were invited to make submissions, did not have anything to offer. The reports have also been endorsed by the Public Sector Management Commission advisory board, which is made up of prominent representatives of the business community and the trade unions. The Public Sector Management Commission has completed its first round of reviews in a very tight three-month time-frame and the Government will now implement those recommendations through steering committees in each agency.

This morning, I want to briefly outline the changes which will be implemented in the Premier's Department. The Minister for Manufacturing, Commerce and Small Business will outline the changes for his department and, later this month, the Treasurer, Mr De Lacy, will make a statement about how the process will affect the Treasury Department.

Changes to be made in the Premier's Department, which complement changes the Government made when it first attained office, will mean a leaner, consolidated and refocused organisation. The new structure of the department completes its translation to a modern central agency role concerned with policy advice rather than with the previous project-oriented Coordinator-General's type role. A new Policy Coordination Division has been established, a division head appointed and senior positions in the area are currently being filled. The restructured department will have a prime role in the formulation and coordination of Government economic policy. There is a great need to ensure that the Government's economic choices are coordinated, consistent and produce real economic development as opposed to the economic development approach of our predecessors through public relations hand-outs or press releases. The revamped department will also be a major driver of the Government's trade and investment promotion activities, with the recent appointment of a head of the new Economic and Trade Development Division.

**An Opposition member:** Where does he come from?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** From the private sector, actually.

One area of particular concern is the need to help business overcome hurdles that sometimes present themselves when companies or individuals are attempting to develop projects. The restructured economic development division will have a major role to play in the initial coordination of major development projects in the State, although it must be emphasised that once this period of initial coordination has passed, it will be important for the carriage of these major projects to be handled by the line agencies. A second and equally important function of the division will be to provide a central reference point for business should difficulties be encountered with any line agency in obtaining the necessary approval within a commercially reasonable time-frame.

In the old department, there were approximately 25 branches or sections within a department of 250 staff, leading to excessive layers of management—in some cases, up to six layers of management in a branch. This will be changed. A broad mix of skills is required in the new department, especially in the Policy Coordination Division, including public administration, legal, economic, industrial relations, commerce and human resource management qualifications. The Government's decisions will result in both staffing and financial savings primarily, but not exclusively, in the corporate services area of the department. The annual salary budget for the department will be reduced by 5 per cent over the next two years.

I now turn briefly to the arts statutory authorities. There are seven statutory authorities currently located in my portfolio. Between them, they are an important part of the State's cultural activity. Over recent years, their activities have made them a highly treasured part of the State's cultural scene. As a result of the review and Government decisions, there will be, firstly, a more consolidated, focused group of organisations within the cultural centre; secondly, upgraded management within the institutions; and, thirdly, a more commercial orientation so that the south bank organisations take the opportunities presented by the collections and facilities under their control to develop additional funding resources.

#### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

##### **Advice of Solicitor-General on Second Report of Cooke Inquiry**

**Hon. N. G. WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (10.18 a.m.), by leave: On Wednesday, 24 October 1990, I advised honourable members that I had received, on that day, the second report of the commission

appointed to inquire into the activities of particular Queensland unions. Honourable members were also advised that the report had been referred to the Solicitor-General for his advice as to whether Volume III of the report, described as the supplement, could be released or whether, in lieu of releasing the whole document, persons identified therein could be named publicly.

The Solicitor-General has provided his opinion. In this opinion he refers to a decision of the High Court, namely, *Balog v. Independent Commission against Corruption* (1990) 64 ALJR 400, known as Balog's case. In that case, the High Court considered whether, pursuant to the Independent Commission against Corruption Act 1988 (NSW), the commission thereby appointed was empowered to express formally any conclusions it might reach concerning the criminal liability of particular persons. In his opinion, the Solicitor-General refers to three relevant statements made by the High Court.

Mr Speaker, to save the time of the House, I seek leave to have those High Court Statements which are included in my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

"In a joint judgement Mason C.J., and Deane, Dawson, Toohey and Gaudron J.J. made the following Statement at page 404:-

'The expression of a finding of guilt or innocence of an offence or even of a prima facie case against an individual, in a report which is bound to be made public, must be likely to have a damaging effect on the reputation of the person concerned. And whilst such a finding may not necessarily have the tendency to interfere with the due administration of justice in the event of a subsequent trial, the possibility cannot be disregarded'.

The Court then went on to consider the types of finding that could properly be made by the Commission and Stated at page 404:-

'At least in theory there may be a fine line between making a finding and merely reporting the results of an investigation. But in practice the line should not be difficult to draw. It is clear enough that there is a distinction between the revelation of material which may support a finding of corrupt conduct or the commission of an offence and the actual expression of a finding that the material may or does establish those matters'.

Finally, at page 405 the Court said:-

'Were the functions of the Commission to extend to the making of findings, which are bound to become public, that an individual was or may have been guilty of corrupt or criminal conduct, there would plainly be a risk of damage to that persons reputation and of prejudice in any criminal proceedings which might follow.' "

**Mr WARBURTON:** The Solicitor-General is of the view that matters contained in Volume III of the second report by Commissioner Cooke should not be made public, either by tabling it in whole or in part in Parliament or in any other way. Volume III contains the very matters which the High Court has said would be likely to present a risk of prejudice of a fair trial of the persons recommended for prosecution. Consequently, I will not be releasing Volume III of the report, which has already been referred to the Director of Prosecutions by the Attorney-General, the Honourable D. M. Wells.

The Solicitor-General was also requested to examine Volumes I and II of the report. He has advised that he does not think there is anything in either of the volumes which, if published, might have a tendency to interfere with the due administration of justice. Consequently, I will be releasing Volumes I and II of the report. All honourable members will be provided with copies.

Mr Speaker, I table copies of Volumes I and II of the second report of the commissioner appointed to inquire into the activities of particular Queensland unions.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid the documents on the table.*

#### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Findings of Public Sector Management Commission Review of Department of Manufacturing and Commerce

**Hon. G. N. SMITH** (Townsville East—Minister for Manufacturing, Commerce and Small Business) (10.21 a.m.), by leave: I rise to outline the findings of the Public Sector Management Commission's review of the Department of Manufacturing and Commerce.

As the Opposition Industry spokesman during the last years of the previous National Party Government, it was obvious to me that this State's Department of Industry Development was being used and abused by a succession of National Party Ministers. When the Goss Government was elected last December and I took on the Industry portfolio as Minister for Manufacturing and Commerce, I saw the disarray within the department caused by that abuse by the National Party. Because of my concerns, I sought and succeeded in having the department reviewed by the PSMC in its first round of Government departmental reviews. The PSMC review findings confirm my own observations.

The commission's major findings are as follows—

1. The department has over time suffered from a lack of clear policy direction. While the department at times prepared such a policy, previous Ministers have either taken no notice of it or have lost out in the personality battles which were part and parcel of the previous National Party Cabinets.
2. There has been inadequate targeting in relation to service delivery. Previous Ministers have encouraged all and sundry to seek help from the department, which came to have a reputation for not turning anyone away. This led to some people regarding it as a welfare agency rather than as an economic development agency.
3. The departmental structure is fragmented and does not optimise resource management and service delivery.
4. There has been an excessive emphasis on land as a means of industry assistance. The industrial estates program, which was established in 1963, has never been properly reviewed by previous Governments. For example, the Liberal and National Parties allowed estates to be created on the wrong side of railway lines, on flood plains and in areas where demand for use is extremely low.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Southport!

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Brisbane Central will cease talking across the Chamber.

**Mr SMITH:** Over the years, the department has had an inadequate regional presence and has failed to deliver a number of departmental programs in regional areas. That is a reflection of the previous Government's failure to recognise the economic potential of Queensland's regions. A number of programs need to be refocused. As to corporate services—the review found that previous Ministers had allowed the department's Corporate Services Branch to grow to a quarter of the total staff and had allowed administrative staff in general to grow to half the total staff.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SMITH:** I have until 11 o'clock. Members of the Opposition can keep interjecting.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. As the Minister is quite determined to mislead the House, under Standing Order 108A I challenge him to move that the House take note of the statement so that honourable members can debate what he is saying.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is a frivolous point of order. I would not appreciate it if the member for Surfers Paradise does that again. I call the Minister.

**Mr SMITH:** Promotion and advertising has been badly targeted and has concentrated on profile rather than substance. The use by the member for Surfers Paradise of almost \$50,000 of taxpayers' funds and departmental resources to produce his own advertising material has already been well documented in this place. There are several examples of that.

As to the defence, aerospace and offsets program—the review found that Queensland's performance has been below that of other States, particularly in the field of civil offsets. In 1987-88, when the member for Surfers Paradise was the Minister for Industry, Small Business, Communications and Technology, New South Wales gained offsets worth \$200m. In Victoria, the figure was \$156m. What did Queensland gain under the leadership of the member opposite? It got \$5m! Even the ACT did better than Queensland. Did the member opposite do any better in the following year? During 1988-89, New South Wales received business worth \$171m and Victoria received business worth \$106m. In the ACT the figure was \$4m. However, under the leadership of the member opposite, Queensland received business worth less than \$2m!

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I know that it is Melbourne Cup day, but let us have a bit of order in the Parliament.

**Mr SMITH:** Those findings confirm my own concerns about the previous Government's stewardship of that department.

**Mr Burns** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Premier will cease interjecting.

**Mr SMITH:** They show clearly that previous Ministers, particularly the member for Surfers Paradise, failed to develop an industry policy for Queensland, failed to provide appropriate economic development services to our business and industry sectors and failed to use the financial resources and talented staff of the department in an effective manner. This Government and I will be changing that.

A new Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development is to be established. That department will—

1. Take in the economic development functions of the Bureau of Regional Development and ensure that there is an effective regional economic development program for this State.
2. Develop an industry policy that will play a major part in our State's economic growth.
3. Put in place real consultation with Queensland's business and industry.
4. Scale down the industrial estates program and develop a more flexible program of assistance to targeted industries.
5. Introduce a range of human resource management systems to attract and retain the best staff possible.
6. Ensure that promotions and marketing meet the needs of the client base.
7. Increase Queensland's participation in defence purchasing, offsets and the partnership for development program.

In short, the new Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development will have a better policy and organisational focus.

The review has confirmed the sorry state of Government that prevailed in Queensland until last December. The Goss Government has already taken action to change that. I welcome the review's report as a contribution to that very necessary change.

#### **QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE**

##### **1. Prisoner Participation in Shooting Expeditions**

Mr BEANLAND asked the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services—

"(1) Is he aware that a number of prisoners have participated in shooting expeditions hunting kangaroos and wild boars near Charleville as recently as 14 days ago in the company of prison officers?"

(2) Who were these prisoners, what crimes are they in prison for and what types of guns were they using?

(3) As the Corrective Services Act states quite clearly that an inmate should not come within 10 metres of a firearm, what disciplinary action has been taken against those involved?"

**Mr MILLINER:** (1) I am advised by the Corrective Services Commission that at no time have prisoners working in the Charleville area participated in shooting expeditions. Whereas it is true that officers have been invited to do so by locals who own local properties or have access to local properties, the invitations have not been extended to prisoners nor accepted on their behalf.

(2) The honourable member's question is inapplicable. See (1).

(3) This question is also inapplicable. See (1). In any case, there is no such provision in the Corrective Services Act 1988, No. 89.

## **2. Employment of Federal Public Servants by Queensland Government**

Mr BEANLAND asked the Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts—

"(1) Will he provide the list of names of public servants who (a) are on leave from the Federal Public Service and have taken up positions in the Queensland Public Service and on Ministerial personal staffs and (b) have been recruited from the Federal Public Service?

(2) Will he detail these public servants' positions, departments and salaries and on what terms and conditions they have been employed?"

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** (1 and 2) To compile such information would require examination of the employment details of about 30 000 public servants and ministerial staff. As most honourable members would realise, neither this Government nor any Government in Australia keeps separate records that discriminate on the basis of the employment background of a public servant or a ministerial staff member. In other words, records are not kept on which public servants since Federation have joined the Queensland public service from the Federal public service, which public servants have been seconded from the Federal public service to the Queensland public service and which public servants do not have an employment background with the Federal public service.

I certainly do not propose to engage in an extremely costly exercise of canvassing the employment details of approximately 30 000 public servants and ministerial staff to ascertain such information. Interchanges between the public services of the Commonwealth and Queensland and between those of the other States and Queensland are common and continuing. This is a standard administrative practice.

If the honourable member is interested in recruitments to the Queensland public service, he might wish to consult the *Queensland Government Gazette*. Advice about the positions, departments and salaries of new recruits to the public service is available from the *Queensland Government Gazette*. I repeat: it is not the policy or practice of this Government to provide to the Opposition or to anyone else the personal employment details of the kind sought of public servants or ministerial staff. Apart from that being entirely inappropriate, it is, in this circumstance, doubly so because of the likelihood of such information being misrepresented and misused against individual public servants.

### **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

#### **Public Sector Management Commission; Professor P. Coaldrake**

**Mr COOPER:** In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to concerns raised by public service unions about what they term "frustrating negotiations" with the Public Sector Management Commission, particularly with its chairman, Peter Coaldrake, and

I ask: is the Premier aware that joint union delegates have called a meeting for tomorrow to consider, to quote from the notice that is being circulated, the "deteriorating situation" and "other courses of action"? Is the Premier concerned that the Coaldrake-led push on public sector reform is creating a them-and-us mentality that is jeopardising public sector efficiency and morale? In view of such discontent among public servants and their unions, does Professor Coaldrake still have the Premier's total and unwavering support for his actions?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The answer to the last part of the question is an unequivocal, "yes". In answer to the first part of the question, I make the general point that we have inherited a public sector that is a disgrace in terms of the effects of political meddling in administrative matters that should be the preserve of managers. The Government believes that, in the public sector, there are many very capable, professional and highly motivated public servants. The first round of reviews that were conducted by the Public Sector Management Commission, indicated that, in each of the three departments that were reviewed, there were some very good people, particularly in Treasury. The department that has been worst affected is the Department of Manufacturing and Commerce, as it is now. It has been known by various similar names. Over the years, the main reason for that is the failure to adopt modern management practices and to provide leadership. Those who failed included the member for Surfers Paradise. As has been pointed out, his main contribution was that psychedelic brochure, as a result of which he has now been nicknamed "Captain Starlight". His other major achievement was to spend about a hundred grand of public money to paint a logo on an aeroplane that he imported from England. Through a process of wide-ranging reforms, the Government seeks to exploit the talent and the commitment of people who work in the public sector. That will require an extensive process of reform.

The other part of the role of the Public Sector Management Commission is to hold a range of negotiations in relation to the structure of the public service and in relation to wage levels. However, that is not the only role of Professor Coaldrake and the Public Sector Management Commission. They work very closely with DEVITIR, Mr Warburton's department, and its head. They have established a very good relationship and they are trying to introduce into that area a number of reforms that have been introduced in other States. The Government is committed to those reforms. It is true that that has caused some concern on the part of some public sector unions. We will, individually and through DEVITIR and the PSMC, work through those to the best of our ability. I am hopeful and, indeed, confident of a good outcome.

The process of reform must go forward. Obviously, it is the job of a union to be an advocate for its members. In any process of reform, uncertainty and tension is caused. But the process must go forward. I can assure members that it will go forward on the basis of a close relationship between Mr Warburton's department and the Public Sector Management Commission. It will go forward on the basis of consultation and genuine discussions and negotiations. As a result of that approach, I am hopeful and confident that reforms will occur. One particular union has issued some information that was somewhat misleading. That has been drawn to the attention of that union. I have written to public servants clarifying the position in relation to what appeared to be misleading information.

**Mr Borbidge:** You put it in their pay envelopes.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Absolutely, because I wanted to communicate directly with them, and that is what I did. That was the proper thing to do.

**Mr Borbidge:** A political message with their pay cheques.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Rubbish.

**Mr Borbidge:** You've admitted it.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Rubbish. It is the height of hypocrisy and, indeed, ambitious hypocrisy on the part of the member for Surfers Paradise—and we both know what I

mean by that—to talk about political messages. I would be quite happy to have that document published anywhere. It has been well accepted by the public sector as evidence of a Premier and a Government prepared to communicate directly with it and to invite its response and suggestions instead of being the stand-over merchants of the past.

#### **Effect on Public Servants of Coaldrake Review**

**Mr COOPER:** In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the Coaldrake review of public service departments and to recent reports alleging that approximately 280 public servants in the Department of Manufacturing and Commerce have no work, and I ask: can the Premier advise honourable members if he anticipates that retrenchments will occur as part of this restructuring process, and will he guarantee that no public servant will be disadvantaged in terms of rights and privileges as part of the Coaldrake push for structural efficiency?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** These characters are obsessed with Dr Peter Coaldrake. I can remember in the 1986 State election when the National Party used Dr Coaldrake in its advertising. In its millions of dollars of advertising the National Party referred to and used Dr Coaldrake as an eminent expert. Now that he has been retained by this Government for his undoubted skills in terms of understanding the need to reform the public sector, the members of the National Party squeal.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** It hurts the members of the National Party to see that the political baggage and rubbish that they left behind is being cleaned out.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Surfers Paradise will cease interjecting and I now warn him under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** In relation to the particular department that has been referred to, it is a ——

**Mr FitzGerald:** Answer the question, please.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** What an outstanding contribution the fox terrier from Lockyer is making! Because Heckle and Jeckle cannot say anything, they tell him what interjections to make.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. I ask you, Mr Speaker: is the Premier permitted to indulge in personal abuse whilst we are prevented, out of respect for the Chair, from even interjecting?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the Premier apologise.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I apologise and withdraw. It was wrong for me to refer to them as "Heckle and Jeckle"; I should have said "Jekyll and Hyde".

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest the Premier call honourable members by their names or by their electorates.

**Mr BOOTH:** I rise to a point of order. Substituting two other words is not a withdrawal. Mr Speaker, I suggest that if you have asked him to withdraw the remarks, he should withdraw them.

**Mr SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** In the interests of harmony and quiet, and because this is a nationally important day, I both apologise and withdraw. I meant to refer to the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy. I will try to conclude in relation to the specific department—

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! My temperature is rising. I suggest that the member for Gympie cease interjecting and that members on my left allow the Premier to answer the question.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I will try and conclude in relation to the particular department that the Leader of the Opposition referred to. It is not correct for him or anyone else to say that the staff of the Department of Manufacturing and Commerce have nothing to do. If he had listened to comments that I made previously in this House and to the ministerial statement made by the Minister, he would have understood the correct position, namely, that there are a lot of people in that department, most of whom are highly motivated and committed. However, I will give the House one example. Twenty-four per cent of the staff in that department are in the Corporate Services Division, and that is frankly absurd. The members of the National Party should be embarrassed by the waste of public money and good public servants which has resulted from the way in which Mr Borbidge and his predecessors so badly mismanaged that department. There is this disgraceful situation of 24 per cent—

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The Premier is deliberately misleading the House. At the time of the change of Government, that department had over twice the number of public servants that it now has.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. I warn the member for Surfers Paradise that if he rises again on a point of order that I consider to be frivolous, he will be dealt with.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** To conclude, the object of the review carried out by the Public Sector Management Commission is to try and get value for money and some better results out of those capable and committed public servants. This will be done through a substantial and fundamental restructuring of that department and a refocusing of its role, with particular emphasis on developing industry in the regions—something that Mr Borbidge and his colleagues failed to do.

#### **Queensland Treasury Corporation; Investment in Poker Machines**

**Mr PREST:** In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to claims made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that the Queensland Government forced the Queensland Treasury Corporation to invest \$100m in poker machines, and I ask: is that a fact?

**Mr De LACY:** I am pleased that the honourable member has asked this question. This matter is important for two reasons. Firstly, it is important that the full facts be put before the House, and, secondly that the whole House —

**Mr Borbidge:** Answer the question without your notes.

**Mr De LACY:** I will answer the question the way I want to answer it and without notes.

I have in my possession a copy of a press release which was issued by the Minister and to which I will refer. It is important that the whole House should know what was in this press release. I will give the House a bit of background. Perhaps those members who were unfortunate enough to be in the House when the honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition made his speech in the Budget debate can remember it. For 20 minutes he spoke about the Victorian Budget, for five minutes he

spoke about the Commonwealth Budget and then he spent five minutes on his normal personal abuse. Honourable members will remember the big exposé about the State Government not having put any money aside to purchase poker machines and the honourable member's claim that \$10m was included in receipts for poker machine tax without allowance having been made to purchase them. That was the big scam, and in response I said that the answer to the claims was quite simple. I said that the Government would have the Queensland Treasury Corporation borrow the money and that the Government would buy the machines, lease them and use the lease rentals to service the debt. The honourable member thought about that for three days and then came up with a press release.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Lockyer will restrain himself.

**Mr De LACY:** The press release stated—

"I thought the QTC was supposed to be independent of Government and out in the marketplace investing in projects which would provide a return to the taxpayer.

Mr Borbidge has asked the Treasurer to explain whether the QTC investment in poker machines was a decision taken by the QTC Board or was forced upon them by Cabinet."

For the edification of the honourable member, I point out that the Queensland Treasury Corporation is a central borrowing authority which borrows on behalf of the State Government. It is a corporation sole, and the Under Treasurer is a corporation sole. The corporation borrows on behalf of the State Government.

**Mr Borbidge:** You said it would not be used for political purposes.

**Mr De LACY:** Yes, and it will not be. The State Government makes decisions on how those borrowings will be spent. The suggestion that the Queensland Government somehow strongarmed the Queensland Treasury Corporation is, quite frankly, too silly for words. The Capital Markets Advisory Board advises the Under Treasurer on the strategy for raising funds, but that board has no say at all in how to expend the funds that are raised. For anybody—let alone a person who was previously a Minister and a supposed economic Minister in the previous Government and who, I understand, held that position when the Queensland Treasury Corporation was formed—to make such a silly, ill-informed statement about the Queensland Treasury Corporation is, from the point of view of the Queensland Government, quite worrying. Somebody once said that a Government is only as strong as the Opposition, and I am pleased that that is not the case in Queensland.

There is nobody in the Opposition who has the slightest understanding of economics at all. The former honourable member for Landsborough, Mr Ahern, has left the Parliament and he was the only member of the Opposition who had any economic credentials at all. I can remember that somebody said he was a rat leaving the sinking ship, but, from what has transpired, I think he was the ship leaving the sinking rats. That is quite obviously the case.

**Mr HARPER:** I rise to a point of order.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! One of the members of the Opposition wishes to rise to a point of order and members of the Opposition are now interjecting on him.

**Mr HARPER:** I rise to a point of order. I find the words used by the Treasurer personally offensive. I ask for them to be withdrawn. He clearly included all members of the previous Government, and I find that most offensive.

**Mr De LACY:** I will withdraw that remark. It was merely a metaphor; but, if the cap fits, he should wear it.

In conclusion, let me say that there was no question of the Queensland Government forcing the Queensland Treasury Corporation into investing in anything at all. The statement made by the member for Surfers Paradise has demonstrated the abysmal and appalling ignorance of the Opposition in relation to all economic matters.

### **Firearm Licensing**

**Mr PREST:** I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: can he explain the likely procedures for obtaining a firearm licence? Will the involvement of an agency, such as Australia Post, delay the issuing of these licences?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** At this stage, the Police Service is negotiating with Australia Post.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They'll walk in with a gun, will they?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Only someone as unintelligent as the honourable member could make such a stupid interjection. I am sure that many people throughout this State are responsible shooters and would like to know the process for obtaining a shooter's licence after 1 January. The process will involve applications being made at Australia Post offices. When people go there, they will fill out an application form and undertake a test. The application form and test will be sent to police headquarters where the application will be checked and the decision will be made on whether or not the person is issued with a licence. If approved, the licence will then be forwarded to the person who has applied.

The situation is that members of the Opposition and some of the more rabid shooters throughout the State have claimed that this system of licensing will tie up police resources and will actually wind down the Police Service. By having the process carried out through Australia Post, the claims that have been made can now be seen to be completely untrue. A small section at police headquarters will handle the applications. The majority of the work will be done on computers and will not have anything whatsoever to do with police stations throughout the State. Claims that police stations throughout the State will become clogged up with the issuing of licences or the processing of applications are completely untrue because no-one will have to go to a police station to obtain a longarms licence. They will go to their local Australia Post office. The matter will be handled there. The Police Department will pay a small fee to Australia Post to carry out that procedure.

**Mr Harper:** Who will pay for it?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** The people who obtain the licence will naturally have to pay a licence fee. That has been clearly spelt out. The fee that they pay will be a once-only fee, and the licence they receive will be for life. At this stage, we are still costing the licence, the fee for which will be on a recovery basis of the costs that are associated with issuing the licence. That is the way the system will operate from 1 January.

### **Out-of-court Payment to Ms D. Swan**

**Mr BEANLAND:** I ask the Premier: is he aware that the Cooke inquiry is taking a deep interest in a \$13,000 out-of-court settlement involving the now State industrial commissioner, Deirdre Swan, and the ALP? When Ms Swan's appointment as industrial commissioner was under consideration by the Government, was the Premier aware of that payment?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I am not aware of the full details of the payment, but I was aware that, I think, a couple of years ago defamation proceedings were instituted by Ms Swan against a member of the Labor Party. I understand that those proceedings were

subsequently settled out of court and, as a result of that, a payment was made to Ms Swan. I understand that the payment was made partly by the Australian Labor Party, but I am not aware of the precise division, or the division of that money as between costs and damages. I understand that the Labor Party did accept some or all responsibility for the out-of-court settlement which occurred some time in the last two years.

#### **Premier's Comments about Federal Minister for Education**

**Mr BEANLAND:** In directing a second question to the Premier, I refer to his reported comments in the *Sunday Mail* and the *Sunday Sun* of 4 November concerning the Federal Education Minister, Mr Dawkins. I ask: does the Premier stand by his remarks that none of the Premiers trust Mr Dawkins and that Mr Dawkins is incompetent, bungling and arrogant?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I do not think that Mr Dawkins is incompetent and arrogant. However, I do think that for him to complain about the Special Premiers Conference treatment of education was evidence of incompetence on that issue in the sense that there was a clear agreement between the Premiers and the Prime Minister—I raised the issue specifically with the Prime Minister at least a month before the Premiers Conference—that there not be any late issues suddenly thrown onto the agenda without adequate negotiation or without the kind of discussion paper or negotiations that occurred in respect of all other issues. Education was such an example. One week before the Special Premiers Conference, the Minister sought through the Prime Minister to put education on the agenda, and that proposal was rejected by the Premiers. Really, if Mr Dawkins wanted the matter on the agenda, the point that I was making was that the competent thing to do would have been to put it on the agenda much earlier and to have it as the subject of a major discussion paper prepared by the Commonwealth or one of the States, which is what occurred in respect of all the other major issues.

The reference to arrogance was simply a reference to the fact that on that issue it seemed to me to be somewhat petulant or arrogant for Mr Dawkins to complain the day after that the Premiers had somehow been remiss in failing to put education on the agenda when, as he well knew, the reason that it had been rejected by the Premiers was that he had not participated in the process that had originally been agreed on. Apart from that, Mr Dawkins is a perfectly competent and charming fellow.

#### **Flooding at Ipswich Road, Oxley**

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In directing a question to the Minister for Transport, I refer him to the continuous flooding of the section of Ipswich Road at Oxley commonly referred to as the Oxley flats. I ask: will he outline to the House whether any plans are in place to alleviate the problem?

**Mr HAMILL:** Firstly, I congratulate the honourable member on the manner in which he has pursued this important issue. As a person who travels Ipswich Road frequently, can I say that the Oxley flats area presents an ongoing problem, considering the high volume of traffic that uses Ipswich Road, which is a national arterial road. Works on that road are subject to the availability of finance under the Commonwealth's national arterial roads program. At present, a number of works are being undertaken along Ipswich Road to provide better flood immunity in that area; for example, the work that is being undertaken at Rocklea in the honourable member's electorate where \$6.5m has been committed to that project.

Work has been programmed for the Oxley flats problem. Considerable investigation has taken place into the means by which adequate flood immunity can be provided to that section. It is anticipated that work to provide a 20-year flood immunity will start in the next fiscal year. Based on initial assessments to provide that measure of work, a commitment of \$8m will be required. I add that that is only part of a range of projects designed to enhance the flow of traffic along Ipswich Road between Dinmore and Granard Road. The honourable member will be pleased to learn that, prior to construction

commencing on Oxley flats, the Progress Road intersection at Wacol, which has claimed many lives over a number of years, will receive road safety treatment with the provision of an interchange. I anticipate that that work will commence before the conclusion of this financial year.

Honourable members can see an integrated project of looking at a whole range of work which will flow from the work that has already been done at Goodna and work that is to be done at Progress Road, the Granard Road section and at Oxley flats. That will be followed up by work at Riverview, which has been of major interest to my colleague the honourable member for Wolston.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I direct a question without notice to the Minister for Manufacturing and Commerce.

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

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I reserve my right to ask the question without notice.

#### **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

##### **Cooke Inquiry; Evidence of Industrial Commissioner D. Swan**

**Mr COOPER** (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (11 a.m.): The sincerity of this Labor Government is facing a great test over how it now handles matters before the Cooke inquiry relating to Industrial Commissioner Deirdre Swan, who was recently appointed to the commission bench by the ALP Government.

Commissioner Swan has given evidence before the inquiry that she received more than \$5,000 for attending executive meetings of the Australian Workers Union prior to her appointment to the bench, when she was State vice-president of the union. According to Commissioner Swan, following advice from two friends—one an accountant and the other a lawyer—none of that money was declared on her tax returns. The commissioner would not name those people before the inquiry because, she claimed, their advice was of a personal nature and not on a fee-for-service basis. The reality is that it is highly unlikely that any lawyer or accountant would give such advice—certainly not a competent one.

Setting that aside for the moment, it is extraordinary that a woman as well educated and, apparently, as intelligent as the commissioner did not herself recognise the requirement under Australian taxation laws to declare all income—a requirement that is clearly spelled out on the claim forms themselves. Whether the money she received was by way of allowance or expenses is a moot point before the inquiry, but what is not disputed—even by the commissioner herself—is that it was paid. It was therefore income that had to be declared. It was income that was not declared on her taxation returns, and it is just stretching credibility too far to suggest that she did not know that it should have been, just as it is stretching credibility to suggest that the issuing of false group certificates by officials over many years was not conniving in tax fraud. If the AWU has lost—as it claims—a letter from the Taxation Office validating that practice, then it should authorise the Taxation Office to release a copy of the letter. I challenge it to do so. Ignorance, even ignorance reinforced by a couple of anonymous friends—if they exist—is, in any event, no defence.

There is a very clear case that a member of the Industrial Commission has deliberately sought to avoid tax. A person whose duty is to administer justice by the hearing of evidence and the interpretation of law has given incriminating evidence about herself and shown an extraordinary, if not incredible, lack of ability to understand a very simple set of laws in relation to the declaration of income. Her position, therefore, of sitting in judgment on any matters before the commission is obviously hopelessly compromised until this matter is dealt with. The reaction of the Government to this clear position has been quite extraordinary.

The first part of this response was from the Industrial Relations Minister, who reacted with shock to a suggestion from me that Commissioner Swan should be suspended on the basis of her evidence and the reflection that it casts on her propriety, and that the Government should so recommend. The Minister accused me of seeking to direct Mr Justice Moynihan of the Industrial Commission as to what he should do with his bench. References were made to the separation of powers. Well, the Minister has got it terribly wrong, and his memory is horribly short. I am sure that he will recall that last year the Premier was outspoken in his calls for the then Government to stand down former Mr Justice Angelo Vasta when allegations of impropriety were made against him. Those calls were only quietened when the then Government ordered a judicial inquiry into those allegations and accepted its responsibilities and placed Mr Justice Vasta's position before the House. The same situation now applies in regard to Commissioner Swan.

Mr Justice Moynihan could only indicate—as he did—that he did not feel that there was a necessity for asking Commissioner Swan to stand aside. He can only interpret his Act. It is up to the Government to deal with the spirit of the law and to meet its clear responsibilities in this matter, and for the Minister to use Mr Justice Moynihan's position on this to justify his own inaction is an insult to Mr Justice Moynihan. He has been used as a scapegoat by the Minister so that the Minister can avoid his own responsibilities. Under the Government's own Industrial Relations Act, the stance of Mr Justice Moynihan is not the point. The point is that Commissioner Swan was appointed to the Industrial Commission by the Government, and it is the Parliament that has the ultimate say on her fate—just as it was the Parliament that had the ultimate say on the fate of Mr Justice Vasta. Therefore, the bid by the Industrial Relations Minister to seek to give Commissioner Swan a letter of clearance by quoting Mr Justice Moynihan was political abuse by the Government of the judiciary and threatens the independence of the judiciary.

I have no doubt that the Minister did not enjoy the job, because the whole story of Commissioner Swan's appointment really is quite sordid. It has nothing to do with who might be a proper person to serve on the Industrial Commission and everything to do with satisfying the pressures of internal ALP politics. Commissioner Swan was a member of the Ludwig faction within the Australian Workers Union, which hates everything and everyone associated with the old Hodder leadership of the union—which includes the Premier and the State campaign director of the ALP, Wayne Swan. Ludwig and Deirdre Swan were systematically working their way through the whole Hodder network within the ALP, getting rid of them as fast as they could, and of course this was unsettling for the Premier and the other Swan—Wayne Swan. Not only were the allies of their mentor in the ALP faction game—Errol Hodder—being dumped by Ludwig and Deirdre Swan but also Wayne Swan was the next target in their sights.

How do you stop a runaway train—one that is threatening to run you down? You derail it. You pack Ms Swan off to the Industrial Commission because it effectively takes her out of the game. It means that she has to resign her ALP membership. It takes her out of active involvement in the machinations of Mr Ludwig. So there it is; appointment solely on merit by the holy of holies—the most sanctimonious mob of expedient jobs-for-the-boys operators this State has ever seen.

I have nothing personal against Deirdre Swan, but where are her qualifications to hold a position on the Industrial Commission bench? It is true that she is a lawyer, but for most of the time that she was working as an organiser for the AWU she was a full-time university student. She was being paid a wage as a full-time organiser, but she was in fact a full-time law student. I am sure that all the rank-and-file members of the party whose dues went to pay her wages will be very interested in that. So she certainly had a legal background. I guess that is some qualification for a role on the Industrial Commission, although it is interesting to note that it is the one category of advocate that the Minister's industrial relations legislation barred from the commission. However, to my knowledge, she had never had carriage of a case before the commission. Her main

claim to fame within the AWU, and the ALP, was that she was pro-Ludwig, anti-Hodder, and, with Ludwig's help, well able to get her way on most things.

Again I say that her appointment to the bench was an absolutely cynical use of power by the leaders of this Government in order to get her out of the way to take her out of the factional power play. That move leads back to the role of the Minister for Industrial Relations, who, as Leader of the Opposition, was dumped when Errol Hodder turned the massive AWU faction away from him and in support of the Premier. That desertion still rankles deeply with the Minister, who has an abiding hatred of the AWU and everything to do with it. However, the Minister's proper role is now clear. It is the responsibility of the Government, not Mr Justice Moynihan, to take a lead in this matter. An extremely strong probability exists, via evidence before the Cooke inquiry, that a member of the bench of the State Industrial Commission is a tax cheat. That is an intolerable situation, given the high standards of which Premier claims to be the guardian—certainly he was in relation to the then Mr Justice Vasta. The members of the National Party will not tolerate the Government's hypocrisy in this matter. When it was clear that the previous Government should act in relation to Mr Justice Vasta, it did so. It is now clear that this Government should act in relation to Commissioner Swan. It has not done so. If it wants to retain any form of credibility, it must suspend her, at least until Commissioner Cooke's report on the Australian Workers Union is handed down.

#### **Visit to Europe by Minister for Transport**

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (11.10 a.m.): During October, I accompanied the Premier on a Queensland business development mission to Europe, a joint exercise involving the Queensland Confederation of Industry, the Metal Trades Industry Association and the Queensland Government. While the Premier dealt with macro-economic issues, meeting bankers and business leaders associated with significant development proposals in Queensland, I worked closely with the individual mission members, who fully appreciated the ministerial support. The mission emphasised this Government's commitment to encourage, facilitate and develop an export culture. It was largely made up of small and medium-sized Queensland manufacturers, who welcomed the extra credibility the State Government's involvement added to their export campaign, and our presence helped open doors and create opportunities which otherwise may not have been available.

London, Cologne and Budapest were used as bases during different stages of the trip. Each venue afforded an opportunity to gain on-the-spot knowledge of the impact the momentous changes now occurring in both western and Eastern Europe will have on the world economy, particularly Australia's. The European Economic Community plans to implement a single-Europe policy by 1 January 1992. The official briefings and business contacts allowed the members of the mission to assess the effect a single Europe might have on their trading opportunities.

In Britain, the official Government line was that the single-Europe deadline of 1 January 1992 would be met. The view of British business was not as positive and there remain serious impediments to full union. Nevertheless, within 14 months, many of the internal barriers to trade within Europe will be torn down, which provides fresh challenges but also fresh opportunities. Britain, for example, is strongly promoting a foreign investment program, advising firms that are keen to do business in Europe to link up with British companies with direct and easy access to the European market. This is one way of breaching fortress Europe. Conversely, British industry sees Australia providing a similar economic bridge into the booming economies of Asia. In fact, one of the companies associated with the trade mission is confident that, as a direct result of the trip, a major British food-processor will set up a manufacturing operation here in Brisbane to give it direct access to the South East Asian market. Those negotiations are still under way and obviously confidential at this stage, but it gives an indication of the thinking

in Britain. To some extent the message was that Queensland, and Australia, are geographically and economically part of Asia and that, Britain is geographically and economically part of Europe and businesses should think and operate in terms of those regional foci.

In Germany, the emphasis was a little different. Just days before the visit, East and West Germany were officially reunified. The republic is presently trying to come to grips with the enormous financial burden the reconstruction of East Germany will have on the country. One view is that for the next five years Germany will be so preoccupied with reunification that trade opportunities will be limited. I doubt that. The business of Germany is doing business and individual manufacturers on the mission found ready access to and acceptance by their German counterparts. It has been argued that Germany has built up such a complex range of regulations and controls to protect its own industry that it is difficult to do business there. This should not be a deterrent. From an Australian perspective, the speedy movement towards single, uniform regulations among the member nations is a positive development. Australian firms have experienced difficulty in meeting the range of different regulations of each member nation in Europe. Under single Europe, one set of criteria will apply. As a result, once those demands are met in one country, a business will automatically qualify for access to all of Europe.

The other component of the trade mission was a visit to Budapest. Hungary has embraced free enterprise more readily than other eastern European countries. While Czechoslovakia has the best developed manufacturing base, much of the investment interest is centred on Hungary. Budapest was originally included on the itinerary as a possible economic bridge into the Soviet Union and other nations in the Eastern Bloc. However, Hungarians see things slightly differently. While keen to capitalise on their links with Eastern Europe, it is noticeable that their own trading efforts have shifted westward rather than eastward. Prior to the revolutionary changes in the Eastern Bloc, Hungarian trade was split fifty-fifty between east and west. That balance has changed quite dramatically in Western Europe's favour, with about two-thirds of the trade now with Western Europe and only one-third with the Soviet Union and its former satellites. The reason is simple enough. The Soviet Union has serious economic problems and its future economic performance is uncertain. Hungary aims to become part of the European Community and is using its traditional links with Austria to build trade bridges to the West. Hungary, with its highly educated and skilled work force, low production costs and enterprising manner, does have the potential to entice joint ventures with foreign firms, including Queensland companies. However, both German and Japanese bankers have cautiously targeted Hungary for investment.

While the individual businessmen participating in the trade mission were out meeting their local counterparts, I was carrying out transport-related business. As honourable members are aware, the Very Fast Train concept is now being widely discussed in Australia. As a large nation, with a widely dispersed population, it is inevitable that Australia will move towards faster, more efficient forms of land transport. In Europe, there are three Very Fast Train projects which are acknowledged as world leaders. The first is the French TGV system, the model favoured by the VFT consortium of BHP and Kumagai Gumi, which is looking at introducing a service in Australia, firstly linking Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne and, perhaps in the future, Brisbane and Sydney. The French system has been amazingly successful. Our briefing on the TGV project took place on a Very Fast Train between Paris and Angers and return. The train, a standard commercial set, reached speeds of 300 kilometres an hour, and the next generation, soon to be introduced to the French network, will travel safely at 350 kilometres an hour. France used significant parts of its existing railways infrastructure, stations and the like, to develop its Very Fast Train technology. In nine years, it has fully recouped the development and establishment costs. French rail, SNCF, now makes 30 per cent profit on each ticket sold. Under the French experience, the Very Fast Train is profitable where it can link centres of three million people in less than three hours. The introduction of a new generation TGV travelling at 350 kilometres an hour would make a VFT link between Sydney and Melbourne potentially viable. The French have found that rail can

capture 50 per cent of airline business on trips of three hours or less. Obviously, under the French guidelines, a Brisbane-Gold Coast-Sydney link would not yet be financially viable.

The main European competitor to the TGV is the new generation Intercity Express operated by Deutsche-Bundesbahn. Deutsche-Bundesbahn operates intercity train services at speeds of 200 kilometres an hour, and new generation trains will travel at 250 kilometres an hour. I received a detailed briefing of German operations at the Hamburg workshops. It is interesting that France has concentrated on high speed passenger services while Germany has developed a combination of high speed passenger and freight services—passenger services running by day, freight by night. Like that of the French, the German system is based on refining traditional railway technology. Because of its emphasis on very fast freight as well as on very fast passenger services, Deutsche-Bundesbahn cannot achieve the same high speeds as the French system. It should be pointed out, however, that Queensland Railways is predominantly a freight operator and it may well be that the German experience will become the model for our railway's continued development. The Very Fast Train concept will inevitably be introduced to Australia and to Queensland, though because of our distances and comparatively small freight and passenger movements, it is beyond our financial grasp at present. It is also likely that the French and German designs, based on classic railway technology, will provide the models and focus for this expansion.

While I cannot explore all aspects of this issue, it would be remiss of me not to mention the Magnetschnellbahn. This train is futuristic technology, involving a revolutionary process of high-speed travel at more than 400 kilometres an hour, through electromagnetic propulsion. This magnificent machine, resembling a monorail, moves on an electromagnetic cushion without the train ever touching the track. Our briefing was held at the 30 kilometre test track near Meppen, close to the border between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands. With track costing 20 million deutschmark a kilometre—about \$A15.5m—and a 10-car set priced at 70 million deutschmark—about \$A55m—the infrastructure is obviously out of most operators' price range. Nevertheless, it is the most environmentally friendly of all high-speed rail, making less noise at several hundred kilometres an hour than our conventional trains at their more pedestrian speeds. In areas with high population densities and environmental concerns, it clearly has a future, though that future may take several decades to blossom. That technology is being put in place to obviate the need for the establishment of yet another airport in the densely populated Ruhr of Germany. With a 15-minute shuttle, passengers will be conveyed from overcrowded airports such as Dusseldorf to Cologne/Bonn or to Frankfurt, obviating the need for the construction of an additional airport and, I might add, making a very interesting opportunity to invest in such very expensive infrastructure.

There are lessons to be learnt from the European experience, including the need to invest wisely in upgrading our rail infrastructure. Queensland Railways must place a high priority in upgrading track alignments and gradients to improve the efficiency and speed of train operations in this State to provide a more efficient and faster train service.

I now seek leave to table a detailed itinerary of my trip.

Leave granted.

*Whereupon the honourable member laid the document on the table.*

### **Corruption in Corrective Services**

**Mr CONNOR** (Nerang) (11.19 a.m.): I rise to speak on corrective services, most specifically about the issue of corruption. I believe we are seeing wilful obstruction to cover up a level of corruption similar to that which existed in the police force prior to the Fitzgerald inquiry. This corruption has been able to prosper and develop because of the Government's attitude, "We don't want to release anything that may embarrass the Government. We have major reforms taking place; a lot of people won't be happy; so

therefore anyone critical is anti-reform." That attitude has glossed over a seething pit of corruption. I will give honourable members some idea of the level of accountability that presently exists. In doing so, I will refer to one practice that leaves a great deal to be desired. In August this year, two prisoners escaped from the Moreton Correctional Centre. The person who manages the security at that correctional centre is the very same person who investigated the escape. It was a case of a manager investigating his own mismanagement. That does not work, yet it is the normal practice.

A number of problems also exist. A document that I tabled in the Budget debate refers to allegations by a prisoner Greene. During a conversation with staff, Greene was asked if he knew what was happening at the Brisbane Correctional Centre. He replied, "Yes. We have reliable sources of information on the commission who tell us everything." That prisoner was saying that prisoners have reliable sources of information coming out of the commission. This is corruption at the highest level. As a result of the Kennedy recommendations, the operational audit team was established. Following outcries from a number of general managers at the different prisons, the operational audit unit was disbanded because it was saying things that the commission did not want to hear. Another example of maladministration relates to a senior manager in charge of one of the prisons, the notorious Boggo Road prison, who was moved from his position following the "great Boggo Road fun run". In April last year, seven prisoners with a pistol walked out the front door of the Brisbane Correctional Centre.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr CONNOR:** It was in April last year.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Are you sure?

**Mr CONNOR:** Yes, I am sure. The person who was manager at that time now has a senior position in the commission and is involved in prisoner transfers and classification throughout the whole prison system. He has an extremely responsible position. Another statement was that commission staff levels were too high. Despite that, there has been a dramatic increase in the staffing level at the commission. However, at the same time, there has been a reduction in the level of staffing within the prisons. In real terms, the funding of wages and salaries of prison staff has been reduced by approximately 7 per cent. Yet, at the same time, administration costs have increased by 50 per cent.

Another instance relates to a murderer named Harbecke, who only recently escaped from Boggo Road by, it is believed, simply hiding himself in a laundry truck. In 1968, he was described as the most dangerous man in Australia. He would kill a person in the same way as he would squash a cockroach, with totally no remorse. That man was roaming the streets of the Gold Coast. I am told that the file relating to him is over two feet thick.

I now have information from what I believe is a very reliable source—but because of the Minister's witch-hunt I am unable to name it—that, a number of days in advance, the management of Boggo Road was aware of the Boggo Road fun run.

**Mr Coomber:** How many days in advance?

**Mr CONNOR:** Three days in advance; yet nothing was done. The management had over three days' notice of how and where the break-out would occur. I have quite substantial evidence that that is the case. I also have reliable information about how the pistol that was used in the escape was smuggled into the prison. It was suspected that it was smuggled in by a prison officer. I have informed the CJC about this matter and have handed over certain documents. I have been reliably informed—and I have documents that go into great detail about it—of how the pistol was wrapped in black electrical tape and how, at a quarter to 8 one evening, it was thrown over the wall of the prison. The documents give great detail about how, on a previous night, in the very same place, metal tubes filled with drugs and wrapped in black electrical tape were similarly thrown over the wall. A few nights prior to the gun going over the wall, one of the tubes was misdirected and it hit the roof of the prison. Although it made a heck

of a racket, nothing was done about it. A few days later, the gun went over the wall. I suppose that the Minister will now suggest that that bit of information has ruined another investigation. That incident occurred more than a year ago, but I am sure that the Minister will formulate some fabrication.

The prison system in Queensland suffers from more than mismanagement. Corruption exists in the commission. Criminals are running corrective services in Queensland. The Minister said that himself. Last Monday week, during an interview on 4QR with Rod Henshaw, the Minister stated—

"We have a criminal element in the Corrective Services Commission."

The Minister has admitted it. As well, he was not told about what he described as a major drug investigation. The Minister stated—

"I am not informed of every investigation going on in the corrective services area."

The Minister acknowledged that, right under his nose, a major drug investigation was going on in Queensland's most notorious prison, namely, Boggo Road. However, he knew nothing about it. Talk about wilful obstruction! However, the bubble of that corruption has now burst. Backbenchers are witnessing the wrath of prison officers who have to live with that corruption. During the past few weeks, prison officers have visited other backbenchers and me. They have complained bitterly. Mr Hollis, the member for Redcliffe, is a former prison officer. He knows what is going on. He visited the prison and told the Minister what is going on and what happened. He was almost thrown out, because the Minister does not want to hear what he has to say.

**Mr HOLLIS:** I rise to a point of order. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark. I was not thrown out.

**Mr CONNOR:** I said "almost". The Minister is being kept in the dark. Probably the best example of the wilful obstruction that has blossomed within the Corrective Services Commission is the total reversal of the most important Kennedy recommendation, which entailed separating prison officers into two streams so that the general prison officer who does the normal duties of a prison officer is separated from the security section. The people who checked persons going in and out of prisons observed what was going on inside the prisons but were separated from general prison officers. That created an additional level of accountability—an extra safeguard of responsible prison officers who could tell if corruption was occurring. However, that system has been abandoned on the very questionable basis of a cost-cutting measure. That separation no longer exists. No doubt the Minister will produce a phoney document that will show a separation, but that will come from the same place as the other phoney document came last week.

Senior officers have been sacked because they dared to criticise the commission. As set out in the Budget papers, the commission has a \$250,000 propaganda machine—four full-time staff pumping out propaganda and telling everyone how wonderful the commission is. However, prison officers who want to put forward the other side of the story are being sacked. Positive proof in the form of videotapes is being leaked out of the prison because that wilful obstruction is preventing those tapes from getting into the hands of police. The police external investigation unit was not aware that it had material on videotape. Again, that was stopped by commission management. Prisoners' statements show that they have a reliable and direct line of communication with someone in the commission. Prisoners are going on safari at Charleville. Following major break-outs, people are being promoted within the commission. Evidence exists that the commission had three days' prior warning of the Boggo Road fun run. As well, evidence exists of a prisoner officer being framed as a result of a pistol going over the wall at Boggo Road. Evidence also exists of a prisoner being paid large sums of money because he had "dirt on someone in the commission". This is just the tip of the iceberg. It goes on and on.

An external, independent commission of inquiry is needed. But what has the Minister done to solve the corruption—the mess within the system? Has he considered an independent inquiry? No! All he is interested in doing is shooting the messenger.

Time expired.

### Youth Homelessness

**Mr HAYWARD** (Caboolture) (11.30 a.m.): Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of public interest which I know you have great personal interest in and knowledge of. For some time, discussion has occurred in the various media and other forums about the social problem of youth homelessness. All of those discussions have contained an enormous variety of views. The range of opinion is substantial, as is the potential for emotive and defensive responses.

In the *Courier-Mail* on 30 October, a correspondent made the following assertion in a letter to the editor—

"There are a great many street kids who are selfish spongers on our society and who are not abused and neglected victims of uncaring families."

On other occasions, representatives of the youth lobby have been quoted in the press as describing our homeless youth as the forgotten victims of the current emphasis on economic pragmatism and fiscal restraint. My question and, I am sure, the question of many of our constituents is: what is correct? Why do young people become homeless? How many homeless young people live in Queensland? What responsibilities do we, as adults, have and what are we doing about the plight of those people? Is it enough? Can we do more? It is to our shame as adults that I must add the observation that there are no clear signs of impending improvement in youth homelessness.

Mr Speaker, as you were a co-author of the Burdekin report, you would remember that almost 9 000 12-to-15-year-old Australians are homeless. That is equal to 1 in every 1 000 Australian children of that age. Approximately 1 620 of those children live in Queensland. My curiosity led me to find the following definition of youth homelessness. Mr Speaker, as a senior consultant researcher on the Burdekin report, you will know that a definition is always a good place to start. The National Youth Coalition for Housing defines youth homelessness as—

"The absence of safe, secure, affordable and adequate shelter as perceived by the young person, and for homelessness to exist, at least one of the following conditions, or any combination of these conditions, should be operative.

- (a) an absence of shelter,
- (b) the threat of loss of shelter,
- (c) very high mobility between places of abode,
- (d) existing accommodation considered as inadequate by the resident for reasons such as overcrowding, the physical state of the residents, lack of security or occupancy, or lack of emotional support and stability in the place of residence,
- (e) unreasonable restrictions in terms of access to alternative forms of accommodation."

My first reaction to that definition of youth homelessness was that it was too broad; one cannot give that much autonomy to a young person. I have no doubt that many of my constituents—and certainly that lady who wrote to the *Courier-Mail* on 30 October—would respond in the same manner. I have since concluded from my own research and from talking to people such as you, Mr Speaker, that my initial reaction was not appropriate. I put it to all honourable members and to all of our constituents: which of the conditions that define youth homelessness would they be happy to endure? I put it to honourable members also that the person who is best located to understand the experience of homelessness and thus to make the assertion of what homelessness means is the person who is enduring that experience. It is in the public interest that those two notions gain wider currency.

Mr Speaker, you will no doubt appreciate the benefits that a solid definition brings to the search for information. My next question, which I think is very important, is: how many young people live in such circumstances? The answer to that question is frightening and a sad indictment of how we, as adults, run this world. Dr Rodney Fopp of the South Australian College of Advanced Education estimated that in May 1988, between 50 000 and 70 000 15-to-24-year-old Australians were homeless or at risk of becoming so. Dr Fopp's methodology is outlined in Appendix D of the report entitled *Our Homeless Children*. All honourable members should have a look at that report. What they will read will shock them. If one does the simplest distribution possible and allocates this army of homeless youth on a per capita basis, one would arrive at an estimate for Queensland of between 9 000 and 12 600 15-to-24-year-olds living in circumstances that no honourable member and none of our constituents would or should ever be asked to endure. Dr Fopp also estimated the number of homeless 12-to-15-year-old children in Australia. He arrived at a figure of 9 000, which is equal to 1 in every 1 000 children of that age. As I said, those are the same figures that were detailed clearly in the Burdekin report.

I am certain that the *Courier-Mail* correspondent whom I quoted previously made her harsh comments in complete ignorance of the statistics that I have cited. No reasonable person could be aware of suffering and hardship on such a scale and still believe that it can all be attributed to bad children. No reasonable person could believe that the educational opportunities that are lost, the employment opportunities that cannot be grasped, the family and social relationships that rot and decay, and the humiliation and loss of dignity that a homeless young person must endure are all suffered in the name of fun on the streets. To assert such a view is to commit the sin of branding the vast majority with the mark of the recalcitrant few. It is most definitely not in the public interest to let such unfairness go unchallenged. I trust that, in the future, all honourable members will respond appropriately to those sorts of letters that appear in the *Courier-Mail*.

I put it to honourable members that, as adults, we have failed our homeless young people. As adults, we profess to have the knowledge and ability to exercise rightfully the bulk of the power in this world. We ask young people to accept our values, to learn from us and to be patient. Their turn to be powerful will come. Perhaps we forget that, in not too many years, today's young people will be sitting in this House. If they learn what we have taught them, if they accept our values and adopt our priorities, they will abandon us in our old age. That is what we are doing to their peers in their youth.

It is easy to be outraged when one is not charged with the task of locating solutions. However, I doubt that unproductive outrage is in the public interest. I have taken the time to discuss those matters with people who work with homeless youth. The public interest is served by putting forward today their suggestions as to what should happen. They have told me that a substantive public housing response to youth homelessness is required. The Government should start with affirmative action for single young people who apply for public housing. This is what I have been told. The Government should try to allocate to single young people a full half of the 1 100 new single units that the Department of Housing and Local Government is building this year. Those are suggestions that have been made to me, and they have probably been made to other honourable members.

If we as adults want to be seen as honest in our efforts to deal with the problem of youth homelessness, these are the strategies that we must pursue. I trust that what I have presented to the House today is sufficient illustration of the need to do more in the area of homeless youth. The public interest will not be served until we are able to make the decisions that allow more to occur, take account of the problems of our homeless youth and provide housing. It is essential that, as members of this Parliament, we look seriously at this problem and address it.

**Rifle Range, Kinkuna; Appointment of Mr G. E. Fitzgerald, QC, to Australian Heritage Commission**

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett) (11.39 a.m.): During the last week of sitting I asked the Minister for Environment and Heritage a question on notice concerning the declaration of a national park at Kinkuna, south of Bundaberg, and the application for a rifle range at Kinkuna by the Bundaberg rifle range committee. The Minister's answer was, to say the least, unsatisfactory because it was deliberately evasive. The first part of my question simply asked—

"Does the Kinkuna area, which includes a proposed rifle range, fall within the scope of the Fitzgerald commission of inquiry?"

The Minister's answer to that question was—

"As the honourable member would be aware, the Government established earlier this year a commission of inquiry into the conservation, management and use of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region. As the honourable member should know, Mr Fitzgerald has indicated that he is prepared to receive submissions on what the proposed boundaries of the Great Sandy Region should be. I am advised that the commission has received submissions proposing to include the Kinkuna area in the Great Sandy Region."

The answer given is unclear and the obvious answer to my question was, "Yes."

Section 3 of the discussion paper refers to the interpretation of the terms of reference, which allows Fitzgerald to receive submissions, and consequently make a determination as to what should constitute the area within his jurisdiction. Therefore, the question can legitimately be asked: why is the Minister being so evasive? Obviously no decision can or will be made until the commission brings down its findings and the Government has had an opportunity to consider them. In light of that, it will be quite some time before decisions relating to the area in question are received. The Minister and the Government should have been honest about the issue so that everyone knows where they stand. Instead, in answer to a question asked in May, Mr Comben said—

"A major proposal will go ahead shortly."

However, six months down the track there is still no answer, nor, as I have mentioned, is there likely to be one. On analysis it could well be argued that the Minister was misleading this Parliament when, back in May, he used the term "shortly".

Mr Comben conveniently overlooks a commitment he gave during a debate at a public meeting I had with him prior to the election on 2 December; a commitment which stated that, if Labor was elected to office, he would straight away declare Kinkuna a national park. He also indicated that he would look favourably at the application by the rifle range committee for a rifle range. I will quote a letter to the Bundaberg *News-Mail* headed ". . . and I believed it", which states—

"Before the last State elections, I went to a public meeting where election candidates spoke. There was a promise of a new national park and a rifle shooting range as soon as the Labor Government was elected. Mr Comben said it. Mr Campbell said it. I believed it. Sorry, Mr Slack, next time I won't be sucked in by their hollow promises. B. Mason, Fairymead Road, Bundaberg."

I did not solicit the letter, nor do I believe that I know its writer.

Eleven months down the track, the Minister answered the fourth part of my question, which was—

"When does the Minister expect to be able to give an answer to the rifle range people regarding their application for an area of land to be set aside for a rifle range?"

He said—

"The matter is being considered by the Departments of Lands, Primary Industries and Environment and Heritage. Until the various land use issues have

been resolved, no announcement can be made. I will repeat, however, that this Government is committed to the creation of a National Park at the Kinkuna area as part of a program of doubling the national park estate within our first term to cover 4 per cent of Queensland."

This is inconsistent with the answer that he gave to the first part of the question, in which it was demonstrated that the issue does come within the scope of the Fitzgerald inquiry. If anyone is to take the Minister's answer seriously, it is obvious that he does not know what he is talking about.

One part of my question was—

"Has the Minister at any stage indicated to the member for Bundaberg that the proposed rifle range within the Kinkuna area would receive approval?"

The Minister's answer was—

"The issue of the location of the proposed rifle range is yet to be resolved and the member for Bundaberg is aware of that position."

I ask: where does that leave the member for Bundaberg? He has been privately telling the rifle range people that they will get the range; that they need only be patient and an announcement will be made shortly. At best, one could say that he is confused. One can understand how frustrated the rifle range people have become. The question now arises as to whether the member for Bundaberg has been deliberately misleading his constituents, or whether the Minister has made a decision outside the Fitzgerald commission and has privately conveyed that decision to Mr Campbell. That is the reason why I asked the following question—

"Has the Minister tried to influence the commission?"

Either the member for Bundaberg is not telling the truth or the Minister is not telling the truth, or both, because there are plenty of witnesses who claim that Mr Campbell has said that the rifle range will get approval. My impression of this whole saga is that both the member for Bundaberg and the Minister have—to put it in parliamentary terms—been less than honest on this whole issue right from the word go.

Naturally the member for Bundaberg is extremely sensitive and nervous about the subjects I have mentioned. Is it any wonder that, following the answer to my question on notice, he followed me out of the Chamber to warn me about the implications of talking about these subjects because of a court decision that related to them? Of course, this was purely for my own benefit, as if I would not know about a court order and its implications. On the previous day in this House the member had made a big thing about making a pious statement on how he was protecting the rights of members of Parliament. I do not—and I know that members of this House would not—condone or approve of a member's conversation in his office being taped. It should not have happened, but I suggest that in this particular case the member for Bundaberg was more intent on suppressing what was on the tape rather than the espoused noble desire of protecting other members' interests.

I will return to the incident when the member for Bundaberg followed me out of the Chamber. Shortly after receiving the answer to the question that I put on notice to the Minister, I left the Chamber to go to my office. The member for Bundaberg approached me as I was entering the Parliamentary Annexe. He was visibly upset and proceeded to warn me that, if I was to mention Kinkuna or the rifle range again, my name would be raised. He stated that I could find myself in court and asked me if I had a copy of the tape, to which I replied, "No", and he appeared to be relieved. No doubt all of this was out of a desire to protect my interests. Needless to say, I did not take kindly to the warning. I believed it to be a threat that, if I were to pursue the subject, I would find myself in court, no doubt at the instigation of the member for Bundaberg. I have written to the Speaker advising him of the approach and registering my objection to it.

The question is: why is the member for Bundaberg so nervous about a tape? What has he got to hide? I am sure that there are many constituents of the member for Bundaberg who would be interested to know what is on the tape that has made him so

frightened. It is obvious that the member for Bundaberg has been caught out and the Minister's answer does nothing for his credibility. However, if one puts both the Minister and the member for Bundaberg together, it becomes very obvious that they have something to hide. I am sure that there are many people in Bundaberg who would be questioning the quality of their representation, especially when one looks back at some of the allegations made by the member for Bundaberg under parliamentary privilege in relation to district personalities who have now been cleared of any impropriety following investigations by the Criminal Justice Commission.

Finally, I wish to raise the matter of the appointment of Mr Tony Fitzgerald, QC, as Chairman of the Australian Heritage Commission. As all honourable members know, Tony Fitzgerald, QC, is also the commissioner investigating Fraser Island. There are two submissions from the Australian Heritage Commission to the Fraser Island inquiry. In these submissions, the Australian Heritage Commission has suggested that the present boundaries should be extended. In effect, a body of which Tony Fitzgerald is chairman has made a major submission to him in his capacity as commissioner, thus placing him in the position of having to make a determination on a submission from his own organisation. If that is not a conflict of interest, I do not know what is. Firstly, I am astounded that, understand the circumstances, Tony Fitzgerald has accepted the position as Chairman of the Australian Heritage Commission. However, as he has accepted that position, I believe that he has compromised his role as commissioner. He should either step down or be relieved of the position of commissioner. It is my contention that the whole commission of inquiry's credibility must now come into question. How can he now act as an independent commissioner?

The Labor Party has attempted to avoid some of the hard decisions relative to the environment by handing them over to Tony Fitzgerald whose integrity it has now placed in question. Members of the Labor Party have not been able to face up to difficult problems and have not been able to make the hard decisions but, rather, have opted for the backdoor method of bringing in those decisions under the name of a person who is well known in Queensland. By doing so, they are hoping to avoid the political fallout that must inevitably ensue when those decisions are made. It is no wonder that the Minister for the Environment has been less than honest and that there has been some nervousness on the part of the Government.

It is time that the Premier stated to this Parliament exactly what Mr Fitzgerald's future role is to be. Is he to stay in his position? If so, is he to set the guidelines for all future environmental decisions that will be relevant not only to Fraser Island and the Great Sandy region but also to the whole of the State? If the answer is "Yes", I think it would be fair to also ask: has the environmental agenda now been handed over to the Australian Heritage Commission, which is an arm of the Commonwealth Government?

#### **Trade Protection for Australian Industries**

**Mr PALASZCZUK** (Archerfield) (11.48 a.m.): At its recent Federal council meeting, the Liberal Party reconfirmed its commitment to apply the Garnaut report to Australian industry. The thrust of this report is that, by the year 2000, there will be zero protection levels for industry. Naturally, because the Nationals are the tail that wags the Liberal dog, they have no choice but to follow this Liberal policy. I believe that if that policy is introduced in this time-frame, it will prove absolutely ruinous for industry. Because Queensland has a traditionally low manufacturing base, it means that for decades this State could be marooned on a reliance on primary production. Let me make it clear that there should be a continuing gradual reduction in protection. The high levels of protection that were built up by the Federal National Party under McEwen have left this nation bereft of any system that could compete internationally. It left industry inward-looking—so much so that there are only 10 complex-factor businesses in Australia that export more than \$100m in goods a year, and none that exports a billion dollars or more annually.

**Mr Randell:** Rubbish!

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The member for Mirani should note that, except for BHP, even these top 10 firms are small traders in international terms, and several are really parts of a network of major foreign-owned multinational groups.

The net subsidy cost of National Party protectionism was estimated in 1989 at \$7 billion and the rural sector has been suffering the most. The costs of production mean that higher prices have to be charged for consumer products, which reduces the living standards of Australian families. Therefore, the case for a reduction of protection is undeniable. However, what is needed is managed change.

**Mr Elliott:** You hope to bring in more situations like bananas. You are bringing in bananas from everywhere to flood the market.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In answer to the honourable member, I point out that at a time when the world is organising itself into trading blocs, it is complete nonsense for Australia to be committing itself to full on zero protection.

Recently, I participated in a trade delegation to South East Asia and found that the Asia/Pacific region is assuming major importance in today's world. As the most powerful country in the South Pacific, Australia is in a position to exercise some influence on the direction of events. The region generates more than 33 per cent of the world's trade. In the next decade, it is likely to create more than 50 per cent of the world's economic output. Within 10 years, China, Japan and South Korea together could produce more than the US, the European Community and Eastern Europe.

**Mr Stephan:** Do you agree that pork should come in from Canada?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I am not going to bother with frivolous interjections because what I am saying is far more important. As I said, within 10 years, China, Japan and South Korea together could produce more than the US, the European Community and also Eastern Europe.

**Mr Stephan:** Do you believe that pork should be imported from Canada?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The honourable member should be a realist and face up to the fact that everything that I am saying must be taken into consideration. The honourable member is living in the past. He is part of the McEwen era and he should get out of that, for goodness' sake.

A recent study by the Japan External Trade Organization shows that Australia is one of the top 10 countries supplying processed and manufactured goods to the Japanese market. Australia now outperforms Canada, Singapore and Hong Kong in the Japanese market for value-added products. Recent studies and assessments by Austrade indicate that exports to the Asia/Pacific region are expected to account for more than 80 per cent of Australia's projected export growth of 8.3 per cent per annum over the next five years.

Unfortunately, the GATT trade talks have stalled and the future of trade negotiations now appears gloomy. This is ruinous for Australia's primary producers, and holds no great hope of long-term, protection-free manufacturing. I notice that the member for Cunningham is now leaving the Chamber. In essence, Australia's industries will be moving targets in a world trade shooting gallery. Despite all the lofty moralism that might be heard from Australia's trading partners, no industrial country applies the concept of the level playing field. Most of Australia's trading partners—particularly those in Asia—use tariffs or trading barriers to protect some of their market.

Japan has an embargo on rice imports, quotas on the meat industry and measures which encourage the use of corn syrup instead of Australian sugar.

**Mr Randell:** Why isn't there a sugar agreement?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** As soon as I mentioned sugar, I stirred up the member for Mirani. It is a pity that he does not use sugar.

In Korea, many imports are embargoed and items such as cars attract 100 per cent tariffs. Even a so-called free trade nation such as the US has voluntary restraint agreements on steel and cars. All of those nations have used protectionist policies to promote export-competitive goods, whereas in Australia protectionism has been a purely defensive operation. It is therefore important during this decade to develop an export-mindedness in Australia. Given the spectacular corporate failures which have damaged our reputation internationally, that will be difficult. Because of their corporate greed, Bond, Skase, Herscu, Ansett and Elliott have tarnished our image. As the member for Rockhampton North would realise, the position is best summed up in that brilliant Moir cartoon of Elliott sitting around a camp fire with a few down-and-outers. One of the down-and-outers said to the former Federal president of the Liberal Party, "Tell us that one again about how you reckon running a Government should be just like running a business."

The tragedy is that a recent article in the *Australian Financial Review* revealed that in the recent boom many companies used their increased profits to pay their executives higher salaries. A table showed that the highest salary increases had been awarded to executives who had presided over the largest corporate collapses. That table typifies the problem in Australia today. We have few companies able to undertake the grind of properly getting into the export market. The lesson of the eighties is that, provided there is Government intervention, companies can be assisted into export markets.

When Labor came to power in 1983, BHP was set to close down its steel operations. As honourable members opposite would understand, a steel plan was formulated with the opposition of the National Party in this place. Today, BHP Steel is one of Australia's most profitable exporting industries. Equally, the car industry developed a policy known as the Button car plan, which advocates lower levels of protection and has an export incentive component. Today, we are exporting cars to the US, and Mitsubishi is exporting car engines to Japan.

The Australian consumer market is too small to sustain large-scale production. Of necessity, we need to forge trading alliances in the Asian Pacific rim. As I said previously, that will be the growth region of the nineties. Importantly, exporting to that region will give us the economy of scale we have so far been lacking.

**Mr Randell:** Mr Palaszczuk, will you take an interjection?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The honourable member is a failed Minister; he should take it easy.

The Goss Government's actions in orienting our trade emphasis away from the US and Europe to the Asian Pacific rim are a recognition of that. The closing of the trade office in Los Angeles and the opening of one in Taipei and Seoul is essential. In Queensland, we will need a department of manufacturing which can focus on that dynamic region.

**Mr Borbidge:** You are after poor old Geoff's job.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** It is wonderful that the member for Surfers Paradise interjects at this very moment.

Under second-rate National Party Ministers such as the member for Surfers Paradise, the department had no focus and no clear policy direction. It saw the creation of manufacturing only through the establishment of industrial estates. No matter where one went throughout Queensland, one observed that the National Party provided a sign and a piece of vacant land and called it an industrial estate. Millions of dollars in Government assets were locked away in land which could, but did not, sustain large-scale export industrial development. I remember driving past a site at Gin Gin, the Claude Wharton industrial estate, where the sign was almost as large as the estate, and just as worthless. Quite appropriately, a big "Technology Park" sign was erected opposite Dreamworld to give members of the National Party six-pack a warm, inner glow as they drove past it on the way to Brisbane. The obsession with appearing to be active, which robbed Queensland of the opportunity to widen its resource-based sector over the past

30 years, has placed us in a parlous position now. I fear that a zero tariff structure will only add to our woes. Time expired.

### Education

**Mr WELFORD** (Stafford) (11.58 a.m.): It is my great pleasure to welcome into the gallery 35 brilliant students, and their teachers, of the Queen of Apostles primary school in my electorate. They will be the leaders of tomorrow. From the talent that I have observed amongst them, I must say that, in future, when they come of age and come to this place as the leaders of this State, they will put the messy lot on the Opposition to shame.

For the first time in more than three decades, this Government is doing something genuine for the education of young people. Our \$223m additional funding for education in the recent State Budget will assure the future of those young people and assure them of the education which they rightly deserve. We will spend \$5m on literacy and numeracy education, which will help those young people obtain employment when they finish secondary school and will also equip them with other skills that will allow them to go on and not just be leaders amongst their contemporaries but leaders in society as a whole. One particularly important feature of our initiatives—initiatives that were never contemplated by Governments in the past—was our initiative to introduce foreign language education into Queensland schools in a deliberate and planned way, not only into secondary education but also into primary schools. That is an initiative that was never heard of from previous Governments and one for which we will provide proper funding for the first time in decades.

The young students of Queen of Apostles school know that we are dedicated to their future. They know that all Governments in the past ignored them and they know that their futures are now assured.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Woodgate): Order! The time allotted for Matters of Public Interest has expired.

At 12 noon,

In accordance with the provisions of Standing Order 307, the House went into Committee of Supply.

### SUPPLY

#### Estimates—Eighth and Ninth Allotted Days Estimates-in-Chief, 1990-91

#### Health

**Hon. K. V. McELLIGOTT** (Thuringowa—Minister for Health) (12.01 p.m.): I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1990-91, a sum not exceeding \$1,585,729,000 for Health, Department of Health (Consolidated Revenue)."

The essence of the Estimates debate in modern Westminster-style Governments is quite simply to provide Parliament with the means to scrutinise the economic management implications of current and proposed Government programs. This Government will abide by its public commitment to open government by providing the Parliament, through the Estimates debate process, with the opportunity to satisfy itself that the economic management of public sector health services in Queensland is sound. Moreover, this process will clearly demonstrate that strategies are now being put in place to provide

more equitable access to resources and health services for groups and communities throughout the State that were clearly disadvantaged under the policies of the previous Government.

Better health is an undeniable right of all people, regardless of their ethnic origin, geographic location or economic means. To restrict access to facilities by allocating resources away from the groups where there is undeniable evidence of significant health problems is tantamount to negligence. In this regard, I point to the examples of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the aged and infirm, women and the psychiatrically ill. This Government is committed to the implementation of the principles of equity and social justice in all areas of Government services. These principles have had a major impact in the formulation of future health-planning and resource allocation in this State.

From an economic management viewpoint, honourable members will no doubt appreciate that financial management of a Health budget of some \$1.6 billion is not a simple exercise. This Government has inherited a public health system that had remained virtually unchanged for more than 40 years. Significant levels of resources were utilised to support the continuance of outmoded policies, programs and practices that have no real place in modern health care or health administration. One significant case in point was the significant gap between expenditure on programs related to disease prevention compared with those dealing with curative measures. It is quite evident that greater concentration on prevention of disease and disability has significant benefits in the longer term not only in relation to better health for the community at large but also in relation to future health expenditures. However, it is quite impossible to cure the ills of nearly half a century in a few short months. The Government needs to work steadily towards the goal of restoring rationality, balance and equity in how it allocates resources to health services. As this debate proceeds, honourable members will see that the Government has started down the path to achieving this goal.

Public sector health services are indeed in need of change and improvement. In a State as large and as diverse as Queensland, it is clear that health care can no longer be effectively managed from Brisbane. It is time to give local communities a much greater say in how local health care is planned, managed and delivered. To this end, initiatives have been approved by Cabinet to regionalise the health services of Queensland. During the 1990-91 financial year, honourable members will see introduced into this Parliament new legislation that will establish the legislative base for significant improvement in health care. Under the proposed legislation, regional health authorities will be established to replace existing hospitals boards. Significant powers will be given to these bodies to manage health care delivery on a decentralised basis. The Department of Health will be restructured in line with the shift to regionalisation. Under the new arrangements, the central department will have direct responsibility for only a very small number of health services. The delivery of health care will be the responsibility of the regional authorities. The central department will be reduced in size and will be primarily concerned with Statewide policy, planning and monitoring.

While regionalisation is proceeding, a range of other initiatives to modernise health care in Queensland have commenced, and will be continued, during this financial year. Improvement in the health status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is a top-rank priority of this Government. Recently I visited the north of the State, and I was appalled to see the state of health facilities in that region. In order to advance the standard of the facilities in the area, a new hospitals district has been established on Cape York Peninsula, with headquarters at Weipa. The district has assumed control of the Weipa and Aurukun hospitals, previously run by the Cairns Hospitals Board. In addition, the district has assumed responsibility for Kowanyama, Edward River, Lockhart River and Weipa South from the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. This is in conjunction with the assumption of responsibility by the Department of Health and existing hospitals boards for other health facilities at Doomadgee, Bamaga, Yarrabah, Cherbourg, Palm Island, Woorabinda, Hope Vale, Wujul Wujul and the medical aid posts in the Torres Strait. The Government is now moving

quickly to improve facilities and the delivery of health care services over the whole region.

In addition to the funds transferred from the former department, \$2.5m has been set aside in the Hospitals Administration Trust Fund. This money will be dedicated to maintenance, increased supplies, upgrading of plant and equipment, staff training and special grants as required. Additional staff have been allocated to the hospitals boards at Mossman and Weipa. Special allocations have been made from the Hospitals Enhancement Program to upgrade buildings and equipment in Aboriginal and Islander communities, and \$3.5m has been allocated in the current triennium for replacement of buildings beyond reasonable repair.

In stark contrast to the standard of health care facilities in some Aboriginal and Islander communities, Queenslanders can be generally satisfied with the status of the major public hospitals in this State. They provide world-class diagnosis, treatment and care, supported by state-of-the-art technology. Clinical and biomedical technologies play an increasingly important role in modern health care. In recognition of this fact, the Hospitals Enhancement Program provides funds to enable public hospitals to upgrade specialty clinical services. As honourable members would be aware, this program is jointly funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments. During 1990-91, the funds allocated to this program total \$12,385,000, with the State contribution being \$4,128,000.

In a new venture, Queensland public sector health services have entered into an agreement with the Holy Spirit Hospital to provide access for public hospital patients to lithotripsy treatment for kidney stones. This coordinated approach will maximise the cost-efficient use of this expensive new technology. The agreement will make a very effective treatment available for public patients and will assist the economic viability of the Holy Spirit's capital investments in this technology.

The health needs of Queenslanders are met by a balance of public and private sector health-care providers. The Government has demonstrated its commitment to cooperation between the public and private sectors and will not pursue policies that will redirect the delivery of health-care services away from services appropriately provided in the private sector.

In line with that principle, I have been forced to make a decision to introduce the application of Federal Government charges for pharmaceuticals in Queensland's public hospitals. The Commonwealth's decision to impose increased charges for pharmaceutical benefits scheme items from 1 November had the potential to impact severely on Queensland's acute public hospital services. If Queensland had not aligned its charges, a significant price differential would exist between the cost of pharmaceuticals obtained through the hospital system and those obtained from community pharmacies. This would act as an incentive for many more patients to attend public hospital outpatient clinics rather than seek treatment from their own general practitioner. The result would have been a direct shift in costs from the Commonwealth to the State. It would not be appropriate for me to articulate the reasons behind the Commonwealth policy decision, except to say that many in the conservative parties fully support the decision. Pharmaceutical charges were put in place in Queensland's public hospitals by those opposite over two and a half years ago, so this step has been taken merely to maintain the current levels of patient activity at public hospital outpatient clinics.

I want to emphasise the point that the introduction of these charges will not affect genuine cases of need. The maximum charge for pensioners for any single visit will be \$10—that is, the cost of four items—and pensioner and concession patients will only be required to pay for up to 50 items in a calendar year. Safety-net arrangements will be put in place to provide further protection for the chronically ill, arrangements which it is hoped will be aligned with Commonwealth arrangements. In addition, hospital pharmacies will have the power to write off charges in special cases of real hardship. While I regret being forced to take this action, it needs to be remembered that attendance at hospital outpatient clinics for GP-type services is largely discretionary. Similar services are available in the community through private doctors and community pharmacists,

with the patient covered through Medicare and the PBS. Indeed, it is in the best interests of all Queenslanders to discourage general practice type patients from attending the public hospital system so that Queensland's acute facilities can concentrate on what they do best and what they have been funded to do in this Budget—provide acute care.

This Budget expands the capacity of Queensland's public hospitals to meet community needs. An amount of \$10m has been allocated for the provision of new hospital facilities during 1990-91, which is the first year of the new capital works triennium, totalling \$116m. Mater Mothers Hospital will benefit to the extent of \$3m. The community of Wynnum in Brisbane, which has been in dire need of 24-hour hospital facilities for some years, has been granted \$2.5m and approval has been given to invite tenders in this regard. Ipswich Hospital has been granted \$1.25m to replace its aging boiler house, and Stage II of the Royal Children's Hospital redevelopment has been allocated \$250,000 towards consultancy costs in the preparation of a design concept. Expansion of the recently opened Logan Hospital complex to a total of 200 beds will attract capital works funding of \$3m. The Ingham Hospital has been allocated a budget of \$2.2m for its second stage redevelopment, which will include bed expansion in a number of patient-care areas.

Over the years, the community has made an enormous investment in health-care facilities. That investment needs to be protected with an effective and efficient capital replacement program. High standards of health care cannot be delivered without due attention to capital works spending. This Government is committed to the allocation of funds, capital or otherwise, based on identifiable health needs rather than political advantage. Although it will take time to restore the necessary balance in capital spending, the next triennium will begin to address that objective. If accessible and high quality health care is to be provided in the public sector, adequate numbers of skilled staff must be available to meet the needs of the community. The Government has recognised that, in the past, staffing levels of health services have suffered, and in this Budget has moved quickly to address the significant staff shortages that have built up over the last decade. With that in mind, the Budget allocates an additional 700 positions to health services. The predominant emphasis in the allocation of those positions has been for the provision of direct-care staff; that is, the staff who serve the health-care needs of Queenslanders.

Hospitals will benefit most from increased staffing allocations. For example, additional positions have been provided for theatre and surgical wards at the Gold Coast Hospital—an area of significant population growth; the bone marrow transplant facility at the Royal Children's Hospital; the Royal Women's breast-screening unit; a new theatre complex at the Mackay Base Hospital; and a new neurosurgical service at the Rockhampton Hospital.

I turn now to the matter of caring for the mentally ill. Relative to the tremendous personal burden and the economic costs of mental illness for the community, in the past mental health programs remained underfunded. Psychiatric services had to fight for every dollar. This Government recognises the legitimate right of people suffering from mental illness to adequate care and treatment. Accordingly, it has made provision for the development of a new security ward at Baillie Henderson Hospital at Toowoomba to allow that hospital to care for more seriously ill patients. In addition, staffing has been provided to allow for the opening of a new psychiatric unit at Logan Hospital and the development of further specialised psychogeriatric and research facilities at Wolston Park Hospital. However, the area of greatest enhancement is within community based services. This step acknowledges the fact that appropriate treatment services and rehabilitation care is more effectively provided in community settings. The Government has significantly increased staffing allocations for community mental health services by 26 per cent during the 1990-91 financial year.

In the provincial areas of Queensland, community mental health services will be commenced in Mackay, which will also service Sarina and the coalfields, together with Wide Bay, which will service Bundaberg, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and surrounding

areas. Enhancement to existing services will occur in Brisbane, Cairns, Toowoomba, the Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast.

In addition, the Government has noted with some alarm the rising incidence of youth suicide. An initiative the Division of Psychiatric Services within the Department of Health to establish a suicide register has been approved. The establishment of this register will assist greatly as a basis upon which to develop and implement effective prevention programs, especially those targeted at younger people.

There is little doubt that health services right across Australia will face significant challenges in the future in regard to the care of an ageing population. By the year 2001, 12 per cent of the population will be aged 65 years and over. With this larger proportion of older Australians, there is the trend towards more disability and, of course, greater need for health services. By virtue of its climate and life-style, Queensland also attracts retired people from interstate. Therefore, we really have no choice but to implement programs now which will provide appropriate health care to our future senior citizens yet contain the threatened blow-out in health expenditures. The Home and Community Care program is attempting to address these very issues. This program, funded jointly by the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments, is designed to provide an integrated range of services to the frail elderly, younger people with disabilities and their carers with the express intention of avoiding inappropriate or premature admission to long-term residential care.

The Home and Community Care program aims to redress the imbalance between institutional and community care, to expand the care options available to individuals, to improve coordination of community care, to improve the assessment of individuals for services and to increase the total resources available for community care. The program emphasises results for service-users—the benefits—rather than service provision as an end in itself. Over the past three years, expenditures have been rising steadily. In 1990-91, the Commonwealth is matching Queensland's annual percentage increase of 20 per cent for matched funding. When this is included with unmatched funds, the budget for the program for 1990-91 will total \$55.69m, an increase of some 24 per cent and the largest dollar and percentage increase to date.

Queensland's vastness presents the Government with special problems in the provision of health services to remote communities. The Royal Flying Doctor Service is an institution in this State and people in remote rural areas can always depend upon that service to deliver much needed health services. The Government fully recognises the vital role that the Royal Flying Doctor Service plays in Queensland health care. Accordingly, the State contribution towards its operating expenditure in 1990-91 is almost \$2m. In the last financial year, the State funded 37 per cent of the Royal Flying Doctor Service's agreed operating costs. The Commonwealth matched this with a 37 per cent contribution. I am proud to say that, in this year's Budget, the State will fund 43 per cent of agreed operating costs, a funding commitment which will be matched by the Commonwealth. In return, the Royal Flying Doctor Service will expand its services to provide regular clinics for Aboriginal communities at Aurukun, Edward River, Lockhart River and Kowanyama. Earlier and on a previous occasion, I referred to the absence of health facilities in those communities. I am delighted that, as a result of these arrangements with the Royal Flying Doctor Service, these communities will now receive a weekly visit by that service.

Funding for child and adolescent health is undoubtedly an investment in the future. Accordingly, a number of new initiatives in this vital area of health services have commenced and others will be commencing during the 1990-91 financial year. These initiatives include the establishment of an adolescent health unit within the Division of Child Health at a cost of \$326,000. The unit will coordinate and monitor both the current services provided to adolescents across the Queensland public health sector and the recent Commonwealth/State initiatives aiming to improve health services for homeless youth. Evidence suggests that young people tend not to utilise mainstream health facilities and services. Therefore, an adolescent drop-in centre will be established at a cost of

\$579,000 to provide primary health care for disadvantaged youth in metropolitan Brisbane.

In 1987, the national campaign against measles was commenced with the objective to eradicate indigenous measles by the end of 1991. To continue this important initiative, an amount of \$140,000 has been allocated in this financial year. Under the previous Government, efforts to advance the status of women's health were obstructed. As a consequence of the long-term lack of recognition of the specific needs of Queensland women, my Government has given women's health issues a high priority in this Budget. Steps taken to improve the health of Queensland women include the following initiatives. A women's health unit was established within the Department of Health to provide advice on women's health issues and to develop strategies and policies to improve the health of women in Queensland. During this financial year, funds have been increased by nearly 100 per cent to expand breast and cervical screening programs. Mobile breast-screening services will be extended. Cervical cancer screening projects will include development of services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and women in rural and remote areas and enhancement of screening facilities in rural hospitals. As part of the national women's health program, \$1.075m has been allocated to fund a number of initiatives, including a mobile health service for women in remote areas and funding support for the Brisbane Women's Health Centre.

I began with the principle of equity and social justice. The spending priorities of the health budget are to provide a fairer and a more just society in Queensland. One strategy must be to achieve equity in terms of prevention programs. The better health program, jointly funded to \$1.5m by State and Commonwealth Governments in 1990-91, has a focus on the reduction of inequities in health by undertaking health promotion activities with disadvantaged communities. Special projects in areas such as nutrition, hypertension and injury prevention will be conducted in Aboriginal communities, with homeless youth and in the workplace.

The prevention, early detection and treatment program in dental health for Queensland primary schools has been maintained and extended. New staff have been allocated to hospital dental clinics throughout the State. The training intake of school dental therapists in the Division of Dental Services has been significantly expanded. This forward planning will maintain the school dental services to an expanding primary school population and, commencing in 1991-92, build up work force numbers for the incremental expansion of the service to Years 8, 9 and 10.

I turn now to the Government's contribution to the expansion of the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service throughout the State. 1990-91 is the final year of the three-year strategic plan to significantly upgrade regional blood collection centres of the blood transfusion service. Specific initiatives relate to increases in the collection of blood products such as fresh frozen plasma and products of short shelf life, such as platelets, the expansion of the computer network to allow more rapid access to results and the tracing of donations and the provision of the most efficient scientific testing and processing of blood collections to ensure the safest blood supply possible.

In these times of increased litigation, it is essential to ensure that technology and methodology are the most up to date and appropriate available. Funding for 1990-91 includes provision for increases in staff for the enhancement of laboratory professionalism and to improve standards and continued upgrading of further country centres. There are plans for enhancement of the regional centres of Maryborough, Mackay and Nambour and further development of the caravan stand-alone mobile concept. The funding also provides for continued upgrading of the public relations/donor recruitment activities of the service to ensure continuing growth in donor base and more effective donor retention. The aim is for a 6 per cent increase on collections, based on 175 000 collections in 1989-90. A goal of 185 000 collections for 1990-91 is the objective.

Funding for 1990-91 includes provision for further expansion and enhancement of the plasmapheresis and plateletpheresis activity. The former is to support the Australiawide need for clotting factor concentrate production and the latter to enhance treatment to

sufferers from leukaemia and bone marrow transplant recipients. Another initiative is to develop staff training and staff skills to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and error reduction together with a further refining of the service's management structure, particularly in the nursing/Statewide context. Funding of a capital nature is to provide laboratory and computer equipment essential to maintaining testing and recording standards.

I turn now to migrant health. Migrant health screening, particularly with respect to the diseases that are managed by the Division of Specialised Health Services, has provided ongoing services for a large number of migrants through cooperation with Commonwealth agencies dealing with migrant issues. A significant proportion of the existing human and financial resources allocated to the division is channelled towards groups with a higher than average disease burden. In terms of facilitating their access to universal health, equity of delivery of health services and social justice, considerable contribution is made by the division during its interaction with almost all migrants who settle in Queensland. More specifically, they are also given special strategic assistance towards hepatitis B, tuberculosis, STDs and leprosy.

The following specific and special strategies will also be achieved during 1990-91—

- (a) Further development and distribution of special health-related pamphlets and literature for migrants, including translated versions.
- (b) Active participation of the medical staff of the division as representatives of the Department of Health at important migrant health conferences and seminars.
- (c) A pro-active strategic plan dealing with all issues of health concerning migrants is being developed within the division and is concurrently also executed.

As to sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS activities at the Special Clinic—the clinic will continue to offer high-quality counselling, testing and treatment services to the general public in keeping with the imperatives of social justice and equity, particularly to marginalised groups, including homosexual and bisexual men and patients giving an incidental history of injecting drug use, and socioeconomically disadvantaged groups. As well, the clinic will continue to provide counselling, testing and clinical services to prostitutes and their clients. The majority of prostitutes attending the clinic are female. The clinic will continue to use its influence and interaction with individuals and groups at increased risk of STD and AIDS to promote safe sexual behaviours so as to continue to reduce the incidence of those infections in those individuals and groups and, therefore, of the general community. The clinic will continue to offer STD screening services to migrants and refugees. The clinic will also continue to offer hepatitis B immunisation to patients at higher risk of that infection. Medical services will be enhanced by the employment of a senior medical officer and another senior medical officer who is attending the Liverpool University for a three-month period of intensive training in modern methods of venereology and HIV medicine. The division will continue to host a branch of the Laboratory of Microbiology and Pathology, which is situated at the clinic and provides reference laboratory services to patients of the clinic and to others.

I convey my thanks to the senior officers of my department who are present in the lobby of this Chamber. I mention particularly Dr Peter Stanley, the recently appointed Under Secretary and permanent head, who is already tackling the tasks of regionalisation and reorganisation with great energy and expertise. Senior members of the executive, Dr Ian Wilkey, the Director-General of Health and Medical Services, and Mrs Margaret Hankinson, the Chief Nursing Officer, have been invaluable. I thank them and Mr Alan Davis, the Acting Director of Finance, for the formulation of this Health budget.

I place on record my thanks and, I am sure, the thanks of Queenslanders generally, for the dedicated service that was provided in the past by the former Under Secretary for Health, Mr Tom McCarthy, who retired on 28 June this year. As many members would be aware, Tom McCarthy joined the Health Department as a clerk and served for some 41 years within the Health Department. He established a reputation for loyalty

and devoted service to the Government of the day. He had an uncanny ability to know and understand all aspects of health services throughout Queensland. What surprised me most was that Tom McCarthy had an incredible memory for names, positions and so on. I could refer any question to him and would receive an immediate response that was always well thought out and well documented. On behalf of this Committee and this Government, I place on record our thanks to Tom McCarthy for his 40 years of service. I also thank the honourable members of my committee for their advice, support and assistance during this period of reform of Queensland public sector health care.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I desire to inform honourable members that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion on all the Minister's departmental Estimates—Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds.

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

**Mrs McCAULEY** (Callide) (12.31 p.m.): To compare this year's Health budget with that of last year and to note the differing philosophical viewpoints and the changes that they have produced has been an interesting exercise. Two of the major pluses announced in this year's Budget—an additional 700 staff for public hospitals and the completion of the new Queensland Institute of Medical Research building at a total cost of \$30m—were both initiatives of the previous National Party Government and must be recognised as such. Recently when I attended a dinner for the Queensland Institute of Medical Research it was quite evident that those medical people involved knew full well the debt that they owed to the former Premier, Mike Ahern, when they spoke of him and the part that he played in obtaining for Queensland the new complex, which will provide for considerable expansion of research activities.

Overall, there is a worrying decline in capital works expenditure, with fixed capital expenditure reduced from \$71.5m in 1989-90 to \$34.5m in 1990-91—less than half. Fixed capital outlay for geriatric institutions has been reduced from \$6.9m in 1989-90 to \$1.03m in 1990-91. When we take into account the fact that we have an aging population that is of grave concern. The funding for existing geriatric institutions has been cut back by almost \$3m, which again is consistent with the Federal Labor Government's attitude towards the elderly, which is: ignore them and they will die eventually, anyway, and hope that most of them are too old and incompetent to vote. Geriatric assessment teams, which will carry out an initial assessment of the individual needs of aged people and advise on the most appropriate forms of care to meet their needs, have been allocated \$3.11m. So there will be no shortage of people to assess the elderly; there will be simply a shortage of suitable choices once the person has been assessed. Patients will be able to enter Eventide homes at Sandgate, Rockhampton and Charters Towers. Regional control of health services to those homes will be implemented in the name of efficiency. I will say more about that later. However, under the geriatric institutions' program consideration is being given to a report on the need for capital development of the Rockhampton Eventide home. As the fixed capital expenditure has decreased in this budget, that will obviously not be done this financial year.

The plant and equipment allocation has also decreased, as has the corporate services allocation. As home and community care funding has increased from \$2.9m in 1989-90 to \$4.1m in this Budget, it is obvious that the direction is to home-based care with support through HACC. This move towards family or community-based living must be monitored very carefully not only for our elderly but also for psychiatric patients and the mentally and physically disabled. Last week, a television program detailed horrific incidents that occurred in mixed-sex community hostels for the mentally disabled in New South Wales. Also, with the economic situation faced by most families these days, which means that often both partners have to work outside the home, there is little joy for the elderly who, in past years, would have been cared for within the family unit. If the home is empty between 9 and 5, it would be a fruitless exercise to assess an elderly patient as being able to be cared for in a home-based situation. Until meaningful

concessions are made in such things as tax and low interest loans, families will have no choice but to put their old folk on lengthy waiting lists for entry to homes for the aged.

The State Budget program statements state that the program goal for hospitals within the Department of Health is to ensure that all Queenslanders have reasonable access without means test to an appropriate and comprehensive range of hospital services. That is at odds with Mr McElligott's push to make privately insured patients pay for the use of public hospital facilities. It is also at odds with the statement that he made recently in Mackay that GP services should not be provided at outpatient clinics. We are faced with the cutting back of services from public hospitals, yet the Estimates provide for an increase of 700 staff. Together with the recently introduced \$2.50 fee for prescriptions for pensioners, both the Federal and State Labor Governments have provided a recipe that will hurt most those people for whom the Labor Party purports to protect and work—the single parent, the pensioner, the little Aussie battler.

Last week, a pensioner called into my office to advise me that, as there is no benefit to him in keeping the repeat prescriptions, rather than hanging onto prescriptions for repeats he would now simply go to his doctor each week for a new script. As he has five asthmatic children who require constant medication, he believes that that will cost the Government far more. Other pensioners to whom he has spoken are going to do the same thing. Those people do not differentiate between State and Federal responsibility. To them, the Labor Government is not looking after their interests and, so, to hell with Labor. Those facts, together with a scheme that is presently on trial at the Redcliffe, Brisbane Mater and Townsville Hospitals, point to cost-cutting on a most vicious scale. Under that scheme, patients will be discharged prematurely from hospital into the care of a community-liaison nursing system, but with no input from general practitioners whatsoever. The AMA has said—and I agree with them—that any attempts to have patients nursed at home under hospital auspices and not have medical care as the responsibility of their GP is totally unacceptable.

Rather than using the cheaper method of contract, the Government has also favoured in-house labour for catering, cleaning and security services. When the Logan hospital was opened, a private health service company was appointed as the interim contractor. It got the place up and running so that the Premier was able to swan around at the grand opening and then was summarily dropped on instructions from the State Government. The South Brisbane Hospitals Board acknowledged that the services provided by the contract company were of a high standard. If the Government is serious about saving money, it has certainly not shown it in this example. The contractors employed local labour, so that point is not an argument, either.

Cost-cutting in the provision of services does not extend to all of the health arena. It does not extend to the implementation of regionalisation which, in essence, will necessitate another level of bureaucracy within health services in Queensland—just what we need. Replacement of hospital boards—funding for which is nominal in relation to the annual Health budget—by area committees and area directors will see an enormous increase in next year's Health budget. During 1989, the number of members of hospital boards in Queensland totalled 314. Contrast the community input from those 314 members with that from approximately 60 area community members who may not be acceptable to the community, anyway.

The Green Paper on regionalisation states that the hospitals boards cost \$586,770 for a financial year in an overall budget of \$1.4 billion. This represents a cost factor of .000419 per cent of the overall Budget. By comparison, an area director would probably earn approximately \$80,000 per annum and the area committee of five members or more would earn about \$12,000 to \$15,000 each, plus travelling costs to move around their region and overnight accommodation and meals. The cost of separate office accommodation and office staff for each region must be added to that, and the formula ends up being a very expensive one indeed. At the rural doctors conference in Longreach the Minister admitted that 98 per cent of all hospitals boards were doing a good job but "their time had come and they must go." One then starts to comprehend the

philosophical and ideological differences between this Labor Government and the previous conservative Government. There were 413 responses received to the Green Paper on regionalisation and I would wager money that 90 per cent or more of them would be against the concept. If those opponents had visited Victoria and talked to those involved with the health regionalisation scheme which was implemented down there in the 1980s, they would have had their worst fears confirmed. Recently, I spent a day with officers of the Health Department in Victoria and found it very productive. It was confirmed to me that the bottom line of this scheme is that small hospitals do close and this is of grave concern to rural communities. However, still more alarming was the fact that area directors were turned over at a great rate of knots, with none of them staying more than 18 months or so. In fact, of all the people I spoke to within the Victorian Health Department, I did not find one employee—and not necessarily area directors—who had been employed for longer than a few years. The reason for this was in large part that the Health Department was not exactly sure what qualifications were required for an area director. Should the emphasis be on medical or managerial qualifications? Should the person have a mixture of both? Unfortunately, people with both qualifications do not grow on trees. I see no reason why Queensland will not experience the very same problems as Victoria following the implementation of this scheme, and I am extremely sceptical about the type of person who will fill the bill as far as also serving on the area committees is concerned. These people will probably be required to work at least one, and possibly more, days per week. I would expect that the sort of person needed would be one who possesses a modicum of managerial experience that would come from owning one's own business or managing a large concern for someone else. How will it be possible for such people to devote 20 hours a week to an area health committee unless they are retired, extremely wealthy or both?

As the Minister admitted in Longreach, the regionalisation scheme for health in Queensland will not cost less than the present administration, and will probably cost more. What an understatement! The claim that regionalisation will decentralise health services in Queensland is a furphy thrown out to confuse the general community into accepting the changes as being more beneficial. However, country people are not fools and they know that local hospitals boards are the most decentralised form of administration of community health services that this State is ever likely to see. Over the last few years, more and more autonomy has been given to local hospitals boards which have effectively used it to further improve their effective utilisation of available resources. The "areaisation" of administration will reduce rather than improve the decentralisation of administration of health services. The department's role should continue to be one of policy analysis and formulation, research and planning, allocation of finance and financial control and provision of some specialist Statewide services. Local boards can also utilise the services of local businesses in the provision of services to hospitals, for example, tradesmen, etc., and this will help foster local business which in turn will maintain the local economy. All of this will be threatened under "areaisation".

The Professional Officers Association has also been critical of the regionalisation proposal which it sees as "top-down" reform rather than the "bottom-up" approach that is needed. It has also pointed out that the all-powerful area health authorities will have no direct employee representation, which is in clear breach of the ALP's commitment to employee participation in decision-making.

Finally, I wish to express concern about the public sector health services bulletin *Update*. Bulletin No. 4 states that every officer of the Health Department and hospitals should each receive a copy of *Update*. Considering that there are 31 000 employees in this sector in Queensland, this is an enormous expense for what is essentially a propaganda sheet. These bulletins are also spread far and wide throughout the community and I serve notice on the Minister that I will be asking questions about the cost of this propaganda exercise. In addition, videos have been sent to all hospitals boards and community health centres throughout Queensland and there have been visits to all 13 regions by members of the advisory committee. The videos are also available to community groups on request. I query the cost of this exercise in light of the extreme

cost-cutting that has been carried out in other areas of health services. It is also true that information has been given by visitors to health centres throughout the State which has been contradicted by other Health Department officers on subsequent visits. It seems evident that even the Health Department does not know exactly where it stands on some issues and, now that the Public Sector Management Commission—Mandrake and his merry men—has got into the act, the atmosphere of uncertainty is making life unhappy for many competent and dedicated hospital managers.

Because I have not wanted to make political mileage out of what has been a very difficult situation, I have not made many public statements about the nursing profession's push for changes to its awards and conditions. However, I need to go on record as being very supportive of the goals of nurses and am as disappointed as they are that no provision was made in the Budget for increased remuneration. Nurses have a right to have a clearly charted career path, with adequate compensation for the work that they do and the skills that they have acquired. In August this year, I attended a meeting of some 800 nurses at South Brisbane and it was obvious that they were very disappointed with the Minister's attitude of trying to shunt their wage claims off to the Industrial Commission. The Minister criticised the QNU for lodging a claim for interim salary increases. However, this claim was simply in response to the Minister's own suggestion. When the QNU put a proposal to the Premier on interim wage increases, he declined to agree with it. It would seem from this that neither the Health Minister nor the Premier is fair dinkum on the matter of wage rises for nurses or the promises made by the ALP before the last election. The impression I gained from the meeting I attended was that most nurses did not want to go on strike, but that they may be forced to do so as a desperate measure by a group which has been led up the garden path by the Labor Party through campaign promises that it never intended to keep. In Victoria, the Labor Party's relationship with the nursing work force has been characterised by disputation, bans and the only nurses strike in the history of Victoria. I hope never to see that type of confrontation in Queensland.

For some time, women's health centres have been a topic of discussion in the circles in which I move. This year, the Federal Government has provided funds for the establishment of four women's health centres throughout Queensland. The Minister has given me the assurance that these centres will not duplicate any existing health facility and that they will be specific information and education centres that have a role to assist women in obtaining access to existing health services. Recently, I inspected a similar centre in Melbourne and was impressed by what I saw. However, I strongly believe that such centres must not become medical centres. I sound a note of caution about the cost of services provided by these centres. Statistics show that the cost of consultation at a family planning centre, which is a service similar to those that could be provided by a women's health centre, is \$43.61 compared to a 25-minute consultation with a private doctor costing \$16.70 under the Medicare schedule. Since the study was done, these figures have increased, but the message remains the same. Women's health centres run the very real risk of fragmenting patient care and duplicating existing facilities, thereby creating great expense for the taxpayer. While I am supportive of the concept, I am also well aware of the problems posed by the introduction of these centres.

The Federal Government's aims for these centres are focused on areas of special needs of women, such as reproductive health and breast and cervical cancer prevention programs. The programs are not focused on areas in which men could reasonably be expected to have an interest as well, such as those that cover the special needs of people who are disadvantaged by age, low income, urban or rural isolation, and disability or have non-English or Aboriginal backgrounds. It is paternalistic to single out women only in this context. If that is slightly more than annoying to the gentlemen in this Chamber, I can quite understand why.

However, a topic that is realistically and genuinely of concern to women is mammography units. Earlier this year, I was fortunate enough to visit the Royal Women's Hospital and inspect one of the mobile breast-screening units. Because the push for such units came from the CWA of central Queensland, this was of particular interest to me.

I am very proud of the initiative and lobbying efforts that set the ball rolling in this regard—under the previous Government, of course. Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in Australia. Its incidence rises rapidly with increasing age and occurs from the early twenties to 50 years of age. In 1987, 2 258 deaths resulted from breast cancer, which is why I applaud the scheme that is progressing in Queensland. Of course, there is no need to point out that the program began under the previous Government.

As my colleague the member for Gregory will speak on rural health in detail, I will touch only briefly on this topic. However, I am concerned as to the whereabouts of the rural health report. I believe that although it has been in the Minister's hands for some weeks, as yet it has not been released. Because I am quite sure that the Minister would not be a party to such a deception, I reject the suggestion that the report is being laundered to suit the aims and ideals of the Labor Party. However, I hope the Minister does not think that he can renege on the Labor Party's pre-election promise of retaining the rural health unit because the people in the bush have just about had enough. Sooner or later they will rise up and go on the warpath.

During Easter, when I attended the rural doctors' conference in Longreach, I was impressed by the planning for specific rural health training. Doctors who are able to participate in that training may wish to stay in country areas, particularly if they are compensated for their qualifications. The training would include anaesthetic, obstetric and basic surgical techniques that are more likely to be needed in rural areas than in the cities, where specialists are readily available.

This year, Green Papers on hostels, ionising radiation, disposal of hazardous wastes, and the Board of Nursing Studies and Nurses Registration Board have been circulated. The hostel proposals have caused a great deal of concern among churches and charitable institutions providing these services. I believe the Green Paper has been withdrawn to be redrafted. I hope that this is the case because, otherwise, the proposals will cause a steep escalation in the costs associated with hostel accommodation for the elderly and other disadvantaged groups, such as psychiatric patients. The Minister must ensure that the upgrading of existing hostels to comply with Health Department regulations must not result in increased costs to consumers who are least able to afford them. I welcome the Green Papers as forerunners to legislation, but I must point out that if the time-frame for submissions is not adequate or if the Green Papers come along too quickly—or both—the Minister will not get the response from the community for which he should be looking. I hope that he is genuine in seeking community input in relation to these matters and is not just wanting a seal of approval for what his bureaucrats have already planned and set in concrete. This Budget has provided not only for an increase in the community health program but also for the provision of an Aboriginal health unit and a Women's Health Unit, which will both cost approximately \$5m.

While I concede the need for special care to be taken in dealing with Aboriginal health issues, it seems to me that all efforts in this direction will be in vain unless Aboriginal communities give away their wet canteens. Aborigines will continue to have enormous health problems unless they come to grips with the fact that people of their culture and heritage should not, and must not, drink alcohol. It is useless to treat the symptoms without treating the disease, which is what will be achieved by the spending of large amounts on the provision of "you beaut" health facilities, without addressing the alcohol issue.

**Mr Foley:** Do you advocate prohibition?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** The honourable member would say that this is a human rights issue and that Aborigines should be allowed to drink. I am saying that, obviously, alcohol affects Aborigines physiologically far more than it affects white people and that steps should be taken accordingly. I will say no more because my colleague the member for Burnett will be addressing this matter. However, some time next year, I hope to talk to Gracelynn Smallwood and visit the northern Aboriginal communities.

Obviously, the community services program is the winner in this Budget. I welcome the increased funding. Judging from the Biloela Community Health Centre and the excellent results it achieves, community health is providing important and wide-ranging services. I am most supportive of this program. Shortly after the Budget was presented, the Minister expressed his support in the media for a health promotion foundation similar to those found in Victoria and South Australia. He suggested that the tax on tobacco could be increased to fund the foundation. The Premier and the Treasurer have put paid to that idea, and no more has been heard of it. The Minister will no doubt be ecstatic to know that I support the concept of a health promotion foundation, but I, too, have problems with some members of my party, including the gentleman who sits beside me in the Chamber and who represents tobacco-growers.

However, the fact remains that, in 1985 in Australia, tobacco and alcohol accounted for 97 per cent of drug-related deaths, with tobacco-smoking causing some 17 800 deaths. In 1989-90, the Queensland Government raised approximately \$126m for consolidated revenue from the State tobacco licence fee; so it would seem unnecessary to impose an extra levy to fund a health promotion foundation. Surely some of that \$126m which is presently pouring into the State's coffers could be used for that purpose.

**Mr McElligott:** It's going to the tobacco-farmers.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Surely not all of it?

**Mr McElligott:** Not all of it, but most of it.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Approximately \$49.9m is going into consolidated revenue, so some of that could be used.

In the Budget, \$790,000 has been allocated to the cancer prevention program, and many more dollars will be provided by the community. In Biloela, I am proud to be the patron of the Biloela branch of the Leukaemia Foundation. Its members are a small but extremely hard-working group of dedicated people who raise funds for that worthy cause. Unfortunately, I cannot attend its Melbourne Cup function today, but I hope to draw a horse in the sweep. The Queensland Cancer Fund and other similar organisations also work towards the common goal of raising funds for research and prevention programs. The Government owes those selfless people a deep debt of gratitude for their efforts.

In that same context, I welcome the formation of the Queensland Council of Carers and also Mindcare, an organisation for mental health which was launched last week in Brisbane at a dinner which I attended. The Queensland Council of Carers is a non-profit organisation with resource centres in Rockhampton, Townsville and Brisbane, funded federally by HACC to support those who care for elderly or disabled relatives in the home. Mindcare has a dynamic committee of Brisbane residents behind it who will no doubt be active in raising funds for, among other things, research into mental health. Only someone who has worked for such charitable institutions can know the hard work and dedication involved in those committees. I salute those committee members and the chairman, Dr Tom George.

The Division of Dental Services provides dental care free of charge to all Queensland primary school and preschool children aged four years and over through the school dental service. To extend that service, as has been allowed for in the Estimates, seems to me to be a waste of money and is no service to those in the dental profession who are trying to make a go of it in private practice. At a time when funds are scarce and drastic cuts in spending have been made, that largess seems ludicrous. I will save my comments on dental technicians and radiographers until another time.

As well, being charitable, I will not mention Ward 10B and the Minister's initial handling of that matter. However, I will sound a mild note of warning. I have received three letters complaining about the Jubilee nursing home at Dalby and, although three is not many, I point out that where there is smoke there is fire. I know that the Minister has also received letters raising concerns about that home. I sincerely hope that he

investigates the matter now, before the molehill becomes a mountain and the matter gets out of hand.

The Minister made mention of the Health Promotion Foundation. It is doing an excellent job with the programs that it is providing for Queensland.

**Mrs EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha) (12.57 p.m.): Much of the funding for health services is earmarked, of necessity, to the State hospitals. I am touched by the faith of one of the several shadow Health Ministers that this Government has the ability to redress so many years of neglect in such a short time. Having worked for many years in both private and public hospitals, I believe that I have some understanding of the pressures within the State hospital system caused by the many years of staff being underpaid, overworked and never consulted or encouraged. It is therefore with pleasure that I noted that this year's Health budget has made possible an extra 600 positions in hospitals and another 100 to various Health Department programs. Attention has been given to staffing new ventures in particular, and there has been a general recognition that, after the many years of neglect, many hospitals need extra staff urgently.

Previously, there has been a tendency to announce high-profile initiatives, with an eye on the political mileage to be gained but with little or no thought given to day-to-day management, or the stress that new initiatives can impose on already overworked staff. Although I do not question the value of many of those past ventures, I do question the timing and the apparent lack of concern for staff that went with them. It is pleasing that health areas are now being better served, with more consultation and consideration of real priorities. It is somewhat ironic that, when I started training at the Queensland Radium Institute many years ago, I was warned that it could not be considered a long-term career prospect, as researchers were on the brink of establishing the cause of cancer and, therefore, a cure was imminent. Today, I stand here acknowledging the urgent need for yet another linear accelerator at QRI to cope with increasing cancer patient numbers.

I endorse the commitment that enables all patients to have the best cancer treatment freely available. A simple cure for cancer seems as far away as ever, although we have a far greater ability to understand the processes, some of the causes, and, with an increasing range of high-technology imaging, can diagnose malignancy earlier. Early diagnosis of cancer is a major contributor to improved prognosis, and screening techniques are available for breast and cervical cancers. I congratulate the Minister on the implementation of programs aimed at early diagnosis and information. That has especially been needed in rural and remote Queensland, an area desperately neglected in the past.

This Budget has included a \$1m breast and cervix screening project, most of which is aimed at making these services accessible to women outside Brisbane. This will include improved facilities at Toowoomba and the Gold Coast, a mobile mammography unit in the Darling Downs region and a second unit on the outskirts of Brisbane servicing the Beaudesert and Logan areas. New breast-screening services will be established at Townsville hospital to service north Queensland and another mobile service will be provided for the north and north-west regions. Cancer of the cervix is a malignancy that has a simple screening technique, the Pap smear, and a very high treatment success rate when diagnosed early. This year, a very successful publicity campaign was aimed at increasing awareness of the need for women of all age groups to be tested. The campaigns have shown a gratifying increase of 160 per cent among women over 60 years being tested—a group that is usually reluctant to be tested. It is of major concern that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are very reluctant to undergo testing. Diagnosis of cancer of the cervix in these women tends to be at a much later stage, with consequent poor prognosis and mortality rates of nine times the average. This is a very difficult problem to tackle, but my feedback has been that it is being addressed slowly but surely. It is being addressed slowly not because of a lack of commitment but because of the need to train local community health workers to gain the confidence and understanding of the Aboriginal women prior to the taking of the Pap smear. These projects also involve educational components, developed in sympathy with the culture of each

individual community. While this is a slow process, it is the best method for establishing ongoing programs that will be effective.

Smoking remains a major concern to any individual who is interested in seeing a real improvement in health and a reduction in cancer statistics. It increases the risk of cancer in the smoker and any unfortunate person who shares the smoker's air. It can cause malignancy in any tissue that it touches—lip, mouth, oesophagus, stomach, large and small colon and, of course, lung. I am hoping that the Minister for Police and Emergency Services is listening. Continued education and anti-smoking campaigns over the last 20 years are having an impact, albeit slowly, in reducing the number of deaths from lung cancer—the major cause of cancer-related death in Australia. Smoking is, of course, also implicated in most congestive airways diseases and cardiovascular problems.

**Ms Power** interjected.

**Mrs EDMOND:** I am reminded by my colleague that asthmatics are severely adversely affected by smoking.

I am encouraged by the numbers of public and private dwellings, transport and restaurants that now ban smoking of any type, and I commend the Health Department for its continued efforts in encouraging smokers to quit for the sake of their health and that of their families. Further hard work is needed, notably amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island groups and adolescents. I look forward to the day when smoking is banned completely in all buildings, including this one.

Another major cause of community concern and awareness has been human immuno-deficiency virus, or HIV infection, and acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS. That community concern is reflected in an increase by 30 per cent in funding of AIDS prevention programs in Queensland and is in keeping with Labor policy commitments to work with the Commonwealth in the fight against the spread of AIDS. A major new service will be the multipurpose clinic at Miami with a methadone clinic, mobile needle exchange and AIDS and STD clinic. Special STD clinics play an important role in the fight against AIDS. They are able to offer high-quality counselling, testing and treatment services to the general public in a non-judgmental and non-discriminatory manner. They enable marginalised groups such as homosexual and bisexual men, IV drug users, prostitutes and socio-economically disadvantaged groups—for example, Aborigines, Islanders and street kids—access to assistance and health education. The clinics can use their influence and interaction with these at-risk groups and individuals to promote safer sex and behaviour modification to reduce transmission of HIV and STDs and also hepatitis B. The Gold Coast clinic is expected to be operational in early 1991.

Recently, Professor John Dwyer, Professor of Medicine at the University of New South Wales, told a Miami conference the following—

"Tough Queensland legislation is driving Gold Coast drug addicts and homosexuals across the border to be tested for deadly viruses—because the practices were condemned in Queensland."

He claimed further that a lot of HIV positive people were living in the Gold Coast area and that it had a flourishing sex industry and many drug-users, as is common around resort areas. I mention this statement because, earlier this year, the member for South Coast was deploring the establishment of a needle exchange clinic at the Gold Coast. He extolled the virtues of saving needles and re-using them—an economic measure, no doubt. Professor Dwyer obviously believes that Queensland should start recognising and looking after its own problems, and the obvious site for a drug and STD clinic is where it is needed. One is obviously needed urgently at the Gold Coast.

While the long lead-time for AIDS means that it will be several years yet before today's programs show results, other STDs can be used as progress indicators. Over the last two years, there has been a steady decline in the numbers of other STDs in homosexual men, which does provide good evidence that there has been significant behaviour modification and adoption of safer sex habits. There has also been a dramatic decrease in the incidence of STDs in prostitutes for the same reason. A matter for

concern, however, is the rate of increase of heterosexual transmission of HIV and the increasing numbers of young people infected, although, thankfully, these figures are still very small. This is certainly the emerging pattern of HIV infection worldwide. World Health Organisation statistics now show that 60 per cent of victims were infected heterosexually. The new at-risk group is seen to be young, sexually active and mobile. There is an obvious need to continue targeting schools and at-risk groups in a manner that is totally non-discriminatory and non-judgmental. This need underlines the importance of the Adolescent Drop In/Outreach Centre. This centre aims to provide primary health care facilities to disadvantaged youth in Brisbane. It will also provide health education, drug and alcohol counselling, STD screening and family planning advice. There is evidence to show that many disadvantaged young people do not know about or utilise existing mainstream health facilities.

A less high-profile but very worthwhile area, reaching as it does throughout the community, is the Home and Community Care program. It gives me great pleasure to see the \$11m increase in funds provided for that joint State/Commonwealth venture. The HACC program provides services to three main groups of people—the frail elderly, younger people with disabilities and their carers. The program is directed towards assisting those people who, without community assistance, would need premature admission to long-term residential care, at substantial public and private expense, and away from their homes, which, in my area, is where most of them strongly desire to remain. That may not be so in the member for Callide's area. Many of the everyday facilities that on honourable members take for granted—for example, home nursing, help from Blue Nurses, St Lukes Nursing Service and Meals on Wheels—receive much of their funding under the HACC scheme. I pay tribute to those services and the role that they perform in my electorate, especially in the areas of Paddington and Ashgrove, which have large numbers of elderly people.

Respite care is provided at a number of centres in Ashgrove and Paddington, both as day and residential care, for aged constituents, many suffering from debilitating conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and strokes, to allow their carers some time to themselves. It must be remembered that often the primary care-giver is aged.

Westcare provides excellent day and residential care for young people with physical and mental disabilities, allowing families to have a holiday from care. That is often so important in maintaining other family relationships, and indeed the whole family's health and well-being. I place on record my appreciation of the work being done in those difficult areas at the respite centres in Mount Coot-tha. Lack of funds is always a worry for those organisations as the demand for their services continues to grow. I am pleased that the Health budget has allowed for a major increase in their funding to enable a significant expansion of services in priority areas such as home help, home maintenance, incontinence, transport and respite care.

A pilot aged-care scheme that has been operating out of the Red Hill/Paddington Community Centre is looking at what areas of home care that are not covered by existing services and providing those fill-in services and support. That pilot scheme has been of great assistance to elderly folk in Paddington and operates on unmatched HACC funding.

I have outlined some of the key areas in the Department of Health in which I have a particular interest. My colleagues will discuss other areas in detail. In conclusion, I congratulate the Minister on the unprecedented increase in community and professional consultation that has taken place with regard to Health Green Papers. This openness is a healthy sign for the future. The Estimates show an awareness and concern for all areas of health care—hospital and community based, city and rural. It has developed policies that will not only improve hospital care but also make more efficient use of the hospitals and, therefore, provide greater access to public hospital in-patient services.

Areas of concern that I raised at the beginning of this year are being addressed. I understand that my proposals on rural radiography are being looked at seriously by the rural health review committee and I hope that it will make positive recommendations.

I can understand that, after so many years of neglect, rural areas are desperate for improvement. It is a scandal that a so-called rural party was so neglectful of rural health.

Time expired.

**Mrs SHELDON** (Landsborough) (1.12 p.m.): Today, it gives me great pleasure to speak on Health Estimates. My learned colleague, Dr David Watson, will speak later, with his usual in-depth knowledge and aplomb, on the regionalisation of the health scheme.

It would appear from a perusal of *Capital Works* in the State Budget documents for 1990-91 that the allocation for Health is the third lowest in terms of capital expenditure. Conservation, recreation and culture and economic services were lowest on the list. The amount allocated for health is approximately \$38.5m. Staggeringly, that is below the allocation for the social welfare and housing program, which is \$833.8m. It seems totally non-feasible to have such a very low capital works program for Health. The \$10m allocated for the provision of hospital facilities in 1990-91 is far short of any adequate allocation. The only major project at any of the major metropolitan hospitals will be the completion of the redevelopment of the Mater Mothers Hospital. This lack of capital funding has occurred even following the advice given to the Health Department by an independent firm that the Royal Brisbane Hospital needs \$400m to be spent on it to upgrade it to the level of comparable hospitals in the southern States.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital has an urgent need for a post-operative ward for transplant patients. The Princess Alexandra Hospital is a world leader in the field of liver and kidney transplants. A key to success in this field is the non-incidence of post-operative infection. To ensure this, those patients need to be isolated post-operatively from general surgery patients. When that does not occur, the risk of infection is high. It should be remembered that the Royal Brisbane Hospital, the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Mater Hospital are Queensland's major teaching hospitals. Without adequate facilities, the education of Queensland's future doctors, nurses and paramedicals will be severely impaired.

Psychiatric services, as a whole, are at an all-time low in terms of capital and staff funding. That is not a new phenomenon. However, it is no excuse for a recipe of more of the same. It is a known fact that at 8 a.m. on any day of the week no acute psychiatric beds are available in any of Queensland's major hospitals. Therefore, if any acute psychiatric patients need to be admitted, other patients have to be discharged. Obviously, the implication is that those patients will be discharged prematurely. They should stay longer, but, as there are no beds for them, they have to go.

In its policy document on psychiatric health, *Labor's Mental Health Policy*, the Labor Party stated that the Goss Government would ensure that sufficient acute and long-stay psychiatric beds were provided and that adequate funds were allocated to enable psychiatric facilities to be properly maintained. This certainly is not the case at the moment. Labor claimed also that it would provide facilities for long-term hospital care which would include semi-independent transitional units to facilitate the return of appropriate patients to the community. When patients have to be prematurely discharged from an acute hospital because beds for more acute patients are needed, it could hardly be said that these patients are being integrated into the community.

The whole field of mental health is appallingly run and very much underfunded. It would appear that the Labor Party's mental health policy was just a glossy publication. Nothing has been done; it was just so much more verbosity. The Royal Brisbane Hospital urgently needs an injection of funds to build a new psychiatric unit. The current unit is called Rosemount. Rosemount is an old, wooden building, built in 1920. It is woefully inadequate as a venue for the work that this unit is endeavouring to perform. It is a depressing place and is in no way geared to help the psychiatrically ill back into the community. The staff there certainly provide the best service they can, but they are hampered by the total lack of funding. This applies to the building itself and to inadequate staffing.

It would appear that, for the last 15 years, the whole program to look after the mentally ill in our community has been static. A survey of the incidence of psychiatric illness in our community estimated, firstly, that one in every five people have some significant psychiatric illness at some stage of their lives and, secondly, that a quarter of the people admitted to our hospitals are suffering from psychiatric illness. Very obviously, many psychiatric patients are not in psychiatric units, they are dotted throughout hospitals generally and accommodated in areas such as medical wards.

There is also a chronic shortage of beds on the south side of Brisbane. The area from the Gold Coast through to the Princess Alexandra Hospital is grossly understaffed and has a very low proportion of patient beds compared to actual requirements. The Southport hospital, situated on the Gold Coast, which has an estimated population of half a million, has an 18-bed psychiatric unit. The world health guidelines for mental health say that, with a population of half a million, there should be at least 140 beds. What is provided is well short of the mark. The unit is not resourced well. Because of this, it is understaffed and poorly staffed and is having great difficulty in attracting people of high calibre. Recently, it was claimed in the press that this unit was on the verge of closing. Should this happen, it would be a public disgrace. It is quite obvious that, in an area such as the Gold Coast, there are complex problems. It has a large population, many of whom are not wealthy but who are refugees from southern states. There is the tourist influx, on an ad hoc basis, and there is a large proportion of transient residents as well.

It should be noted that there is also a very high rate of youth suicide on the coast. Because of the poor social infrastructure, which in general has not kept pace with that growth in the region, there is also a high level of unemployment. There needs to be a considerable injection of funds into the public sector of mental health because, although the Gold Coast was once regarded, possibly, as a wealth place, whose inhabitants could afford private health care, this situation has certainly changed. As I have said, there is a large migration of people from the south. These people are often under stress and have no support. They turn to alcohol and drug abuse. Drug and alcohol problems also have a high incidence among the mentally ill. This, of course, is another cost to the community as a whole, because the treatment of drug and alcohol related problems is basically publicly funded.

To summarise on the position of hospital beds for the psychiatrically ill from the Gold Coast to the south side of the river inclusive, which is the unit at Princess Alexandra Hospital—there are only really 98 beds. Of those, 80 are at the psychiatric unit at the Princess Alexandra Hospital and 18 are on the Gold Coast. QEII Hospital was to have a psychiatric unit, but this has never gone ahead, and there is to be, as I understand it, an allocation of 20 beds at the new Logan Hospital.

In the major provincial areas, there is a great need for more community psychiatric services, including any clinic facilities, to expand and to upgrade. On the Sunshine Coast, which has a similar population mix to that of the Gold Coast, there is a very small acute unit at the Nambour hospital that is hopelessly inadequate. The only community clinic is at Maroochydore. This clinic does not have enough funding either for expansion or for staff facilities. The only provincial area that has anything like adequate facilities for the mentally ill is Toowoomba. It is quite certain that there is not adequate infrastructure for the chronically mentally ill, and this does not appear to have been in any way addressed in the Budget.

With reference to chronic mental illness, it is known that one in every 100 people are schizophrenics. The incidences are even higher for manic depressive illnesses, which seem to be endemic in our society at present. Both of these illnesses, particularly the latter, can be adequately treated with drug therapy. So increased funding is needed to provide education for people to obtain medical assistance with these conditions.

It is a fact that barely 30 per cent of people in Queensland now carry private health insurance that enables them to go to a private hospital, even at an intermediate level, so there is an even greater burden on the public hospital system. The Federal Government

is obviously discriminating against those with private health insurance, so it will have to make available considerably more funds to the public sector. With the cost of hospitalisation, even those people with medical insurance need it upgraded from intermediate coverage. Because of the cost infrastructure at a unit at one of the bigger hospitals, that intermediate level of insurance quite often will not cover patients' costs.

Intermediate beds in public hospitals are getting scarcer. Public hospitals need beds for public patients, so that intermediate facility for public hospitals is also disappearing. By and large, people who are insured in an intermediate hospital scheme consider what it will cost them and elect to go public. Because of the cost structure, some of the 30 per cent of the population who are privately insured are going to public hospitals. It appears that the funding for health as a whole is grossly inadequate. Adequate health care requires massive amounts of money, which the community at large cannot afford. We must consider other means of providing health care. Obviously, one of those means is to allow health insurance contributions to be tax deductible and to promote people to help support themselves in the health-care sphere. The present mentality of a large proportion of the population is that, if it is free, it is there to be had, despite the fact that it is an indirect cost to them. There must be an increase in direct funds for research and preventive measures in health.

Much has been made by the Goss Government about a health promotion foundation. It does not appear to have got off the ground. We need to increase direct funds for research. Much has been made by the Government about that health promotion foundation. There is little, if any, funding in the Budget under the heading of preventive health measures. Unfortunately, that foolishness is at the expense of the health of all Queenslanders and the economic expense of all taxpayers. In its pre-election policies, this Government promised preventive health measures as a priority. Had it kept to its promise, it would have gone a long way towards the approach to preventive health measures that are desperately needed in this State. Sadly, not only has the Government failed to keep that promise but it has given every indication that it is interested only in continuing to pay lip-service to it.

Prevention programs under professional health services in the Budget papers are designed to reduce the incidence of several health problems, including drug misuse, cancer, cardiovascular disease and chronic respiratory conditions. The fact that is not mentioned is that smoking is related to each of those problems. A sorry fact is that, of the 15 000 Queensland children who take up smoking this year, one quarter or 3 700 will die prematurely from smoking-related diseases.

The Goss Government gave a major pre-election promise to establish a Queensland health promotion foundation totally funded by part of the tobacco levy. The Government has not done that. It has put on its blinkers and is hiding behind its other promise not to raise taxes beyond CPI increases. That is surely an excuse to do nothing. The formation of a health promotion foundation would mean that the fields of education and prevention in health care would be actively promoted. Drug abuse, whether it is alcohol or tobacco related, could be targeted, especially for our youth.

I turn now to medical research. This Government and the previous Government have provided good support for research for the QIMR. However, when the QIMR moves to the Bankroft Centre with the RBH Foundation's clinical research centre, an increase in funding of the order of \$1m per year will be necessary. It is also important to consider medical research in teaching hospitals. The most promising aspect for change for the future for medical research lies in the major teaching hospitals in Queensland. The nexus between quality medical care, quality medical teaching and medical research is well recognised. Thus research in the major teaching hospitals in Queensland becomes critically important as we enter the twenty-first century. Particular issues must be addressed by this Government. Firstly, what importance does the Government place on research in teaching hospitals? Secondly, what is the Government doing to foster research in teaching hospitals? Does research in teaching hospitals in Queensland have the same profile as it has in southern States?

Time expired.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK** (Albert) (1.27 p.m.): I am pleased to speak to the Estimates of the Minister for Health. As the Honourable Minister knows, the Health Department is a gigantic monster that requires a great deal of funding to keep it operating—well over \$1.5 billion this year—and it is one sphere of Government that affects almost every person in this State. The problem with the Minister's portfolio is that, because of the ever-increasing pace of technology, it is hard to keep up with the changes. It is an expensive problem. For example, let me consider the hospital enhancement program, which was commenced by the Commonwealth in its 1988-89 Budget. That three-year program, which was to upgrade public hospital clinical services, provided funds for clinical enhancement, including new buildings, building renovations and capital for equipment. It also provided funding on a cost-shared basis of \$2 from the Commonwealth and \$1 from the States. During the 1990-91 financial year, a total of \$12.385m will be spent on that program.

Similar projects have been considered to meet the criteria established for the allocation of funds. They include the provision of a CT scanner and refurbishment at the Toowoomba Base Hospital. I must point out that CT scanners are not cheap. Each unit costs approximately \$2m. Funds will also be used to provide magnetic resonance imaging at Royal Brisbane Hospital and the upgrading of central monitoring systems at the Bundaberg, Maryborough and Redcliffe hospitals. An additional commitment of funds has been made for the purchase of a linear accelerator at the Queensland Radium Institute. Funding will also provide for the upgrading of Aboriginal health facilities in the Torres Strait, Cape York peninsula and far-north Queensland, administered by the Thursday Island and Mossman Hospitals Boards and the Cape York peninsula hospitals district—to name a few.

I turn now to psychiatric services, which is a subject that interests me. At times places that provide psychiatric services can be dangerous. I cite the example of a social worker who was shot last year on the Gold Coast. His attacker was sentenced yesterday in the Supreme Court. Mental health services are provided in psychiatric hospitals and other community-based centres throughout the State. The division has over 6 000 patients in active treatment at any one time. The major expenditure field within the division is the institutional services area, which has more than \$60m allocated to the three specialised psychiatric hospitals for the continued development of their specialised programs.

Sitting suspended from 1.30 till 3 p.m.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** For the coming year, the Budget provides for staffing at the new acute psychiatric unit at Logan Hospital. I have visited that hospital. The problem is that it is a lovely facility, but it has no staff to man it. The Budget also provides for the development of a new security ward at the Baillie Henderson Hospital in Toowoomba. Architects should not design false ceilings for security wards. Many years ago, I visited the Barrett centre where the security unit had a false roof and the inmates were able to push the tiles off, climb up the wall and jump to the other side. They may be insane, but they are not stupid. The Budget also provides for additional staff to develop further special psycho-geriatric and research facilities at the Wolston Park Hospital. I have worked in a few of the psycho-geriatric units there. Earlier this year, I visited the hospital and found that many of the patients who were there in 1982 are still there. The fact that they are still there after many years must be an indication of the service that those inmates are receiving.

Within psychiatric services, the Estimates provide for expenditure on community-based services. That is the section of greatest enhancement. The 1990-91 financial year will see a 20 per cent increase in staff allocation. When I was working in a psychiatric hospital, the Division of Psychiatric Services was leaning towards community-based services, and it seems that that is continuing. The Budget will allow the service to visit parts of Nerang and Mundubbera which, because public transport is not available to take people to the Miami clinic, have the greatest need.

**Mr Stephan:** The wrong area.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Well, that is what my notes say—Mundubbera.

**Mr Stephan:** Didn't you write that?

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** I did not know where it was, either. I thought it was out near Merrimac, but I could not find it.

**Mrs McCauley:** Do you know where Mundubbera is?

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** No, I have never been there. It was Mudgeeraba.

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** It must be Mudgeeraba. There is no public transport to take people to the centre at Miami. I have also visited the service at Miami and spoken to the regional psychiatrist there, Dr Kev McNamara, who was willing to discuss his problems in an open and professional manner.

I refer to the provision of an adolescent health unit.

**Mr Stephan:** What was that word again?

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Adolescent health unit. That unit will coordinate with existing health services that are provided by the Health Department to adolescents. The unit will oversee Commonwealth and State initiatives in providing health services to homeless youth and will resource the Burdekin report initiatives. Because many of the findings of the Burdekin report came from the north Albert and Logan regions, those initiatives are of great value to me in my electorate of Albert.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Yes, we have. It is the fastest-growing area in this State.

In addition to the adolescent health unit, \$579,000 has been provided for the adolescent health drop-in/outreach centre, which operates in the Logan/Beenleigh/Gold Coast area and provides primary health-care facilities for disadvantaged youth. It provides health care and consultation, health education and promotion, mental health services, drug, alcohol and smoking counselling and treatment, screening for sexually transmitted diseases, dental services and other needed facilities. It is known that some young people do not use mainstream health services. That is why funding is provided for those services.

It is refreshing to see the Minister increase funding for disease prevention rather than dealing with the end result. For example, Queensland has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. In the past seven years, the number of people with melanomas has increased by 40 per cent. The number of people with skin cancer in Queensland is almost double the number in the United States, which has the next highest rate. The number of people with skin cancer is about 50 per cent to 60 per cent higher on the Gold Coast than it is in Brisbane. That shows the importance of education. In the future, educational programs should extend to the places where the disease begins—on the beach.

It is good to see the beginning of the next stage of the Logan Hospital with the provision of \$1.5m to expand the present facilities to a total of 200 beds. Logan lies in one of the most rapidly growing parts of Australia and therefore services need to keep pace. By the turn of the century, Australia will experience a dramatic increase in the number of people over the age of 65, which will place a further burden on the limited health dollar. The Minister's job is not easy. However, he is managing the job in fine style and will continue to receive support from his committee, which is well versed in health matters. Dr John Flynn, the member for Toowoomba North, is a medical practitioner. I am a nursing sister. Wendy Edmond is a radiologist.

I give my support to proper career and wage structures for nurses. Queensland nurses can see that the Government is committed to fair wages and a career structure,

but they must realise that they have to go through the right channel, that is, the Industrial Commission. I thank the Minister for giving me the opportunity to speak. As I said, his job is not easy, but he will provide the best service with the limited funds that he has.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory) (3.08 p.m.): I have pleasure in participating in the debate on the Estimates of the Health portfolio. Every honourable member in this Chamber is well aware that Mr McElligott has probably one of the most important portfolios in this State. If the people of Queensland have good health, they will be on the road for a long time.

Today, it is my intention to primarily address my comments to the rural sector of the Health portfolio. Honourable members will be aware of the great importance of maintaining the presence of the Health Department in the rural areas of this State. The Minister will also be aware of the cost of maintaining rural health services. It simply costs more to service rural Queensland than it does to service the urban areas of this State, but that should not be a reason or excuse to either downgrade health services in the west or in any other part of the inland section of this State. The Government should be committed to maintaining and increasing the presence and impact of the Department of Health in rural Queensland. Today's Estimates debate provides me with the perfect opportunity to commend those many people and organisations who dedicate themselves to health services in my region.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service, although not directly under the umbrella of the Health Department, is a very vital link in maintaining health services in the remote and isolated areas of our State. This service operates under great difficulty because of the hours needed to be worked by the health professionals and the very remoteness of the region. It is to be hoped that the Government's commitment to the Royal Flying Doctor Service will be maintained and in fact increased. The increase in the contribution by the Federal Government from 37 to 43 per cent must be commended. I thank the Government for that. I believe that it is a very worthy service and I am pleased that the Government agrees with me.

The Flying Surgeon gives the people in the remote areas of this State equality of surgical procedures with those traditionally experienced by city people. This service requires total commitment from its medical staff. The doctors, nurses and pilots who bring this service to the people of rural Queensland should be commended for their untiring efforts, often without appropriate recompense. They are truly courageous and dedicated people, and I express my gratitude to them. Over a period of years I have had a fair bit to do with the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Flying Surgeon. Before I became a member of this Parliament, I spent 10 years as a member of the Quilpie Hospitals Board and saw at first hand the way these people operate these services and their total commitment. The Minister visited Longreach a few days ago and unveiled a plaque in memory of the great work carried out by the Flying Surgeon since 1958 in the western regions of this State. It is due to the services of the Flying Surgeon that today I have a wife and a daughter. My wife and daughter are alive today because of the great work carried out by the Flying Surgeon almost 19 years ago.

The Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist also comes under this category of aerial medicine. This service was introduced by the previous National Party Government and has been a tremendous bonus to the upgrading of women's health in rural outback areas. The introduction of this service has alleviated the financial burden on rural women who in times past had to undertake extensive travel to the capital and regional cities in order to obtain the specialist attention and advice that is now provided by this great service. A continuing commitment by the Government to this program and to other women's health issues is welcomed.

I note with interest that the Government has committed the expenditure of \$1m this year on breast-screening services. I ask the Minister to consider closely exactly where this money is to be spent. It is my concern that the \$1m will be spent largely in the capital cities or provincial areas of this State. Already, mobile breast-screening units

operate on the Gold Coast and in the Albert, Logan and Beaudesert Shires and a second unit is to be established in Townsville. I would appreciate it if the Minister in his reply will outline the portion of that \$1m that will be spent on breast-screening in western Queensland. I would like to know if the Government is interested in committing funds to the establishment of a mobile breast-screening unit to service western Queensland. Further in relation to this problem, clinics should be conducted to encourage women to have a Pap smear test for cervical cancer at the same time. This is a very important issue and one that should be given a great deal of consideration and thought.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** This issue creates a great deal of havoc and worry for a lot of women and it is not an issue that should be laughed at in this Chamber. I do not understand the reaction of some Government members, because this is a very serious issue. From time to time women need to have these tests and those facilities should be provided so that this embarrassing disease can be eradicated.

Another important initiative in aerial health services for rural Queensland would be the establishment of a flying paediatrician service that would operate in a similar way to the Flying Surgeon and the Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. Paediatrics is every bit as important and specialised as the service that is currently provided by the Flying Surgeon and the Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. A flying paediatrician would operate in conjunction with various child health centres throughout western Queensland. It would be the role of the child health nurse to identify problems for referral to the flying paediatrician. This matter should be given due consideration. Honourable members would be aware that parents often do not identify problems involving their own children and this occurs to an even greater extent with Aboriginal children in western Queensland communities. A flying paediatrician would be able to identify and address health problems in children at an early age before the problem becomes worse. In the long term this would lead to cost-savings, because often these problems become more expensive to rectify in adulthood than in early childhood.

I now turn to consider the area of patient transfer, which is equally as important to remote inland Queensland as the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the Flying Surgeon. As I mentioned before, I spent 10 years on the Quilpie Hospitals Board and had a great deal of experience with retrieval and evacuation of patients. The importance of this service should not be overlooked.

I shall cite the response of Dr Hoyal of the Cloncurry hospital to the Green Paper on rural health—

"The proliferation of competing evacuation and retrieval providers is not only inefficient and confusing but causes delays in arranging movements. The release of and wide public discussion of the now almost mythical 'Stables Report' would help to rationalise the arrangements even if considerable vested interests should feel threatened.

It should be possible to have a single Emergency Air Tasking Authority in this State so that a single contact number will enable the most rapid movement of the most appropriate aircraft with the most appropriate ancillary equipment and staff to the optimum destination for the individual patient."

I am in total agreement with what Dr Hoyal has stated. Time and time again when an emergency arises because of an accident and when it is necessary to evacuate a patient for urgent medical treatment in Brisbane or one of the larger coastal hospitals, the aircraft arrives too late. The results are often fatal because the delays are too long. I draw the Minister's attention to the need to give urgent consideration to having an aeroplane based in a town such as Emerald or a city such as Rockhampton to service inland districts. Although aerial transport is a high cost item in Health budgets, a service of that type would assist the speedy recovery of patients.

While I acknowledge the great job done by the aerial ambulance service in central Queensland, I point out that the service does not cover inland regions. The Flying

Doctor Service carries out a fair amount of recovery work and the aerial ambulance service extends to Emerald and Barcaldine from Rockhampton, but it does not cover Longreach, Quilpie or Charleville. Retrieval teams are required in those areas and if the Minister could give consideration to the extension of the service, I believe that that would be a worthwhile addition to the rural health program and would address some of the needs of the area. Last week, during discussion of the Estimates for Emergency Services, I referred to QATB ambulances, which are different from hospitals boards ambulances. Because the department is concerned about looking after and caring for people in emergencies, I believe that all ambulance services in this State should come under the jurisdiction of the Health Department. For that reason, I believe that the QATB ambulance service should be under the jurisdiction of the Department of Health.

While I have sufficient time, I wish to address the issue of the scarcity of radiographers in rural hospitals. I point out that radiographers receive specialised training and undertake a number of years' study for the specific purpose of being able to operate very important equipment in hospitals throughout the State. I believe it is unfair and irresponsible for nurses to operate this technical equipment in country hospitals. This issue requires a great deal of thought. I believe that radiographers, and not trained nurses, should carry out radiographers' work.

I wish to address an issue that applies not only to rural health but to health care in general in this State. I refer to skin cancer, which is probably the most critical disease confronting Queensland society. The disease is very prevalent in the western and coastal areas in this State. I believe that the Minister should introduce into schools a program to teach children from a very young age about the seriousness of skin cancer and the long-term detrimental effects of the disease. I can speak with personal experience because I have fair skin and have suffered from skin cancer during my life in the bush. I believe that this problem should be addressed because it is very serious and it is not a good feeling to have a doctor carving away at one's face to remove skin cancers. If children are made aware at a young age of the problems caused by skin cancer and are trained to apply creams and to wear protective clothing, such as hats, I believe that the Government would be on the right track to the maintenance of long-term health care.

The time allowed for my speech is drawing to a close. However, before I conclude, I wish to specially mention the work carried out by frontier medical services in the western areas of this State under the auspices of the Uniting Church. In June this year, the Uniting Church appointed a nursing sister to Bedourie, which is probably one of the most remote areas of Queensland. Since Sister Elizabeth Lowson took up her appointment, approximately 540 people have been treated at the clinic. At this time, the clinic is seeking financial assistance for the purchase of drugs, etc. It has been obtaining help from Mount Isa and from the clinic at Windorah, but I hope that the Minister will be able to assist the clinic in the foreseeable future in its provision of these services. The clinic is a very important link in the chain of health care in the west. Many tourists and local residents benefit from the assistance provided by the frontier services at Birdsville and Bedourie. The nursing staff do a great job, and I trust that at all times they will be supported by the Department of Health. I have no doubt that they will be.

My colleague the honourable member for Tablelands will elaborate on issues that I have not covered in my speech. I trust, however, that the Minister will take note of the matters that I have mentioned because I believe they are very important and deserve attention in the expenditure of Health funds.

Time expired.

**Ms POWER** (Mansfield) (3.23 p.m.): Greater equity and social justice for all in the Queensland community—those issues are top priority throughout the Labor Government's first State Budget in 32 years. Those issues drive my local electorate work and my work on the ministerial committees for Education, Family Services and Health portfolios. They drive my participation in the Labor women's caucus and the women's sport promotion unit. So it is with great satisfaction that I rise to support the Honourable

Minister for Health's budget Estimates for women's health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health programs, both areas in need of long-overdue equity and social justice. Women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are distinct groups with distinct health needs. Answering those needs equitably and effectively requires review of where the public health system is at. It requires innovative approaches to priority health issues, and it requires increased participation by health service consumers if better health is to result. I congratulate the Minister on his work in making considerable headway already in each of those areas of change.

In this time of transition, the commitment of Health Department staff to the better health of Queenslanders is also acknowledged. This is a time when health services and delivery are under the microscope for increased efficiency and results; a time when all Queenslanders want to see change in their public health-provider. A vital and challenging part of that change is a change for the better health of women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people wherever they may live in Queensland. After years of neglect and denial of their special needs in health care, women of Queensland have every right to ask this Government in bringing down its first Budget, "Have you delivered?" It gives me great pleasure to look to the Health budget and say, "Congratulations! It is a women's health program." I will not break out the flowers or fruit that might traditionally mark such an important entry to the State of Queensland, but I am excited to speak of such a positive step forward for the well-being of women in this State. As Queensland women, we can look forward to a change—a change for our better health.

A Women's Health Unit spearheads this new age of policy and action. The unit brings a strategic voice to the development of relevant departmental policy, a skilled voice to advise the Health Department Statewide and a coordinating voice for women's health activities all through the department. The challenge for the unit is to successfully meet the many and varied health needs of the diverse individuals who are Queensland women. This challenge will, I am sure, be taken up under the guidance of unit coordinator, Ms Jude Abbs. She has a proven track record in health service delivery to women. That record is strengthened by her belief in looking to women themselves for support and guidance about how they want their health services improved. Managing funds of \$5.4m under the combined State/Commonwealth National Women's Health Program is a major part of that unit's responsibility to women of this State. This year, funds from the program will establish a pilot mobile women's health service targeting rural and remote area women. The services will work out of Mount Isa, Atherton, Townsville, Mackay and Roma. Funding to start up community-based women's health centres is being made available. The previously established Brisbane Women's Health Centre is being funded, and funding for other centres is being considered. And it is not just big-ticket projects that get support in this new era for women's health.

The National Women's Health Program is about empowering women to take charge of their health needs, to develop health-care skills appropriate to the life-style choices they make. Therefore, more modest programs are an integral part of the Budget. For example, women from a western Queensland community are running an eight-week health skills course. Community-based responses, large or small, to health issues are the life-blood of this women's health program. The yearly death toll for breast cancer in this country is 2 000 women. Each year in Australia, an estimated 3 200 women need mastectomies. Annually, 350 women die of cervical cancer. Multiply that mortality rate in the wider population by nine for an estimated mortality rate of cervical cancer for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women living in remote and rural areas. Those statistics make plain the importance of the State Government's \$1m expansion of the breast and cervical cancer screening program in Queensland. Total program funds will be used to continue existing screening services and to develop follow-up assessment centres and new services around the State. The development of appropriate screening and educational services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in remote rural and urban areas is another first for this Budget.

As to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health—rates of death from cervical cancer are nine times that of the wider Australian population. But the grim picture does

not end there. Life expectancy is up to 22 years shorter than that of the wider Australian population. Rates of contracting tuberculosis are 14 times that of the wider Australian population. The hospitalisation rate is three times higher than that of the wider Australian population. The suicide rate at one Queensland community was found to be five times that of the wider Queensland population. The member for Callide suggested that all we have to do to improve their health is to introduce prohibition. I suggest that their poor health is a result of 32 years of neglect by former Governments and will not be solved by introducing prohibition.

In its recent submission to the royal commission into Aboriginal deaths in custody, Queensland's Aboriginal Coordinating Council reported on similarly damning statistics in far-northern Queensland communities. One media writer, reacting to the gravity of the report's findings, led with the headline "What do Aborigines do more than most? Die". To see those indicators of health status among Aboriginal and Islander communities is to be shocked and distressed. But this Government will not stand still, stunned by the shock value. Our position must be one of productive response. Productive response relies on the immediate action and innovation of our health professionals and administrators. But truly productive response relies on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people having control of their own health programs.

Government action and community participation are the keys to the activities of the Aboriginal Health Program, the focus of expenditure for the program under the Budget this year. For years under the previous Government, health and medical services to remote northern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities were separated from the Health Department. Since its election, this Government has moved swiftly to align those services with those provided to the rest of Queensland.

This historic move will ultimately see services to the communities upgraded. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents will finally have full access to the resources and support of Queensland's total public health system. To assist the transfer, the Minister has recently appointed a special adviser on Aboriginal health. Ms Gracelyn Smallwood is highly skilled and respected in the field. Her appointment indicates the commitment by this Government to making the transfer happen, and happen effectively. Sick care is a vital part of the Aboriginal health program—indeed, of any health program. But this Government also gives high priority to the prevention of sickness in the first place.

Health promotion is equally vital in the change for better health for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Making good on this commitment, the State Government is funding an additional 41 Aboriginal Health Program staff. Most of these extra staff will be based in north Queensland, where it is estimated that about half of Queensland's Aboriginal population and nearly three-quarters of Queensland's total Torres Strait Islander population reside. This is certainly a boost for health service equity and access for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The new positions will help to fill service gaps in prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, nutrition education, improvement of young people's health and other general preventive health programs. The Aboriginal Health Program will involve Aboriginal and Islander people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of productive services. The commitment by this Government to cooperate nationally with the Commonwealth and other States and Territories under the National Aboriginal Health Strategy will also make joint resources work harder and better for the Aboriginal and Islander people of this State.

Health is about living. It is about being well. This Government's Health budget is about a change for the better health of women and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Queensland. The money and programs will not be working alone. They are part of a total Government aim to improve the quality of life of the people of Queensland. Women's sport, education, housing and town services, human services, equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination are all a part of that initiative. All up, that is definitely a change for the better.

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (3.33 p.m.): I have to rise in defence of the tobacco industry in my electorate. It has suffered an inordinate attack today in this place. It must fall to me to support that industry. Recently, I conducted a bit of research into health promotion foundations. I fear that I am going to have to disagree with my colleague the member for Callide. I will have to say something about health promotion foundations and the fact that the Minister was caught recently trying to introduce a health promotion foundation and ended up with his tail firmly between his legs. The Opposition understood, from what the Premier following that episode, that of course a health promotion foundation in Queensland was a dead issue. However, I refer to a letter to the editor in the Launceston *Examiner* of Thursday, 25 October 1990, headed "Tobacco sponsorship", which stated—

"The future for Queenslanders in the debate over cigarette company sponsorship of sport looks healthier for them than your article of October 11 suggests."

Regrettably, I do not have a copy of the article of 11 October. The letter went on—

"Firstly the current State Government under Premier Wayne Goss has promised to introduce a Health Promotion Foundation funded by part of the state tobacco levy."

This was in October 1990. That letter was signed by Mr Graeme Brien, the executive director of the Queensland Cancer Fund. I am not quite sure what the Premier is saying to the Queensland Cancer Fund on the one hand and to this Parliament on the other hand. However, it appears to me that he simply cannot agree with himself. It depends on the forum that he is in at the time.

I want to examine briefly the activities of the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation, what it means to the Victorian Government and what such a foundation would mean to this Government. I am surprised that the Premier backed off, because the Victorian Government is using that foundation in the most magnificent pork-barrelling exercise ever seen.

**Mr Stoneman:** They wouldn't do that. They are supposed to be accountable. They are going to break the country, but they'll be accountable.

**Mr GILMORE:** Of course Labor will break Victoria. This Government will do exactly the same thing to Queensland. It is only a matter of time before this Government takes Queensland down the Victorian road.

The story about the Victorian Health Promotion Foundation is an interesting one. It was set up in 1986, and between 1987 and 1991 it will have collected \$100m. That in itself is an interesting figure, but what has happened to the money? Much of it, of course, has been put into sports sponsorships and various other things. However, \$15.3m has not been allocated by that Government. It has been salted away because there is an election around the corner and it is going to use that money. The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation acts as a State Government—

**Mr Welford:** What evidence do you have of that allegation, that they are going to salt it away and use it for an election? Where is your evidence of that?

**Mr GILMORE:** That comes from no less an authority than the Victorian Auditor-General. I hope that the honourable member is satisfied with that. He had to open his mouth. That is the story.

This State is confronted with a situation similar to that of Victoria. It will happen as a matter of course. What will that mean to the tobacco industry in this country? On a number of occasions I have argued that the introduction of a tobacco tax would reduce the tobacco industry, and there has indeed been a reduction in the consumption of tobacco as opposed to tobacco products. However, interestingly enough, figures kept by the Australian Customs Service indicate that there was actually an increase in sales of cigarettes in Australia in 1989 of 1.5 per cent to 34.6 thousand million, and it is expected that 35.5 thousand million cigarettes will be sold in the year 1990.

If the Victorian Government, the South Australian Government and, indeed, the Queensland Government consider that these health promotion foundations are going to stop people from smoking, why is it that both the Victorian Government and the South Australian Governments, which have introduced health promotion foundations to stop the consumption of tobacco products, have budgeted consistently for an increase in the consumption of tobacco products? Why is it that they can proceed down this track, year after year, suggesting that we are doing the greatest thing by stopping people smoking cigarettes and yet they continually budget for an increase in revenue from that source? The suggestion is that they are fund-raising exercises, which have very little to do with the health of the Australian people. I can only assume that in the very near future this State Government will be heading down that same track.

I wish to spend a couple of minutes talking about some of the serious problems facing health services in far-north Queensland. In the last four years, I have been subjected to a constant barrage from people in my electorate and outside who have been unable to obtain access to the services of hospital-based dentists, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, social workers and speech therapists. I am not blaming this Government for that, any more than I blamed the previous Government. There are some serious problems in gaining the services of those professional people and, once their services have been gained, there are serious problems in retaining their services. Nonetheless, it is important that the Government understand that the only way in which far-north Queensland will get adequate access to those services is by providing sufficient funds and incentives for those people to move there permanently.

In my electorate there is a most unfortunate family with not one but two children suffering from Frederick's Ataxia, which is a debilitating disease inevitably resulting in death. Nevertheless, during their life, those children suffer considerably and require physiotherapy daily. I have already said that far-north Queensland has difficulty in gaining and retaining the services of physiotherapists. While awaiting the appointment of permanent physiotherapists, to this area this family has no access to public physiotherapy services. It does its best, but the Government has always denied the family access to private physiotherapists. In my view, the Government should understand that families, such as the one I mentioned, have enough trauma without having to do their amateur best to keep their children alive while awaiting the appointment of a physiotherapist to their town. While the Government cannot provide the services of a physiotherapist at a hospital, it should make available sufficient funds available to enable these families to gain access to a private physiotherapist. Similarly, many people, particularly age pensioners, require the services of a rural hospital based dentist. Many people have told me that they do not have access to such a dental service and, as a result, they are going around with their mouths full of rotten teeth and are having difficulty in obtaining fitted dentures. If the Government cannot provide sufficient funds or incentives to enable dentists to be located in rural areas, it should provide people with access to private dental services.

Far-north Queensland also has serious needs in the area of specialist medical services. At the present time, no ophthalmologist is available for people who attend the Cairns Base Hospital. Apparently, because of a lack of money, those specialists are simply unavailable. Recently, I wrote to the Minister about the provision of an orthodontist in far-north Queensland. I am pleased that he has now made available the services of an orthodontist. Regrettably, this tight Budget has not provided enough working hours for that specialist medical service. Therefore, literally dozens of children in far-north Queensland are being denied access to the services of an orthodontist.

In the past, far-north Queensland has had trouble in obtaining the services of a resident psychiatrist. In fact, one lived on the Atherton Tableland but he transferred to Brisbane and, for some considerable period after that, far-north Queensland had no resident psychiatrist. Many people in far-north Queensland, for one reason or another, are in need of psychiatric services. The Government must do whatever is needed to supply those communities with the specialist medical services that they require.

The Cairns Base Hospital does not have a head trauma assessment unit. When their children and others have received a serious head trauma in an accident, many

people have contacted me because they have not had access to a neurologist to obtain a proper assessment of the injury. As a result, people have waited up to a month for the visiting neurologist to travel to Cairns and, by that time, because of their injury, some patients have either died or been permanently disabled. Such a position is neither fair nor acceptable to the people of far-north Queensland.

Once again, the rumour is travelling around far-north Queensland that the SES helicopter is to be removed from the area. I congratulate the Minister for ensuring that the SES helicopter is used for medical evacuations from tableland regions and other areas to the Cairns Base Hospital. It was a far-sighted, meaningful and important decision in the provision of health care to far-north Queensland residents. However, some people in Government would prefer to see that helicopter used somewhere else. The job is squarely on the shoulders of the Minister, when in Cabinet, to ensure that that SES helicopter is not transferred from far-north Queensland. It is important as a health tool, as well as for search and rescue and other tasks of importance.

I shall conclude my speech by referring to the circumstances of people who are in home care. I cite the case of a young lady who is suffering from ME. Two years ago, she was taken home from the Cairns Base Hospital, ostensibly to die. Because of the quality of the nursing care that has been given to her by her parents, she has not died and, indeed, may live for some years to come. However, the Department of Health is loath to provide sufficient medical supplies for that family and for the benefit and good nursing of that girl. The suggestion is that, had she been in hospital, she would not need the level of supplies that are demanded by the mother who, by the way, is a registered nurse. But that is entirely predictable and entirely understandable. That mother is providing a level of service that no-one else could provide for her daughter. No-one else would provide a 24-hour, one-on-one service. It can be assumed that that mother would expect and demand the best provision to be made for her daughter. I might add that, in terms of hospital bed hours or anything else, it is not costing this State one razoo; the parents are providing that. I ask the Minister to please find within his heart and his budget the wherewithal to provide sufficient home-care supplies of catheters and other necessary items for those people who are unfortunate enough to be stricken by terminal disease, who for whatever reason are taken to their parents' home, ostensibly to die, but who sometimes take some years to do so. That is very important to those people. If that small wish were granted, their lives would be made much easier.

I have a couple of moments in which to speak about Aboriginal health. A number of people have stood in this place today and spoken passionately about Aboriginal health. I wonder just how much they know about it.

**Mr Stoneman:** Nothing!

**Mr GILMORE:** I suggest that the honourable member for Burdekin is right; they know absolutely nothing about it.

The truth of the matter is that the health requirements of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait island people in this State is probably the most traumatic need of any particular group in this State, in this nation and, possibly, in the world. But it is not a simple matter of just providing needles, bandages or something else. It has to be a holistic approach not only with the provision of medical services, doctors, nurses and other medical and paramedical aides but also the underlying causes of health problems must be tackled. I have said in this place on many occasions that alcoholism and the reasons for it must be tackled. The underlying reasons for the unemployment and the other miseries that are suffered by those people must be tackled. Until this Government understands that it cannot simply say that Aboriginal health—

Time expired.

**Mr FENLON** (Greenslopes) (3.48 p.m.): Firstly, I congratulate the Minister on a very fine budget in what I believe is one of the most difficult portfolios. Health is an area within which much money could be spent, but it is also one within which a great deal of care must be taken to order priorities appropriately so that the public and the

taxpayer receive the best benefit. It is also very heartening that, through the Health budget, the Government and the Minister are giving continued support to the public hospital system, which is one of our finest institutions. The Health budget goes a long way towards ensuring that that system is supported and continued.

The issue of nurses' wages and conditions has already emerged in this debate. It is a matter to which I wish to pay some attention. Nurses' problems have had a very unfortunate history in this State. They have been neglected and very poorly treated. Of late, the issue of pay and award-restructuring, which is now before the Industrial Commission, has gained a great deal of prominence. I was very surprised to hear the comments by the member for Callide and, indeed, her hypocrisy when she referred to the new era of benevolence being shown by the National Party towards nurses. Some members may have very short memories, but those of us on the Government side of the Chamber do not. My recollection is that, until 2 December last year, nurses in Queensland were never given any opportunity to engage in any form of negotiation with the previous Government. On behalf of the Nurses Union, I was very involved in many wages discussions. During that period, there was no attempt by the previous Government at negotiation or cooperation, nor was there any attempt to reach agreement as to the fundamental aspects of nurses' wages and conditions. The member for Callide has a very short memory.

It should be remembered that, since coming to office and since receiving the first application for wage rises and award-restructuring from the nurses in April, the Goss Government continued to negotiate for many hours and days to reach agreement with them. It was also amazing to hear that the member for Callide was surprised—

**Mrs McCauley:** I am glad you listened so closely.

**Mr FENLON:** I listened very closely indeed.

As I was saying, it was amazing to hear that she was very surprised that this matter has had to go to the Industrial Commission. She might like to read the wage-fixation principles, set down by the State Industrial Commission, which bind all employers and employees. Essentially, those principles require the Industrial Commission to determine the outcome of the award-restructuring process. I commend the Cabinet—and the Minister in particular—for its decision to accept the appropriateness of the national benchmark, which came down in recent months, its indication that it would not oppose the nurses' claim to the Industrial Commission for wage rises and its recommendation for the expeditious conduct of the matter through the Industrial Commission. That is a great contrast to the past years of neglect under the National Party Government. I welcome it and commend the Government for it.

I turn now to nurses and the 1989-90 annual report of the Queensland Department of Health. Although the report addresses the problems of nurses, I offer some suggestions to the Honourable Minister about the way in which the problems of nurses could be dealt with in the future. When I perused the report looking for a reference to nurses, I found it at the end. It is surprising that only two and a half pages were devoted to nurses, because nurses comprise the largest group within the health work force. If my memory serves me correctly, approximately 15 000 nurses are employed in the work force. A little more prominence should be given to the rank-and-file nurses in the wards. The report mentions the very fine efforts of the high-fliers. Reference is made to the participation of nurses in various research projects. As well, the report outlines the activities of the Chief Nursing Officer and her very capable colleagues. However, we should spare a thought for the nurses in wards who work long shifts with a break of only eight hours between them. They provide the most critical aspect of hospital care. The evidence is abundantly clear that the role of nurses in recuperation within the hospital system is most critical. Nurses are the motor of the hospital system. I hope that, in the future, recognition is given to the scale of their contribution and centrality to the health-care process. Recognition should also be given to the changes that nurses have experienced and the great personal burden that they carry in upgrading their own education and coping with the very rapid and radical changes within the health system.

During this debate, my colleagues mentioned a range of matters in which the majority of nurses would be interested, namely, women's health issues. I commend the Minister for his efforts to give great prominence to the issues of breast screening, cervical cancer screening and the establishment of the Women's Health Unit. That will be very good news for the great majority of women in my electorate. I affirm the representations that I have made to the Minister to the effect that consideration should be given to the expansion of those facilities on the south side of Brisbane. The Princess Alexandra Hospital has a range of those facilities. Women who live on the south side of Brisbane would benefit greatly by future upgrading of those facilities in line with those available at the Royal Women's Hospital.

I turn now to funding for the Home and Community Care program, which is shared jointly between the Queensland Department of Health and the Commonwealth Department of Community Services and Health. The program, which is administered under the HACC national guidelines, is designed to provide services to three main groups of people, namely, the frail elderly, younger people with disabilities and their carers. Its objective is to provide a comprehensive and integrated range of basic maintenance and support services to people in those groups, with the specific intention of avoiding inappropriate or premature admission to residential care. The program has been given priority in the Budget in a range of fields, including a continence promotion program, transport, home maintenance, respite, in-home and centre-based care, education and training, home help and flexible packages for unserved areas.

There are some very salient points as to the directions and trends that the community is encountering in home help and home care, which are driven by a particular tendency throughout the hospital system. In the past 10 to 15 years, the level of dependency in hospitals has been increasing radically. That has had a flow-on effect to the remainder of the health system in that people who are in a more critical condition are being released earlier from hospital. The tendency is to keep people in the community for a longer period before they are admitted to hospital. That has created a wide range of pressures upon the domiciliary nursing service. I have received some very strong representations to that effect from the St Luke's Nursing Service that is located within my electorate. That service has been feeling those pressures. I hope that the improvements in the HACC funding that are provided in the Budget will go a long way towards alleviating the problems of that service. In the next financial year, the domiciliary nursing service will require very close monitoring. The people who work in that field drive motor vehicles, and the specific expenses relating to petrol and the continued running of motor vehicles will come under greater pressure as petrol prices continue to increase.

I am also pleased to note the directions taken in the Budget in relation to smoking. In the future, I would welcome some constructive discussion on the development of a health-promotion foundation. The Government is still waiting to hear the view of the Liberal Party on that subject. We were listening very intently to the comments made by the Liberal member who spoke earlier, and we would still like to hear what the Liberal Party has to say about it. The Minister has had a great range of problems to deal with. I was very pleased to join him on a trip to western Queensland to inspect hospitals. Both he and the Health Department have dealt well with those problems, particularly at Charleville.

Time expired.

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.03 p.m.): I rise to add my contribution to the debate on the Health Estimates. It gives me a great deal of pleasure to follow my colleague the member for Landsborough, the Liberal shadow Minister for Health, who has done such an excellent job in analysing and commenting upon the Estimates in this debate. The Liberal Party is very fortunate to have as its spokesperson somebody of Mrs Sheldon's ability, who is trained in the health-related professions and who demonstrated what a competent individual she is by building up her own private practice.

I wish to concentrate on the functions of the Health Department and, in particular, the reorganisation of the Health Department into the regional structure that is proposed by the Minister. I wish to evaluate that proposal, its costs and its benefits. Obviously, whatever organisational structure that the Minister decides upon will have a significant bearing upon the costs of health delivery in this State. At the outset, I record my appreciation for the input that I have received from many of my constituents in the health professions. Their detailed advices have helped me to understand the implications that arise from the proposed reorganisation. Some of my constituents gave me very detailed analyses. In the 14 minutes remaining to me, I could not possibly cover all the detail that I have received.

One of my constituents—I am sure he will not mind my mentioning his name—is known within the health administration and is a former director of QRI, Dr Mowatt. He reminded me of a line that I used when addressing my own research students, namely, "What is important is the question you ask." If one wants an answer, the prerequisite for getting the right answer is to ask the correct question. In the next few minutes, I will raise some questions and, even though in many instances they may be rhetorical, I hope that they will at least provoke the Minister in thinking about the issue of the organisational structure that he will adopt. The concept of the regionalisation of health services is aligned very closely with the issue of decentralisation. When the proposed organisational structure is viewed from that vantage point, it is very difficult to argue against regionalisation—or decentralisation—in principle.

The concept of decentralisation is adopted by many organisations for a very simple reason, that is, in order to locate the decision-making responsibility close to the point at which all the information necessary for the decision is acquired. In a complex environment—and one would certainly not argue against health care and the delivery of health care being a complex environment—involving at times very complex trade-offs, it is important that the decisions are made where all the information can be brought together. That is the rationale behind any decentralisation and I presume that it is the rationale behind the decentralisation proposed by the Minister. As I said, it is very difficult to argue against decentralisation in principle. However, later in the debate, I will raise some pertinent questions as to how the decentralisation that is proposed will eventuate in practice.

The Minister is, of course, the Minister for Health. I do not point that out in a frivolous manner, but the emphasis on health flows right through the psyche of the department. For example, the annual report of the department places a significant emphasis on issues such as research, community and public health, health and medical services, hospital and allied services administration, administration and support services, financial management and technology, and scientific support services. All of those issues are an integral part of the provision of health services to the public. The emphasis, whether it be deliberate or otherwise, is on prevention; it is on healthy individuals. However, when most people go to hospitals, they do so because they have an illness that they would like to have diagnosed or treated. It does not necessarily follow that the organisational structure that is appropriate for providing health services is necessarily appropriate for providing services to those who are ill.

In providing services to those who are ill, the patient and the orientation of services to the patient are paramount. When one talks about health, at times one can do so without even considering the possibility of an individual patient. In the organisational design of a health-delivery system, one has to make sure that the emphasis on health does not so dominate the emphasis on illness that the patient, the patient's needs and the orientation that that demands are not squeezed out. I make this point because in all the updates, and in fact in the Green Paper, I notice that this essential concept is missing in the analysis.

I will now turn to some of the more obvious dangers that can be seen in the proposal that has been put forward. Again I emphasise that the principle of decentralisation and the necessity for it in certain complex organisations is not being questioned. As the

Minister is aware, the road to Hell is often paved with good intentions. During the next few minutes I will concentrate on intention versus practice. The first danger one can envisage is that the critical decisions will still remain with the central Health Department, thus ensuring that there will be no effective change, irrespective of the regionalisation concept. If the Health Department is out of touch with hospitals and their requirements today, it will still be out of touch after regionalisation. A second and related problem is that the concept of regionalisation will place another bureaucratic layer between the hospitals where health services are primarily delivered and the Health Department where many of the decisions are finally made. The real danger of the proposed concept is that these regional authorities develop into minihealth departments themselves, without the full range of decision-making of the centralised Health Department.

A third related question which arises is: will the regionalisation involve real decentralisation, rather than pseudo-decentralisation? This involves questions associated with which decisions will be delegated. Will the regional authorities, the chief executive officers and perhaps the hospitals have authority as well as responsibility for making independent decisions, and for which decisions will they not be independent? Which ones will have to be referred back to the central Health Department? Decentralisation, or real decentralisation, means that decisions and the authority to make decisions have to be delegated to individuals in lower levels of the organisational hierarchy. This means that at times different regions will make different decisions, even though many of the circumstances from a central viewpoint may appear to be similar. Individual regional differences will dictate different decisions, despite circumstantial similarity. That is one of the costs of decentralisation. The benefit of decentralisation comes from the decisions being made closer to the point of the action and, therefore in the long run, a series of better decisions reflecting the particular circumstances of the area. Nothing in the Minister's statement reveals what is going to occur, so we do not know whether or not the proposed decentralisation is real or merely pseudo.

Fourthly, it seems that the concept of decentralisation is in conflict with the central funding formula that is adopted by all Government and bureaucratic departments. This is not a criticism of the bureaucracy, but it is a fact of life that the revenue that goes to the Department of Health fundamentally comes from two sources: firstly, from Federal Government resources, and, secondly, from State consolidated revenue. When decisions on the allocation of funds are being made, it is fairly important that these decisions and the method of arriving at these decisions are consistent with the decentralisation philosophy which runs through the regionalisation concept. Without consistency between the funding decisions and decisions on the day-to-day operation of the delivery of health services, there will simply not be a complete and proper decentralisation.

A final point relating to this set of points concerns the ability of the Health Department to evaluate the regions and, of course, the hospitals in those regions. It would seem that the regionalisation proposals as elaborated to date do not incorporate the basic and essential elements and steps to fill in the medicine information void. There is no indication that the Minister's department has yet developed an information system that allows the standard of professional performance, the quality of individual patient care and the appropriateness of community-based health care to be judged, to name but three areas. I notice that the Minister has indicated that management information systems will be one of the projects that will be undertaken by the implementation committee. I would have thought that this, along with a number of other projects, would have been undertaken conjointly with determining what kind of organisational structure was appropriate. If the information system is not consistent with the requirements demanded by the organisational structure, the organisational structure will simply not work.

I turn now to some other issues that appear to have been either forgotten, missed or slid over in the Green Paper and in the many updates that the Minister's department has issued on the concept and implementation of the regionalisation strategy. First of all, it seems that to date there has been no thought given about the professional structure of hospitals. For example, while nurses, medical practitioners and, to some extent, allied health professions, have been identified, the complexity of the professions

represented in hospitals has not been recognised. Consequently, for example, there is no recognition of the dental profession, psychologists or speech and occupational therapists. I could name many others. It seems to me that unless this issue is addressed at the hospital level and then at the regional level, there will be a less than satisfactory health delivery system. If the various health professions are to be integrated into a management structure, these professional bodies and/or representatives of the various professions must be brought into an advisory committee at the very early stages.

The second point that tends to be glossed over in the updates is the importance of a health background in the appointment of at least a number of members on the boards, such as the regional director and chief executive officers of the major acute hospitals. For example, when it comes to regional directors, I notice that Cabinet has decided that regional directors will preferably—but not necessarily—have experience in a health care field. From past experience, I am aware that the great specialists in areas do not necessarily make good managers or administrators. However, I must admit that I have rarely seen a successful administrator of a technical area who does not have at least some command of the technical area itself. I will give the Minister an example with which he is familiar. I am sure he understands that not all academics or professors make successful heads of departments or deans. However, I have never seen a successful academic leader who has not come from the disciplines involved, although I have seen it tried. The same is true of a Health Department where, if the full benefits of regionalisation or decentralisation are to be felt, there must be people involved who have in their background the knowledge and experience that enable them to make sensitive trade-offs in critical areas.

The third issue in this set of points concerns the make-up of the advisory and steering committees with respect to the regionalisation concept. One of the concerns that I have when considering the members that make up the advisory committee—and the brief resumes that I have been given in the various updates and other things available through the Health Department—is that there is no-one who has any particular experience in decentralised organisations. As I indicated earlier in my speech, it is critically important that individuals have an understanding of what a decentralised organisation can and is meant to accomplish, and what kind of activities or mechanisms can reinforce that decentralised structure, as well as those kinds of mechanisms or processes that are likely to inhibit that process. This relates to the concern that I expressed earlier regarding whether the decentralisation will be real or pseudo.

I will raise a minor point concerning the establishment of project teams and staff to manage those project teams. I notice with interest that update bulletin No. 3 was published on 14 September 1990, yet applications for positions to these project teams closed at 5 p.m. on Friday, 14 September—that is, the same day. It does not give one a lot of faith in the implementation process to find that the staffing has taken place in what turns out to be a relatively closed system.

Finally, I wish to address a couple of health-related issues, but issues that are more directed towards the future. These are some of the things I would have thought should have been addressed when looking at the development of a health policy and reflected in this first Budget. The first issue is a philosophical one which concerns all of us, that is, that the demand for medical services has tended to increase enormously over the past few years and is likely to increase more substantially in the future. It could be said that a paradox exists in the sense that the more effective that medical care becomes, the greater is the demand for that care.

Let me cite the following example, which was given to me by one of my constituents—

"For instance, the baby who survives an episode of severe gastroenteritis may, as a teenager, suffer a compound fracture of the leg. Having survived this, she may be seriously injured in a car accident. Sometime after this, she may have a major haemorrhage after a childbirth. Having recovered from this, she may develop cancer in her 50s, a heart attack in her 60s, and end her days in her 80s totally dependent upon others because of arthritis and dementia.

All the above events are usually fatal if untreated. The more successful medicine becomes, the longer people live to require more medical care. The increasing complexity and cost of medical care compounds the problem."

The points raised involve fairly deep philosophical and ethical questions and sometimes put a price on life. In previous generations, because medicine was so ineffective, in many cases these questions were irrelevant. At some stage—and it is being done implicitly whether we like it or not—these issues will have to be addressed.

A second question is a fairly interesting one for the future. As I understand the proposed system, there will be specialist centres in the various regions. Specialist centres or increased emphasis on, for example, outpatient care rather than in-patient care require a sophisticated and well-developed ambulance service. If the Minister is thinking about a hospitalisation system for Queensland, he will also have to look at the issue of an appropriate ambulance service. At the moment, it seems to me that an appropriate ambulance service for a proposed regional hospitals system exists only in south-east Queensland, and perhaps only in Brisbane. Although this may be part of the portfolio of another Minister, I do not think the Minister for Health should be unaware that decisions made within Health have some interaction with Emergency Services.

In conclusion, I make one other suggestion. Existing hospital boards have as members people with various skills. Although some were regarded as political appointments, the boards comprised people who had a great variety of skills—ranging from fund-raising to management skills. In any reorganisation of the system, it is important not to lose the finer qualities that existed. I think a particular challenge is presented to the Minister to ensure that, when the system is redesigned, those skills will exist somewhere in the system because, without them, the system simply will not work.

**Dr FLYNN** (Toowoomba North) (4.18 p.m.): In the time that is available for my speech, I wish to discuss some aspects of the department's Estimates relating to rural health. Recently in Toowoomba, I met Mr Brian Courtice, who is the Federal member for Hinkler and chairperson of the Prime Minister's country task force. He gave me the task force's report on a recent visit to the electorate of Kennedy. I wish to cite page 1 of that report, which states—

"The Task Force believes that rural health services in Australia are in crisis and that all levels of government and other interested bodies should be involved in urgent moves to address the situation."

When I first read that part of the report, I thought it was probably a bit of an overstatement. However, honourable members should take notice of Mr Courtice because he is well known to be very cautious in his use of the word "crisis". I then began to read the director-general's Queensland Health and Medical Services annual report, and I wish to cite page 1, which sets out a discussion on mortality trends in Queensland. The first page opens with some good news—

"The overall mortality for Queensland continued to decline and was marginally lower in Queensland than for the rest of Australia."

Presently the figure stands at approximately 500 deaths per 100 000 people; the decrease is due largely to a reduction in the incidence of ischaemic heart disease, or heart attacks. However, straightaway the bad news begins—also on page 1—in the following discussion on regional mortality patterns—

"Despite the overall decline in the mortality rate and the fact that mortality in Queensland is slightly lower than in the rest of Australia, there are major inequalities in health within the State."

Reference is then made to figure 1.8, which sets out some startling facts. The table provides standardised regional mortality ratios expressed relative to Brisbane. Brisbane is the standard and is given a figure of 100. The Gold Coast and the Sunshine Coast have mortality rates of 82 per cent, which are significantly lower than that of Brisbane. Every other area in the State records a higher incidence. The eastern interior, including Toowoomba, is recorded at 105. Western Queensland records 126, and far-northern

Queensland records 131. The higher mortality rates of western and northern Queensland are, respectively, 26 per cent and 31 per cent higher than Brisbane and are due to increased mortality because of a large number of conditions, including cancer of the cervix, alcoholism, liver disease, drowning, motor vehicle accidents, pneumonia, bronchitis, emphysema and asthma—that group of respiratory conditions—and hypertension.

When I saw these figures, my initial thought was that no doubt to some degree the higher mortality rates for western and northern Queensland were due to the relatively high proportion of Aborigines living in those areas. It has already been mentioned that Aborigines have the highest mortality rates of all groups—of the order of three times that of the general population. However, having discussed these figures with officers of the department, it is quite evident that, even allowing for the high incidence of Aborigines in those areas, the mortality rates in western and northern Queensland—particularly western Queensland—are higher than those of coastal areas and that this is due not only to the higher proportion of Aborigines living in those areas.

All honourable members would be aware that death is inevitable. Mortality rates are a very blunt instrument to use to measure the health of communities, because communities with identical mortality rates can still have widely varying levels of health and health services. I am really quite alarmed by the fact that, even using as crude a measure as mortality statistics, the health of rural Queensland is showing up to be very poor. In the annual report, there is no significant discussion on the causes of that. Honourable members will be aware of the Minister's concern to improve the health of rural Queenslanders. That was clearly shown by his early commissioning of the rural health team's review of existing health services and the assessment of future priorities in rural health. That valuable report is expected to be tabled soon in the Parliament. However, even without the aid of that report, some of the causes contributing to those high mortality rates in western and northern Queensland are quite obvious.

Rural Queenslanders have had much less access to disease-screening programs and also to health promotion programs. A large degree of complacency still exists in those communities about their health. Because people in rural industries work out in the fresh air—away from the air-conditioners of the city—and eat hearty, healthy food that is often prepared on their own properties, they may think that they are leading a healthy life-style. However, at this stage they still have a much lower awareness of the dangers of having high cholesterol, untreated hypertension and a whole range of other conditions.

**Mr Stoneman:** Mr Hawke is the reason that they have hypertension.

**Mr Dollin:** You people have given us hypertension.

**Dr FLYNN:** That is right. These figures relate to last year.

Another major factor that affects health services in rural Queensland is the difficulty in attracting suitably qualified health professionals to work in remote areas and keeping them there for a reasonable period. The difficulty in obtaining suitable health professionals and in giving rural people access to screening programs and health promotion programs was identified in Mr Courtice's report. I am sure that we will hear more about those matters in the rural health team's review. Country doctors have already identified a number of factors which make it difficult to attract doctors to the bush. Money is usually well down on their list of priority. The two most important factors are the lack of training and the inability to get a decent break from the job once they are there.

One of the funding initiatives in these Estimates begins to address the problem of providing specialised training for doctors who work to enter rural practice. The Estimates provide \$262,500 to the Post Graduate Medical Education Committee of the University of Queensland to assist with the development and coordination of training for rural practice and to provide for continuing medical education for rural practitioners. It will include support to establish specialised training units at Toowoomba and Rockhampton hospitals. In Toowoomba, the specialised unit will be known as the Cunningham Centre. That centre will draw together a number of existing resources, including the opportunity

to obtain extensive clinical experience and academic teaching provided by the Toowoomba Base Hospital; the facilities and expertise of the family medicine program; the existing library facilities; the opportunity for education and research support provided by the University College of Southern Queensland; and liaison with participating existing rural practitioners. Those resources will be focused through the director of the Cunningham Centre to provide suitable basic and advanced rural training programs.

It is envisaged that basic training would consist of three years' hospital and general practice placements, commencing in the second postgraduate year. Advanced training will also be offered at the registrar level in the fourth and subsequent postgraduate years. The advanced training program will be tailored to suit the needs of each trainee, depending on the skills and experience already possessed and the intended location of rural practice. The length of advanced training will vary, but it is expected that it will range between six months and two and a half years. Training for the diploma of obstetrics and for accredited general practice anaesthesia will be available; so will rural practice placements, which will provide further valuable experience and the chance for a break for some hard-working rural practitioners.

Yesterday, I spoke with one of the participants in the Cunningham Centre. The first trainees will begin there next year. That person told me that next year 17 advanced trainees will be working at the Toowoomba General Hospital. That is a boon for Toowoomba, because it means that we will have 17 registrar staff who already possess considerable experience in a range of medical practice. I was also informed that next year those 17 people will be able to provide a total of 21 months of locums for rural placements. That is a vast improvement on the old system. When I was working in the public health system, by and large, hospital superintendents in rural areas were relieved by a second or third-year resident from a Brisbane hospital. Although people such as me were obviously competent and caring, we were frequently called upon to work in an environment with which we were not familiar and often encountered difficulties that were quite challenging to overcome. It is a boon for rural people that next year, for a total period of 21 months, locums will be available to relieve hospital superintendents in rural areas. They will be get an advanced trainee from the Cunningham Centre who is already well qualified and well experienced in medicine and who is undertaking a training program which is tailoring him for further expertise in that area. Apart from providing both the basic and advanced training, the Cunningham Centre will also have a research function and will begin gathering the data that we need to determine the factors which influence a medical graduate to choose a career in rural general practice and their length of stay in that practice. We may then be able to design recruitment programs for the future to attract suitable medical graduates to provide a rural medical work force.

As I mentioned earlier, rural residents also have difficulty in gaining access to screening programs and health promotion programs. These Estimates have already outlined a number of positive initiatives to improve their access to such programs. We have already heard about the increased funding for the mobile breast cancer screening unit and increased funding for the cervical cancer screening program. Those programs have been referred to by the member for Mansfield, and I will not deal with them again.

I only have a couple of minutes left in which to speak. In that time I want to discuss briefly the most important reform in the health arena this year. I refer, of course, to the reform of its administration. This reform also holds a lot of promise for rural Queensland. All honourable members will be aware that Cabinet has agreed to the proposed model for regionalisation determined as a consequence of the analysis of the responses to the Green Paper. From 1 July next year, Queensland's 59 hospitals boards will be replaced by 13 regional health authorities. These Estimates provide for 39 staff to be involved in the implementation of this policy. The second phase of the reorganisation is an independent review of the central department by the Public Sector Management Commission. Despite what the honourable member for Warwick may think, regionalisation is not a socialist plot to overthrow a few National Party appointees to boards. This reform is about wringing every drop of efficiency out of Queensland's public health sector. It is about getting every possible health dollar into the hands of the service-providers. It is also about a flatter management system, so that in future service-providers

can influence policy and spending priorities—something that they had no opportunity to do in the past. It will eliminate duplication and ensure better coordination between hospital and community-based services. It will bring the administration of our major psychiatric hospitals back into the mainstream of medical administration for the first time. Single-point accountability will be introduced throughout the administration system, ending the areas of blurred responsibility that now exist. People throughout Queensland—rural Queenslanders in particular—will benefit from these changes.

I want to conclude by discussing briefly the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Despite sharing a name with one of its founders, I have little practical knowledge of the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Earlier this year, I attended the Toowoomba annual general meeting of the RFDS and was surprised to hear an obviously suspicious conservative voter speculating on the future of the RFDS now that the socialists are in power. I think that he was almost disappointed to hear the truth. As you have already alluded, Mr Temporary Chairman, the Estimates show that this Government has increased its proportion of agreed operating costs from 37.5 per cent to 43 per cent, and this will be doubly advantageous to the Royal Flying Doctor Service because the Commonwealth will also match the State department's contribution of 43 per cent. In dollar terms, both the State and Commonwealth Governments will lift their contribution by more than \$250,000. This shows Labor's ongoing commitment to the Royal Flying Doctor Service and the health of rural Queenslanders.

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett) (4.33 p.m.): Obviously, at this stage of the debate, many honourable members have already covered much of what I was going to say. However, I will take up from where the member for Toowoomba North left off when he spoke about regionalisation and what the benefits will be for this State when the Government does away with 59 hospitals boards and replaces them with 13 regional health authorities. I had the honour of serving on a hospitals board for quite some time. If I was still a member of that hospitals board, I would not appreciate being done away with or made redundant. In saying that, I pay tribute to those people who have served on the hospitals boards throughout this State. They have done a very fine job. Despite what the member for Toowoomba North might say, these people contributed a wealth of expertise. Their expertise may not have related directly to health. They brought to those boards a wealth of common sense and business acumen, from which the hospitals benefited. The board of which I was a member faced many problems. The health problems faced by people in country areas have already been mentioned. Several honourable members have mentioned hospital dental health services, school dental health services and the difficulties in obtaining dentists, physiotherapists and doctors.

I welcome the allocation of any extra money to encourage doctors, dentists and physiotherapists to go into country areas. The fact is that it is extremely difficult to obtain their services. As the member for Toowoomba North mentioned, it is not just a matter of money, which is somewhat down the list of priorities of these people. My home town of Gayndah has a doctor who services quite a large shire with a population of approximately 3 000. That area could use two doctors. He has indicated that he would like an assistant but it is impossible to get one because doctors simply do not wish to go out into the country. Various committees have examined the problem and tried to come up with solutions. However, the fact remains that doctors are not prepared to go out into country areas. Many small community centres throughout the State have extreme difficulty getting doctors. Many of them do not have a doctor. Exactly the same situation applies in regard to dentists. It is often said that it is a matter of money. That is not the case. People have not been prepared to go out into the country areas. The school dental services have the same problem. Last year I had to ring the department because the schools in my electorate had not received a visit from a dentist in 18 months. Naturally, the parents were jumping up and down about it. However, the simple fact was that the dentists were not available. As I understand it, it was not that the funds were not available to enable the employment of dentists; it was that they were not prepared to go out into those country areas.

It is up to the Minister and the Government to try to address those problems. As I have said, committees have made various suggestions, but there has not been any improvement of the services. In fact, as the years have gone by, those services have dwindled. I do not believe that the regionalisation of health services or the provision of regional health authorities will do anything to address that problem. If anything, it will probably go the other way and people will go to the larger centres in increasing numbers to avail themselves of medical facilities. Even in larger towns there are major problems. I have been talking about places like Gayndah, Gin Gin, Eidsvold and Mundubbera. Recently, I attended a meeting of doctors at the Bundaberg hospital. The same problems exist there as exist in smaller centres. Bundaberg is a large city. One would not think that there would be a problem getting doctors to go to Bundaberg, but, for some reason or other, they and their wives regard it as a country town. Efforts have been made to entice overseas doctors to those areas, but they have been unsuccessful.

All in all, more incentives are needed. The education level of doctors needs to be addressed to evolve a way to encourage people to attend university and commit themselves to the provincial and country areas of Queensland. It may be necessary to award scholarships or to lower the TE score entrance requirement for potential doctors who are prepared to make that commitment. At present, the TE score requirement of 990 for a person wishing to study for a medical degree at a university exceeds the TE score necessary for that person to handle the course. I am sure that there are sufficient people who have a sufficient TE score to cope with the medical course and who would be prepared to work in country centres. However, students have not been encouraged to do that. Other students who would benefit from an incentive scheme so that they could further their university studies would be prepared to commit themselves to country areas to gain experience. That would create a bank of doctors who would be able to work in country towns. The Minister admits that the lack of doctors in country towns is a major problem that needs to be addressed. I am fearful that the present problems are only going to be accentuated.

The Minister would be aware that there was much controversy in the regional centres in my electorate when Hervey Bay was chosen as the centre of the region. I am surprised that the member for Isis has not got a smile on his face. As far as I am concerned, Hervey Bay is the centre of nowhere. I believe that the logical choice was Bundaberg. I strongly suspect that that decision was made on political grounds.

The member for Maryborough holds a marginal seat. The electorate of Bundaberg is not considered by many ALP members to be a marginal seat, but the electorate of Isis could also be considered marginal. There are parochial jealousies between Maryborough and Bundaberg. The decision was made to solve problem by allocating the regional headquarters to Hervey Bay, to the delight of the member for Isis, but not so for the people in the Bundaberg region, which has the largest population and is the centre for the aerial ambulance. I am promoting Bundaberg because most of the people in the hinterland travel to Bundaberg for their business and other purposes. By placing more facilities in Bundaberg, transport facilities to that centre will become more viable. By splitting the centres throughout the region, no one centre will be viable.

Many honourable members have spoken about the Government's commitment of an extra \$4.1m for the Home and Community Care program. The Minister referred to the increase in the number of people in the over 65 years bracket. Recently, a nursing home centre opened in the Gayndah area. It provides an additional 15 beds at the Gunther Retirement Village. The centre received 58 applications for those 15 beds which confirms the Minister's comment that there is a rapidly increasing demand for those facilities within the community. There is no doubt that the larger part of that responsibility falls on the Commonwealth Government but, by the same token, the State Government also has a responsibility to provide those facilities. I question the position of dozens such as Gayndah with large hospitals that used to gain their patients from the ranks of the elderly, who are now cared for in nursing homes, thus leaving the resources at the hospital unused. In the future, the Government should provide for greater utilisation of those hospital facilities.

I support the Minister's initiatives to address the major problems in the area of Aboriginal health. Members spoke about the alcohol and drug related problems that exist within the Aboriginal communities. While it is said that Aboriginals are prone to alcohol and drug problems, many Aboriginals are not alcoholics and are fine citizens within their communities and the wider community. However, there are many problems associated with alcohol and drugs that impact on Aboriginal health, such as malnutrition, personal physical abuse and brain damage. There needs to be closer coordination between the Departments of Education and Health. One honourable member mentioned that in some instances the Aboriginal communities are no different from other communities in remote areas. Any health program undertaken in those Aboriginal communities must be accompanied by a strong education program. The Minister's awareness of that need and the need for consultation with the Aboriginal people and that has been indicated by the appointment of an Aboriginal consultant in that area. However, an Aboriginal consultant should not be appointed just for the sake of appointing an Aboriginal consultant. The people appointed to deal with those problems have to have the necessary qualifications and background to handle them, otherwise the Government will have a disaster on its hands. The solution of the Aboriginal health problems is not a simple one. The provision of money and facilities will not necessarily overcome them. The Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs has often said in this Chamber that there are no quick fixes for many of those problems. They are complex and it will take time to come to terms with them.

Aboriginal communities are just as entitled as any other community to health services. There is no doubt that a definite need exists for such services. By the same token, the previous Government's contribution was not all negative. There are many positives. That Government provided many hospital facilities in Aboriginal areas. Recently, I visited Cherbourg, which contains a very fine hospital, but it does not have a doctor. It was put to me that, as that was an Aboriginal community, it was being disadvantaged because it did not have a doctor. However, I was able to tell the people involved that there are many similar-sized white communities throughout Queensland that also do not have a doctor. It is acknowledged that most of the Aboriginal communities are in remote areas and that they are difficult to service. The Minister's initiative in providing the Flying Doctor Service in those areas is welcome. No doubt he has a commitment to recognise the problems and to endeavour to address them.

I turn now to the redevelopment of the Bundaberg Hospital, which has been the subject of an inquiry by the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works. I am pleased to say that the committee's report cleared both the previous Premier, Mike Ahern, and Lohse Constructions of any impropriety in the building of the hospital extension. The report found Lohse Constructions to be inexperienced, but I ask: when do firms such as Lohse Constructions get experience if they are not given a go? The workmanship was good and the job was completed. However, unfortunately, penalties had to be incurred because the construction ran way over time. Contrary to suggestions, I point out that no cronyism was involved. Ian Lohse should be commended. He did a good job and no subcontractors were left in the lurch, as has occurred on many other occasions when contractors employed on Government projects have left subcontractors in the lurch and have owed money. In this particular case, Lohse Constructions was not responsible for anything like that. Lohse Constructions is an established and well-respected firm within the Bundaberg area. It is easy for people to knock it. By the same token, it is only through the preparedness of people such as the Lohses, who are prepared to have a go, that this State is able to point to achievements that have enabled it to reach the position that it has in relation to its health and its economy.

**Mr NUNN** (Isis) (4.49 p.m.): I must say that, on the subject of the inability of country towns to attract medical officers to their hospitals, I have to agree with Mr Slack. That inability is a great pity. In common with him, I do not know the solution to the problem. My home town of Hervey Bay is in a situation similar to that of Gayndah but, thankfully, the problem has been partially solved by the appointment of an additional medical attendant. Nevertheless, we could do with one more. However,

the Area Health Office for the Wide Bay region has been attracted to Hervey Bay. Mr Slack, of course, has become stuck in the old parochial trap. He has decided that, because the office was not established where he thought it should be, it should not go anywhere else, either. When I return home, I would like to tell the people of Hervey Bay that Mr Slack and his National Party colleagues do not think they are worthy of any of the facilities which exist in some of the other towns in the area.

**An honourable member:** He is leaving the Chamber.

**Mr NUNN:** He is, too. With great appreciation, I am watching him slink out of the Chamber. The fact is that the department and the Minister recognised the emergence of Hervey Bay as a fast-growing town. Hervey Bay has sustained a development growth of 10.7 per cent and it is emerging as a force to be reckoned with in the distribution of health care in the Wide Bay region. They are the simple facts of the matter.

This debate is most important because it deals with the Budget Estimates which relate to the distribution of health services to all Queenslanders. I say "all Queenslanders" because, in times past, there has been a distinct lack of recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Islander communities to health care. This State Government recognises that the Aboriginal health program is a preventive one which aims to improve the health of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders to at least the equivalent of that of the rest of the Queensland people. One needs to look no further than the Budget allocation for this program to find proof that its concern for the health of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is indeed genuine. On top of more than \$5.5m allocated by the Commonwealth Government, this State has allocated a further \$700,000. This will result in the provision of 41 new positions in the program, and most of these positions will be created at a regional level. This means that new staff will be in the field, where they are so urgently needed, and it will allow access to services where recent availability has been limited. As a result, the Government's campaign to improve the health of these people will be assured of success. The campaign is based on the surveillance of health parameters, the coordination of public health activities, the promotion of healthy life-styles, health education activities and the utilisation of existing services.

I cannot let this debate pass without commenting on the contribution by the member for Callide on the replacement of boards by the Area Health Authority. The member for Callide was rich in her praise for the boards, and no doubt some of them deserve this praise. They battled as amateurs in what is now a fiercely professional field. The horse-and-buggy days demanded that boards be scattered throughout the country, dealing with the health of the community on a district basis. The Government's policy of dealing with the distribution of health care on a regional basis is the right one and is a policy for our times. If professional care is to be given, professional administration is required.

**Mr Hobbs:** It costs more.

**Mr NUNN:** To put it more simply, so the honourable member can understand: you get what you pay for.

It is argued that the boards were the only ones able to generate local input. However, the news coming out of the country areas is that, for approximately the last 20 years, there has been no input from the local people outside the boards. In fact, most people regarded the boards as an appendix—something that had been around forever but was of no apparent use.

**Mr Hobbs:** That is not true.

**Mr NUNN:** That is true. Complaints made by Maryborough people as a result of an inquiry into the management and board of the Maryborough general hospital bear testimony to the failure of the board to maintain contact with the needs and concerns of the community. No doubt the results of the inquiry will be enlightening.

For many years, the local hospital in my electorate has been crying out for funds. What has come to light is a patients' trust fund with a balance of \$150,000. That sum

is made up mainly of interest from the funds of people who at one time or another were inpatients. Because of the antiquity of the gear in the operating theatre, the hospital could not function. No funding could be found for new equipment, yet \$150,000, which has been sitting in that account, could have been used for the general good of the patients. Trust funds exist in public hospitals throughout Queensland. I cannot begin to explain why that fund has only come to light in the year of the board's demise. If that can be put forward as an example of how the public has input into the affairs of the hospital or, for that matter, if it denotes good management, I will eat my hat. It points to the fact that there could be literally millions of dollars in patients' trust funds throughout Queensland. A good case might exist for an audit of those funds.

The people of Queensland can be quite confident that a system of regional health care administered by professionals—as proposed by this Government—can and will work. The network of country hospitals, some of which are literally falling to pieces, will be improved beyond recognition and, indeed, beyond the comprehension of the Opposition. In the run-up to the 1989 State election, the Goss Labor Party made a commitment to establish a health services information centre in the Division of Research and Planning. That centre is a necessary addition to the health-care network. Previously, interested people found it difficult to glean information about health care in Queensland. Simply put, the centre will provide information about the health system. It will provide to the public, researchers, other organisations and the staff of the Queensland Department of Health and allied services information about statistical data relating to hospital morbidity and causes of death and perinatal data. As well, the centre will provide health information along agreed guidelines. Most importantly, it will maintain confidentiality of individual patient data. It will refer inquirers to specific departmental research sources and, where relevant, will be the first-stop inquiry point for those inquirers to the department who cannot easily be directed by the general switchboard. On an ongoing basis the centre will undertake an analysis of the demand for service, the sources of demand, the use of information sought and the extent to which the demand can be satisfied. The information centre will expand the role of the central statistical unit. The costs of the unit in its first year of operation will be in the order of only \$115,000. That sum, which will facilitate the collection and dissemination of health information to the people and organisations of Queensland will be money well spent when one considers that, in addition, we will ascertain where the demand for services lies, what services are in demand and how well the demand can be serviced. In other words, we will be able to run a tighter, more efficient operation and will be able to tell where the dollars are going.

I could speak at length, but at this stage the debate becomes repetitive. I suspect that more members on both sides have contributions to make to the debate. The Opposition has been torn in its attitude to health care by the ideological differences between Liberals and Nationals. However, the opposition parties are united on one front that is designed—accidentally or otherwise—to run down the public health facility so that they can foster the interest of their backers in the private sector. I appeal to them to join with the Labor Party in its attempt to provide professional health care to the people of Queensland. I do not need to commend the Minister, because his application to his job and his dedication to the provision of health care to the ordinary people of Queensland is well known. I commend the Minister for his presentation of the Estimates.

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego) (4.58 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak to the Estimates of the Health Department. The Health portfolio, which is very diverse, affects everybody. It reaches out to mothers, fathers, grandmothers, uncles, aunts and everybody else. The subject of health is a little like education. Education and Health are very difficult departments to administer because so many people are constantly touched by them.

At this stage I pay tribute to Mr Tom McCarthy, the former Under Secretary of the Health Department, who spent some 40 years in that department. For such a long time he played a very important role in the management of health facilities throughout Queensland. That is a tremendous amount of time for somebody to put into such an

important job. I wish him and his family well and wish them health and happiness in his retirement.

Unfortunately, health-care in rural Queensland is not progressing. The member for Toowoomba North referred to mortality rates. Recently, in Charleville, the Minister launched Health 2000. At that time he stated that in my electorate a few aspects of health care are causing serious concern. I refer to figures relating to the incidence of lung cancer, suicides, accidents and so on. When I first saw those figures I did not believe them. I thought that somebody had been tampering with them. I concede that problems exist in country areas. One problem is the difficulty of attracting doctors to those areas. I am not sure what the answer is. We must try harder. One of the most important things that we can do is to follow up the review of rural health that was done in Western Australia. One of the results of that study was that doctors who are most likely to return to the country are people who originally came from that area. We should try to give country schoolchildren some incentive to eventually become doctors. I am not sure exactly how we should do that. Maybe we should allow them to gain some extra qualifications so that they do not have to reach quite as high an educational standard as urban children. That is one of the ideas that the review came up with, and it could well be worth while thinking about.

Doctors are needed in country areas. It is only a matter of time before they have sufficient experience to work in the country. One of the problems experienced by doctors who leave the city and go to the country is that they are frightened. They do not have the back-up that is available. Often, doctors specialise in one field. We need doctors who are prepared to go to the country and not be frightened about difficult births, and so on. That is one aspect that we should consider. The Opposition was disappointed that the Minister disbanded the rural health section of his department, but he did re-establish it, to a certain degree. We would like more emphasis to be placed on rural health.

I am particularly interested in the hospitals in my electorate. I was very pleased to see that the new wing of the Augathella Hospital, which cost \$1.3m, was opened by the Minister. That will be a big boost to the people who live in the area and will give them confidence in the health service. The renovations to the Charleville Hospital and the nursing home are appreciated. The Government did a great job in that respect. I give credit where it is due to the Minister and the department for the assistance that they provided to those people. One of the consequences of the floods in western Queensland—and that is no fault of the Government or anybody else—is that 12 or 15 people from the nursing home have passed on. I guess that that is a result of the trauma that goes with an event as horrific as the floods. The new nursing home will be built in the grounds of the Charleville hospital and will be virtually out of reach of any future flood. It will be of great benefit to the district.

I mentioned that it is difficult to get doctors to work in country areas, because many of them are worked to death. Some doctors in the country work for 30 days straight. It is difficult to attract other doctors to the country to relieve them. It is difficult to encourage the wives of doctors to live in country areas. Because their husband is on call for long periods, they cannot attend social gatherings. More doctors practised in the country in the fifties, sixties and seventies, than do now.

I express appreciation to the Government for increasing from \$1.2m to \$1.4m the amount of money provided to the Flying Doctor Service. That is appropriate, because it is a very important service and one upon which people in the country rely. I used the service when a fellow who worked on my property was run over by a tractor. The flying doctor arrived within a very short period, and the injured worker was taken away. He has returned to work, and we can thank the flying doctor for saving his life. The Flying Surgeon and the Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist are also very important. It is interesting to note in the annual report of the Health Department that the Flying Surgeon who is based in Roma performed 1 273 operations and made 3 271 consultations.

During the course of that work, the service flew 49 182 nautical miles. Using a seven-day week for a year, that works out to be approximately nine consultations a day.

The service based in Longreach covers a much larger area. The Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist held 2 293 consultations. The Flying Surgeon who is based in Longreach travelled 78 600 nautical miles and held 2 644 consultations—approximately seven a day. If an academic were to calculate which service was doing the most work, he would say that it was the doctor in Roma. But it does not work that way. Greater stress is placed on those people who travel great distances. I place on record my appreciation of those specialists who do great work in the country. We certainly need them, and we need more of them.

One of the problems with the large number of consultations that I referred to is that that number would be increased if the service was provided in the towns. If those professional people were based in Longreach or Charleville, more people would go for consultations. Many people now do not go to the doctor. A few friends of mine who have said that they would go to the doctor later on, continue to put it off and eventually they do not go. Perhaps that is why the statistics are so high. People should visit the doctor more often but, because the doctor is not there, and the Flying Surgeon or the Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist visits only once or twice a month, the time is not always suitable. Perhaps the bore has broken down, they are a million miles away or there is some other reason why they do not visit the doctor. The doctor used to visit my own town of Tambo once a week. He now visits twice a week and those are the only two days when people can be sick. If they are sick on the other days they have to wait or simply take a few more Aspros to get them through.

The establishment of the liver transplant unit was a very important initiative, one that the National Party totally supports. I note the Government's dilemma over the Government jet and that the liver and heart transplant units will continue to have the use of that jet. I do not know if the Government jet has carried a heart yet, but I hope it does in the future. The sale of the jet places this service in jeopardy. This is a purely ideological argument. The Government is deliberating over this state-of-the-art aircraft, but it is unequalled in the world. It is needed by the people of Queensland, who in due course may end up with some second-rate machine. The people of Queensland do not want that; they want the best. This jet is the best, and the Minister should assist the people of Queensland by pointing out to the Government that Queenslanders want to keep it.

I refer also to the transfer of student nurses from hospital-based schools of nursing to higher-education sectors. I do not know a great deal about this debate and do not really want to get involved in it, but I sound a note of caution to the Government. There is genuine concern in the community that in the future nurses will not be adequately trained. It is all very well to have an academic record and everything else, but the simple fact of the matter is that practical training is second to none and the school of hard knocks is what really counts.

**Mr Hollis:** You would complain if you got second-rate nurses out there, wouldn't you?

**Mr HOBBS:** I would be complaining if I got second-rate nurses.

**Mr Hollis:** That's what you are asking for.

**Mr HOBBS:** I am not entirely sure about that. I believe that everyone should have practical training, as well. I am happy to have a mixture, but it must be ensured that the nurses do not simply finish their academic studies, go into hospitals and take over in areas where they are not capable. That is not a derogatory remark, but we must ensure that they have hands-on experience. This is pretty important.

**Mr Szczerbanik:** They are not trained to be like that.

**Mr HOBBS:** I would like to take the honourable member's interjection, but I wish to turn to regionalisation.

Regionalisation is not a step forward. The previous speaker referred to regionalisation and said that it would lead to increased professionalism. I accept that point, but once the Government loses touch with the people and what they want, all the professionalism in the world will not solve the problem. The economy of this nation is being run by professionals, and they have not been doing a very good job. The provision of health services is the same. This Government has to provide what people need, rather than what they think they need; if it cannot do so, it is on the wrong track. At the end of the day, all that will result is a bureaucracy that may in the long term get out of hand. It will cost more.

**Dr Flynn:** Not when you consider the review of the central department, there won't be any increased cost. You have to take the two together, not just one.

**Mr HOBBS:** I do not know about that. There may be some cost-savings in there. I am prepared to look at that.

I ask the Minister: how will regionalisation help the hospitals of places such as Charleville, Cunnamulla and Tambo, which have a base hospital, a medium-sized hospital and a small hospital with an out-patients centre? How will regionalisation in the short term—for example, five years—benefit those hospitals? What can I tell my constituents? What benefit will regionalisation have for hospitals in my electorate? I do not think that it will benefit them at all, but perhaps the Minister can answer the question.

Time expired.

**Mr SULLIVAN** (Glass House) (5.14 p.m.): I wish to use the few seconds remaining in this Estimates debate this afternoon to put on record the very deep appreciation of my electors to the Minister, who has provided in the 1990 Estimates the initial funds for the establishment of the Caboolture hospital. This hospital has been promised to my electors by a succession of National Party Ministers and members since 1977.

**Ms Spence:** Caboolture obviously needs it more than Robina.

**Mr SULLIVAN:** Caboolture certainly has a greater need than Robina, which possibly needs psychiatric services.

The facts are that Caboolture is part of the second-fastest growing area in the Sunshine State and part of the third-fastest growing area in the nation. Patients living in what will be the Caboolture hospital catchment area presently occupy 33 per cent of the available space for patients at the Redcliffe Hospital. The establishment of the hospital at Caboolture will free up a great number of bed spaces at the Redcliffe Hospital. Currently the Redcliffe Hospital cannot accommodate 48 per cent of its own patients within the available space. Obviously the establishment of the Caboolture hospital will not replace the need for an upgrading of the Redcliffe Hospital. The establishment of the Caboolture hospital is something that the people have looked forward to for a great number of years. The Minister's stature in the area of Caboolture is extremely high. The people who live in the area appreciated very much the announcement he made on 28 May, as he opened the Caboolture Health Centre, that the establishment to which I have referred will go ahead. The 1990 Budget provided funds for planning. The people who live in my electorate anticipate seeing bricks and mortar in the next financial year.

Time expired.

**Hon. K. V. McELLIGOTT** (Thuringowa—Minister for Health) (5.16 p.m.), in reply: First of all, I thank all honourable members who have contributed to the Estimates debate which, with one or two very minor exceptions, has been very effective. Members on both sides of the Chamber have avoided political point-scoring for the sake of a good debate, and I thank all of them for that. Probably one reason for the positive attitude displayed is that the Health budget is a very good one.

In particular, I thank some of my ministerial colleagues who accepted substantial cuts in their budgets to ensure that vital Government services, such as health, education and others, were kept at a level that permitted the Government to meet basic standards that are demanded and expected by the people of Queensland. Funding levels for Health have been maintained and, in a couple of instances that I have already identified, substantial increases have been made. I am very grateful for that fact, and also for the fact that honourable members who spoke during the debate highlighted those important initiatives in areas such as the blood transfusion service and the Flying Doctor Service. I believe that those initiatives will improve substantially the way in which the department can meet the needs for health care services for the people of Queensland.

I do not propose to answer each specific point raised by members but, rather, undertake to write to each member who has contributed to the debate and respond to the questions that he or she has posed or the points that have been made. A few general issues were consistent throughout the contributions made to the debate, and I wish to comment on them. First of all, both the member for Callide and the member for Landsborough sought to criticise the amount of capital works funding provided in this year's budget. Unfortunately, their criticism indicates a lack of understanding of the way in which the capital works program works. Traditionally, it has been funded on the basis of a triennium program, the first year of which is regarded as a planning year. Expenditure and the provision of funds in that year are naturally less than in the succeeding two years. Personally, I do not believe that that is the appropriate way in which to fund capital works. Discussions are being held with Treasury to ascertain whether a system of rolling triennium funding can be introduced so that funding for each year is approximately equal and will enable capital works programs to continue unhindered. At present, funding reaches a crescendo in the last year of the triennium. After that, the whole program collapses and the department has to start again from zero with a planning year. It seems to me that that is an inefficient way to maintain a capital works program; but I will put matters into their proper perspective. The capital works program for the current triennium, which begins this financial year, has increased to \$116m from \$90m in the previous triennium. The amount approved for capital works in the Health budget has been increased by 28 per cent.

Most, if not all, speakers on the opposite side of the Chamber referred to rural health, which seems to be the flavour of the month. Not only is my department substantially reviewing the provision of services to rural Queensland but also the Commonwealth Government is demonstrating considerable interest because, towards the end of this month, the Federal Minister will host a conference in Broome, Western Australia, to discuss rural health services that are provided throughout the nation.

Most speakers who contributed to the debate agreed on one issue. I certainly support the view that, although most honourable members can identify the problems, they are very short on solutions. As many speakers indicated, resolution of the problems does not appear to be simply a matter of providing more money. Questions were asked about access to ongoing in-service training and support from other departments in cases of emergency, which are factors that make the delivery of health services in rural areas difficult. I take the view that, notwithstanding that honourable members understand the problems, solutions still must be found. I have proposed to the Queensland branch of the Australian Medical Association that, in an effort to not only identify the problems but also, more importantly, to come up with some solutions, a joint sponsorship arrangement be entered into to provide a conference next year on rural medical manpower in Queensland. I make it clear at the outset of that process that the solution is not simply to throw more money at the problem, which has been tried in the past and found to be ineffective.

Another point raised by all members on the opposite side of the Chamber was regionalisation. I appeal to honourable members of both the National Party and the Liberal Party to understand that regionalisation is a fact of life. There is no doubt at all in my mind that the concerns expressed during the debate are unfounded. As a general rule, I believe that the only comment that can be made in defence of the retention of

hospitals boards is that people who serve on the boards are nice people who have worked hard and have done this, that and the other thing. Although I am not about to dispute that or criticise individual members of boards or individual boards throughout the State, I make the point that the time has come for the placing of professional health-care services in the hands of professional decision-makers and for appointing people to positions on the boards who can make a contribution rather than because of their political affiliations or the fact that they are nice people. I cite the example of a fellow to whom I spoke in a western Queensland town who pleaded with me to retain the boards. His argument was that, in the past, friends of the Government were appointed to a board and that, if the hospital's manager could not get what he wanted through the normal processes that existed in the department, the board would go to its friends in Government and get whatever was needed. He appealed to me to get rid of all the National Party members and replace them with Labor Party members so that the same process could continue. To my mind, that is the very argument for getting rid of that outdated structure. The fact is that the Government does not provide services and equipment on the basis of having political friends in high places. The Government delivers services on the basis of needs and assesses those needs with the benefit of expert input from the type of people who will be appointed to regional health authorities.

Somebody raised the question of whether the devolution of responsibility will be real or only imagined. I assure honourable members that the process involves getting people out of the central Department of Health and into the regions so that the decisions are made at the point closest to the delivery of services. I would have thought that a party that claims to represent the people of country and rural Queensland would applaud that form of decentralised decision-making. Today, I urge the National Party to do that. Naturally, when it comes to consideration of the legislation to implement regionalisation, we will debate the process. However, I make the point that it will work and it will benefit the constituents whom honourable members represent. I appeal to honourable members to take a positive attitude and to attempt to understand regionalisation and the changes in the structure that we are talking about during that process.

Finally, the rural health unit report has been mentioned. I have seen the first draft of that report. It is being redrafted to take account of regionalisation—in particular, to attach costings to the various recommendations that are included in the report. The suggestion was made that for some reason or other I am laundering the report or seeking to cover it up. To correct any impression of that, let me say that this is not a report that is looking at identifying weaknesses in the previous Government's administration or criticising anybody; it is intended to be a blueprint for the delivery of health services in rural Queensland for the future. Therefore, it is important to delay its final production and public launch until it is in a form that is meaningful on the delivery of services.

In this debate, people talked about incentives for medical officers and others to work in country areas. If one has an unlimited supply of money, those things are possible. However, one must bear in mind that, if one offers incentives to doctors and nurses, one must also offer them to teachers, policemen and so on. The solutions are not simple. For any meaningful report to be considered by this Committee and the community generally, it must take account of costs. That is the reason that the report has not been published. It will be published as a blueprint for the future. Again, I seek support of all honourable members in positively and constructively considering the recommendations contained in that report.

I conclude by thanking again all honourable members for their contributions. I think that there was a real recognition today of the valuable initiatives taken by the Government, particularly with Aboriginal health, women's health and rural health. I appreciate that support and look forward to continuing to work with those members of the Committee who have contributed to the debate today.

At 5.25 p.m.,

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr J. N. Goss): Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 3 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Health.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

\$1,585,729,000—Health, Department of Health (Consolidated Revenue).

\$1,445,959,000—Health, Department of Health (Trust and Special Funds).

### **Resource Industries**

**Hon. K. H. VAUGHAN** (Nudgee—Minister for Resource Industries) (5.28 p.m.): I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1990-91, a sum not exceeding \$31,403,000 be granted for Mining, Energy and Electricity, Department of Resource Industries (Consolidated Revenue)."

There can be no denying that mining is fundamental to the Queensland economy. It provides 56 per cent of Queensland's export revenue and 24 per cent of Australia's total mining industry output. In 1989-90, the value of Queensland's total mining production increased by 16.5 per cent to hit a record high of \$5.106 billion. Mining royalties alone earned the Government more than \$207m and, altogether, more than \$1 billion is raised in charges from mining and minerals-processing industries, charges which represent around a quarter of all revenue the State raises.

Clearly, mining underpins our economy's foundations. It is the Government's role to manage the State's mineral and energy resources in the interests of all Queenslanders, because those resources belong to all of us. We are committed to the sustainable development of Queensland's resources, not development at all costs for the sake of a quick million like our predecessors. Sustainable development means that the decision we make now on land use, be it mining, farming or conservation, should not impinge on the ability of future generations to enjoy as good a life-style as we enjoy now. It also means making decisions based on as much information as possible and using that information to decide what the costs and benefits to Queensland might be; and I mean all the costs and benefits—economic, social and environmental. That philosophy will guide this Government in its decisions within the Resource Industries portfolio, and that has been reflected in the allocation of funds, as I will demonstrate. Having set the scene for the future for the benefit of the Chamber, I will outline the current status of the industry.

During 1989-90, coal continued to dominate the Queensland mining scene. The Queensland coal industry benefited from a higher international coal price, a lower Australian dollar and a small increase in production levels. The value of production increased by 20.9 per cent to a new record of \$2.879 billion, up from \$2.381 billion in 1988-89. A total of 74.9 million tonnes of coal were produced and Queensland's coal exports reached a record 61.3 million tonnes. A significant development within the coal industry has been the trend away from open-cut to underground mining, which has impacted on productivity levels. However, the records do show that there has been a decrease in time lost through stoppages, for which I must congratulate the work force, its unions and management of the coal industry. They will have further opportunity to demonstrate their advances at the new Gordonstone mine, which is the first to be covered by a single union under the ACTU's union restructuring.

In August this year, the Premier announced the go-ahead of the \$500m Gordonstone project—the first coal mine project in the Bowen Basin since the development rush of the early 1980s. Two longwall units are planned to be installed at the mine and, at full production, the colliery will produce 4.2 million tonnes of coal annually and will have a work force of 400. Employees will live in Emerald, which is expected to increase to a population of 8 000 by 1992. The Goss Government—in fact, the Premier himself—made a major contribution to this project by helping it gain Foreign Investment Review Board approval. The Premier made strong representations to the Federal Treasurer, Paul Keating, on behalf of the joint-venturers and, as a result, the Commonwealth eased its foreign investment guidelines to allow the project to go ahead. This is, of course, entirely in line with Queensland's own foreign investment guidelines, which prefer 50 per cent

Australian investment but allow for relaxation when, as with Gordonstone, there will be opportunities later to increase Australian equity and the project is in the State's interest.

Gordonstone was not the only good news from within the coal industry. Several existing mines announced major expansion plans, with a move towards underground, particularly in the Bowen Basin. A \$100m expansion of the existing open-cut operations at the Blair Athol steaming coal mine saw production capacity increase from five to eight million tonnes per year. At Oaky Creek, operated by MIM and two overseas partners, a new \$100m longwall extension will see output rising to 4 million tonnes of clean coking coal annually. This will bring an estimated \$90m in export income into Queensland, as well as providing another 150 jobs in central Queensland. Another Bowen Basin expansion project to be completed was German Creek's new underground coking coal operation, Southern Colliery, which has an annual production capacity of 1.5 million tonnes. Further development also took place on the West Moreton coal fields around Ipswich, with the Premier opening a new \$30m coal preparation plant and coal-handling complex at the Ebenezer mine in February this year. This expansion has seen Ebenezer's capacity double to 1.2 million tonnes.

The Government released four new areas for coal exploration in the central Queensland coal area as part of its program to ensure that resources are being tested and developed in time to meet market demands. These areas were Burton Downs, which has been awarded, and Moranbah North, Springsure and Rainworth, which are yet to be finalised. Department of Resource Industries staff located significant deposits of high-volatile thermal coal at Cullin-La-Ringo North and Minerva, both south of Emerald, as part of the department's reconnaissance drilling program.

In the exploration stakes, base metals emerged as the second most popular mineral to be sought after—a trend which has borne fruit in the north-west again with the discovery of the century deposit by CRA. This discovery follows on the heels of the opening of two new base metals mines in that region, Hilton and Thalanga. MIM's Hilton mine, 10 kilometres north of Mount Isa, is one of the three great polymetallic mines in the world, and will extend substantially the life of MIM's operations in the area. The \$100m Thalanga mine is near Charters Towers and is another step forward for one of the most active mining areas in Queensland. Statewide, gold production continued to grow strongly, with the value of gold bullion production increasing by around 11 per cent to \$523m. The quantity of gold bullion produced increased by 10.5 per cent to 51 999 kilograms.

However, the most far-reaching development has been the long-overdue updating of this State's mining laws—in fact, the first major review since before the turn of the century. I speak, of course, of the Mineral Resources Act, which came into force on 1 September. That Act, incorporating the amendments which I introduced to the Parliament, has operated smoothly during its transition period so far. I must commend the various interest groups that took part in the consultations that I set up earlier this year. As the Opposition spokesman before the happy events of 2 December, I was inundated with complaints from people concerned about the National Party's original legislation, and I am confident that the amendments that this Government framed have settled the majority of those problems. As it stands now, the Act is a suitable framework for this Government to implement its policy of sustainable development—what I like to refer to as development without destruction. That philosophy has been reflected in the allocation of funds within the departmental budget, which I will deal with in detail now.

The Titles and Tenures Services Program has been allocated a budget of \$4.452m for 1990-91, excluding its corporate services component. Of that, \$400,000 has been set aside for continuing regionalisation, which is a major cog in the machinery of the Mineral Resources Act. Under the regionalisation initiative, the Titles and Tenures Services Program is responsible for establishing nine district offices in the main mining centres of the State, together with one district office in Brisbane. Offices have already opened at Charters Towers, Georgetown, Mareeba, Quilpie, Cairns and Brisbane and I expect

that others will follow at Winton, Emerald, Rockhampton and Mount Isa in the current financial year. These new district offices will replace the old service, which was carried out by Justice and Corrective Services Department officers in 38 courthouses and offices around the State. All of the offices will be interconnected via the computerised mining tenures database, which is designed to give people quick access to up-to-date information about their region and also help manage revenue. When it is up and running, it will speed up some processes by six months.

I am fully aware that this computerisation process was under way before our Government came to power and in fact was mentioned by Mr Katter in the Estimates debate last year. But it was Mr Katter who in fact fouled up the successful installation of the system, which is precisely why this Government is still trying to get it up and running. I understand that, with the onset of the election, Mr Katter insisted that the computer system be installed in Charters Towers, in his electorate, and in Mareeba, in the electorate of Tablelands. This has caused massive problems in getting the system working—all because Mr Katter interfered for his own political purposes. However, my departmental officers have been working hard, and all the offices should come online by 1991-92. These district offices will also be used to promote and supervise tourism in the mining environment and provide information for fossickers and the like in areas such as the central Queensland gemfields.

Importantly, the district offices will give the Government an effective field presence which will help its liaison with the mining and exploration industry, landholders and the local community in these areas. It will also allow the Government to monitor the industry's compliance with legislation and the terms and conditions of their mining tenures—something our predecessors were not particularly interested in. Their lack of action in this regard is as much to blame as the miners involved for the sad situation that exists in areas such as the gemfields and some of the older, ravaged mining areas of this State. Those days are over in Queensland. There will be no more rampant, unthinking development at all costs with no regard for the future. The Government has provided support for its objectives in this area with a specific allocation to the Environmental Management Unit within the Mineral and Energy Resources Development Program. The total allocation to mineral and energy resources is \$5,246m, of which \$220,000 will go to the environmental unit. This subprogram has now properly been given full responsibility for approving all aspects relating to environmental performance of mining operations, including plans of operation—functions previously carried out by mines inspectors. The extra funds that they have received are more than 200 per cent higher than the allocation for 1989-90 and are being used to take on more expert professional staff.

Work is now under way on the massive task of assessing plans of operations for every mining lease in Queensland—plans that have only just been required under the Mineral Resources Act. These new environmental officers will also be able to spend more time in the field, where they can see what is happening on mine sites. This will allow them to provide back-up technical advice on rehabilitation and proper environmental management to miners. It will also indicate to lessees the difference between this Government and the previous Government, that is, that this Government is serious about this issue. As I signalled in this Chamber during this debate last year, the terms and conditions of mining tenures must be adhered to. The Government would prefer to achieve this by consultation rather than confrontation with the mining industry, which is a policy applied throughout the Government.

The department has been working on draft guidelines for mine rehabilitation and mine site environmental management with the Queensland Coal Association and they are close to being settled. As a result of the Government's very clear emphasis, coal-mining companies, amongst Queensland's largest operators, are now making plans to rehabilitate many older disturbed areas. The mineral resources development program will work as a whole to facilitate environmentally responsible mineral exploration via the management of exploration and mining tenures. In the event that a lessee fails to fulfil the Government's requirements, it has access to security deposits, but a couple of

notable failures have shown up the ridiculous level at which those deposits were set by the previous Government. The people of Queensland have been lumbered with the cost of rehabilitating mine sites—projects that can cost tens of thousands of dollars—because security deposits were totally unrealistic. Those deposit levels are being reviewed in conjunction with the draft rehabilitation guidelines and, in the coming months, a whole new approach will be implemented.

Another of the important activities of the mineral and energy resource development program is the provision of mineral resource information to the industry, other areas of Government and the rest of the community. The program also deals with resource taxation and micro-economic reform issues and the monitoring of world economic trends, the most notable lately being the effect of the Middle East crisis on Queensland's mineral and energy sectors. The mineral and energy resource development program has a separate unit that deals entirely with Queensland's energy resources. Its role is to promote and facilitate exploration and development of those resources and, most importantly, the efficient use of energy. This section will receive \$1.514m in 1990-91 to allow it to manage exploration and mining tenures for coal, oil shale and petroleum, identify opportunities and promote energy-related research and development for the benefit of all sectors of Queensland society. Among its responsibilities that have been particularly relevant recently is liquid fuel emergency procedures. Those procedures are invoked if severe fuel shortages arise and the department and the various bodies involved will have a fire drill of those procedures this year to check their effectiveness.

The petroleum resources assessment and development subprogram will address the potential of onshore Queensland to yield further petroleum discoveries. New areas will be examined, along with unconventional petroleum sources such as the coal-bed methane resource in the Bowen Basin, which is being tested by Mitsubishi and Elders. Work will continue on a petroleum leads and prospects atlas, an inventory of the areas with petroleum potential in the various geological basins of the State. The coal and oil shale resources assessment and development subprogram will continue with a major project to establish a computerised data base of departmental coal and oil shale exploration data, which will be accessible by industry.

In the area of energy, Queensland's single most significant energy resource is coal, which provides 40 per cent of this State's energy. The Government's job is to manage Queensland's massive coal resources and their exploitation on behalf of the people of Queensland, who own them. With that objective in mind, the allocation for resource industries includes a total of \$460,000 for a major restructuring of the Queensland Coal Board into a useful and effective policy adviser. The extra funds represent an increase of almost 200 per cent on last year's Budget allocation and will allow the appointment of a full-time board, with two members and a chairperson, as well as two additional specialist technical staff. Under the previous National Party Government, the board was starved of funds and was little more than a collector of statistics—even then, the board was pressured not to cooperate with its counterpart in New South Wales in producing national coal statistics. There is no point having the board without giving it a real job. The board will provide the Government with expert advice on international export markets and other industry developments and promote Queensland as a reliable coal supplier, in conjunction with the industry and other State and Federal authorities. The revamped board will work in cooperation with the Department of Resource Industries. I assure honourable members and the coal industry that this is in no way a move to intervene in their affairs, but simply a move on the Government's part to improve its own support systems to allow it to make effective and relevant decisions.

The restructuring of the Queensland Coal Board is only one of the energy-related initiatives that this Government has put in place since 2 December. The major one is its Green Paper on energy policy, which forms the basis of an exhaustive review of energy issues. From the Green Paper and the responses gained from the community, the Government will put together Queensland's first integrated, well-planned set of energy strategies, ones that will give industry, business and the general public some direction for the future. One area that it will focus on is renewable and alternative energies and

what part they can and should play in Queensland's energy mixes in the future. The Green Paper is being prepared now and will be available for comment later this month. In the meantime, the Government is tackling the area of energy efficiency, which is a subject that I have always felt strongly about, even before the suggested possible link between the burning of fossil fuels and the greenhouse effect.

In the coming months, one of the Government's initiatives will be the establishment of an independent energy information centre in Brisbane to give advice to householders, car-owners and schools. A total of \$170,000 has been set aside in the budget of the mineral and energy resource development program for the centre, which will be a cost-efficient shopfront in the foyer of the Queensland Minerals and Energy Centre at 61 Mary Street. It will provide advice on the efficient use of a range of energy sources, including electricity, gas and solar energy. To ensure that this service is available to all Queenslanders, a toll-free telephone number will be supplied. Information, advice and publications will be provided on topics such as energy-efficient house designs, hot water systems, lighting, selection and use of appliances, and energy-efficient transport. The centre will draw on the experiences of similar services in other States and will be backed by the department's energy management unit, which also runs the Government's energy management program. This program advises other Government departments on how to monitor and control energy use. Energy efficiency does not just mean using energy in a miserly way. It also requires using the most appropriate form of energy, and a way to facilitate this is to have a wide range of energies available.

The State gas pipeline project is a way of providing an alternative form of energy—a relatively clean and inexpensive form of energy—to business, industry and domestic consumers. There has been a lot of bleating from the Opposition on this subject and before I go on, I would like to set something straight. When this Government was in Opposition, its concern with this pipeline project was that the previous National Party Government had not made enough effort to get private enterprise to build the pipeline and that it was sinking public funds into another massive project without sufficient assurance of an end market. The Labor Party did not oppose the principle of Government providing infrastructure, which is a perfectly appropriate thing for Government to do. Having put that on the record, I will continue. The State gas pipeline delivered its first gas to the Queensland alumina refinery in June, almost two months ahead of schedule and, a few days later, to the new ICI caustic/chlorine/cyanide plant. In February 1990, the Government announced that it would extend the pipeline further from Gladstone to Rockhampton, the chief reason being that this would allow the development of a new value-added industry for Queensland. I speak of the \$200m Queensland magnesia joint venture based on the Kunwarara magnesite deposit near Rockhampton. This project will mean employment and local prosperity, but most importantly, and in line with Government policies, sees Queensland processing its natural resources before selling them off overseas. An amount of \$38.266m will be allocated from the State Gas Pipeline Construction Fund to build the gas pipeline extension and to maintain the operation of the existing line from Wallumbilla to Gladstone. Most of the pipeline should be installed before Christmas, and commissioning is scheduled for May next year.

I turn now to the safety and technology program, which includes the Safety in Mines Testing and Research Station at Redbank. A total of \$12.845m has been allocated to this program, which includes \$2.747m for SIMTARS and \$1.5m as the Government's contribution to the mines rescue brigade and its rescue facilities and training activities. The remainder will be used to provide a safe workplace for Queenslanders in resource, gas and explosives industries and to protect lives and property affected by those industries. Following the allocation of environmental matters to the appropriate section of the department, mines inspectors will now be able to concentrate on safety and health matters. In the current financial year, they will carry out more audits and inspections at metalliferous mines. Inspectors will research and plan better methods of advocating, encouraging and leading management and workers in safety and health management. The department will review the delivery of safety and health information to employees,

as well as re-examining the effectiveness of operating systems, the availability of safety procedures, the effectiveness of training procedures and of supervision on mine sites.

In the area of coalmine safety, the department will develop risk assessment and risk management techniques to help improve safety performance in coalmines, and a review of the mines rescue brigade will continue. The department will be encouraging research into safe techniques for mining underground coal reserves in outburst-prone areas. In the area of gas operations, a senior gas-examiner has been appointed to the Cairns area, which was formerly serviced by a well-travelled examiner in Townsville who covered a vast area of north Queensland. The safety and technology program also deals with mining subsidence, and one of its major projects is at Gympie, where abandoned goldmine shafts pose a public safety risk. The program is currently reviewing the situation in Gympie, where many shafts were sunk before or near the turn of the century. I recall former Minister Bob Katter's ludicrous comments in this debate last year that living in old mining towns with holes in the ground was one of "the greatest excitements in life". I do not think Mr Katter would be too excited if he fell in one in his backyard. The departmental Estimates contain \$50,000 specifically for this kind of public safety issue, and I will be making further announcements about this later this month.

I turn now to SIMTARS, which has just completed its first full year of operation and has a budget of \$2.747m for the current year. Several months ago, I instigated a review of SIMTARS to see where it fitted into the mining research sector and where it might be going. After years of delay and two tragic mining disasters at Kianga and Moura, our predecessors finally set up SIMTARS, but they did only half the job. The centre was funded, but given little direction or idea of its priorities on mining safety in the State. Our review has looked at SIMTARS' current activities and its planned future direction, with particular focus on the financial and organisational structures required to meet the expectations of stake-holders. A number of basic reforms have been put in place and several others are under active discussion with the major stake-holders and interested groups. I am confident that as a result of these reforms SIMTARS will have a clearer charter under which it can fulfil its responsibility for safety and testing within the industry, as well as performing fee-for-service research and testing on a strictly commercial basis. I hope to be able to announce further reforms before the end of the year.

As part of its safety research activities, SIMTARS has developed the Camgas gas-analysis system, which is now installed, or being installed, in all major underground coalmines in Queensland. This system has been extended to become a full mine gas-monitoring system, world-leading technology which has attracted a lot of interest in the international mining scene. Our commitment to research extends beyond SIMTARS to include a \$20m package for a CSIRO centre for advanced technologies to be established at Pinjarra Hills. The centre will become the headquarters of the CSIRO Division of Geomechanics and contain a substantial component of the Institute of Minerals, Energy and Construction. The centre will join a world-leading group of mining research centres—SIMTARS, the University of Queensland's Julius Kruttschnitt Mineral Resource Centre at Indooroopilly and the Australian Coal Industry Research Laboratory (ACIRL) at Ipswich. These facilities will give Queensland the potential to lead the world in mining research and the introduction of new technology. We have the raw materials; research and development can help us to exploit them in the cleverest way.

I turn now to the corporate services program. For budget purposes, funding for this area has been apportioned to other programs in the Estimates. However, I will outline a major Government initiative funded from this program—the resource industries policy unit. The policy unit is an example of what makes this Government different from those of the last 30 years. It recognises that it is here to represent the people of this State and to make intelligent decisions that will benefit them. That is why I have set up this policy unit with an allocation of \$500,000, much of it for salaries. The unit will coordinate and develop advice on matters which influence the effectiveness and the strategic direction of the Resource Industries portfolio.

One of its major tasks has been the coordination of the energy Green Paper. In the current year, the unit will continue to audit areas of the department and investigate ways of getting the community more involved in policy-making. Members of the unit will also represent the State Government on the Prime Minister's sustainable development working group on energy production and distribution. The corporate services allocation also includes \$2.22m for information services. This will be used to provide electronic access to exploration data for industry, and to produce a range of products to meet the needs of industry, the public and the department.

During 1990-91, the department will continue to maintain and upgrade its geoscience and company report databases. The Queensland exploration reports index, which contains data on more than 22 000 company reports, is now on line, allowing industry quick access to open-file information. On average, 1 300 references to this information are made each month. Access will be further upgraded when dial-in access arrangements are finalised. During 1990-91, the information services program will also begin to implement a marketing strategy for all its information outputs across the department.

I turn now to the geological survey program, which has been allocated \$7,348m to ensure that Queensland's geoscience knowledge base remains current during 1990-91. An up-to-date information base both enhances the quality of Government decision-making and assists industry. The program's mapping activities this year will concentrate on central and north Queensland, as well as on Anakie in the central Queensland gemfields and on Gympie. At Anakie, the Government is using aerial survey methods for the first time, a technological step forward that will cost \$193,000 and cut a three-year mapping project down to two years. As well, the Government will recover some of the costs of the survey by selling the information collected to private exploration companies.

The department will cooperate with the Federal Bureau of Mineral Resources in fieldwork on Cape York Peninsula and in an assessment of oil and gas prospects in the Surat and Bowen Basins. Examinations of oil and gas prospects will take place in the northern Eromanga Basin and the Galilee Basin around Longreach. Of course, it is important to make this information available to industry, and various databases within the program are being continually upgraded.

In closing my comments on the Resource Industries Department Estimates, I ask the Committee to note the new emphasis in this Government's approach to mining. We see mining as one of a number of land uses, each with its own costs and benefits, and each with its part to play in the ongoing development of this State. Our role is to decide how those parts fit together best to bring the greatest benefit to the people of Queensland.

I turn now to electricity. The Queensland electricity supply industry is a major Government-owned enterprise with assets worth more than \$7.7 billion—assets that belong to the State and everyone in it. The people of Queensland are shareholders in the industry and they are entitled to know that their funds and investments are being managed wisely. With that in mind, in May this year the Government contracted a prominent merchant bank, Jarden Morgan, to conduct an efficiency audit of the entire industry—the Queensland Electricity Commission and the distribution boards. I gave those people a wide brief, because I felt that any investigation worth doing is worth doing well, and they have looked into financial, organisational and operational efficiencies. Recently, I received a hefty document containing their findings, but I will have to leave the Committee in suspense at this point until I have discussed the findings and the possible outcomes with my Cabinet colleagues.

In the meantime, I will detail the Estimates for the industry, which are divided into four programs, namely, finance and debt-servicing, power generation, power transmission and corporate services. These Estimates are framed against a 2.5 per cent average annual growth rate in Queensland's population over the last 10 years. Much of it is due to interstate migration. This figure is an entire percentage point over the national rate, and the outlook is that this will continue. Working on current usage patterns, it is forecast that electricity demand will grow at 5 per cent per annum—a demand that the

industry must respond to. I am happy to advise the Committee that the response will not automatically mean building new power stations, as happened in the 1980s.

The QEC has examined its marketing strategies and identified some areas where it could change its focus. This has led to a campaign to encourage the efficient use of electricity, supplemented by the industry's efforts to improve the use of its resources through demand management. The industry is changing its tack from trying to sell more electricity to using public education campaigns to teach consumers to do more with less. It has also sought to apply that equation to its own operations. This has been reflected in the allocations for power generation and transmission, which together total \$753m. Of that sum, \$475m will be used to operate and maintain generation and transmission facilities, and \$278m will be used for the acquisition and construction of new assets.

It is significant that the industry is refurbishing two of its stations—Gladstone and Swanbank—to extend their operating lives. For example, Swanbank was being run below capacity and, until the refurbishment, it was the least efficient of Queensland's power stations. The QEC is in the process of automating that station, making it more efficient and reinstating its mothballed units so that the State can get the proper benefit of its sizeable investment in Swanbank. That project has given the station, and the people of Ipswich who work there, a brighter future. The industry has also directed some effort into research and development of renewable energy sources, particularly in their application for remote areas.

Work is under way at Birdsville on an electricity generation project using the heat from underground water. In central Queensland, the Capricornia Electricity Board is examining hybrid systems using solar energy similar to those about to be installed on some of the islands of the Torres Strait. As I have said, Queensland depends on coal for 40 per cent of all its energy.

I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Coal burning is a major contributor to greenhouse emissions, and with the Federal Government's interim planning targets set, it is encouraging to see the electricity industry actively looking at alternatives.

It is a pursuit this Government will encourage them in.

The committee may notice that the forward estimates also allow for around \$22 million for the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric project.

This expenditure is limited to fulfilling existing contractual obligations pending the outcome of this Government's current investigation into the State's energy needs.

I would like to place on the record that this is not in any way a sign that a decision has been made on the future of this proposal.

I can assure the committee that whatever the taskforce decision, this Government will ensure the reliability of electricity supply to all the consumers of this State.

An integral part of that is the historic agreement which the Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Warburton, and I signed earlier this year with the electricity industry unions.

There was an example of what can be done through consultation rather than confrontation.

The previous Government's achievements through their antagonistic, confrontationist politics include hundreds of sacked workers—workers whose last years in some cases ended in tough financial circumstances after the loss of their superannuation.

The contracts that were introduced produced a splintered workforce, with staff on different conditions, different rates of pay and different hours.

The Industrial Commission has ruled that giving one group of employees different conditions from the rest was not appropriate—something we knew all along and have thankfully brought to an end.

I turn now to the finance and debt servicing program.

This program will seek to achieve two major outcomes in the current year—to continue to improve its debt to equity ratio and to minimise interest costs.

The Q-E-C manages the industry's debt through the Queensland Treasury Corporation and a total of \$809 million will be paid to service and redeem debt this year—including early repayment of \$275 million.

The committee should note that all capital expenditure in 1990/91 will be met entirely from internal industry funds and under the industry's five-year plan, no loan funds will be required.

The Q-E-C benefits from a Government guarantee when it borrows funds—a benefit it has never paid for.

As part of the Government's drive to make Government-owned enterprises operate on a more commercial basis, the Treasurer has imposed a half-a-percent capital guarantee fee on those borrowings to pay for that guarantee.

The Q-E-C has undertaken not to raise electricity prices before next February, and this fee will not impact directly on retail prices. The commission is also committed to half-CPI tariffs policy until 1994.

I turn now to the final program, corporate services, which has been allocated \$33 million in these estimates.

These funds will be expended on the regulation and co-ordination of the electricity industry, for forward financial and engineering planning, and for the management of generation and transmission.

In closing my comments, I point out as I did with the Resource Industries Department, the new emphasis in the electricity supply industry.

It is now realising that it is not its charter to just build new power stations to meet an ever-expanding electricity demand from energy-hungry consumers.

The industry has identified and is accepting a more responsible role as a manager of energy production and use, not an electricity sales group, and the benefits of this approach will become clearer as we head into the 21st century.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** I commend to the committee the estimates for my portfolio.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr J. N. Goss): Order! I desire to inform honourable members that, on the Vote proposed, I will allow a full discussion on all the Minister's departmental Estimates, Consolidated Revenue, Trust and Special Funds.

For the information of honourable members, I point out that the administrative acts of the department are open to debate, but the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in Committee of Supply.

Sitting suspended from 5.59 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (7.30 p.m.): I rise to respond to the Minister's speech on the Estimates for Resource Industries. I will not attempt to cover the whole of the Estimates. The Minister could not fit it all in in half an hour, and I am certainly not any faster on my feet than the Minister is. I will, however, dwell a bit longer on a couple of matters. Although the Estimates were increased for certain sections of the department, such as the establishment of additional funding for the Coal Board with an additional vote towards environmental work in the Minister's department, the funding for the rest of the department was cut back. The industry should be aware that money has been juggled from one account to another. Overall, however, the department has been pinched for funds. Whilst the Budget placed increased emphasis on certain areas, mining was certainly not one. We must consider it in perspective, and the mining industry in Queensland is a major source of our income. I am told that the mineral resources in Australia create almost half of our exports. If we do not look after that golden goose that is laying an egg for all Australia to enjoy, we will end up with a welfare State that puts emphasis on the services that can be provided but we will not have the wherewithal to pay for those services. It is extremely important that we continue to develop our mineral resources in a proper and responsible manner.

I reject totally the allegations made by the Minister that the previous Government was a development-at-all-costs Government. This Government is receiving the benefits of the policies of the former National Party Government, and the Minister should not

forget it. The Minister did not emphasise the amount of money that really comes into the Government coffers from his department. He mentioned the amount of royalties that are received, but he should explain that point to his colleagues.

I refer to the increase in funding for the Coal Board. I wonder why the Minister increased the size of the Coal Board. He said that he would provide some extra statistics. He said that he would put full-time members on the board, that costs would go up and that it would be of benefit to him as a Minister. I question that assertion. I do not know what his rationale is, but I will make some guesses. Did the Minister consult with the coal industry to find out whether it wanted the size of the Coal Board increased? I am sure that the Minister's answer will be, "No". If the answer is that the industry was consulted, its answer would still be, "No". I am certain of that, because people in the industry have spoken to me about it. The Coal Board would have been wound up by the National Party. It had limited duties. It had awesome powers—draconian powers.

**Mr Vaughan:** For 32 years.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** But it was gradually wound down. It was only keeping statistics. The Minister now sets it up as a policy unit to advise him. This extra quango will be able to use its draconian powers. Why did the Minister want it? It is a trade-off to the unions. The Minister wants to have union members on the Coal Board. The coal industry in Queensland has developed very well to take Queensland ahead of New South Wales. A joint coal board with union representatives as members was established in New South Wales. The Minister cannot deny that. Therefore, he will create the same body in Queensland. It is another trade-off. He said, "I have to create something." If he wants the Coal Board to be a policy-forming committee, he can have that in his department. But what happens if a conflict of interest arises between the statutory authority, the Coal Board, and the department? Would the Minister set up a board to look after the other resources, such as gold, gems, silver, lead and zinc? No, he does not want a board for those resources. What about the experience in New South Wales? On 25 September 1990, the Industries Assistance Commission handed down a draft report on mining and minerals processing in Australia. What did that report say about coal boards? On page XVII, the report states—

"Many of these regulations were introduced progressively over a considerable period in response to particular circumstances or events, however conditions have, in most cases, weakened or negated the original rationale for Government intervention. In these circumstances and with the now competitive nature of international coal markets, retention of inappropriate regulations is impeding the efficiency of economic performance in the industry. The commission is convinced that substantial gains would flow from reducing the level of Government intervention in an industry that, despite the existence of several impediments, remains Australia's largest earner of foreign exchange. The Joint Coal Board has outlived its usefulness and should be disbanded."

What does the Queensland Government do? It is going to increase the powers and responsibilities of the Coal Board. I can assure the Government that the industry does not want that. The Coal Board was set up after the war so that the Government could procure domestic coal in emergencies. What does the Coal Board have to do with our extremely competitive coal-exporting industry? I see it as a first stage of the nationalisation of the coal industry. Why does the Government want the Coal Board to continue? Why does it want to inflict the board on an industry that does not want it and has done very well without it? In New South Wales, the Industries Assistance Commission said that the Coal Board was an impediment to the industry, which had continued despite it. The Minister might come up with answers to those points. The Coal Board has to be abolished. Its responsibilities should return to the Minister's department. I ask again: how will the Minister resolve a conflict of interests if departmental advice conflicts with advice of the Coal Board? The Coal Board has outlived its usefulness. It was heading for its correct fate; it was being gradually wound down by the previous Government, with part-time

commissioners who kept statistics and reported on the production of coal in Queensland over the years.

Another matter that concerns me, and one that I have mentioned previously in this Chamber, relates to the access to land for mining. The Minister is well aware of my views on that matter. There have been problems in the past because of the people who are opposed to the development of mines, which is a healthy attitude for the community to have. However, included in the Budget papers is a booklet titled *Environment Greening Queensland*. Page 3 of that booklet states—

"More than 100,000 hectares of National Park have already been gazetted since the government's election. This is consistent with the Government's pre-election commitment to increase the National Park Estate to 4% of the State. The Department of Environment and Heritage, in consultation with other Departments, is actively examining other areas of the State which should be included in the National Park Estate."

That is a reasonable statement. I ask the Minister: is he consulted whenever a national park is created in Queensland and does he consult with geologists if there are any minerals or potential for minerals to be found in the region? Was there any potential exploration for minerals in the Lawnhill Gorge area?

**Mr Vaughan:** Yes.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Yes, there was mineralisation in that area.

A recent press release stated that 118 000 hectares will increase the size of the Lawnhill national park to 130 200 hectares. I understand that the area is a glorious one and certainly very fitting for a national park. Does the Minister consult with industry and does the industry agree that areas of land that have not yet been explored for minerals should be locked up? At present, it is a fact of life in Queensland that minerals are still being discovered. If land is locked up in a national park and no-one knows what minerals or how much mineral wealth is available, future generations will be denied a higher standard of living. If one wants to find out about mineralisation in national parks, one must get hold of the data on the minerals that were discovered before the national parks were locked up, because at the present time exploration in national parks is not permitted.

**Mr Welford:** Hear, hear!

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member says that there should be no exploration in national parks, but this Government does not mind drilling for oil or gas in national parks. I ask the honourable member for Stafford what his opinion is on that. Can he give us his Government's policy? The honourable member is silent because he does not know what the policy is. He is a little out of his depth because there is no drilling for oil or gas in the electorate of Stafford.

**Mr Welford:** You would have drilled for oil on the Great Barrier Reef. You would have drilled anywhere.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I tell the honourable member that drilling can take place without any disturbance to a national park, so why cannot other minimal disturbance and exploration take place in certain areas of national parks?

I know that when the Government wants to excise a section of a national park, it must come to this Parliament to do so. I fully agree with that, but if there happen to be minerals in a certain area and a value judgment is made, why should we not have the courage to say, "Let's know what is there"? Surely the people of Queensland have the right to know what is there? Is this Government going to keep them in the dark forever? It cannot do that. It is important to understand what minerals are present so that a value judgment can be made. I am not opposed to national parks. I enjoy visiting them and I strongly believe that they must be preserved for future generations. However, I also believe that a balanced judgment must be made at all times.

I wish also to comment on a press release put out some time ago concerning the greenhouse effect. On 11 October, a joint statement was issued by the Federal Minister for Energy, Mr Kerin, and the Federal Minister for the Environment, Ros Kelly, in which they stated that Cabinet had made a decision concerning a reduction of 20 per cent in the emission of greenhouse gases by the year 2005. The press release states—

"While recognising the need to restrict emissions and to aim for a 20% reduction, the Government will not proceed with measures which have net adverse economic impact nationally or on Australia's trade competitiveness in the absence of similar action by major greenhouse gas producing countries."

That is a reasonable statement. Mr Kerin had to report back to the Government. It is strange that newspaper articles headed "Kelly wins clean air fight"—meaning that Ros Kelly, the Minister had a win—"Hawke move lifts hope for greenhouse gas cut" and "Greenhouse gas emission reduction targeted at 20pc" then followed. If one really read the statement, one would find that it was nothing more than a political gimmick and an attempt to grab a headline, because if other major countries in the world will not agree to a 20 per cent reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases by the year 2005, then this is null and void. If anyone thought that those other countries would agree to a 20 per cent reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases by the year 2005, they were green behind the ears.

It is important to note that there is concern throughout the world about the apparent warming of the earth's surface. Many people have latched on to this latest thing, that is, the greenhouse effect. Years ago, the testing of atomic bombs in the Pacific was blamed for causing a lot of problems throughout the world. If people thought that the weather pattern was changing, they blamed the atomic bombs. At present, it is the greenhouse effect. The greenhouse effect and its impact on the environment must be studied in a scientific manner. Many people say it is only hypothesis, but many eminent people are taking it as fact. I have made some study of the greenhouse effect and am not yet convinced that it is only the emissions of carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons and nitrous oxide that are the causes. There is no doubt that the levels of those gases are increasing in the atmosphere and that they can be measured on a scientific basis.

I have in my possession a graph showing that, on a 33-year average throughout the period from 1885 to 1985, there is a remarkable similarity between sunspot activity and the pattern of global temperatures on a five-year averaging basis.

**Mr Smyth:** Wait until I put my glasses on. I am a bit far away.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I realise that the graph is difficult to read. I did not seek leave to have it incorporated in *Hansard*, but I will certainly show the graph to any honourable member who wishes to look at it at a later stage.

Graphs have also been prepared to show that with the increase in man-made greenhouse gases that have been released into the atmosphere, there is very little correlation with global mean temperature changes. From 1940 to 1975, there was a marked drop in temperature, in spite of the fact that in the years before and after that period there was a marked increase in the use of greenhouse gases. Therefore, one wonders why there was a decrease in temperature recorded over a considerable period. At this stage, global temperatures are tending to decrease. One must ask oneself whether or not the greenhouse gas effect is a major problem.

People who advocate that, to save the world, Australia should stop exporting coal should think again. If greenhouse gases are causing the Earth's temperature to rise, all it would take is for the heavily populated and underdeveloped countries of the world to marginally increase their energy consumption. I understand that countries such as India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Turkey are already producing enormous quantities of coal and that the production levels are not recorded. If the level of consumption in those areas escalates because of increases in population and if that occurs at a time when production and export of coal from Australia is cut, this country will be the net

loser and the world will be no better off. A number of factors must be taken into account in the overall equation.

Theories on this subject abound. Honourable members must understand that among those theories is the contention that the release of sulphur dioxide into the atmosphere changes water vapour in the air and reverses the greenhouse effect. However, the down side is that acid rain is a possibility. These problems are complex, but the ordinary man in the street wants to believe that changes in atmosphere and climate are all caused by the greenhouse effect.

There is no doubt that the atmosphere can be tested and that the level of gases can be measured, which means that the environment can be properly evaluated. However, people who want to maintain a high standard of living do not approve of the export of uranium. All honourable members would know that the Federal Government's uranium policy is a joke. The Federal Government's policy is a three-part strategy for uranium-mining: uranium mines in the Northern Territory are to be maintained; one of the largest uranium mines in the world is to be opened in South Australia; but Queensland is not allowed to mine its uranium. That is what I would call a uranium policy that allows the Federal Government to have an each-way bet. It is the most ridiculous policy that one could imagine.

**Mr Smyth:** You are saying that now what we should do is open up uranium mines, yet you have just said that we should sell more coal overseas.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I did not say that more uranium mines should be opened up. I said that there will always be a conflict between the various energy sources. I am saying that coal production should continue until it has been demonstrated that coal poses dangers to society. I am also saying that supporters of the Labor Party contend that Australia should not produce uranium and that uranium should not be used. Quite frankly, the world is starting to believe that uranium is acceptable.

**Mrs Bird:** Rubbish!

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Certain parts of the world are coming to the view that uranium is an acceptable energy source. How much of the electricity generated in France and other European countries is produced from uranium because of other factors that come into the equation?

**Mr Smyth:** Japan is not. Japan has scaled down its use of uranium.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** A reasonable percentage of Japan's electricity is generated from the use of uranium. I have been told that 40 per cent of Japan's electricity is generated from a nuclear source.

The choice of energy resources always presents a problem. However, all that some people can say is that uranium-mining and coal-mining should be stopped and that the Tully/Millstream project should be stopped because approximately 20 yellow-bellied sugar gliders will be disturbed in the wet sclerophyll forests. Members of the Labor Party want to stop all kinds of energy resource production, but I do not think that the Minister for Resource Industries would be very happy with that attitude.

When the Minister took over the portfolio, he issued a press release on the previous Government's proposal to establish on a large scale a hybrid electricity-generating system derived from diesel energy battery cells, solar energy and wind-generated electricity. The project was handed over to the Queensland Electricity Commission and now the bulk of electricity generation in the Torres Strait area will be provided by diesel power only. On only two islands in addition to Coconut Island, where an experimental station had already been established, will the hybrid electricity-generating project go ahead. I assert that the Government should have subsidised major research being undertaken into the hybrid system of generating electricity in the Torres Strait islands. Murray Island is the most easterly island of the major group. It is a volcanic island and has fairly high

altitude. A good deal of wind blows across the Murray Islands group and electricity could easily be generated by wind turbines and solar panels, backed up by diesel power.

During the last few years, the University of Queensland has developed inverters that can convert DC power to AC power, and AC power to DC battery storage. The Minister has already announced that two of the islands to which I have already referred will use that system of power generation. At present, they are not using the wind turbine system, but solar and diesel generation are being used. I contend that Queensland could be a world leader in the development of this type of power generation for isolated communities.

In many isolated countries throughout the world it is too expensive to generate electricity by using diesel. The solar method would have been environmentally safe and would have provided an industry that could have been promoted by Queensland. I would have been pleased to see the Queensland Electricity Commission encourage the development of that method. The commission says that it will monitor the position, but it should have carried out investigations on a much larger scale, particularly with the wind turbine generation and solar power generation. Great break-throughs in technology have occurred in the generation of electricity from solar cells. Anyone who has been following the industry knows that it will go ahead. Experimental solar-powered cars have travelled across Australia. Twenty years ago, who would have thought that that was possible? That technology is gradually improving. Consumers eventually receive benefits from the leap in technology that is created by companies that work themselves at the threshold of technology such as those involved with the Adelaide Grand Prix.

I turn now to electricity. In the annual report of the Queensland Electricity Commission, the Minister stated—

"Although electricity usage in Queensland increased by 6.8 per cent in 1989/90, the industry is aware of the growing need for the more efficient use of energy and is examining ways to minimise consumption."

The Minister spoke also about encouraging manufacturers to produce more energy-efficient appliances. I applaud those statements. The consumers will save much money if they know what the cost of running each item is.

While I am talking about that issue, I point out that the Minister has appointed consultants to produce a Green Paper on energy usage. I believe that Dr Ian Lowe was to advise the Minister on a Green Paper that was to be distributed by the end of the month. I do not know Dr Lowe, but I have heard of him. I understand that he is a professor at Griffith University and that in the past he has been successful in gaining headlines for his approach to energy conservation. On 14 August 1990, an article in the *Courier-Mail* stated—

" 'Mr Greenhouse' adds his energy. The Griffith University's Science Policy Research Centre director, Ian Lowe, will help the State Government develop an energy strategy."

Because of his rather colourful ways of demonstrating ways to save power, I ask whether the professor is the most suitable person to advise the Minister. He is known as Mr "Pushbike" Lowe and he has been very conscious of the consumption of energy. I understand that he was also the chairman of the Labor Party science policy committee. Members of political parties should not be denied consultancy fees, but I believe that members of the public should be informed of that matter.

Furthermore, the annual report of the Queensland Electricity Commission pointed out that Queensland had the lowest average electricity price of all mainland Australian States. It stated—

"The effects of the two year price freeze will have an impact on price comparisons in both 1989/90 and 1990/91 that will increase this margin."

Our price record in recent years, and our firm plans to limit future annual price rises to less than half the rate of inflation, have established an impressive record of stability."

I congratulate the commission on that report. I wonder whether, under a Labor Government, that policy would have been achieved. When the Minister came into Government, the first thing he did was to change the rules with regard to VEAs. Certainly, Mr Warburton was behind that move, but the rules of the industry were changed.

**Mr Livingstone:** Which you created.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The Minister was emotionally involved in the electricity strike—I understand his sentiments—but I believe that the hard questions that were answered then were the basis for the hard-won gains that the consumers in Queensland achieved by not allowing runaway unions under poor leadership to cause much pain to consumers and to workers in the industry. At that time, many workers certainly suffered a sad time.

**Mr Livingstone:** And the Government of the day.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The Government of the day survived very well after that issue; there is no doubt about that.

The annual report of the Queensland Electricity Commission referred to Swanbank and stated—

"Load growth in the next four years will mean increasing reliance on Swanbank Power Station. To meet these needs the Commission let a coal supply contract to commence in July 1992."

I ask the Minister: what is the price per tonne of the coal at Swanbank? How does it compare with the price of coal that is supplied from Tarong, Callide B and other coal-fired stations? It is important that we know the cost of coal from the Ipswich field. If it is higher than the other prices, we should be informed. I understand that other circumstances have a bearing on the matter.

**Mr Vaughan:** You ought to know. Your Government negotiated it.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I merely ask the Minister what the price is.

With electricity generation, it is important that we keep our fingers on the pulse. The future development of Queensland depends on the provision of cheap electricity for domestic consumers and for industry. It is important that we be vigilant on costs that might escalate.

Recently, the Special Premiers Conference discussed issues such as the national electricity grid. I would like to know the Minister's position on that matter. I would not like to see centralised control of the electricity industry in Australia. I am not being parochial; I would not like to see Queensland's electricity-consumers suffer because of poor management of the industry in other States. It is vital that we maintain this important industry.

In conclusion, I thank the staff of the Minister's department for all the cooperation that they have shown to me over the years. I have raised several issues that I thought needed to be raised during this Estimates debate.

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton North) (8.01 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister on the presentation of well-planned and fairly balanced Estimates for his department in the forthcoming year. Of particular note in these Estimates is the commitment by this Government to the mining industry in this State. Earlier today, the Minister stated that this Government will continue to view the mining industry as the foundation stone upon which to develop a sound economy in this State. However, this Government does recognise that other competing interests must be taken into account before mining can be considered. Amongst these interests are other land-users such as the grazing industry. In addition, of course, environmental considerations must be addressed.

The fact is that in recent years in Australia the principle of sustainable development has been adopted. This term, though universally accepted as the way to go in the mining industry, was not in the vocabulary of the previous Government, and it took the election

of this Government to put the issue of sustainable development on the agenda in this State. Sustainable development means that the development at all costs for a quick quid nation, which was the hallmark of the mining industry under the Nationals and Liberals, will disappear. It will be replaced by a policy that strikes a balance between the economic, social and environmental costs and benefits to get the best possible outcome for the people of this State. So the Government is not talking about halting mining, although it does recognise that in a few instances mining may not be appropriate. What it is talking about is environmentally responsible mining, responsible exploration and construction management of sites during operations and ongoing rehabilitation of sites during and after mining operations. To facilitate that, the Government has to dedicate resources to setting the environmental standards and helping and encouraging mining and exploration companies to meet those standards.

The environmental management subprogram that operates within the Mineral Resources Development Program has received a funding boost of more than 200 per cent to \$220,000. Earlier today, I was reading the debate on last year's Estimates for this department. The present Minister was then the Opposition spokesman. He made reference to that line item in the Budget. Last year, the previous Government actually cut funds for that area, which just goes to show what environmental vandals members of the Opposition really are. As the Minister explained, this will allow the employment of extra environmental officers, who are all, of course, trained professionals. Those officers are responsible for setting environmental requirements on mining tenures and examining the mine plans that are now required under the new Mineral Resources Act to be submitted by all mining lease-holders. The environmental staff have also been working for some time with the coal companies to develop draft guidelines for environmental management of mine sites. Hopefully, the guidelines will go some way towards improving the damning statistics that are currently the order of the day. I refer to the statistics of the land disturbed for coal-mining in Queensland, less than 3 per cent of which has been rehabilitated.

**Mr FitzGerald:** How long have we been mining and how long would that take?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I suggest that the honourable member should go out to some of these places and have a look at the disgraceful mess that has been left. If the honourable member thinks that that is fair enough for the standard of development that has been undertaken by those mining companies——

**Mr FitzGerald:** Some of it is excellent; you must admit that.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** But the figures indicate that these companies are not pulling their weight. I can understand why this has pricked the honourable member's conscience. The fact is that while members of the Opposition were in charge of the department and Mr Katter was at the helm—which is like putting a python in charge of one's fowls—they did nothing about policing the matter and following it up. Members of the Opposition made little or no effort to police the terms and conditions imposed on mining tenures to protect the environment during and after mining. That is a fact of life. As was indicated last year by the Opposition spokesman, the previous Government showed complete disinterest when it actually reduced that item in last year's Budget.

**Mr FitzGerald:** We are going to send a copy of this speech to all the miners in Queensland.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I hope so.

**Mr Barber:** Mining of the Conondales comes to mind.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** That is absolutely right. In line with its emphasis on sustainability and environmental responsibility, the Goss Government has given a new emphasis to energy issues, which is clear from the Budget Estimates. Major items are the Energy Green Paper, which is to be released next month for public comment, and the Energy Information Centre, for which a total of \$170,000 has been allocated. The Green Paper

and the response of the community to it will be used to formulate Queensland's first coordinated energy strategies to take this State into the next century. Unfortunately, National Party Governments of the past either were not intellectually capable or were not interested in developing integrated, well-planned policies.

The legacy of the Nationals' ineptitude in this area, coupled with the accessibility and extent of our energy resources, has made Queensland heavily dependent on fossil fuels. It has been too easy to use Queensland's cheap, readily available coal to fuel power stations and to reticulate that electricity supply throughout the State. This has led to the position where 40 per cent of all energy in Queensland and 90 per cent of the electricity comes from the burning of coal. Queensland's reliance on these non-renewable resources takes on further significance in light of the Federal Government's recent decision to set interim planning targets for the reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I know that the learned gentleman opposite does not believe in the greenhouse effect and subscribes to the big bang theory. I understand his position, but the majority of people do not agree with him. Coal-fired electricity generation contributes around 8 per cent of the greenhouse gases emitted in Australia and is seen generally as an area of potential for reducing those emissions. While the Government recognises the necessary and ongoing role of the coal industry, the clear challenge is to reach some kind of sustainable energy balance, a target that is set down in the Queensland Labor Party's energy platform. The members of the Labor Party were talking about sustainability long before the Brundtland report made it trendy. With the policies that will be based on the Green Paper and the community's response to it, the Goss Government will not only continue to stimulate the Queensland economy and employment growth through the efficient and environmentally responsible development of Queensland's traditional energy industries, but also encourage new energy sources, including solar power.

I want to digress here to refer to a point that was made earlier by Mr FitzGerald when he backed up the regular squawkings of the now dethroned Minister, Mr Katter, who, regrettably, is not in the House tonight, about Coconut Island. He would have honourable members believe that that system is the most efficient in the world, and tonight he was backed up by the member for Lockyer. I was pleased to see that he stuck his head into the noose.

**Mr FitzGerald:** It is an experimental system.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** The facts are that this Government will provide electricity to those places. It is going to install the hybrid electricity generation system on another island. While I am speaking about this remarkably efficient hybrid system that Mr FitzGerald lauds around the place, it might interest him to know that in many cases it costs more to run the diesel and to recharge those batteries than it would to run a full diesel system.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You can run a diesel system.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** And that is exactly what the Government will be doing on the other islands, but it will not huff and puff and turn those people into guinea pigs, as did the previous Government. It is a shame that some of the honourable member's electors were not used as guinea pigs in the same way as the previous Government used the Torres Strait Islanders, but that was typical of the previous Government and I am pleased that honourable members opposite acknowledged that.

The Government's energy policies will also ensure that consumers have access to a reliable supply of energy at a reasonable cost and on an equitable basis. Much of Queensland's energy comes from electricity, supplied by the Queensland Electricity Commission through the seven electricity boards. This Government is so concerned about public sector and statutory authority efficiency that it has had carried out an

efficiency audit of the electricity supply industry to find out if improvements can be implemented. The Minister is now considering that report.

Another major energy initiative in the Department of Resource Industries' budget is the energy information centre. Householders use about one-third of all electricity consumed in Queensland, and drivers of private vehicles use about one-third of all oil-based motor fuels. If energy is to be conserved, or used more judiciously, then the average householder or motorist must play a role in managing their own use of energy. Consumers are often bombarded with conflicting claims by advertisers and suppliers and can easily be misled into making decisions which lead to energy use that is excessive, inappropriate to their needs, and costly. Clearly, there is a need for people to be able to get simple, accurate and objective information to guide them in designing or buying an energy-efficient house, minimising their need for home heating and air-conditioning, lighting their home, choosing a hot water system and providing their transport needs with the minimum of fuel use.

The Queensland electricity supply industry provides a service to consumers about the efficient use of electricity and has begun a major campaign to encourage energy-efficient practices in the home. The industry also has various advisory services for commercial and industrial electricity consumers. However, there is a major information gap when it comes to other potential areas of saving, including comparisons of one form of energy against another. The Government has moved to fill that gap with an energy information centre, scheduled to begin operation early next year.

Brisbane becomes the last mainland State capital to have this service, a perfect example of the neglect of this issue by the National Party Governments of the past. The centre will be staffed by specially trained and qualified officers from the Department of Resource Industries and will be set up in the foyer of the Minerals and Energy Centre at 61 Mary Street. It will be an unpretentious, cost-efficient set-up. Unlike the previous National Party Government, this Government would rather spend its money on providing information rather than flashy structures that never get built. This will not be the world's tallest building; it will be a reality. People who have inquiries will be able to telephone, visit or write to the centre, and the Government is arranging a toll-free telephone number for the thousands of Queenslanders outside the Brisbane metropolitan area. Other projects covered by the energy management unit within the resources assessment and development program include work on energy efficiency in the Government's own buildings. The measures that have been implemented thus far have yielded savings of more than \$350,000 a year. The energy management unit also provides an advisory/training service for staff in other Government areas to learn how to run their services energy efficiently.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I am crook all right.

The unit has also conducted training sessions for several hundred Health Department personnel and will continue those in the coming year. Before I drop dead, I commend the Estimates to the Committee.

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.16 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to rise in this debate. I commiserate with the honourable member for Rockhampton North and hope that he survives his attack.

**Mr Szczerbanik:** Is there a doctor in the house?

**Dr WATSON:** Yes, is there a doctor in the house?

I am reminded of the earlier predicament in which the Minister found himself when trying to cover the broad breadth of his portfolio in only 30 minutes. I decided that tonight, in the 15 minutes available to me, I had better concentrate on only one or two aspects, the first related to costs associated with the mining industry, and the second related to some research opportunities within that area. Before doing so, I want to address the economic context within which the mining industry exists. I do so because,

if some of the comments I will make later are to be understood, it is necessary to understand exactly the position in which the mining industry in Australia finds itself.

It is well known that Australia is endowed with mineral resources, some of which can be categorised as really world-class deposits. Many of them are situated very close to deep-water ports. This means that, compared with its mining competitors, Australia has a comparative advantage. However, that does not necessarily translate into a comparative advantage in downstream processing, in which factors other than easy access to resources tend to come into play. Mining and early stage mineral-processing currently generate about one-tenth of Australia's gross domestic product and represent approximately 40 per cent of Australia's exports and approximately 50 per cent of our merchandise exports. They also typically produce between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of the total private new investment spending in Australia. This again reflects the orientation to increasing productivity in a capital-intensive industry. It is also consistent with the industry being an employer of few people—only about 2 per cent of the work force.

Apart from being important in their own right, mining and early stage mineral-processing share important links with other aspects of our economy. For example, mining is important for industries related to transport and investment. It means that, through the mining industry's relationship and interlinking with other industries, booms and busts in mining are translated throughout the economy. In addition, mining is very importantly related to other industries through the exchange rate. History shows that the value of the Australian dollar relative to other currencies depends largely upon Australia's export performance in the long run. That is not to say that variations cannot occur in the short run, but in the longer run it is very closely related to our export performance. As mining represents a very important part of that export performance, consequent deteriorations or upturns in the mining industry translate into weaknesses or strengths in the Australian dollar, which has important repercussions for other export industries and, of course, for import-competing industries.

**Mr Smyth:** A lot of coal-mining contracts deal in American dollars.

**Dr WATSON:** That is right, and I presume the honourable member will speak more about that. Given the export orientation of this sector, the pattern of world exports and the trade positions of other countries, the mining industry is influenced by the ups and downs in world markets and by other countries' Governments. But just as importantly, the mining industry is affected by impediments that may be placed in its way by State and local governments. Earlier in the debate, the member for Lockyer spoke about some of those impediments. I do not intend to repeat them, but, in just a moment, I will concentrate on one aspect. It is important to understand that if the impediments are reduced and these matters are addressed, the gain to the Australian economy can be quite substantial. I think just recently the Industry Commission estimated that if State and Federal Governments could reduce the impediments in the way of mining, approximately \$4 billion a year could be added to our gross domestic product.

The matters that I wish to raise during the next 10 minutes concern some of the opportunities that are available to us and some of the things that are important in relation to cost. Firstly, I must refer to the address given by Sir Bruce Watson at the opening of the Oaky Creek underground mine, which I know was attended by the Minister. However, I think other members may be interested in hearing part of the speech made by Sir Bruce. He stated—

"Operating costs account for only about 50% of total costs. Nevertheless, margins are so tight that it is imperative that these costs are kept under control.

We attacked one of the major components of our costs—rail charges—in a submission we made recently to the Industry Commission Inquiry into Rail Freights.

I am not going to use this occasion to go over everything we included in that submission. Let me just say that government charges, principally for rail and port operations and funding, account for a bigger proportion of production costs than do direct mining costs. Rail freights represent a hidden tax which has given the

government a guaranteed source of revenue that is insulated from the vagaries of the industry's overseas markets."

I think it is important to remind honourable members of those comments, because just recently an unfortunate situation relating to this Government's use of the Gulf crisis to escalate rail costs has arisen in the coal industry.

**Mr McGrady:** Are you in the wrong Chamber?

**Dr WATSON:** No, I am not in the wrong Chamber.

The problem is that, in the last couple of weeks, the Government has taken advantage of the formula that is used for the calculation of rail charges to increase the charges to the mining companies by not only the cost increase associated with diesel oil but also the profit component associated with that cost component. The problem is that coal from many companies is transported by electric-driven rail, not by diesel rail. If the Minister's department wishes to encourage mining and coal production, it is important that the Minister insist that his Cabinet colleagues behave in a way that will induce coal companies and others to make commitments and not to take advantage of short-term international crises to jack up the revenue that the Government receives. That represents some fairly blatant profiteering by the Government. Other people have accused the Federal Government of profiteering on oil prices and tax revenues that are generated therefrom. I think it is fair enough to say that, unfortunately, this Government is doing the very same thing. I do not believe that the rail freight formula was ever intended to be used as a way of extracting profits from companies in short-term international crises. One way of destroying investment and convincing people that the risk of investing in one's State and country is high is to adopt an opportunistic attitude and take advantage of the short-term fluctuations in oil prices stemming from the Gulf crisis. It must be understood that, to encourage business and investment, some reasonable expectations of how costs will vary in the long term must be provided.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Are you going to encourage oil exploration as well?

**Dr WATSON:** I am talking about this Government's response to an oil crisis and whether or not it is using the rail freight formula in an opportunistic way. That is the critical point. This Government wants to kill investment. It does not understand the system of investment or competition on international markets.

**Mr Prest:** Don't you want to debate it with Henry?

**Dr WATSON:** I do not believe that I have to debate it with the honourable member.

I turn now to research. Last week, the Minister attended the opening of the Australian Coal Industry Research Laboratories in Ipswich. The Minister mentioned the four major centres in Queensland that are associated with coal research. The university mine is located in my electorate. Another centre—the CSIRO centre for advanced technologies—is expected to be located in my electorate.

**Mrs McCauley:** Do you have any mines in your electorate?

**Dr WATSON:** I have a mine in my electorate, namely, the university mine. Across the river is SIMTARS, which is potentially a major mining research centre. Many researchers live in my electorate.

Together with several honourable members I was fortunate to be a member of the parliamentary delegation that visited the Idemitsu coal research laboratory. During the conducted tour we were told that the establishment cost of the research facilities, including buildings and equipment, was about \$A30m and that the annual running costs are approximately \$A6m. So much in Queensland and the rest of Australia depends upon coal and the mining industry that we must start putting a significant effort into research. Two recent publications by the University of Queensland on 3 and 17 October contained articles about research that is being conducted at the university mine and the Department of Mining and Metallurgical Engineering. One article referred to water jet drilling as a

technique of exploring coal seams and the developments that are occurring in that field. The other article referred to a new bucket that is being used for efficient open-cut mining. Those articles depict the kinds of pay-offs that are available to basic research in this country. For example, the article on the new bucket states—

"For a typical three dragline open cut operation this equates to an extra \$30 to \$40 million of exposed coal per year, with a saving of around one million dollars in electrical energy costs."

Pay-offs can result from very fundamental research. I believe that the SIMTARS research institution deserves a fair bit of support. The Coopers and Lybrand report, which is mentioned in the department's annual report, stated that it did outline the need for increased strength in fields such as mining research in which, in the view of the industry, SIMTARS was underresourced.

During the next couple of years, I would like the Minister to encourage his colleagues in the Ministry to devote perhaps 1 per cent of the super tax on coal and 1 per cent of the royalties to supporting basic research and, for example, the university mine, which needs buildings to develop the necessary infrastructure, and SIMTARS. Both of those institutions deserve a fair bit of support. I encourage the Minister to give them that support.

Time expired.

**Mr McGRADY** (Mount Isa) (8.31 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to participate in the debate on the Estimates for Resource Industries. I do so as a member of the Minister's parliamentary committee and also as the representative of the premier mining city of Australia. Therefore, I feel that I can speak with some authority on an industry that is recognised as being one of the top money-earners for this State. In the recent State Budget, the Treasurer announced large increases in the funding for education, the environment, health and many other areas—and rightly so, too. However, to some extent, those increases were made possible by the record \$5.1 billion worth of minerals that Queensland produced in 1989-90—an increase of 16.5 per cent on the previous year. That figure does not take into account the \$500m profit that Queensland Rail made on mineral freights in that same year. Whilst the industry is bringing tremendous financial wealth to the State as a whole, it also provides infrastructure to the regional areas and supports those centres. It is certainly helping the Government with its policy of decentralisation.

Mount Isa is a perfect case study, in that Mount Isa Mines employs 5 200 people and has a wages bill of \$250m per annum. That does not take into account the other 5 000 people who live in the Mount Isa community and are employed in servicing the industry or work in other spheres of activity such as schools, hospitals, railways, shops—I could go on all night. As a direct result of the mining operation in Mount Isa, 400 people are employed in Townsville either at the copper refinery or in the Townsville transport services. The wage bill for that organisation is \$9m a year. That does not include the activities of the port of Townsville in the shipment of mining products and minerals. In the Brisbane office of MIM, 270 people are employed. The total MIM wages bill over the past 10 years exceeded \$2.4 billion. As a whole, MIM employs 8 500 employees, 94 per cent of whom live and work in Queensland.

The Goss Labor Government certainly recognises the importance of mining to regional centres in Queensland and the importance of maintaining services to the industry where it operates rather than having that Brisbane-head-office mentality, which was the hallmark of the previous National Party administration. The regionalisation program allocated \$400,000 from within the titles and tenure program in the Budget. As well as maintaining the existing offices throughout the State, those funds will provide a new regional office in my home City of Mount Isa and in Winton. Part of the major rationalisation of the system of the 38 mining districts in Queensland was carried out because those districts were serviced mainly by staff of the Justice Department at the regional courthouses. Now, the department has in the main mining centres of the State dedicated mining officers with expertise specific to resource industry matters. I believe

that that will bring trained staff to regional centres where they are most needed—where the action is.

This year, the Government has increased its expenditure on the environment and environmental issues, and I think that every honourable member would welcome that move. More and more people are beginning to realise the importance of preserving the environment. These regional centres of the Department of Resource Industries will allow closer monitoring of the environmental performances of the miners and will ensure their adherence to other conditions that apply to mining leases, including the health and safety of workers. In some quarters, the mining industry is seen as not having an interest in the environment. In some cases, that could be true. However, I believe that, overall, the industry is fully aware of the demands by the community and Governments to ensure that environmental issues and policies are adhered to and, in the main, welcomes the general thrust of the Government's policies.

I emphasise that the Government has no intention of destroying the mining industry. It has to create a sensible balance and take on board the social and environmental impact of any mining development. There will be times when the economic realities far outweigh the environmental issues. On those occasions, the emphasis should be placed on developing industry, creating jobs for people and, at the same time, taking care to uphold the basic policies that will be kind to the environment. Some people in our community would put forward policies that could destroy an industry that creates so much wealth for Queensland. That is why a closer working relationship between the industry and the Department of Resource Industries should be established. I have no doubt that the stationing of field officers in the department's regional offices will allow closer supervision of all mining operations and a greater liaison between the companies, the individuals and the Government.

The introduction in the first year of the Goss Labor Government of the new Mineral Resources Act was the first major overhaul of mining legislation since before the turn of the century. When the National Party introduced the original legislation, it caused considerable controversy and debate. In relation to the Goss Government's amendments earlier this year, I pay due respect to the tremendous work that the present Minister, the Honourable Ken Vaughan, did in bringing all sides together. As a result of his work, many of those problems have been resolved and the concerns that interest groups held about the National Party's original piece of legislation have, in the main, disappeared. The Mineral Resources Act brought changes in mining tenure and in the requirements of those tenures, which are intended to find a balance between competing land uses.

Having district offices and trained staff will help to overcome any confusion during the transition period. The role of the small gougers should not be overlooked, because they are part of Australian folklore and have played an important role in the discovery of minerals in Queensland. Whilst initially many of those small gougers were concerned about some provisions of the new Mineral Resources Act, it is quite clear now that, once those provisions are explained to them, the majority of miners will support the legislation and work in harmony with it.

I keep referring to the new regional offices that will be set up around Queensland and in my own city of Mount Isa. Registrars will be appointed to those offices. Under the Act, they play a very important role as mediators between land-holders, miners and explorers. Mediation can take the unproductive heat out of disputes between land-holders, miners and explorers. The Government's intention is to allow continuing access to land for industry whilst protecting the rights of land-holders to earn a living off the land. Offices at Mount Isa and Winton should be operational by mid-1991 and connected soon after to a Statewide computer system known as the mining tenures database. This database will mean quick, easy access to information about the local area and this continuing regionalisation demonstrates the Goss Labor Government's commitment to providing the administrative and legislative framework for mining and the decentralisation of Government services. This should never be forgotten by any member in this Parliament.

I turn now to one other aspect of the mining industry, that is the role which the industry can play in the ever-increasing tourism market. These new regional offices will be able to promote and supervise tourism in the mining environment. I refer to fossicking in certain parts of this State and in particular to a development which occurred recently at Kuridala in the Cloncurry Shire. Two individuals applied for a lease over this area, which is known throughout Australia as one of the better fossicking areas, and as soon as the application was made there was uproar in the Mount Isa and Cloncurry communities because people knew that part of that mineral field had great tourist potential. The mining warden recommended that this private lease be given to these two individuals, however, this recommendation was overridden by the Minister, the Honourable Ken Vaughan, much to the delight of many people in my area. The Minister has advised me that he is considering making the Kuridala region a departmental area that would certainly prevent any application for mining leases, exploration permits or mining claims over this area, but would certainly make it available for fossickers.

The Government should be considering more areas that can be set aside for fossicking and this can be achieved now that there are people on hand to properly supervise and maintain these areas. We do not want a situation to develop such as the one that has developed in central Queensland where the slack previous National Party Government allowed uncontrolled use of mining machinery and continuous breaching of the mining laws which were designed to protect the area, and neither do we want a moonscape that would destroy the gemfields at Kuridala or anywhere else. This Government is committed to preventing that happening again. I have had discussions with officers of the Mount Isa Lapidary Club concerning the Minister's suggestion and the club is happy for the areas at Kuridala to be declared as a departmental area. However, there are other gem and fossil-bearing areas that might need similar protection. The regions where Maltese cross and quartz are found, that is mainly in the Mary Kathleen area, and the regions where garnets are found on Muroon station south-east of Cloncurry, come readily to mind. Some two years ago a number of members from the Mount Isa Lapidary Club and a geologist from the Department of Mineral Resources visited the more accessible areas that are of interest to fossickers. A report was made and I recommend that the Minister study this report and hold discussions at a later date with members of the Mount Isa Lapidary Club, who I feel certain would be more than happy to assist in nominating other areas that could be considered and declared as departmental areas.

I turn briefly to the electricity industry and, in doing so, I reiterate some of the remarks made by the Minister in his speech earlier today. This industry is a major Government enterprise, with assets worth more than \$7.7 billion. This industry and its assets belong to the people of this State. It is not the plaything of Governments or selected people; it is there for the benefit of the whole of Queensland. As the Minister stated, each and every one of us are share-holders in this great enterprise and therefore it behoves all of us to ensure that it is being managed wisely and correctly. One of the most significant decisions taken by this Government was the commissioning of Jarden Morgan to undertake a stocktake or—as the Minister referred to it—an efficiency audit of the entire industry. This involved the Queensland electricity and distribution boards. I believe that the report is now completed and no doubt will be acted upon by Cabinet in the not-too-distant future.

No debate could be complete without some reference to industrial relations in this industry. The previous Government's record in industrial relations is one on which it will not only stand condemned by today's generation of Queenslanders, but also will be referred to by historians as how not to conduct industrial relations in a modern society. The National Party Government showed all the hatred it had for decent Queenslanders and, in particular, for organised labour. Thankfully, with the election in Queensland of the Goss Labor Government, there is now sanity in this important area and these employees now have the same rights as all other Queenslanders and every other employee in the State of Queensland today. Organised labour in this State will never forgive the National Party—supported by its cousins in the Liberal Party—for the horrors that it inflicted on decent, hard-working Queenslanders.

In conclusion, I draw Parliament's attention to the situation that still exists in a number of boards around Queensland. In particular, I refer to the savage dismissal by the previous Government of people who had served as members of boards for many years. It appeared to me that they were dismissed or sacked for blatant political reasons. Today, many of those people are still running those boards and I appeal to the Minister to give serious consideration to doing what the Minister for Transport has done in regard to the harbour boards around this State, namely, examine the composition of these boards and ascertain if they are the right size, if there is fair representation from the regions and, above all, if the members are there because of the expertise that they have in the industry or in representing community groups, and not there simply because they are members of a political party. It has been my pleasure to have been involved in this debate. I reiterate the comments I made at the beginning of my speech, namely, that people in this Chamber and this State should be aware of the major contribution that mining communities make to the quality of life in this State and, as a direct result of the earning capacity of this industry, this Government is able to bring benefits to the people of this State that they normally would not receive.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs) (8.46 p.m.): Quite a deal of discussion was engaged in by the member for Mount Isa in relation to regional mines offices. Although I do not disagree with what he has said, it should be made very clear that this was an important initiative of the previous National Party Government. The regional offices that will soon be opened in Emerald are very modern and up to date. The honourable member also referred to cooperation between Government and industry. Again, although I do not disagree with what he said, I suggest that this Government should put into practice what some of its members are preaching.

Let me refer to the fact that at the moment the coal-mining industry is exporting approximately 60 million tonnes a year, which provides the Government with freight revenue. Over the past two months, as a result of the Railways freight escalation clause the Government has gained a windfall in profits of between \$30m and \$50m. Since the Gulf crisis, the cost of diesel fuel has risen by approximately 50 per cent. In real terms, this means that the coal-mining companies have to pay an additional 50c per tonne for rail freight. Over a 12-month period, the amount of revenue obtained by the Government would be \$4m for Blair Athol coal and an additional \$2m for some of the other coalmines. These charges could blow out even further if the Gulf crisis gets worse—and no-one can say that it will not. In that event, the price of fuel could escalate again and provide this Government with yet another windfall. The Commonwealth Government also obtains a windfall because for every dollar that the price of crude oil increases, the Federal Government will receive up to \$100m. In United States dollar terms, the price of crude oil has risen from \$23 per barrel to \$33 per barrel, which will provide the Federal Government with a blow-out of \$1 billion.

The increases in rail freight revenue must be seen in the light that it is not as though the Railways are not already making enough money out of coal freight revenue. In 1989-90, Queensland Railways received approximately \$12.14 per tonne and carried 823 million tonnes of coal, which amounted to 71.8 per cent of Railways revenue. With the exception of 2.5 million tonnes, the total coal tonnage freighted to the coast—60 million tonnes—was transported by electric locomotives, which means that 57.5 million tonnes is being hauled by electric locomotives that do not use diesel fuel which has been purchased at the higher price. Those locomotives use power generated from Queensland's coal-fired power stations. There has been no cost increases at all associated with the operation of electric trains, yet the Government is charging the coal companies for rail freight based on the escalated costs of fuel. That is not fair. I suggest that the Government should very, very quickly abolish that practice.

One must also remember that, by using electric trains, Queensland Railways costs are reduced considerably because electric locomotives do not require as much maintenance as diesel engines and fewer engines are required for haulage. For example, whereas on

the Gregory-Gladstone line five diesel engines were required, only four electric locomotives are now used. Of course, electric locomotives are also faster than diesel locomotives, which means that the turn-around time for electric trains is reduced, thereby providing a greater utilisation of rail freight wagons. The cost increases that the Government is imposing on coal-mining companies are unfair. The Government is obtaining a windfall which could well affect the start of the Ensham and Woolfang projects. Coal-mining companies simply cannot continue to bear these increased costs.

Members of the Opposition hope that the Ensham project will be commenced in the not-too-distant future. I must say that I was very unhappy about the Government taking so long to pay some of the graziers whose properties were taken over by the mining companies. The Government was responsible for the delay in the payments. Although I am pleased to be able to state that the property-owners have now been paid, the people involved—Mr Nixon of Duck Ponds and Mr Lee of Ensham—went through considerable personal stress because they were not sure what would happen. One day everything would be all right, but the next day the Premier would say, "No, CRA is not involved and we do not want you." The end result was that these property-owners did not know which way the Government was going.

I find the lack of confidence shown by this Government in CRA a little mystifying. A few years ago, the company bought the Blair Athol coalmine and people could not understand why operations were not commenced immediately. The company waited until the time was ripe. Presently, production is being maintained at the rate of 8 million tonnes a year. The mine is one of the biggest in Australia and is one of the most profitable. It is clear that CRA is a very careful company and that it would have been careful in its development of Ensham. If the Government had stuck with it, Queensland would have had a very fine coalmine at Ensham.

The Opposition is pleased with the development of Gordonstone. The company seems to be setting its sails correctly. The housing development is going ahead at full steam and the quality of the houses appears to be particularly good. Generally speaking, the company is cooperating very well with everybody, including the Minister. The Opposition is very pleased that the project is going ahead.

We are also waiting for the development of the Woolfang project near Clermont. Obviously, in the near future that project will commence. Furthermore, today, the rail connection link to Gordonstone, which will cost \$8m, was announced. That sets the seal of approval for that coalmine to start production.

I would like to comment briefly on the gemfields, which is one of the major sapphire-bearing areas of the world. At present, because of the price of gems, the miners are not having the best of times. However, those people are vigilant and will stick by their guns.

**A Government member:** They are good people.

**Mr LESTER:** Of course they are good people.

The medical centre, which was opened last year under the National Party Government, is doing a tremendous job. When the medical centre was established, it created controversy. I received objections from sections of the hospital board at Emerald. They did not believe that a medical centre was warranted at the gemfields, but I stuck to my guns and had it built. More than 2 000 patients have used that medical centre. I congratulate the sister in charge, Kerry O'Neil, on carrying out a brilliant job. Recently, we have seen the establishment of the ambulance, the development of the road between Sapphire and Rubyvale and the establishment of the excellent rest area at Anakie. In the near future, some aged persons' residences will be constructed.

From time to time, we hear the odd inane comment made about the people of the gemfields. Recently, Keith Wright, MHR, was responsible for a comment which I will not repeat in this place. He was taken to task by the gemfields newspaper for his comment about the gemfields people. He may not have meant the comment as it came out, but it was not good. For Mr Wright's information, I point out that the people of

the gemfields must be very good, because the Police Department has seen fit to cut back working hours for police at the gemfields. I am sure that the Police Department would not do that unless the people were very good. Honourable members can rest assured that the quality of the people at the gemfields is 100 per cent, and I will back them all the way all of the time.

We need to boost tourism to the gemfields. That is not being done by the State Government, the Federal Government, the airlines or anyone else as it should be. The gemfields should be promoted throughout the world. No matter where one goes, one sees the Great Barrier Reef and Ayers Rock promoted as tourist attractions. Governments and travel authorities promote those two tourist attractions throughout Australia and the world. However, the poor old gemfields are not promoted. When I have called in at the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation in Sydney or Melbourne and have asked about the gemfields, nobody has known what I was talking about. They have had to go out the back to find some brochures for me. The gemfields need to be promoted up front, because it is a great area for people to visit and the accommodation facilities are improving all the time. In recent times, the standard of the caravan parks has improved greatly. The standard of accommodation provided by motels and other places has improved.

I would like to see a link from Rockhampton, stopping at the gemfields, at the Longreach Stockman's Hall of Fame, at Alice Springs, at Ayers Rock and continuing through to Western Australia. That type of service could be provided by the airlines and by certain forms of bus and hire-car transport. It is now possible to travel from Winton to Alice Springs along the Plenty Highway. Certainly, more work needs to be done on that highway. Recently, the member for Burdekin, Mark Stoneman, travelled along that highway in a conventional vehicle and had an excellent trip. The highway links up with the highway called the "gun barrel" highway which goes through Alice Springs. By travelling through the Olgas, people can travel from Perth, to Kalgoorlie, to Alice Springs and through to the gemfields.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** I find the behaviour of members of the Labor Party who seem to be throwing off at the gemfields to be a little mischievous. I hope that they are not falling into the same trap that Keith Wright fell into by attempting to make fun of the gemfields people, because this speech is going straight to the gemfields newspaper and will be published word for word. The inane comments from members of the ALP will be in that newspaper for all to see. Labor members have time—I have a little less than two minutes to speak—to say that they are sorry for the comments that they made about the gemfields people. If they do, I will forgive them and so might the gemfields people forgive them, because they are very forgiving and decent types of people.

**Mrs Bird:** They were not about the gemfields; they were about you.

**Mr LESTER:** Here we go again. Members of the ALP just want to knock the gemfields people. One of the lady members of Parliament now wants to have a go at them. I wonder what goes on in this Chamber!

**Mr Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** The honourable member for Glass House is now having a go at the gemfields people. I wonder what the Parliament has come to. Here I am doing my job as the member for the area, sticking up for the gemfields people, and Government members are condemning the gemfields people and making fun of them—laughing at them. That shows their true knowledge of what the gemfields people are all about. I invite members of the ALP to visit the gemfields and see the people for themselves. They will then have to come back to this Parliament and repent for the inane comments that they have made about the gemfields people and say they are sorry. While I am the member for Peak Downs, I will stick up for the people of the gemfields, because they

are great people, great Queenslanders and great Australians. I will stick by them all the time.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West) (9.01 p.m.): That is a very hard act to follow. A very important debate is currently in full swing in all parts of the Australian media about ecologically sustainable development. It is an important debate when honourable members, as a Parliament and a Government, address issues relating to resource industries—as has been done in the Budget for the current financial year. Everybody knows that the State's mining industry makes a major contribution to our way of life. It provides essential raw materials for Queensland, Australian and world markets and provides employment for the members of Queensland families. With the support of the Goss Labor Government, the mining industry and its contribution to the State's economic life will grow in the years ahead. But it will not grow in the ad hoc anti-environment fashion that it did under the previous National Party Government. The National Party mentality of dig it up at all costs is gone. Gone are the days of not thinking about the long-term costs of pollution relating to mining, including visual pollution from scarred landscapes. The greenies have not hijacked this Government's agenda in this area. The Government has simply gone down the commonsense track of striking a balance between mining and the environment.

Mining and the investment needed to carry it out are largely the province of private enterprise. However, the Government has to be in a position to point people in the right direction, show them possible opportunities and then regulate the industry to protect the people working in it and the environment. It starts by ensuring the availability of an up-to-date information base to ensure that Queensland's overall prospective resources are fully understood by those seeking to invest in exploration activities. Funds have been allocated in this Budget to ensure that this important Government function continues. The department also has to manage exploration and mining tenures and the very important State royalty system, which helps fuel the Budget under which the Government is currently operating.

Energy management and energy conservation issues, along with complex projects such as constructing and operating gas pipelines, have to be addressed. A very important task for the department this year is the completion of comprehensive mine rehabilitation plans for all coalmines, so that the community can be rid of the visual pollution in the mining industry that was encouraged during the dark days of National Party rule. These coalmine sites are scattered all over the countryside. They are an absolute disgrace, and they stand as monuments to the Opposition parties. I have read some of the speeches made by the member for Flinders. I suspect that most members of the Opposition would not have even heard of Ipswich. However, I suggest that they visit the area and see for themselves the holes in the ground that the mining industry has never made any effort to do anything about. They are an accident waiting to happen. Young children could be drowned in those holes. In other areas there are almost mountains of left-over material, which causes a lot of problems. Under legislation that was introduced earlier this year, the Government certainly hopes to be able to do something about those disgraceful monuments.

The Goss Labor Government understands what environment and conservation mean. Some \$220,000 has been provided for the environmental management establishment initiative, and \$170,000 has been provided for the energy conservation initiative. In addition, in this Budget, the Goss Labor Government has allocated funds to help ensure the health and safety of those working in resource industries and those members of the public who may be affected by these industries. Here again, the previous Government paid relatively little attention to this important task. No. 1 on the Government's hit-list in this area is reducing the risk of large-scale disaster in underground coalmines to a point at which Queensland will be regarded as a leader in the world coal-mining industry.

This Government is committed to research and development through the ongoing operation of what is now known as the SIMTARS facility at Redbank, a suburb of

Ipswich City. SIMTARS is a semi-autonomous division of the Department of Resource Industries and has an international reputation as a centre for mining research. On coming to office, the Minister had an extensive review conducted at SIMTARS. This was needed to ascertain the research and testing required to support the Department of Resource Industries safety regulations, what involvement there should be in other areas of research, testing and services and the alternative ways of achieving those outcomes. The level of cost recovery and the efficiency and effectiveness of SIMTARS were also reviewed. The reforms that the Minister is putting in place will help the centre and its staff to better perform this important safety service for the community.

The belief of this Government in the pre-eminence of safety considerations was behind its review of SIMTARS, because it was determined to get the best safety results possible for the money that was being invested in that area. As a result of the review, it has been recommended that a new accounting system be implemented, which will allow operation on a full cost-recovery basis and assist prioritisation of work undertaken. That has already been carried out. SIMTARS will continue to expand its fee-for-service work, with the revenue to be retained in a trust fund, as recently approved by the Treasury. Performance indicators are being drafted so that accountability reporting can be introduced. Comment is being sought from the major stake-holders in SIMTARS, including industry and mining unions, about how other recommendations of the review committee may be implemented. These include the setting up of a mining safety, testing and technology advisory committee and the provision of specialised services to that committee. The proposal is that these services would include reports on current mine safety issues and the management of committee projects.

The review also recommended a system of classifying work to allow priorities to be set against those classifications. Feedback has been received from the stake-holders, and that is being assessed so that any further reforms can be put in place without delay. This is all part of the Government's role in helping to provide a safe workplace for all Queensland workers. The Government has to ensure that risks associated with mining are minimised by setting and enforcing strict standards of equipment maintenance, mining practice and training. This Government has a strong commitment to SIMTARS because of its important role in helping to set those safety standards and, in the course of its work, finding ways to improve safety conditions. A perfect example of this work and its effectiveness is in the expansion of the underground coal-mining scene in Queensland. In response to the trend to underground coal-mining in Queensland, SIMTARS has developed its own automatic gas detection monitoring and alarm systems for underground mining. These systems are widely used in Queensland and have attracted international interest, indicating potential possibilities on the world market.

As well as its work in the traditional areas, such as flameproof testing, SIMTARS will be expanding into areas such as education and training in specific areas at individual mines, as well as carrying out electrical and mechanical research projects that are beyond the capabilities of the mines. One of the projects, that the centre is currently involved in is the establishment of a heavy current testing laboratory. SIMTARS is working jointly on this project with the Queensland Electricity Commission, the Queensland University of Technology and SEQEB, and they hope to have that laboratory operating late in 1992. This will allow SIMTARS to test switch gear and flameproof control panels against the relevant Australian standards. The significance of this work is that local manufacturers can have their equipment fully tested in Queensland, rather than ship it to New South Wales for testing, as is now the case.

While I have pointed out some of the issues that SIMTARS is looking at, they are only a small part of the safety and technology expenditure by the department. In fact, the department's safety and technology program involves a commitment of almost \$13m—more than a third of its entire budget. This clearly demonstrates just how highly this Government rates the issue of safety. The previous National Party Government paid very little attention to this very important issue at all and stands condemned for its neglect of Queensland's miners.

The Minister, Ken Vaughan, is doing an extremely good job and is going to be the Minister for a long time to come on entering Government, he asked for an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the mining warden who investigated the Moura mine disaster in 1986. He was horrified to find that a number of those recommendations—recommendations that could protect property and lives—had not been implemented. Clearly, there had been a lack of political will on the part of the previous National Party Government to see those recommendations pursued and implemented. Even worse, the previous Government had started yet another inquiry into the Moura disaster. That Government allowed that inquiry to run its full course in case it produced some new evidence. However, what it revealed was the lack of action by the previous Government on the findings of the previous Moura inquiry. In fact, the new inquiry, appointed under instruction from the then Premier, Mr Cooper, came up with some of the same recommendations as three years before, but this time, because of the Goss Government's determination to do something about the welfare of some 10 000 coal-miners in this State, those recommendations are being implemented.

In conclusion, the mining industry in Queensland accounts for approximately 24 per cent of the total output of the Australian mining industry. In 1989,90, the total value of mining production in Queensland was \$4.8 billion. Coal-mining remains Queensland's major mining activity, providing almost 56 per cent of the State's total mining production, and overall it is beyond doubt Queensland's most important industry. Last year, the value of coal production in Queensland was \$2.7 billion.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** It is interesting that, because he hates to hear the truth, the member for Lockyer sits there squirming in his seat.

When one looks at those figures, the relatively small amount of money spent on safety is money well spent to ensure that a safe environment is created for workers in that very important industry. I thank the Committee for its undivided attention.

**Mrs McCAULEY** (Callide) (9.13 p.m.): The Budget Estimates for the Mines Department this year have allocated an additional \$220,000 for environmental management, bringing the total to be spent to \$300,000, an increase of 275 per cent. Of this sum, \$170,000 is allocated for energy projects such as a Green Paper on energy strategies and an independent energy information centre to advise people of the most efficient use of energy, including solar and gas.

When I read this, I immediately thought of Hugh Morgan's speech to the Australian Mining Industry Council this year when he warned that "the environmentalist road today offers great opportunities for the ambitious, power-seeking revolutionary." Honourable members should not lose sight of the fact that mining disturbs less than 0.02 per cent of Australia's land area and the mining industry plants over two million trees every year to help rehabilitate the land. In the often hysterical debate about the greenhouse effect, it should be remembered that carbon dioxide from coal-fired power stations accounts for less than 10 per cent of man-made radiative gases. It should also be remembered that methane, which is produced by, among other things, cows and CFCs, are far stronger greenhouse gases than carbon dioxide. It is important, too, that the benefits to this State from the coal industry are recognised, and I will cite a few statistics. They may vary somewhat slightly from those cited by the previous speaker because they are not quite as recent.

Coal is Queensland's largest export industry, in 1986-87 earning \$3.3 billion or 42 per cent of the State's total exports. Coal represents 66 per cent of the value of all Queensland minerals, more than 90 per cent of which come from the central Queensland area. In the last 10 years, more than half of Queensland's fixed capital spending has been in the coal industry. The effect of investment in central Queensland coal-mining regions has been particularly pronounced. The coal-mining industry has been a prime mover in the decentralisation of Queensland. It has built towns where previously there were none, and it has financed the construction of social and industrial infrastructure.

In the last decade, over 40 per cent or \$1.95 billion of the coal-mining industry's capital spending has been devoted off site to the construction of power, water, road, rail, port and residential town facilities.

In 1986-87, coal contributed 18 per cent of State Government revenue, with the railing of coal accounting for 71 per cent of Queensland Railways' revenue in that year. I am pleased to see the Treasurer in the Chamber to listen to these statistics—perhaps he is already aware of them. The coal industry is responsible for 30 000 jobs Statewide and \$6,600m worth of industrial output in Queensland. It is interesting to note that research shows, firstly, that Queensland coalmine households spend over \$300m annually; secondly, that Queensland coalmines spend \$900m annually on goods and services in the State; and, thirdly, that the coal industry is estimated to impact directly and indirectly on the lives of some quarter of a million Queenslanders.

As has been mentioned previously by the Opposition spokesman, the decision by this Labor Government to upgrade the Queensland Coal Board into a major adviser on the State's coal industry must be viewed with some alarm. The Minister has stated that the revamped board will be responsible for providing long-range planning and policy advice as well as ensuring that Government policy on the industry is implemented. The concern is that the board may be used to intervene in the affairs of Queensland's coal industry. New South Wales' history demonstrates the folly of outside intervention. Funding for the board has been upgraded in this Budget by more than 200 per cent to half a million dollars and will provide for a full-time chairman and two full-time members and support staff, including a mining engineer and a geologist.

I read this morning that Peter Ellis, formerly from the Department of Manufacturing and Commerce, has been appointed Chairman of the Coal Board. I will reserve my thoughts on this appointment until Mr Ellis has proven himself one way or the other. It seems passing strange that this promotion of the Queensland Coal Board comes at a time when Governments are moving to encourage industry to take responsibility for its own affairs. Indeed, the State Government's Savage committee report recommended the winding-up of the Coal Board, and the same recommendation was made by the draft report of the Industries Assistance Commission inquiry into mining and minerals-processing in Australia. Also, the Federal and New South Wales Governments are reviewing the Joint Coal Board's activities and functions to see if its existence can be justified. One would have to ask: is Mr Vaughan seeking nationalisation of the coal industry under another name?

Another matter of concern which has been mentioned by previous speakers is, of course, coal freight rates. The Queensland Chamber of Mines says that Queensland's coal freight tax remains a major impediment to new investment and increased sales. It points out that in most cases mines cannot pass on Government costs to their buyers, who have a wide choice of international suppliers in a fiercely competitive global market. The QCM also claims that no other country in the world taxes its coal-producers to the point at which contracts have been lost and mines left undeveloped. That claim is made because, in addition to paying the taxes, the mining companies have paid for the full cost of the railway services and additional provisions, as well as paying the normal rail freight charge before the export rail freight charge is added to a third tier. The total tax extracted by the State from the coal industry is \$600m per annum.

**Mr McGrady:** But all these agreements were made by your Government.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** That does not make them right.

In addition, tax levels which do not reflect the capacity of the industry to pay have had an adverse effect on that industry. The Coopers and Lybrand survey, which has been mentioned previously tonight, found that in 1988-89, for the fourth year in succession, operating revenue per tonne of coal produced fell 4 per cent; that is, it is down 17 per cent on the modest level recorded in 1984-85, and this amounts to a significant decline in revenue in real terms. This is at a time when output per person in the coal industry has fallen from 29.42 tonnes a shift to 28.32 tonnes.

As has been detailed by the member for Peak Downs, in recent months the diesel fuel component in rail freight has caused large increases. That has occurred even in those areas where the rail line is electrified and no diesel is used. This provides the State Government with a windfall profit which it should morally not accept, particularly as the escalation sought appears in most cases to far outstrip the actual cost increases faced by the Transport Department in the rail haulage of coal. This inflated escalation is applied not only to the railways' costs but also to the tax component of those rail freights, and the only winner is again the State Government.

Although coal is important to Queensland, it is not the only mining activity of note in the State. Mount Isa Mines, of course, provides 95 per cent of the State's copper production, and Queensland provides 70 per cent of Australia's copper production. Although the Hilton mine was officially opened earlier this year—and it was talked about as a goer when we lived up there in 1966—there are no longer boom conditions in any of the metalliferous mines. Rather, a steady production and low growth rate is the norm. However, I salute Mount Isa Mines as a good corporate citizen and an integral part of Queensland's mining history.

Shale oil, mineral sands and bauxite are other important components of Queensland's resource industries. Some are developed and some are not. The Wallumbilla to Gladstone gas pipeline is a monument to the National Party's ability to get large projects up and running. Premier Goss has a lot to learn. His career to date is littered with fiascos such as the Gladstone Power Station sale and Ensham. And what is the future for the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric project? Mr Goss has done so much harm in less than 12 months that one wonders what he will do in one term of office.

I will now make a brief comment on the electricity industry which, when it was handed over to this present Government, was certainly in a very good state. In fact, the IAC report on Government non-tax charges shows that, between 1975-76 and 1987-88, the productivity of the Queensland electricity supply industry increased by some 38 per cent. That is in contrast to other States, where productivity increases were: New South Wales, 19 per cent; Victoria, 32 per cent; South Australia, 15 per cent; Western Australia, 24 per cent; and Tasmania, 11 per cent. The productivity level of the Queensland electricity industry is considerably higher than that of its nearest competitor, the New South Wales industry. I was rather disquieted to read an article in the *Morning Bulletin* of 26 October this year which mentioned rises in the cost of connecting electricity to rural blocks under revenue guarantee conditions. According to that article, the member for Broadsound stated—

"But I have won some cases and lost some and I don't hold much hope with this matter."

That is a fairly defeatist attitude. Capelec's area manager stated that the company's costs have increased "because we have very few rural people in our area now without power". That does not excuse the increase that is hitting the primary producers at a time of economic crisis. Mr Pearce stated—

"Before the new rates were introduced, a property owner or group of property owners whose revenue would amount to \$30,000, would have been supported by Capelec up to \$200,000 for the construction of the power line.

Under the new rates, Capelec would now only provide \$133,333, and the property owners would have to find the extra \$67,000."

I protest very strongly about that. Although it is a quiet slug, it is a big slug that is most unfair for rural areas.

I intend to refer to a few selected passages from the ambit log of claims of the United Mineworkers Federation of Australia. It may well be good for a laugh, if nothing else. The ambit log of claims includes an entitlement to retire at 40 years of age with full benefits; a minimum wage rate of \$3,000 per week; a maximum of 28 hours per week with shifts to be no more than seven hours and one hour off for lunch; and no overtime to be required. However, if an employee elects to do overtime he must be

paid at quadruple the ordinary rate. The ambit log of claims includes a tolerance time of 30 minutes at the end of each shift for showering and changing; annual leave of 25 weeks——

**Mr Schwarten:** You are reading out of an ambit claim. Don't you understand that?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Yes, I do. That the federation has to submit such a ridiculous ambit log of claims demonstrates the weaknesses in our industrial system.

**Mr Schwarten:** Do you understand what an ambit claim is?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Of course I do, but I still believe that this is foolish in the extreme. The log of claims includes annual leave of 25 weeks' paid leave plus loading equivalent to 100 per cent of such rate; first-class air fares to and from the city of the employee's choice; shift-workers to be entitled to an additional five weeks; a public holidays entitlement of 20 days a year and paid leave on their birthdays; special family leave of 10 days a year; compassionate leave entitlement of 30 days' paid leave each year of service; unlimited paid training and study leave; plus a minimum of \$1,000 a week in addition to all other payments.

**Mr Pearce:** What about Yarrabee?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** As usual, the member for Broadsound is rabbiting on about Yarrabee. He was a miner in the industry for 10 years. I remember him proudly telling honourable members about that one evening. I presume that, during that time, he lived in subsidised mine housing and was on a very good wage. No doubt his wife worked. However, when he left that cradle of luxury and went to the coast, he claimed that, after 10 years of good wages in the mining industry, he did not have enough money saved up to be able to afford to buy a house. That does not reflect very well on the honourable member. He is like a cracked record. Every time I get to my feet in this Chamber the honourable member asks, "What about Yarrabee?" Mr Pearce has a lot to learn. It is most unfortunate that attitudes such as his can lead to such ambit logs of claims. One does not have to look much further than that to see the problems that the mining industry faces.

**Mr DOLLIN** (Maryborough) (9.28 p.m.): I rise to support the Budget Estimates of the Resource Industries Department. I ask honourable members to note the Government's commitment to the responsible development of Queensland's resources in its decision to extend the State gas pipeline to Rockhampton. Governments must take a long-term view of development and not consider only short-term returns, as private enterprise does.

**Mr Borbidge:** You fellows opposed it in Opposition.

**Mr DOLLIN:** It was our idea to go to Rockhampton. Because Governments must take that long-term view of development, they provide infrastructure such as roads, railways and ports to help new developments to get off the ground for the benefit of the citizens of the State. Because those types of facilities have a massive capital cost, Governments build them with funds from the public purse.

Governments have access to cheaper borrowing rates and have less pressure applied to them to provide benefits to share-holders. That is essential for long-term investment. However, Governments must still balance the initial upfront costs of providing facilities with the end benefit to the people of Queensland. The Labor Government was very careful about weighing up those costs before it decided to extend the State gas pipeline to Rockhampton. In Opposition, the Labor Party was concerned that the National Party had gone into the Wallumbilla to Gladstone stage of the pipeline without being sure of having a large enough market for the gas. Because of those concerns, the Labor Party examined the figures and the prospects for the new industry before plunging into another major capital project with public funds.

In February, when the Cabinet made its decision to spend \$34m to extend the pipeline from Gladstone to Rockhampton, the Government knew that it had done its homework and had the correct answer. Work in the field has now begun. By May 1991, the pipeline is scheduled to deliver gas to the Queensland magnesia project at Parkhurst near Rockhampton to fuel a magnesite deadburning and calcining plant. Construction of Phase 1 of the \$200m Queensland magnesia project, which began in March 1990, is scheduled for completion in September 1991. The mine and beneficiation plant are located on part of the Kunwarara magnesite deposit near Rockhampton. The processing plant is located on the Parkhurst industrial estate on the northern outskirts of Rockhampton. The Queensland magnesia project, which is a value-adding industry, is the sort of processing industry that this State needs to ease its independence on international commodity prices and to balance our deficit. The Government is determined to make the Queensland economy more broadly based. It is far-reaching, forward-thinking decisions such as that on the pipeline extensions that will allow us to do that.

The \$110m Wallumbilla to Gladstone section of the pipeline delivered its first gas to the Queensland Alumina refinery in June, almost two months ahead of schedule. One week later, gas was supplied to the new ICI caustic/chlorine/cyanide plant, which was a tremendous effort and achievement by the main contractor and supervisor of that large project, Saipen Aust. Pty Ltd. Leighton Contractors constructed the last 16 kilometres to the ICI plant. The added benefit to QAL of the use of natural gas is that it replaces imported fuel oils. No doubt QAL is glad that it made the change only a couple of months before Iraq invaded Kuwait and the oil price went through the roof. Who can tell when that conflict will end and what price fuel might reach in the future. From the national economic point of view, the decision to use gas has meant also that QAL is replacing overseas imports with an Australian product, an import replacement that can only help the balance of payments. That assistance is much needed in the face of the downturn in some of our agricultural exports.

For the coming year, \$38.266m will be allocated from the State gas pipeline construction fund to build the Gladstone to Rockhampton natural gas pipeline extension and to maintain the operation of the State gas pipeline that runs from Wallumbilla to Gladstone. The State gas pipeline unit, which is responsible for both of those projects, has a permanent staff of nine, made up of an engineer, an operations coordinator, pipeline controllers and administrative staff. In August, following finalisation of an impact assessment study of the pipeline corridor, a manager was appointed to the Rockhampton branch of the pipeline route. The IAS investigated the impact of burying the pipeline with a minimum cover of 750 millimetres over the top of the pipe, including places where the pipeline crosses streams, roads and rail lines. Consideration was given to soil disturbance and erosion, vegetation, flora and fauna, the economic impact of mineral resources in the region and the identification of sites of archaeological interest. As honourable members would be aware, in that sort of operation, care must be taken that noxious plants are not spread along the length of the pipeline. Machines must be cleaned down from property to property to avoid the spread of noxious weeds. Trenching is susceptible to erosion. Trenching not carried out correctly could have disastrous effects. During the peak construction period, up to 80 contractors, their employees and State gas pipeline inspectors will be involved in the project—a great bonus to the work force. The first 1.5 kilometres of pipeline has been laid, and most of the pipeline should be installed before Christmas this year. The Rockhampton testing will be carried out before full commissioning by 31 May 1991.

The pipeline would never have eventuated if the gas fields of the Surat Basin and the Denison Trough had not been identified and developed. The Government has a role to play in the identification of resources, and that process is assisted by the work of the geological survey program of the Department of Resource Industries. Investment in that geological knowledge base is essential to attract investment in Queensland's exploration and mineral development. Geoscience mapping provides information that is essential to promote investment in the State and, at the same time, provides information on which sound land-use decisions can be based. The Government has allocated \$5.219m to the

geological survey program to ensure that Queensland's geoscience knowledge base is kept up to date at all times. The program's activities are divided into four subprograms—marine and coastal investigations, metallogenic studies, basin studies and geological mapping. This all sounds very dry and unexciting, but it is an integral part of the ongoing development of resources and it supports the Government's role as manager of the State's resources that are so vital to our economy. The main task of the regional geological mapping subprogram is to expand the knowledge and records of Queensland's geology. That involves extensive fieldwork and collation of that information to enable access by industry and the Government, which is so important for future exploration programs. The subprogram also works extensively with its Federal counterparts in the Bureau of Mineral Resources. During the coming year, the regional geological mapping program, conducted by the geological mapping subprogram, will be concentrated in central and northern Queensland at Anakie and Gympie. I am sure that my good neighbour, the honourable member for Gympie, will be happy about that, as it could mean more gold for Gympie.

**Mr FitzGerald:** He wants more details. He has asked for more details.

**Mr DOLLIN:** More details—if he strikes gold, I would be very interested to talk to him about it.

The basin studies subprogram will work also with the Bureau of Mineral Resources. Their work will be in Queensland's Surat and Bowen Basins, which supply a large proportion of our valuable energy resources. They will be in great demand owing to the problems in the Middle East. Their aim is to determine the viability of petroleum exploration. The Government then uses that information to manage the development of those resources. The marine and coastal investigations subprogram will continue to provide consultancy services primarily to Government agencies concerned with coastal management, including that of Fraser Island. The Department of Resource Industries also produces and disseminates information through its information services program, which has been allocated \$2.22m. That funding will be used to provide electronic access to exploration data for industry, to produce geoscientific, technical, safety and educational publications, and to produce geological, resource and report mapping products to meet the needs of industry, the public and the department for the benefit of all Queenslanders. During 1990-91, the information services program will begin to implement a marketing strategy for all of its information outputs across the department. That strategy is aimed at saving money by eliminating waste, producing more accountability, generating revenue and better satisfying industry and community needs. This is in line with the Goss Government's emphasis on efficiency within the public sector. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister on the valuable work he has done not only in this area but also in the many other facets of his portfolio.

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (9.38 p.m.): I have pleasure in joining in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Resource Industries. Resource industries have played a very important part in Queensland's history. Queenslanders can look forward to the industry continuing to do just that.

**Mr Randell:** It was developed by the National Party.

**Mr STEPHAN:** It certainly was developed over a great length of time and quite successfully by the National Party, a fact which must be realised by Government members. It is because of this base that some of them are now members of this Parliament. People have come to work in Queensland for mining companies and have helped to develop various parts of the State.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Name them.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Honourable members know who I am talking about. I am not too sure if the honourable member for Archerfield is one of them, but members owe a debt of gratitude to the National Party.

I wish to comment on a couple of matters raised by previous speakers. For example, the honourable member for Mount Isa, Mr McGrady, stated that the Government has no intention of destroying the mining industry. That is rather a strange comment to make. He is obviously very concerned about his own party's policy and the community's perception of it. Otherwise, why would he make such a comment and why is he almost apologising for his and his colleagues' intention and direction in this matter? Mount Isa relies on the mining industry to a great extent and it is difficult to understand why the honourable member made that comment in the first place.

The member for Ipswich West spent a great deal of time—and there is nothing wrong with that—on the environment and mining and the way that they both work together. I wonder if the honourable member realises that the end result of mining is a hole in the ground. As Opposition spokesman on forestry, from time to time I am involved in discussions concerning forestry, which is a renewable resource. As opposed to mining, this resource is regenerating all the time. In fact, these industries are opposites, because the forestry industry is very environment oriented, whereas mining is not. There needs to be emphasis on the environment, but it should not be put in the wrong place. The honourable member should not misdirect his concerns, because the gases released as a result of mining form only a small portion of the gases that harm the ozone layer. Honourable members should not get too carried away and think that the gases all come from the one industry.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the Minister's comments concerning the collapse of old mines in Gympie and other areas. This is a very real problem and no doubt the Minister has had correspondence with the various councils involved. The Minister made the comment that we could expect an announcement in about a month. I await the contents of this announcement with a great deal of interest and wonder what direction the Government is likely to take. In some of the discussions the Minister had with the Gympie City Council he advised that under the new guidelines repairs would be carried out to an affected home automatically if there were no current mining titles over the area and where the damage was caused by subsidence of previously unrecorded mine workings. The Minister said that in these cases the Government would move immediately to determine the cause and extent of the problem and attempt to stabilise the property and make it safe. That is only one portion of the problem. In this case the land may be held under freehold title, a mining title, an MHL or an MHPL and previously unrecorded mine workings may exist. I would have thought that there would be recordings of mine workings in those areas, whether they occurred back in the 1860s, 1870s, 1880s, or whenever. I hope that when the Minister comes up with a suggestion or recommendation it will assist people in these mining areas.

**Mr Vaughan:** We have gone a lot further than your previous Government did and in 32 years we will go a bit further than that.

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is all very well. Discussions have been going on, but I point out that so far it has been only rhetoric. I am merely pointing out what the Minister himself has said about rehabilitation.

**Mr Vaughan:** We have done more in 11 months than you did in 32 years.

**Mr STEPHAN:** This Government might have done more in 11 months in some areas, but it has to prove it. The Government has been making promises but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If this is the Government's thinking, the problem will not be overcome. There could be situations where houses on adjoining properties have different titles. Some of them will have freehold titles, some mining titles and others are in residential areas. It is not the fault of the present owner, the previous owner or the land agent, and they may be unaware that there is a mine shaft at their back door or underneath their house. If the householder has recently taken possession of the freehold title and there happens to be a shaft just underneath the side of the house, this causes great mental and financial concern to the householder. I compliment the Minister on having done more than any previous Minister, but the quest is to overcome the problem.

It is not the policy of any Government to make matters difficult for land-owners and residents. Since I have been the member for Gympie, I have been trying to overcome this and other problems that arise from time to time.

I did not quite catch what the member for Maryborough, Mr Dollin, was saying about the possibility of gold-mining in Gympie. I inform him that exploration to a depth of 900 metres has occurred in some of the old workings in the Gympie area. BHP has invested \$26m in the Devex mine and outlaid an additional \$5m to enter into the project. The \$26m was paid to secure a 55 per cent equity in the mine, but the problem now is that BHP has decided to pull out of its mining operations in Gympie. Recently, employees were stood down and the question now is: for how long will the mining program continue? There is no doubt in my mind that gold in fairly large quantities can be found in the hills surrounding Gympie. Over the last 12 to 15 years, exploratory drilling has been carried on and has shown that a quantity of gold exists. However, one of the problems is the cost associated with extracting the gold from great depths, taking into account the quantity of water that is present and other mining problems. Although I do not expect the Minister to be able to overcome these problems, I look forward with expectation and hope to gold once again being produced in Gympie.

The Labor Government in Queensland has promised that there will be no new taxes and no increases in charges. Notwithstanding that, a charge has been imposed on borrowings obtained by organisations such as SEQEB and QEC. A charge of 0.5 per cent has been imposed on Government-guaranteed borrowings, and if that is not a new tax, I do not know what is. This is another example of the Government saying one thing and doing another. In spite of the fact that the Government has gone out of its way to point out that there would be no new taxes, it has sneaked in another new tax, which has not gone unnoticed.

Over about the last five years, the power generation industry has enjoyed a period of very great stability, as the annual report indicates. The average time of power generation lost in all areas has been reduced considerably, and I would like to think that the production of power will be maintained at a high level. States such as New South Wales and Victoria hold up Queensland as the model to be followed by other Governments, and it would certainly be a step in the right direction if those States followed Queensland in other areas as well. It is interesting to note that in contrast to the period of instability that the power generation industry underwent in recent years, the industry is now enjoying a period of great stability. Queensland can hold up its record of electricity supply with a good deal of pride and satisfaction.

New processing industries, such as the timber-mill at Imbil, have been established. In addition, a timber-processing plant was recently opened at Toolara. Both plants use large quantities of electricity and are assisting to keep the costs of electricity supplied to small land-owners and residents at a low rate. Residents are also being confronted with the costs of connecting their households to mains powerlines. If three power poles are involved in the connection, it is not unusual for costs to amount to approximately \$8,000, but if the house is situated a mile or so away, the costs increase even more.

I turn now to discuss alternative sources of electricity generation. Wind turbine power generation has recently been developed. Over a long period, many imaginative wind-powered generating plants have been invented for application in specific locations. I foresee the possible use of alternative power supplies in remote locations such as in the Torres Strait area. Alternative power sources have great potential for use in these areas. In fact, I would be very upset if the Government did not encourage the use of alternative power supplies in these areas. After all, even though the initial installation costs are high for small numbers of users, these alternative supplies of power are much cheaper in the long run. There is great potential for the use of wind-generated, solar and hydroelectric energy development. To date, I believe that the Government has not placed sufficient emphasis on the development of these alternative sources; nor has it encouraged their use, in spite of the fact that some machines can produce up to 4 000 watts for 24-volt units. The installation cost is almost the total cost associated with this form of

energy supply. Although these sources of energy do not overcome all the problems of power generation in remote areas, the Government must make efforts to encourage the development of power units of this nature, which can only result in benefit for this State.

By and large, I look forward to the electricity supply industry in this State continuing in the future as strongly as it has been carried on in the past. I would like to think that the Minister would not do anything to change that.

Time expired.

**Mr SMYTH** (Bowen) (9.54 p.m.): The Queensland Budget highlights the Government's commitment to the coal industry with almost \$1.8m for coal industry projects. Those funds include almost half a million dollars for an upgrade of the Queensland Coal Board. Coal remains this State's single most significant mineral commodity, accounting for 56.4 per cent of the State's total mining production and one-third of its export revenue. Exports rose from 59.03 million tonnes in 1988-89 to 61.27 million tonnes in 1989-90. That represented a 3.8 per cent increase in exports. Most of the growth was in steaming coal exports, which rose 10.6 per cent from 18.9 million tonnes to 20.91 million tonnes. In 1989-90, the value of coal production rose 20.9 per cent to \$2.9 billion, a \$500m increase on 1988-89. That was supported by an increase in the average international price received for export coal, which rose 15.5 per cent to \$61.90 per tonne.

The coal industry employs more than 10 000 people directly, as well as supporting a flow-on of another 30 000 in support services and associated industries. The Goss Government recognises that contribution and the need for the industry to be well managed. Because resources belong to everyone, our Government's role is to manage the State's resources on behalf of all Queenslanders. Unlike the National Party, we know that politicians are not the font of all wisdom. We recognise the need for expert advice rather than ad hoc decisions being made according to Ministers' whims. We all recall the Winchester South project, tenders for which closed on 1 January 1981. Originally, they were to close on 1 December 1980, but a Melbourne-based resources group lobbied the National/Liberal Government for more time to prepare the tender documents. I note that Opposition members are listening intently to what I am saying. At the close of tenders, 32 tenders involving approximately 100 Australian and international companies were received. The winner through tendering was of little surprise. The consortium comprising BHP Australia and Sir Leslie Thiess—Westfield—was successful. It appeared that that consortium was the favourite because it accepted a deal from the National/Liberal Party Government to pay an additional levy which was little more than a selective and disguised resources tax. The speed with which the decision was made surprised many in the mining industry in Australia. The successful consortium was to pay an extra \$1 a tonne in royalties but would only mine the top seam, leaving the lower seam sterilised and lost forever. Other companies were paying 50c a tonne in royalties.

After the successful consortium was notified of its win, Treasury insisted on other charges which involved costs of many millions of dollars to the company. It was brought to the public's notice that Treasury did not sight the tender documents before the decision was made within two hours at a Cabinet meeting. The document presented to Cabinet contained three pages and it was obvious, simply by viewing its contents, that it was prepared by a National Party Cabinet Minister. After a Cabinet leak and threats by Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the National Party State President, Mr Sparkes, of royal commissions and sackings of Ministers who leaked information, within two weeks the National/Liberal Government backed off on the extra resources tax. It was clear at that time—and crystal clear now—that a shoddy deal was being worked out to satisfy National Party supporters. Evidence produced showed that other tenders would have provided a better deal to the people of Queensland, but not for the National Party. The Liberal Party distanced itself from the coal deal, even though Dr Llew Edwards, the then Treasurer, helped to make the decision in the Cabinet room. After 10 years, the Winchester

South project is still waiting to be developed. Mr Ivan Gibbs and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen fouled up a promising financial resource for this State. Our Government will not make decisions such as the one made on Winchester South.

After an exhaustive review ordered by the Minister, Mr Vaughan, the Coal Board is to be upgraded to be an effective policy adviser to the Minister and to the Government. The Coal Board will also complement activities of the Department of Resource Industries. In fact, that means an increase in funding from the Goss Government of more than 200 per cent to almost half a million dollars. The board receives further funding from the coal industry and from interest on its own investments. Our Government realises that to get good advice on which to make important decisions we must have resources devoted to developing that advice. The sad truth is that, for many years, the National Party starved the 40-year-old Coal Board of funds. Previously, the Coal Board had been turned into a collector of statistics which watched over the domestic industry. It was made a toothless tiger and was traditionally headed by the director-general of the department. As with all major Government positions, Labor has advertised nationally for a new chairman and board members. The Coal Board is no longer a case of jobs for the boys. The widest pool of talent has been taken into account to get the best candidates for the jobs. In fact, interviews are to be conducted soon by a panel which includes the Minister, Mr Vaughan. It is worth noting that extra funds will help expand the board's function as an adviser to the Minister on long-range planning and policy. As detailed in the Coal Board's annual report, a full-time chairman and two full-time members are to be appointed, along with a mining engineer and a geologist. Until now, the board has comprised a part-time chairman, one part-time member and one full-time member. Technical staff will form a support unit analysing properties of coal in Queensland as well as analysing international markets and advising the Government on the suitable development of resources. Because of changing technologies, the Coal Board will pay particular attention to a range of different coal qualities and characteristics which international and domestic consumers are seeking. There is a growing international stress on clean coal, especially in Europe, where acid rain is a problem. As well, international research and development is turning towards finding ways of reducing the emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants from coal-burning and making boilers, etc., more efficient.

If the Opposition spokesman on Resource Industries knew his material, he would realise that major research is being carried on in that field in Europe and also in Japan.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Of course there is. I know there is.

**Mr SMYTH:** He did not mention it in his speech.

In the coming year, the board plans to take a lead in supporting and developing energy efficiency programs for domestic coal-users. That is in line with our Government's general emphasis on energy efficiency.

A review of the energy policy is now under way. With extra funds from the Goss Government, the Coal Board will be able to be further involved in dissemination of information about the specific characteristics of Queensland coal. This has already been translated this financial year into sponsorship of coal technology and efficiency seminars and conferences. The Coal Board has also strongly supported the efforts of energy groups to promote the use of some of Queensland's cleaner coals. It also represents the Government on the Australian Coal Consultative Council Advisory Committee and subcommittees, the national research group and working parties. The Queensland Coal Board has also represented the Government on the Queensland Coal Mining Industry Consultative Committee, working to minimise industrial difficulties and, where possible, anticipate potential problem areas in the workplace.

I mention at this point the improvement in the industrial record of this State's coalmines. In 1989-90, productivity fell marginally, but this can be attributed to increasing overburden ratios and the trend towards more labour-intensive underground mining in Queensland. The records of the Coal Board show an increasing willingness by the parties

to negotiate. This has resulted in a decrease in the time lost owing to industrial stoppages. I congratulate all those involved on this encouraging trend. Under the new Labor Government, I expect to see this trend continue throughout other industries in a new atmosphere of conciliation rather than confrontation.

The Coal Board's other representations on behalf of the Queensland Government include a presence on the Board of Australian Coal Industry Research Laboratory, the Queensland Coal Association's Thick Seam Mining Technology Committee and the Queensland Coal Mines Safety Research Advisory Committee. As part of its representative role, the Coal Board will also cooperate more closely with the New South Wales-based Joint Coal Board and the Federal and New South Wales Governments. National coordination is sensible, which may be why the National Party went the other way on so many issues. For instance, under the National Party's version of the Coal Board, national coal statistics were never produced. As an example, a ludicrous situation prevailed in which only separate Queensland and New South Wales figures were produced. This situation will now be rectified with the restructuring of the Queensland Coal Board.

It also needs to be made clear that the Government has no intention of using the expanded Coal Board to interfere with the operations of the industry. It was never intended that the upgrading of the board be used as a tool to intervene and interfere. This Government has been kept up to date on coal research and developments around the world, as well as other market movements, so that it can manage Queensland's resources and development. Informed decisions need to be made to allow the coal industry to be ready to meet market demands and take up market opportunities.

I welcome the far-sighted decision of the Goss Government to allocate extra funds to the board. This can only help the Coal Board to carry out other functions and, in particular, to look after the welfare of workers in the coal industry. Apart from an advisory function, the Coal Board manages the coal industry employees' severance pay fund and administers the coal-miners' health scheme. That fund is used to promote the welfare of workers and members of mining communities. The move by this Government to improve the advice on which it bases its policies extends further than the coal industry and the Coal Board. There is a need for long-range planning to extend to all areas of the Resource Industries portfolio. It is recognised that all departments have a role to play in providing policy advice to Ministers and Government, but there was a need for a dedicated body such as the Coal Board.

The Minister has set up a Resource Industries Policy Unit, which has as its sole duty the development of policy options. A total of \$500,000 has been allocated for this unit, which includes salaries. This is basically a bright-ideas unit, which will look forward and anticipate what potential problems might lie ahead in areas relevant to the portfolio. This kind of long-range planning allows the Government to be proactive rather than reactive, to prevent problems rather than simply patch them up. This will enable the Government to keep up with changes in the mining industry and within the community in general and also to anticipate and be ready for the needs of the future.

One of the major tasks of the policy unit was the preparation and coordination of the Government's energy Green Paper. This has involved coordination and input from various Government bodies, as well as from others outside the public sector with suitable expertise. The unit is also carrying out this Government's stated intention to improve the efficiency of the public service. This department will ensure that equitable and effective base recruitment and human resource management systems are available to the public sector. In these tough times the Government must ensure that the best possible results are obtained for the public of Queensland with the funds invested in maintaining a public service. The Government must be as efficient as possible. This will also give workers in the Queensland public service job satisfaction.

The Goss Labor Government has stated that it will be accountable and financially responsible, and it is quite clear from these Estimates that this applies to its Department of Resource Industries.

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett) (10.06 p.m.): I listened with interest to the presentation of the Minister's Estimates and the speeches of Government members. Listening to them, one would think that everything is going well from the Government's point of view, that it has done everything right and that the National Party, when it was in Government, did not do anything right. No mention was made of the fact that the mining industry has gone from virtually nothing in the 1970s to one of the biggest mining industries in the world. If one looks at it, one finds that it is all achievement.

Members of the Government say that they have done everything well. Why is it then that the mining industry is so unhappy? All the people involved in the mining industry with whom I have spoken have indicated to me that they are not at all happy with this Government. This Government has been in power for 11 months and it has done nothing. It has turned Ensham into a disaster and has ripped off the coal-miners for \$5m as a result of the situation in Iraq.

As the member for Moggill and other honourable members have said, the Government has claimed that it needs to increase coal rail freights to take into consideration the escalating cost of diesel. In fact, the Government has based that rise on the tax component of that rail freight cost, which is an \$8 tax component. It is a \$4 actual cost to the Government and it has based the charge on the whole lot, providing a windfall profit. Yet members of the Government talk about all the good things that this Government is doing for the mining industry. If that is so, why is it that that industry is so unhappy with the Government? People involved in the mining industry have told me directly that they do not support—in fact, they oppose—the retention of the Coal Board. They see it as a back-door way of getting union involvement in the management of the coal industry. Can the Minister give the Committee an assurance that that will not happen?

**Mr Pearce:** Give us some names. Who?

**Mr SLACK:** The Minister is not even listening. He is not prepared to answer the question. Can he give the Committee an assurance that it will never become a statutory body? Those questions are worrying the mining industry.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SLACK:** Just listen to them. I have been told by people in authority in the mining industry.

**A Government member:** Who?

**Mr SLACK:** Honourable members should listen to what I am saying.

Another question put to me was: why is not the Minister standing up for the industry? Why is he taking such a low profile when so many things of concern that vitally affect his portfolio are happening? Other departments are cutting across the rights of the mining industry, such as the environmental department that is looking willy-nilly at declaring land throughout the State as national parks simply to meet an election commitment by the Government to double the area of national parks from 2 per cent to 4 per cent in its first term in office, without proper consultation with the mining industry itself. Where has the Minister been in all those situations that have arisen?

Recently, a big area at Lawn Hill was declared a national park; yet, at the same time, vast quantities of minerals were discovered in that area. If that area was to become a national park, it would be locked up.

**Mr Vaughan:** Has Lawn Hill been made a national park?

**Mr SLACK:** No, but the suggestion is that it will be. The claim has been made to me that the Minister has not been consulting with the mining industry to ascertain its requirements. That industry is worried because of that.

**Mr Vaughan:** The people you have been talking to do not know.

**Mr SLACK:** That is what I have been told. I can only go on what I am told.

**Mr Vaughan:** The people you have been talking to don't know.

**Mr SLACK:** I can only go on what I am told. A recent press release stated that the industry was disappointed in the Minister's attitude to consultation and that he was not speaking up for the mining industry.

**Mr Vaughan:** They never said that to me.

**Mr SLACK:** That is what was in the press release and that is what I have been told. I invite the Minister to discuss those matters with the coal-mining industry. If things are wrong, then talk to them about it.

**Mr Vaughan:** I addressed the Chamber of Mines the other day.

**Mr SLACK:** That is not the message that I am getting. The claim in relation to the Coal Board is that the joint board in New South Wales is to be disbanded. The industry commission has made a recommendation to Paul Keating for the board to be disbanded. At the moment, the Federal Energy Minister, John Kerin, has under way an inquiry into the joint coal board in New South Wales. It looks as though it is proposed to disband the board, yet Queensland does not agree with that proposal. The Government is proposing to promote the Queensland Coal Board, although the industry does not want that. It feels that the Mines Department is quite capable of marketing its own coal. Over the last 20 years, it has successfully done that and it will continue to do so without any major problems.

Why is it necessary to increase the staff of the Coal Board, to advertise for geologists and engineers and to increase the number of board members? Why is the mining industry so unhappy? It feels that it is going to be ripped off by this Government. The mining industry already provides approximately \$700m towards the Treasury—with approximately \$500m from rail freights and more than \$200m in royalties. The Government allocated \$31m to the Mines Department. Although that department has received a minor increase, it was the lowest increase received by any department in the Budget allocations.

The industry is worried by the continual talk of user pays and charges. It is very concerned about its future. From the information I have been given, the Minister has not given an indication that those fears are not valid. Honourable members can understand why that industry is worried.

The mining industry is not worried about environmental controls and the declaration of national parks, but it is concerned that the proper steps are taken before those national parks are declared and that it is consulted as to whether investigations have taken place about the location of minerals in areas that may be declared national parks. Honourable members will appreciate that, once those areas are declared national parks, those minerals will be locked up forever because the industry cannot explore for minerals within national parks. Given the state of Australia's economy at present, it is not the time to lock up the future wealth of this country.

As I said, the mining industry is not opposed to environmental controls; they are good and to be expected, provided that they are controlled by the Mines Department. However, the mining industry objects to controls which are not consistent, over which it has no input, and which are based on emotions rather than scientific fact. Honourable members can understand those concerns.

I mentioned the environment, rail freights and the recent increase in the rail freight component. Many companies are sending their coal on electrified lines where that cost should not be imposed. Some of those companies have experienced five to six rises in the last month and they are not in a position to pay them. They have not had any great windfall profit from the Iraqi or Middle East situation. Most of their contracts are locked into 12-month or longer contracts and they have not had any advantage from which they can provide windfall profits to the Government. Quite often, the Government has

been quick to condemn the oil companies for engaging in profiteering as a result of what is happening in the Middle East.

As Opposition spokesman for Aboriginal Affairs, I have spoken to mining companies about their attitude to Aboriginal affairs. They have told me that they have no problems or arguments with to Aboriginal land rights; that as mining companies they do not concern them. However, they certainly have a big problem with mineral rights. As one can appreciate, they believe that the rights to the minerals, wherever they are, belong to the Crown. As farmers and other members of the population do not have rights to minerals, the mining companies feel that Aboriginals should be placed in the same position. The companies are concerned that although claims have been made about mineral rights, nothing has been said to allay their nervous fears. Although they do not wish to have any input into matters affecting land rights, they definitely wish to have an input into the debate relating to mineral rights involving land occupied by Aboriginal and Islander people. They would like to know where the Minister stands on this issue. As I said earlier, the companies have indicated to me that they are very unhappy that, in negotiations, the Minister responsible for mines does not appear to be standing up for coal-mining and the mining industry.

**Mr Vaughan:** Tell them to come and talk to me and tell me that.

**Mr SLACK:** I will.

It should be remembered that Queensland's coal industry provides jobs for about 10 500 people. If the multiplier effect is applied to that figure, the result is that the industry creates two jobs for every person that it employs. The member for Mount Isa would be very conscious of that. The coal industry has also provided the bulk of the private capital that has been expended in this State over the last 10 years. I do not think anyone in this Chamber would deny that. In the last 12 months, it has produced for the State of Queensland revenue in excess of \$700m, made up of rail freights of more than \$500m as well as royalties and other charges of more than \$200m. As the member for Mount Isa said, the industry has provided infrastructure and services for people in country areas. There is no doubt that, over the last 20 years, it has been of tremendous benefit to the development of this State, and it should continue to be of benefit to this State provided it is given the opportunity to expand unfettered. When I say "unfettered", I mean in a reasonable fashion with encouragement to invest and reinvest. It cannot be treated as a milking cow. As I mentioned before, I cannot overstress the need for consultation. If the industry is encouraged to prosper through the development of new mines, Treasury will reap the rewards. But if the Minister and the Government continue to treat it in the manner in which they have, there will be many more disasters like Ensham, and the people of Queensland will be the poorer for it. There is no doubt that, in the mind of the mining community, the Government's handling of the Ensham deal has been a disaster.

So it is not all good when Government members try to tell members on this side of the Chamber that what they are doing within the mining industry is all for the benefit of Queensland. They are looking at the mining industry as an industry from which they are able to gain revenue to fund many of their other programs. If this great industry is to provide the investment that this State requires, the Government needs to encourage it and ensure that it is able to reinvest so that it can expand and so the economy of this State can grow and maintain the strength that it has over the last 20 years. The major contributing factor to the strength of Queensland's economy has been the mining industry.

**Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (10.21 p.m.):** The welfare of the Queensland people depends in large part on the health of the mining industry. We are here to debate the expenditure of \$31,403,000 from the public purse. But that has to be seen in the light of the value of Queensland's total mining production of some \$5.1 billion. Without a healthy mining industry, the resources of Government would be unable to achieve the reasonable

expectations of the Queensland people in other areas such as health, housing, education and welfare. It has been thus for many years.

The development of Queensland dates from the days of the gold rushes and the influx of migrants to work in the mines. My own great grandfather and grandfather worked in the mine at Mount Morgan. They, along with tens of thousands of others, came out from Ireland in order to work in the mines in Queensland. We here in Queensland today find ourselves in a position in which our economy still depends greatly upon the strength of the mining sector. In coal production alone, it is worth some \$2.879 billion to our economy.

The supplementary Budget information provided in Budget Paper No.4 for the State Budget of 1990-91 identifies at page 33 certain of the matters for which expenditure from the public purse is sought in this motion before the Committee. Let me deal firstly with the issue of energy policy. I welcome the proposal for the release of the Green Paper on energy policy.

For too long in this State the issue of energy policy has not been adequately and properly planned. Energy policy entails a consideration of diverse aspects of our economy ranging from the use of domestic energy through to transport and heavy industry. The ludicrous situation into which planning fell under the previous Government is illustrated no more poignantly than in my own electorate of Yeronga where the Tennyson Power House, which had money spent on upgrading and renovation, was then closed down. What an extraordinary waste of money! What an extraordinary lack of analysis in energy policy!

**Mr Welford:** No planning whatsoever.

**Mr FOLEY:** No planning indeed. I acknowledge the honourable member's observation.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Why was it the cheapest mainland power?

**Mr FOLEY:** Good fortune sometimes triumphs over the absolute attempts at neglect on the part of the previous Government. Does anybody claim that the bungling of the Tennyson Power House issue reflects adequate energy planning?

**Mr FitzGerald:** It cost us. There is no doubt about it.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am glad that the honourable member makes that concession. I welcome that concession. When faced with the plain facts, there is no way that one could resist such a concession. Electors in my electorate, and the people of Queensland generally, are entitled to better. They are entitled to rational planning. One looks forward with great pleasure to the initiative that the Minister has foreshadowed in a Green Paper on energy policies. I note also that the supplementary Budget information indicates that initiatives will include the establishment of effective infrastructure to allow the dissemination of information to domestic, commercial, industrial and rural sectors on the efficient use of energy. That echoes the observations expressed in the annual report of the Queensland Department of Resource Industries for 1989-90. Page 7 of the report indicates that the market strategy adopted therein demonstrates a proposal to save money by eliminating waste, to produce more accountability, to generate revenue and to better satisfy industry and community needs.

It is extraordinary that electricity was marketed as a commodity. It is pleasing that there is now a recognition that it is necessary and desirable that one's approach to marketing strategy in that regard should not be simply that more is better. It is necessary to approach the issue of energy policy with a slightly more critical attitude than that to ensure that, where possible, consumers are encouraged to use less energy. No doubt that approach is to be encouraged through the Green Paper.

I turn now to one of the other important initiatives set out in the supplementary Budget information and alluded to in the Minister's eloquent speech at the beginning of this debate. As to environmental management—I am pleased to note that additional

resources will be applied to achieve mining industry compliance with reasonable environmental standards, particularly in regard to the improvement of land rehabilitation and pollution control. The abysmal neglect of the environment by the previous regime is the subject of scandal throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. I well recall in 1984 appearing in the Mining Wardens Court in relation to the proposed sand-mining of a strip of land on Stradbroke Island. After a detailed hearing, the Mining Warden recommended against the granting of the mining lease application. In his report, reference was made to the profound importance of the Aboriginal midden sites, the importance of the dunes systems, the importance of local fauna, and the aesthetic and recreational value of the area. I recall to this day the experience of realising that that recommendation was overridden by the Minister of the day and that mining proceeded nonetheless. That spoke eloquently of the approach of the previous regime to sensitive matters of environmental quality, even when they were so close to the urban metropolis.

I turn to the great debate of our time with respect to sustainable development. In his opening remarks, the Minister put forward a most important proposition—one of the most important propositions with respect to environmental protection that has been put forward thus far in the course of this year. He said—

"We are committed to the sustainable development of Queensland's resources."

That most important statement ranks with the other great initiatives of the Government in legislation, such as the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act and, indeed, the heritage legislation.

Queensland is in a unique position with respect to the debate on sustainable development. Australia itself is in an important position in the world in striking the appropriate balance in the tensions between development and the environment. This subject has been discussed by Professor Roy Rutland in the *Mining Review* of June of this year in a most stimulating article entitled "Australia—Ready or Not—Minerals Resources for Sustainable Development". In the debate on sustainable development, Professor Rutland puts the case that Australia has a particularly important role to play with respect to the issue of mineral resource development. He concludes that Australia has two principle advantages in this regard. Firstly, it has a very large area with high potential that is still relatively unexplored. Secondly, it has a low population density.

The advice that he gives in the course of his paper is twofold. Firstly, he advises that the basic geological study of the earth's crust in Australia must be maintained and enhanced. Secondly, the mapping accord currently being negotiated between the Bureau of Mineral Resources and the States has the potential to provide the knowledge base required for exploration and resource assessment to assist in making land-use decisions. I am advised that that national geoscience mapping accord between the Commonwealth and the States has been achieved as between Queensland and the Commonwealth. It is also important to note that this has to be closely coordinated with the Cape York Peninsula land-use study.

In this respect, let me inject a note into the debate that has been lacking in many speeches thus far. The debate about sustainable development entails not only physical environment but also the future of all sectors of our community. In Queensland, we face an issue in Cape York, where isolated and, in some cases, vulnerable communities live in a region where future economic development will have a profound impact upon their communities. They must be consulted. They must have the opportunity to have a say in the future welfare and well-being of their communities. I would urge that, in any future land-use planning for that area, those Aboriginal and Islander communities should be consulted fully to enable them to have an effective say. Let there never be a repeat of that sad and tragic event in the early sixties when the Aboriginal people of Old Mapoon were removed by force from their lands and their houses burnt. Let us hope that we have moved into a more enlightened era in which competing land uses will not be resolved in such a brutal way as was done under the previous Government.

The debate about sustainable development brings into sharp focus the issue of whether or not we are mere colonisers sitting on the edge of this continent on the

opposite part of the earth to Europe or whether we are people who are determined to live in harmony with this continent and whether we regard ourselves as Australians here to stay. If we are, we must live in a world where prosperous and effective mining takes place within a community that is committed to the well-being of all of its people.

**Mr RANDELL** (Mirani) (10.35 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to enter the debate, because my old friend the member for Nudgee is the Minister in charge of this portfolio. When the National Party was in Government we recognised his ability. I am very pleased that, of all the members on that side, he has the Resource Industries portfolio. It would not have been just if he did not get the resource industries portfolio. Many times, he tried to debate the National Party very lustily. Most of the time he failed, but at least he has a good job now and I hope he looks after it.

It amuses me to listen to some Government members speak about the great job that the ALP is doing with mining in Queensland. The irony is that many Government members would not be in this Chamber if it were not for the planning and foresight of the former National Party Government over the years.

**Mr Welford:** Your planning was exposed by Fitzgerald.

**Mr RANDELL:** If the honourable member wants to talk about Fitzgerald, I would like the CJC to have a look at some of the funds that the ALP has received from the unions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! That is outside the debate.

**Mr RANDELL:** I am sorry, Mr Chairman. They provoked me.

As I said, many Government members would not even be in the Chamber if it were not for the foresight of the former National Party Government. I recall that, when mining first started in the Bowen Basin, the ALP opposed it.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr RANDELL:** The honourable member would not be here if he had not been the secretary of a railway union and if places such as Coppabella that cater for the demands of workers in this State were not built by the former National Party Government. A long time ago, I recall the ALP candidate in Sarina debating the National Party member, trying to stop mining in the Bowen Basin. The ALP tried to stop the railways being built. Members of the ALP said that the former National Party Government was going to sell off Australian assets to Japanese companies. What do we have now? The member for Broadsound could tell honourable members what a great town Dysart is. What about Middlemount? I was the chairman of the Broadsound Shire when that town was built. I am very proud of it; it is my town, or I like to believe it is. The member for Broadsound would not be in this Chamber if it were not for the foresight of the National Party Government in building towns, in building schools for our children and doing all those things that are good for Australia.

Queensland has an asset that has been built for this State and this nation, and the National Party can be very proud of what it did in the past. Government members should not cast aspersions. That development has brought enormous prosperity to the region that I represent. I cite the example of Dalrymple Bay, the Half Tide harbour has been built for the tugs and Hay Point. Millions and millions of dollars have been poured into central Queensland. I wish to give the lie to what Government members are saying, that is, that the National Party did nothing in this State. I will finish on the note that the National Party is very proud of what it did in this State.

**Hon. K. H. VAUGHAN** (Nudgee—Minister for Resource Industries) (10.39 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their comments and contributions to this debate. However, I wish to respond to a few points.

The first point concerns the extent of the Government's Budget allocation to the Department of Resource Industries. As I said earlier, the allocation to my department

is roughly equivalent to that received in 1989-90, however, with that ball-park figure this Government has placed an additional focus on what it believes are the priorities neglected by its predecessors, that is, policing the terms and conditions of mining leases and ensuring the Government has access to the best possible policy advice, without neglecting those traditional areas that have been the staple of the Department of Resource Industries' activities, such as the management of mining tenures. In other words, it is targeting managing its resources for the maximum return.

There appears to be some Opposition agitation to the Government's plans for the Queensland Coal Board, with the honourable member for Lockyer, for example, calling for the board's abolition. As I said in my introductory remarks, the previous Government retained a skeleton board for 30 years. This Government reviewed the matter and decided that the board could play a useful liaison and policy advice role in conjunction with my Department of Resource Industries. I stress "in conjunction" and not in conflict, as the honourable members for Lockyer and Burnett suggested. It seems that those on the other side of the Chamber are only familiar with one style of operation, that of confrontation. The Queensland Coal Board and the Department of Resource Industries will be in regular liaison, and I point out that they both report to me. In undertaking the review this Government was aware of the oft-stated views of both the mine employers and the mining unions. It was also aware that all parties agreed—I repeat, all parties agreed—that it was entirely within the Government's rights to upgrade and enhance the quality of policy advice available to it in making decisions on the crucially important coal industry. Members opposite also made much of the present review of the JCB in New South Wales. I point out that the scope of that review covers the entire range of future options for the board, including its possible expansion.

Earlier speakers in this debate also raised the issue of the diesel component of rail freight escalation arrangements. I have to point out again that these provisions are the product of this Government's predecessors. They were not instituted by the Goss Government. They have been in place for some time and, on occasion, have operated in favour of the companies concerned. On coming to office this Government initiated a broad review of rail freights, which the previous Government never did, including, of course, current escalation provisions.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Yes, we did.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** I said that this Government is undertaking a broad review. Nonetheless, I understand that the Treasurer has responded swiftly and directly to industry on existing alternatives to the diesel price calculation factor. I suggest that any further queries be addressed to the Treasurer.

The honourable member for Lockyer also asked whether I was consulted on national park declarations and whether in turn I and my department took account of geological information. The answer to both those questions is, "Yes".

**Mr FitzGerald:** Did you get any wins?

**Mr VAUGHAN:** Again, yes.

**Mr FitzGerald:** How about environmental parks?

**Mr VAUGHAN:** I suggest that the honourable member listens and reads the Mineral Resources Act. He should have a good look at it and digest it. This Act requires that national park proposals be referred to me for consideration.

Concerns were also raised about the recent Special Premiers Conference decision to establish a working party to examine the feasibility of the interconnection of State electricity grids. Members may not be aware that the economical and technical feasibility of interconnection between Queensland and New South Wales has been subject to ongoing review by the QEC and its New South Wales counterpart for many years. The working party will take that examination one crucial step further through a comprehensive examination of all the issues. The member for Lockyer asked a specific question as to

the price of coal to be supplied to the Swanbank Power Station in 1992. He seemed to be insinuating that coal was being bought at uneconomic prices to subsidise the Ipswich/Moreton areas. I remind the member that the contract in question was signed by the previous Government and not by this Government. Obviously I am unable to give the member a specific per tonne figure, but I am advised that the cost of the coal in question, together with the cost reductions as a result of QEC's enhancements to the Swanbank Power Station, will make electricity supply from that station competitive with that from Gladstone.

Some mention was also made of the Government's decision to offer an authority to prospect over the Ensham deposit to three of five former joint venture partners. Both the Premier and I have addressed this issue on a number of occasions and I do not propose to go through it again in detail. I will confine myself to reminding members, including the member for Surfers Paradise, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, that the Government moved to break a stalemate that the previous Government helped to create when it cobbled together the original consortium.

In her rather wide-ranging speech the honourable member for Callide raised the matter of capital guarantees paid by rural consumers. A number of the electricity boards have endorsed an increase in percentages of capital expenditure paid by rural consumers to place them on exactly the same footing as other categories of consumers. The boards have taken this approach on the grounds that—particularly with 99 per cent of the rural population connected to supply—ongoing special subsidisation of rural consumers cannot be justified.

The member for Mount Isa has flagged that he intends to approach me in relation to a number of departmental fossicking areas within his electorate. I assure him that I am aware of the considerable number of Queenslanders who are active fossickers and I will give due consideration to his representations.

It is now appropriate for me to reiterate a few points about the changed emphasis in the portfolio of Resource Industries under this Government. This Government's new emphasis is on getting the best return for the people of Queensland through the exploitation of the resources that they own. When I speak of the best return for the people of Queensland, I am not simply talking about dollars and cents. This is where this Government and the Governments of the last 30 years differ so sharply. A real analysis of return must take into account all the costs and benefits—economic, social and environmental. It is up to the Government to put all of these factors on the scales, weigh them up together and make a decision that is in the best interests of the State. There will be times when the scales will come down on the side of mining and where the economic and social benefits far outweigh the cost of disturbing the environment. Equally, there will be cases where the value of the natural environment to this and future generations is such that mining cannot be contemplated. The Government will not walk away from making any of those decisions after the process of careful assessment has been thoroughly pursued.

The tug of war between conservationists, miners and industrialists is becoming more and more heated. The Government hopes to be able to take some of the non-productive heat out of the debate by giving every argument a hearing in making land-use decisions. If the process of decision-making is rational and fair—and, importantly, if it is clearly seen to be rational and fair—that must help. Admittedly, there are extremists on both sides who will refuse to concede any ground or indulge in any give and take. However, the Government believes that by having in place clear guidelines that take into account a range of viewpoints and considerations, it will be able to show that the umpire's decision is reasonable. As the umpire, the Government has to police the rules. It is in this area that the Labor Government's policies are very different from its predecessors.

In the House, I have often said that as a Labor Government we would police the terms and conditions of mining tenures, and that is what this Labor Government is doing. Not only did the previous Government not do that, but also it failed to provide

enough incentive and technical assistance to companies to enable them to meet those conditions, particularly in relation to environmental management. As I have outlined today, this Government has reversed that trend.

The Government has also boosted staffing levels in its environmental management section and has drafted rehabilitation and environmental guidelines for miners. Under the regionalisation program, additional field officers will not merely be supervising. They will also provide positive back-up and advice to miners and explorers in carrying out their environmental work. Cooperation is the key. Having made its message clear to the companies that it is serious, the Government is now working to support miners and explorers with its technical resources. While the Government is working with industry to improve this facet of mining operations, it also recognises that, if there are failures, it also has to protect the public purse. To achieve that protection, the Government is reviewing the level of security deposits so that they more accurately reflect the actual costs of decommissioning and rehabilitation.

The Committee will recognise that the Government has not been playing politics with the basic activities of the Department of Resource Industries. The Government has merely altered the focus of the direction that it wants Queensland to take in the years to come. The Queensland electricity supply industry is also recognising the changing needs of consumers and the community. The industry is recognising that current patterns of energy generation and consumption are not sustainable, and that the community may not even find them desirable. Increasingly, consumers are realising that consumption—whether it be of energy or of plastic wrapping—needs to be intelligent and responsible because it is affecting the world that the next generation will inherit. That sentiment underlies the energy Green Paper which will be available for public comment later this month.

I am pleased to state that the Queensland Electricity Commission and the seven distribution boards have also taken note of the change. They have begun to educate their 1.1 million customers about the efficient use of electricity. The industry itself is using demand management techniques to improve its own operations. Research is being carried out on non-traditional energy sources that can supplement the existing system in the not-too-distant future. During this financial year, a decision will be made on the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric project and, possibly, reforms within the industry as a result of the Jarden Morgan report. Whatever the outcomes of these projects, I assure the Committee that the people of Queensland will continue to have a reliable electricity supply.

I look forward to working with the staff of the Department of Resource Industries and the Queensland electricity supply industry over the next year. I am confident that together we can achieve the objectives I have outlined tonight.

At 10.50 p.m.,

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 3 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Resource Industries.

The questions for the following Votes were put, and agreed to—

\$31,403,000—Mining, Energy and Electricity, Department of Resource Industries (Consolidated Revenue).

\$1,638,187,000—Mining, Energy and Electricity, Department of Resource Industries and Queensland Electricity Commission (Trust and Special Funds).

Progress reported.

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS REGISTRATION (REPEAL AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS) BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 24 October (see p. 4210).

**Mr LINGARD** (Fassifern) (10.51 p.m.): Moves towards the repeal of this legislation were commenced by the previous Government and were supported by members of the

accounting profession at that time. Therefore, the Opposition will be supporting the legislation.

The previous concept of the Public Accountants Registration Act was to provide a form of protection for the public and for those people who acted as accountants under the provisions of the Act. This acted as a form of Government registration. However, it is only natural that the many changes that have occurred in the field of public accountancy have caused many sections of the legislation to become irrelevant. All honourable members would accept that the field of accounting and auditing has changed dramatically. Therefore, the Opposition will support the repeal of the Act.

Considerable control needs to be exercised by the bodies that monitor the roles of accountants in both Government and private professional areas. The Minister has stated that these supervisory roles will be adopted by groups such as the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, and by virtue of the provisions of the Companies Code and the Securities Code. Moreover, the Tax Agents Board will cover tax agents, and in the professional accountancy area the Australian Society of Practising Accountants and the Institute of Chartered Accountants will adopt a supervisory role. It must be accepted that not all people who participate in these professions belong to professional organisations. The Opposition accepts that repeal of the Act is necessary but believes that procedures must be enforced to ensure that the original concept of offering protection for both members of the public and accountants is assured. This is the role that this Government must enforce.

**Mr HAYWARD** (Caboolture) (10.53 p.m.): The purpose of this Bill is to repeal the Public Accountants Registration Act and disband the Public Accountants Registration Board. It is important to understand a little bit about the history of this matter. The Public Accountants Registration Board has operated in Queensland since 1946. It was set up by a Labor Government and it is to be abolished by one. Registration is required in order to practise public accountancy in Queensland. When the Bill was introduced originally in 1946, it was considered desirable that some form of protection should be given to the public by registering accountants. That is where the Act in recent times has fallen down. I am sure that David Watson, who was a member of the Public Accountants Registration Board, will provide evidence to support the statement that, in recent times, a significant number of complaints received by the board have been from public accountants who were seeking to protect their client base from competition. They were simply saying that so-and-so was practising some form of accountancy and they were complaining to the board to do something about that person who was not, in their terms, a registered practising accountant.

The annual reports of the Public Accountants Registration Board are presented each year to Parliament. The annual report of the Public Accountants Registration Board for the year ended 31 December 1989 shows that there were 3 885 registered public accountants in Queensland. The annual report for 1988 shows that there were 3 878 public accountants registered. Both reports spell out clearly any disciplinary matters that have occurred during the year. It is probably a matter which the member for Moggill will raise later. As I said, he served on that board. The number of complaints that have been received in the last two years has been very small. In fact, only 12 complaints were received, and only one matter resulted in a penalty being imposed by the board.

**Mr Welford:** Does that mean that their dishonesty is too sophisticated?

**Mr HAYWARD:** It means that the complaints that have been made have not hit the deck, so to speak, because they were mostly concerned with complaints against other people practising. The complaints came from accountants trying to protect their own client base.

It is important to understand the intention of the Act. It ensures that, if a person wishes to be a principal of an accounting practice in Queensland, that person must be registered under the Act. That is an important point to remember. It is important to understand that not every accountant is registered. They are registered only if they are

a principal or a partner of an accounting firm. The board has failed in that it has not recognised the changing environment of accountancy in Australia. As the Premier said when he introduced the Bill, accounting has become increasingly national in its perspective. Substantially large multinational companies exist in Australia. Later, I will go into more detail about that.

In Australia, changes have occurred not merely in the size of accountancy practices—not just how they operate—but also in the staffing gender. It is interesting to read the original debates in 1946. *Hansard* explains a lot about the nature of accounting when the Act was introduced. I will illustrate how accounting has changed. When the Premier of the day, Mr Hanlon, introduced the Bill, he stated—

"A public accountant will be a man who sets himself up to solicit public business, not a man who may be employed by a private firm or a Government department to carry out the accountancy work of his employer."

He went on further to say—

"We should not deprive energetic and ambitious young men, who have worked hard in their spare time and in the evenings to qualify as accountants . . ."

That gives honourable members some idea of the nature of accounting and how it operated at that time.

I have a dated but significant book called *Practising Accountants in Australia* by Reg Gynther. It was written in 1967 and gives details about the situation that applied. In Chapter 16, he talked about the issue of female accountants in public practice. He stated—

"There is evidence that the Commonwealth Institute of Accountants (under its former names) barred women from membership from its incorporation in 1887 until 1918, and the Federal Institute of Accountants did not amend its articles to enable women to become members until 1925. The Australasian Corporation of Public Accountants also barred women from its ranks for some time at least. The prejudice seems to have lingered, and this is confirmed by a letter received from a woman with a remarkable record in the profession."

In the book, the woman spoke about working for an accounting firm. She stated—

"The first examination I took was under the Australasian Corporation of Public Accountants, being warned beforehand that even if I passed, I would not be eligible for membership because I was a woman. I failed."

That is a history of some of the language when the Bill was introduced.

It was not that long ago that women did not work on audit staffs of accounting firms. The argument—wrongly used—to support that was simply that, if an argument developed between the firm and one of the male accountants with whom it was dealing, there was potential that the woman would be stood over by the employed accountants. If work was to be carried out in outlying areas, women were not allowed to represent the firm in those areas. That attitude certainly does not apply today.

In 1988, the national President of the Australian Society of Accountants was Ms Elizabeth Alexander. In 1988, the President of the Northern Territory society—a fairly outlying, rugged area—was Rita Harvey. When Rita, commenting on her appointment, said that she had not been discriminated against because of her sex, she ventured the opinion that more and more women would become senior accountants. When David Watson speaks on this Bill later, I am sure that he will point out that at present 50 per cent of the new graduates to accounting are women.

One of the main reasons why the Act has failed is that it has not moved with the times. Accounting has become more national in perspective and the scope of the work performed has certainly expanded. It has expanded with the scope and diversity of the Australian and the world economies, and it has expanded with the use of technology. This Act was introduced in 1946. It only recognised the limited scope of traditional

accounting and auditing, as was spelt out by the Minister of the day in his second-reading speech. Everybody knows that the increasing complexity of business has certainly placed heavy demands on the accounting profession. This increasing complexity has not been recognised by this Act. Again, that was clearly covered by the Premier in his second-reading speech when he talked about some of the issues, such as financial consultancy, investment advice, superannuation and computer advice, that arise now. Naturally enough, in view of when it was drafted, the old Act did not deal at all with computer issues or anything to do with electronic data processing. It simply concentrated on auditing.

What must be understood about the activities of practising public accountants is that much of the work with the client is very personal, and it is based on trust. The nature of business is such that it has led to specialisation. Large firms have different departments. Smaller firms concentrate on particular areas such as liquidations, insolvencies, taxation, auditing and computer advice. It is very rare now to find accountancy practices that can say that they are generalist in every area. Most practices specialise in a particular area. In order to understand how accountancy has moved in Australia, it is important to understand that accountancy firms nationally and certainly within Queensland are roughly placed into three levels. We are dealing with what is now termed the big six accountancy firms, which are basically accounting firms with a huge international exposure. So that honourable members can understand just how big the industry is, I will refer to an article in the *Business Review Weekly*, which states—

"Australian accountancy has 6050 practices that employ about 50,000 and turn over \$2.3 billion."

An example of one of these big six accountancy firms is Coopers and Lybrand. That article states that Coopers and Lybrand reported that last year it earned fees in Australia of \$229m, which was a 17 per cent increase on the previous year. There is a second-tier level of firms. A second-tier level firm in the Australian context would have fees of about \$28m, a staff of, say, 321 and 61 partners. Small firms would have fees of less than \$2m. There is a huge variation in the size of Australian accountancy practices. That same variation applies on a much smaller scale, of course, in Queensland.

The controversial question that arises in accountancy now and has led to the debate concerns the future of the smaller accountancy firms. There has been some debate as to the possibilities of their survival, given the huge multinational and middle-tier Australian firms. However, they will survive for a few reasons, and I think it is important that they be outlined in the debate on this Bill because I believe that the smaller firms may tend to object to the legislation. They will survive because they provide a personalised service on accountancy matters and, as I have said, many of them specialise in a certain area, particularly in a State such as Queensland. Honourable members who represent rural electorates would know that many accountancy firms in country areas specialise in primary production or computer advice. Fundamentally, and increasingly more importantly, is the fact that smaller accountancy practices generally charge lower fees. These days that is a significant factor when people are seeking accountancy advice. It is interesting to examine the size of accountancy practices that exist in Queensland. Probably the largest practice would be KPMG Peat Marwick, which has 45 partners and a staff of approximately 400 people. That is a large firm by Queensland standards but certainly not by Australian standards. As everybody is aware, Queensland has a much smaller market. There are many reasons for that, but I do not intend to go into those now.

The movement towards specialisation has resulted in a merger of accountancy firms. Other obvious reasons are efficiency and cost-saving. When I was preparing my speech, I came across the recent winter salary survey of the accountancy recruitment firm Accountancy Placements. That firm has sounded a note of warning for all accountants. It has stated that big mergers have had a negative effect on the employment market. That is the issue of efficiency coming through again. However, it notes that general trading conditions have been the most critical issue, and practices have sought to weed out non-performers. The amalgamations have certainly resulted in smaller practices. It

has certainly placed a lot of pressure on the new graduate intake for next year. Many Queensland firms which previously took on substantial numbers of graduates are taking on a lot fewer this year. I think it is important to note that the supply of accounting graduates has far exceeded the demand.

Another matter that needs to be raised is what is to happen to the surplus funds held by the Public Accountants Registration Board. For the year ended 30 June 1989, the surplus funds available were in fact \$122,492. Most of that, of course, is held in current assets, so it is freely available. The report shows that when the present Act is repealed, under section 10 of this legislation those funds are to be distributed in equal shares to the Institute of Chartered Accountants and to the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants. They are to be used—I quote from what the Premier said—"for fostering professional development and education in accountancy in Queensland". That is very important.

Accountancy education is a matter that will probably be covered by the member for Moggill, but there has been extensive debate in the accountancy field on curriculum issues. One of the things that is important is the time lag between the current issues in accountancy and their introduction into the curriculum. This Bill is a classic example of how things are changing so quickly that often people are not taught exactly what is happening. The other problem is how to deal with complex legal issues and their relationship with financial accounting. Another issue that educators will have to address is how to fit all the necessary information into a three-year course. That is one of the problems that accounting educators are going to be faced with, and that is important in the context of this abolition because that money is to be set aside to further accountancy education. The question is how to fit the necessary learning into the subjects in the particular course that is to be undertaken.

It is important to understand that both the accountancy bodies are to receive those surplus funds. They run extensive professional development activities and are representative of most accountants in Queensland. I have spoken with the representatives of those bodies and those funds will be very welcome. The Institute of Chartered Accountants tends to represent practising accountants in public practice, and the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants tends to represent all accountants. It is a much larger body and probably has a longer tail as it represents members in Government and industry, as well as academics. It has a national membership of 53 000. I am talking about a substantial organisation.

Professional development and the distribution of this money are important issues. Most organisations now require compulsory professional development of 40 hours per annum. Last year, the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Queensland randomly audited 150 of its members as to how they were complying with that requirement of professional development. It is important for honourable members to appreciate how seriously those organisations treat professional development because they are now taking over that responsibility for it. During that random audit last year, 15 people failed and were referred to the registrar of the Institute of Chartered Accountants for disciplinary action. I have to say that nothing has been done at this stage as the reference is a recent innovation. However, the power is clearly there for the institute and the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants to suspend or fine members for failure to comply. It is important for all honourable members to understand the power and the importance of those organisations.

Both accountancy bodies are also now proceeding towards amalgamation. That move has been on the drawing board for a number of years. Over a period a number of ballots on that issue have been held. Hopefully, this time it should succeed. There are good arguments to support that amalgamation, such as: one voice for the profession instead of two; the matter of office rationalisation, having one library, because all honourable members know that libraries are very costly to maintain, one magazine—presently there are two—and congresses and seminars coming under the control of one body.

This Bill clearly states that the remaining funds are to be distributed to those organisations. The accounting bodies are concerned about making substantial cost savings. Accounting education is important and those organisations are undertaking those programs. I believe it is important that that should apply under clause 10.

It is a pleasure for me to support this Bill. I understand from the people in the accounting profession to whom I have spoken that there is no opposition to this Bill. I do not know whether other members of this House have been speaking with people in their areas, but I certainly have not encountered any opposition. I actually thought that there might have been, but I have been overwhelmed by the clear support for this Bill. People have made it very clear that as far as they are concerned the Public Accountants Registration Board should be abolished.

Time expired.

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.14 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak on the Bill repealing the Public Accountants Registration Act. As the member for Caboolture has so kindly indicated, I was a member of the Public Accountants Registration Board from 1979 to 1984, when I was elected to Federal Parliament and, more recently, from 1988 to December last year, when I was elected to this place.

I speak with some experience on the operation of the board and the difficulties that the members of the board experienced in trying to enforce the Act. I should also indicate that I was one of the five members of the board who, in 1988, proposed to the then National Party Government that the Public Accountants Registration Act be repealed and that the board be abolished. Later in my remarks, I intend to draw heavily on the document calling for the board's abolition, and I feel comfortable in doing that because I played a fairly substantial role in the original writing and rewriting of that document.

Before I make particular comments, I pay a personal tribute to those members of the Public Accountants Registration Board with whom I served over those many years. Honourable members may know that the board is chaired by the Auditor-General. During my time on the board I served with Jim Peel, Pat Craven, Vince Doyle and, most recently, with Pat Nolan, who is in the lobby. I can quite clearly say that each of those Auditors-General, while they had their own distinctive style, added greatly to the deliberations of the board and made major contributions to the accounting profession. The Institute of Chartered Accountants was represented by two former State chairmen, Mr Len Doggett and Mr Hugh Greenway. Representing the Australian Society of Accountants, or what is now referred to as the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants, were Geoff Orr and Lance Hogg, both of whom were very distinguished State presidents of that body. Those representing Treasury did not often turn up, but when he did turn up, Mr Bob Shead actually performed very well. Finally, the board was run on a day-to-day basis by an extremely efficient lady, Ms Lesley McMillan. I can guarantee that not only did she perform a great job but she was also a pleasure to deal with.

Today we are debating the repeal of the Public Accountants Registration Act. The objective of Government regulation of a profession, a trade or an occupation is the protection of consumers from adverse physical, personal and/or financial consequences arising from their inability to evaluate the qualifications, competence and integrity of potential purveyors of the products or services of the profession, trade or occupation. I guess that is an understanding all of us have of what a regulatory process might do in any profession.

It was against this background, together with some quite explicit criteria, that in 1988 the board evaluated whether or not the Public Accountants Registration Act should be repealed. I will outline the prerequisites that we as a board saw for effective regulation. These were: a clear definition of the products or services subject to regulatory control; effective selection, identification and licensing of authorised purveyors; public awareness of regulatory machinery and of the potential consequences of dealing with unauthorised

persons; mechanisms for the detection of and action against unauthorised purveyors; procedures for reviewing continued eligibility of authorised purveyors in terms of selection criteria; machinery for the determination and imposition of punitive measures against authorised purveyors; and appeal procedures to protect the interests of persons affected by decisions and actions of the regulatory body .

In examining its functioning and what had happened over the past few years, the board decided there were quite significant limiting factors which made it impossible to fulfil its proper function. For the benefit of members, I will refer to some of those concerns. I will not refer to all of them, but I will touch on the major ones and some of those that were indicated by the member for Caboolture. One concern was that once a practitioner had been registered, there was no way the board could go back and check whether or not the person so registered continued to be capable of performing the act of public accounting. In other words, there was no way to be able—and in fact the board did not have the resources available to it—to physically go back and test from time to time the competency of the individuals once they were registered. It was impossible, because registered with the board were approximately 4 000 members, many of whom lived interstate and overseas. So the process itself would have been extremely difficult.

A second problem was that the board was convinced that its limited charter and the absence of any capacity to monitor, to inspect or investigate activity rendered it largely ineffectual in its public protection role. It should be remembered that one of the critical things in regulating a profession is that presumably that regulating is being done for the benefit of the public and consumers. Yet the board found itself pretty much ineffectual when it came to that critical process. As the member for Caboolture said, it could be noted that, over the years that I was a member of the board, the board prosecuted very few practising accountants. In fact, over the past 10 or 12 years, only 17 such prosecutions occurred.

It was interesting that, when the board did proceed against an accountant, it invariably did so based upon the information received from another practitioner. The question that was usually raised was whether or not the person who was to be proceeded against was actually acting legally as a public accountant; it did not really address whether or not the person had the capabilities to so act. I can recall one occasion on which every public accountant in a country town made a complaint against every other public accountant with respect to the procedures that were being adopted either in obtaining clients or in the practice of the profession. But not one complaint came from the general public or from any of the clients. It was merely each and every practitioner in the town who was making a complaint.

That became even worse, because when the board actually tried to enforce the Act as it saw it, it came across some significant problems. One was the evidentiary requirements in a court of law. Although the Public Accountants Registration Board could actually discipline people who were registered with it, it could not do anything on its own account for practitioners who were not registered with it. They had to go through the normal court procedures. I can remember one instance in which somebody who was not registered advertised himself as a public accountant. On that occasion, the board proceeded and went to court. The issue was thrown out of court because the board—and let me add that I guess the Crown Solicitor had not advised the board to the extent that perhaps he should have—could not establish that the person whose name appeared on the board advertising his services was the person who actually put the sign up. It was impossible for us to proceed beyond what the Act said we should be doing. We learned from that and established the issues much more clearly. After a very expensive legal process, the individual who was not practising according to the Act was fined \$100. One had to ask whether or not the board was really performing any useful function.

I turn now to the well-known case of Steve Hart and Associates. He was very smart. Although he was not registered as a public accountant, he managed to practise in a way that indicated that he was performing all the activities of a public accountant. He was so smart that he managed to get around all the rules. When it came to the critical issue

of whether or not the board could fulfil its function, the board was ineffectual, despite the best endeavours of its members—the Auditor-General, the secretary and other members.

Another problem goes back to when the legislation was first introduced. I refer to the narrowness of the definition of "public accounting". It was basically general accounting and/or auditing. I am aware that the member for Whitsunday has some relationship with someone who practises public accounting. As the member for Caboolture said, the practice of public accounting is far broader than many people believe it to be in terms of general accountancy and auditing. In 1947, this was alluded to by Thomas Hiley as a potential problem. He was the member for Logan at that stage. I understand that Sir Thomas Hiley died today. At that time, he said—

"It is well that the House should give some thought also to what the term 'public accountancy' involves. There is a feeling that 'public accountancy' means the simple auditing of the accounts of companies. On the contrary, 'public accountancy' connotes, in 1946, an infinitely wider concept of duties than the mere auditing of the accounts of public companies."

Later in that speech he submitted to the House that, amongst other things—

". . . the duties to which public accountants are asked to devote their attention (include) the keeping and preparation of accounts, public secretarial work, filling in of taxation returns and adjusting assessments, installation of office systems, cost accounting, business budgeting and statistics, work in connection with bankruptcies, liquidations, and receiverships, auditing the books of all classes of businesses, and making business investigations, and occasionally you have an arbitration where the matter at issue is a financial matter, and the giving of financial advice. With that manifold scope of duty, I suggest that we are not dealing with any narrow, little demands that may be imposed by the commercial community on the profession."

I am sure that everybody who is involved in accountancy, particularly public accounting, would suggest that the complexity of public accounting has increased substantially since then. The problem is that of the vast range of activities in which a public accountant engages, the vast majority are not regulated by the board. Therefore, the board has been regulating general accountancy and auditing procedures. Because a vast range of activities do not come within the purview of the board, the individuals performing those duties are not subject to any disciplinary action or control. In addition, a large number of people who perform duties such as financial services, computing, cost accounting and management consultancy are not technically practising general accountancy and auditing. Therefore, they and their organisations do not come within the disciplinary power of the Public Accountants Registration Act.

Two issues critically affect the ability of the board as it exists to perform any reasonable activities. One relates to the taxation legislation. Although the Tax Agents Board was established in 1922, was transferred to the Commonwealth in 1943 and predates the Public Accountants Registration Board, the growth in the complexity of taxation has meant that tax agents perform a great variety of activities, many of which are public accounting activities. Provided that they perform them with the purpose of producing a taxation return, they are acting within the Commonwealth legislation and are not subject to control by a State authority. That provides a massive loophole whereby a lot of public accounting activity is undertaken by people who are not registered.

In July 1982, responsibility for the Companies Auditors Board was moved from the Auditor-General and the Premier's Department to the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs. When I was first appointed to the Public Accountants Registration Board I was also appointed to the Companies Auditors Board. Those two bodies, which had the very same membership, controlled a significant part of accounting and auditing work. As soon as the Companies Auditors Board was dissolved and the responsibilities were placed under the control of the Commissioner for Corporate Affairs, a substantial slice of public accounting came within the purview of a joint State/Commonwealth Act. That put a substantial portion of the accounting profession outside the purview of the Public

Accountants Registration Board. When that occurred in 1982, I started to think quite seriously that the board should be dissolved and the Act repealed. At that stage I started to raise the issue on the Public Accountants Registration Board itself.

The issues that the board saw as a problem can be summarised as follows: the regulatory machinery in Queensland is considered to be an anachronism for several reasons. Firstly, it serves little purpose in protecting the public interest and largely duplicates self-regulatory processes of professional accountancy bodies and other statutory mechanisms. Secondly, public accountants now provide a multifarious range of accounting, auditing and financial services that are far beyond what was envisaged by the original legislation and beyond the scope of effective regulation of the nature provided for in the Act. Thirdly, financial services other than accounting and auditing now provided by public accountants may be provided by financial institutions, consultants, managers, advisers, trustees, etc., who are not subject to the Act. Fourthly, the vast majority of registered public accountants are members of highly disciplined professional bodies with a demonstrated capability for effective self-regulation. Fifthly, the law does not recognise the growing incidence of specialisation in the profession in which the complexity and sophistication are increasing at a rapid rate. Finally, the board considered the redefining of public accounting to embrace all the services provided by public accountants, but decided that that would result in the entire financial service industry and every practitioner in it being brought under the Act's purview. At that time, we decided and recommended that it was impractical and undesirable that this should be contemplated. The Liberal Party will support the repeal of the Act but, at the Committee stage, I foreshadow an amendment to clause 10.

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (11.33 p.m.), in reply: I thank the three members who have spoken for their contributions and for their support for the legislation. The member for Fassifern spoke on behalf of the Opposition and I thank him for his contribution, which was straightforward and to the point. He indicated that the National Party in Government was proposing to move in this direction. It is pleasing to see that bipartisan support. The member for Caboolture, who is a member of my parliamentary legislative committee, also spoke at some length about the profession of which he is a member and about the circumstances of this legislation. I thank him for his contribution, which was obviously well informed and based on his understanding of not only the issues surrounding this particular proposal but also the profession. Obviously, because of his background, he clearly understood the issues. He pointed out that there were very few prosecutions under the Act. I do not know whether there is a problem here or not, but in the more substantial professions, such as the legal profession, the pursuit of any potential problems is much more rigorous. Of course, I could not accept any suggestion that the legal profession is more inclined to stray from the straight and narrow. I gather from the comments made by the member for Caboolture, which were confirmed by the member for Moggill, that the other aspect about proceedings being taken against accountants is that, unlike lawyers again, they tend to do each other in.

The member for Caboolture also made the very good point that both bodies run professional development courses, that he has spoken to both bodies, that they also have regulatory responsibility and, for that reason, it is appropriate that the funds referred to as being required to be disposed be dispersed to those bodies. I understand that we will have a further discussion on that. The issue was raised with me by the member for Moggill prior to the debate. I understand that he wishes to put forward a proposal. I thank the member for Caboolture for his contribution both tonight and earlier in the year in the legislative committee and for raising the matter before that. I had a discussion earlier in the year with him and the Auditor-General in relation to the proposal and the reasons for it. I thank also the Auditor-General for his advice to me in terms of pursuing this matter.

The member for Moggill also made a worthy contribution. As he said, he is a member of the board and, as a representative of the University of Queensland—

**Mr Hayward:** He was a member of the board.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Sorry, wrong tense. He was a member of the board. In his capacity representing the University of Queensland, he is very well qualified to speak in this debate. I thank him also for his contribution. I thank the Liberal Party for its support for the legislation to repeal the current provisions.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

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

Clauses 1 to 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—

**Dr WATSON** (11.38 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 3, omit lines 25 to 34 and substitute—

'10. Disposal of surplus funds. The Board, after payment of the amounts required to be paid by virtue of section 9, is to pay the balance of the monies standing to the credit of the funds of the Board to The University of Queensland to enable the interest received from the investment of the monies by the University to be applied by the Department of Commerce of the University for the purpose of fostering research and education in public accountancy in Queensland.' "

I have moved this amendment for a number of reasons. I am a member of both the institute and the society.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** I will clear that up first.

In addition, I have also served on the regional councils of the society and on many of the committees of both the institute and the society. I do not raise these issues to in any way reflect upon the good intentions of those bodies. The University of Queensland has had a very long association with the Public Accountants Registration Board. When the original Act was introduced in 1947, the Premier, Mr Hanlon, indicated that the board would consist of four members. One would be the person holding the office of Auditor-General for the time being, who would be ex officio the chairman; the second would be the person holding office as Under Secretary of the Treasury, who would be ex officio the deputy chairman; the third would be a member of the Faculty of Commerce of the University of Queensland elected by the Senate of the university; and the fourth would be a public accountant registered under the Act who had the qualifications outlined in the definition and who would be elected by the registered public accountants in the State. It is interesting that in the original legislation there was no mention of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Australian Society of Accountants or the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants because at that time the latter body did not exist. There is not as long a history of association between the board and those bodies as there is between the board and the University of Queensland.

Much of the earlier examination was undertaken on behalf of the board by the University of Queensland. When I was an undergraduate at the University of Queensland, I can recall quite vividly—and possibly the members for Caboolture and Townsville might also recall this—that the accountancy examination papers were for students enrolled in the B.Com., B.Econ., AAUQ and the Public Accountants Registration Board certificate courses.

**Mr Hayward:** You are giving away your age.

**Dr WATSON:** It is public knowledge in any case.

As a tutor at that time, I can remember grading a number of those students. I understand that the University of Queensland was compensated for the work, although

I did check with the meritorious professor, Reg Gynther, whose work was quoted by the member for Caboolture earlier in this debate. He does not recall the Faculty of Commerce ever receiving any money, but perhaps that is university politics.

More importantly, the member of the Public Accountants Registration Board who is appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Senate of the University of Queensland actually plays a substantial role in the running of the board independently of board meetings. In fact, invariably when I was a member of the board the secretary of the board would contact me and other representatives of the university who were members of the board and ask for our advice on the academic qualifications of applicants and, in some cases, legal issues. The representative of the University of Queensland was not only involved as a member of the board but also was intimately involved with the evaluation process that went on initially with the examinations and then later in the evaluation of applicants and their academic qualifications. This occurred quite independently of board meetings and was a fairly extensive process. I point this out because no other academic or accounting institution can say that it has had such a long and deep association with the board.

The sum of money that is available provides an opportunity for this Government and Parliament to do something about accounting education and research. It is a critical issue as to whether or not the funds will go to these two professional bodies. There will be approximately \$100,000 left after expenses and other things are taken into account. If that sum is split between the professional bodies, each body will receive \$50,000.

**Mr Davies:** A reasonable compromise is the James Cook University.

**Dr WATSON:** Ron Peterson might even disagree with the honourable member.

The decision has to be made as to whether giving \$50,000 to each of those institutions will be as beneficial to Queensland as it would if it were put into a trust fund as proposed in my amendment. The interest will be available to support research and education at the University of Queensland. We hear a lot—especially from the Prime Minister—about Australia wanting to be the clever country, but being the clever country requires a commitment of the resources about which both Federal and State Parliaments have to make decisions. This is a significant sum of money that could be dedicated—without affecting anyone else—to the development of individuals in a major institution, that is, the University of Queensland, which is regarded as the premier institution in this State, particularly in accounting and finance.

**Mr Beattie:** I would be a bit careful about that. There are a few other institutions that might have a different view.

**Dr WATSON:** I stand by what I say, that it is the premier institution in this State. Most people would consider it to be the premier institution in this country in terms of accounting and finance. I am not suggesting that the funds be dissipated in any particular way. The University of Queensland is the premier institution for the simple reason that it has the only doctoral program and the only significant honours program of any academic institution in this State, and it offers one of the few doctoral and honours programs in this country. If the Committee is talking about training people and producing people with post-graduate qualifications who can undertake research and provide a foundation for the future education of students, it seems to me that there is no doubt that significant value will come from placing this money at the disposal of the University of Queensland.

Earlier I said to the Premier that, in my estimation, the interest on this amount would probably support for one year the carrying out of research by two doctoral students. This country is flat out attracting doctoral students in accounting anywhere, and the most significant program is conducted by the University of Queensland. If the Government and the Parliament want to do something for education and research, they have the opportunity to do so by putting this money into a trust fund and having interest available to support education.

**Mr Hayward:** What is the point about practising accountants, though?

**Mr Beattie:** That is what the Bill is all about. It is about practising accountants.

**Dr WATSON:** We are talking about an opportunity to help the accounting profession—including potential practising accountants—over a long period.

**Mr Beattie:** You and Robin Hood would have got on well.

**Dr WATSON:** The honourable member should look at the amendment, which states that the money and interest are to be provided for research and education in public accounting. There can be nothing more significant or pertinent to the public accounting area than that. Let us not mess around with this matter. If that is the essence of the honourable member's query, then this amendment satisfies it precisely. It seems to me that the Premier would do a great service to Queensland if he accepted this amendment and supported it when it comes to a vote.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The amendment put forward by the member for Moggill is a reasonable one and I have no strong objection to it. However, the proposal outlined in the legislation is preferred by the Government. I have outlined the reasons for that in detail. The member for Moggill raised this point with me this morning but, as I said to him, the Bill has been drawn on the basis of discussions engaged in with the relevant professional bodies. The Government feels obligated to maintain that commitment but, beyond that, very sound reasons exist for maintaining the original proposal; that is to say, it is preferable to the proposition put forward by the member for Moggill, not that the proposition he put forward is unreasonable.

I have sought advice, and the board members who were available for consultation today in relation to this proposition have informed me that the original proposal in the legislation has greater merit. They support the legislation. I am also advised by members of the board that, as they see it, the legislation provides that the money will be directed towards the same basic purposes as those suggested by the honourable member. What we are talking about is the agent chosen for delivery, and there are various arguments for and against both proposals.

A number of propositions have been put to me, and these are the basis upon which the Government will adhere to the original proposition and not accept the amendment. The propositions are based on advice both from the board—that is, the members who were available—and from the professional bodies. Their views are that the proposition put forward by the Government should be maintained for the following principal reasons. Firstly, there is a clear logic in the proposal put forward by the Government in that the two professional bodies will provide a continuation of regulatory control over practitioners after dissolution of the board. Secondly, they will apply funds to the professional development of their members, which is in the public interest. Thirdly, they are best placed to do this widely across the State. Fourthly—and this is very important—the surplus funds were, to a very high degree, contributed by their membership. Fifthly, the amendment is not regarded by them to be altogether impartial because it ignores the claims of sister institutions. Sixthly, the University of Queensland is regarded by the amendment as the representative of all tertiary institutions. Lastly, it is pointed out that it will be seen that funds contributed by practitioners throughout Queensland have been directed to the south-east area of Queensland only.

They are the points that have been put to me. I accept them. On that basis, the Government will adhere to the original proposition.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 11 to 13 and Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

**Third Reading**

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

**PUBLIC SERVICE (ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS) BILL (NO. 2)****Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 24 October (see p. 4211).

**Mr LINGARD** (Fassifern) (11.54 p.m.): We have already seen the passage through this House of the Public Service (Administrative Arrangements) Bill (No. 1). Therefore, all of the comments that we made on that Bill are relevant to this Bill. In the first of these public service Bills, the Opposition indicated that it would support the two Bills, even though it did not agree with the concept of what was done in the reorganisation of the public service by the ALP Government. The Opposition supported the first Bill which addressed changes to 29 Acts within five departments. This Bill addresses changes to a further 97 Acts within seven departments. There is no doubt that the new Government has used the reorganisation of the departments to be extremely vindictive towards those whom it believes are not of its political persuasion. However, I am aware that discussion on those matters is not relevant to this Bill.

The Opposition accepts that the Government has every right to make changes to the organisation of departments and that, when that happens, complementary legislation is necessary. Therefore, only for those reasons, the Opposition supports the second public service Bill.

**Mr BEANLAND** (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.56 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the Bill. Although we acknowledge that the Government has a right to make these amendments largely—not totally—as a result of its election commitments on the rearrangement of the various departments, it also continues a saga in relation to the public service. That saga is not doing a great deal for the Queensland public service, nor for the Government. It is certainly creating an enormous amount of uncertainty and it is demoralising. Furthermore, the public service is being treated rather shoddily by the various courses of action that the Government is taking. It seems that in many cases change is being made for change's sake. In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that this legislation and its predecessor formalise in part the Government's promise to maximise efficiency. That is not the case at all; far from it. That is one of the glib phrases that the Government plucks from the air from time to time.

With this Bill, the Government is proposing to put into effect some more stages of its public sector reform process, a process in which it promised 18 Government departments, one of which was to be a separate department under the Minister for Regional Development. We find that that is another broken promise. It has not happened. That department has been attached to the Treasury Department. In place of that, we have a portfolio of Minister for Land Management, which was not foreshadowed in the Government's policy document. According to that document, Land Management was to be included in the Primary Industries portfolio. Although the legislation is fulfilling part of the Government's election promise, it has broken yet another promise. It is good at breaking promises. It cannot even organise its departments in the manner in which it promised prior to the last election. Many of the amendments put in place a number of titles, such as director-general. I am not sure whether that is supposed to improve the efficiency of the department's operations. It might formalise things so that each department is headed by a director-general. However, that does not in itself deliver better or more efficient and effective service to the public of Queensland.

I will deal with what has occurred in the area of Local Government and Housing. In the rearrangement of departments, Local Government has been given a great kick down the ladder. Today, it has a much lower profile than it had previously. The Director of Local Government is now on the third rung of the ladder. He is a general manager of local government services and is on the third rung of the ladder. He is no longer the

senior public servant within the Department of Local Government. In fact, the senior public servant is the Director-General of Housing and Local Government. Although these amendments might seem fine to the Minister and to the Government, I believe that at the end of the day they do little to give the type of presence to a number of aspects of government, such as local government, that we have seen in the past. Local government has a much lesser role to play in this Government's eyes than it had in recent decades under previous Governments.

The Government has spoken of independence and the end of political interference in the public service. Under this Government, there is less independence for the public service than ever before. In fact, in recent times, we have seen a great deal of interference in the public service. One only has to look at the type of treatment that was handed out to very senior public servants when Government departments were rearranged immediately after the Government took office. Therefore, whilst the Government might be carrying out a number of aspects of its election commitments, it has certainly broken some promises in terms of its public sector reform process. The Government has not followed through with those promises, as it indicated clearly to the people of this State prior to the election that it would.

In conclusion, the Government is being anything but open and accountable to the public. One only has to look at the way in which the Premier answered a question on notice from me this morning. In a very arrogant response, the Premier failed once again to honour the freedom of information and the freedom of providing information from an open and accountable Government. If the public sector reform that the Government talks about so freely is to be achieved, surely there must be freedom of information, which this Government also talks about at great length but which it certainly threw in the trash can today in fine fashion. This Labor Government has once again concealed information about the public service.

Although this legislation might be heralded by the Minister as going a long way towards meeting, or in fact meeting, the election commitments of this Government, it certainly does not meet all of those commitments. In the last 24 hours, honourable members have seen yet again a number of broken promises.

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (12.03 a.m.) in reply: I thank the member for Fassifern and the member for Toowong for their support for the legislation.

Motion agreed to.

### **Committee**

Clauses 1 to 4 and First to Eighth Schedules, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### **Third Reading**

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

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (12.03 a.m.): I move—  
“That the House do now adjourn.”

### **Ministerial Statement by Minister for Manufacturing, Commerce and Small Business**

**Mr BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.04 a.m.): This morning the political cripple who presides over what is left of the once-proud Department of Industry Development indulged in a litany of untruths and misrepresentation designed to justify his continued presence in the Cabinet.

**Mr SMITH:** I rise to a point of order. I find the remarks by the honourable member objectionable and I ask that he withdraw them.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister seeks a withdrawal of the remarks.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I withdraw the remarks, Mr Speaker.

The Minister has misled the House for reasons of pure political expediency—

**Mr SMITH:** I rise to a point of order. I object to the words "misled the House". I ask for a withdrawal.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister seeks the withdrawal of those words.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I withdraw them.

Let me say that the actions of the Minister have fermented widespread dissatisfaction within his department. I want to refer briefly to his ministerial statement and challenge him to debate with me anywhere and at any time his record compared with that of his conservative predecessors.

Misrepresentation No.1 alleged that the department's Corporate Services Division had grown to a quarter of the total staff establishment of the department. The Coaldrake review and the Minister have ignored the fact that, under the previous Government, the department also included the Centre for Information Technology and Communications, the Queensland-China Council, the trade and investment branch and, until shortly before the election, the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. Under the previous Government, the portfolio was responsible for nearly three times the number of staff. If Dr Coaldrake saw fit to transfer many of these functions to other departments but not to reduce the number of administrative staff, that is the Minister's problem and not the fault of his predecessors.

Much of the Minister's statement is not worthy of response. However, I must defend the record of the Defence Aerospace and Offsets Branch established by me in 1988. Contrary to the Coaldrake assessment embraced by this pitiful shell of a Minister, annual purchasing information provided by the Department of Defence shows that the value of contracts placed on Queensland companies by the Defence Contracting Office in Queensland increased from \$28.616m in 1987-88 to \$67.863m in 1989-90—not the \$1.6m quoted by Government sources in this morning's *Courier-Mail*. The correct figure is \$67.863m. These figures do not include contracts awarded to Queensland companies on a subcontract basis by interstate or off shore prime contractors to the Department of Defence. But perhaps the greatest deceit perpetrated by the Minister and his plastic Premier relates to the alleged revelation—

**Mr SMITH:** I rise to a point of order. I object to the word "deceit". I ask for a withdrawal.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister seeks a withdrawal.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I withdraw, Mr Speaker.

That deceit relates to the alleged revelation that Queensland secured only \$1.6m in offsets. The Minister, by his ignorance, has demonstrated that he is unfit for Cabinet rank. Offsets have nothing to do with defence contracts. They are accumulated only when Governments procure from overseas. The reason why the previous Government's offsets were relatively low was that, unlike its Labor colleagues interstate, it did not spend overseas and, unlike this Government, the Opposition makes no apology for supporting local industry. I repeat that offsets are accumulated only when one procures from overseas.

The ministerial statement that this cowardly Government opposite refused to debate is a politically inspired course of action riddled with misrepresentations and selective references. This morning's statement in an article in the *Courier-Mail* also referred to the Crown industrial estates program producing little more than spear grass and a skating rink. No mention is made of the fact that the department used the Crown industrial estates program to attract ICI and Minproc to Gladstone, Fisher and Paykel to Cleveland,

Colgate Palmolive to the Gold Coast, the relocation of NQEA in Cairns and the establishment of Power Brewing at Yatala, all up an investment of \$300m.

This report has again confirmed Dr Coaldrake's well-deserved title as "crony in chief of the Goss Government". It is a tragedy that a fine department has all but been destroyed in the process and that defenceless public servants have been used to prop up an incompetent and useless Minister.

Time expired.

### **Cassowary Conservation by National Parks and Wildlife Service**

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave) (12.09 a.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise tonight to acquaint members with the good work being undertaken by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service with respect to the cassowary in the wet tropics of north Queensland. Australia's second largest bird, the cassowary is the largest bird found in Queensland's tropical rainforests. It belongs to the ratite group of birds—large flightless land birds with a keelless breastbone, hair-like feathers and three pointing toes. Overseas relatives of the cassowary include the ostrich of South Africa, the New Zealand kiwi and the rhea of South America. Australia's own emu also belongs to the same group. Of the three known species of cassowary, only one is found in Australia and is restricted to the remaining wet tropical rainforest habitats in far-north Queensland. The other two species are found in New Guinea and nearby islands.

Before European settlement in this country, the cassowary was more abundant and populated a far wider area than it does today. The early settlers, in their bid to open up agricultural land, cleared large tracts of rainforest and, in the process, sharply reduced the cassowary population. Today, the bird is found mainly in the inaccessible coastal range area and in isolated rainforest pockets of far-north Queensland. The cassowary is definitely under threat. Evidence indicates that if some steps are not taken in the near future to protect the cassowary, its habitat and its food supply, it may eventually go the way of the Tasmanian tiger. As a society, we can little afford to lose such a valuable member of our fauna heritage. The Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service is currently working with conservation groups, local authorities, researchers and concerned individuals to address this problem. Australia's first conference on cassowary conservation is to be held on 1 December at Mission Beach. It is appropriate that Mission Beach has been chosen as the site for the conference as this area has been identified as a major habitat pocket. Other areas with substantial numbers include the Wallaman Falls district and two areas in my electorate, namely Wopen Creek and Coquette Point adjoining the Graham Range.

The clearing of land for farming has resulted in a fragmentation of the cassowary habitat, which has clear negative implications for the survival of the species. Earlier this century, the bird was prolific in other places in my electorate, but human interference has seen its almost complete elimination from those areas. It is a rare occasion now when a cassowary can be sighted at Lake Barrine, the Malanda scrub, at Danbulla or in the lower Goldsborough Valley. Crome and Moore in their 1988 study also drew a strong parallel between the decline in cassowary numbers and the high incidence of feral pigs. Pigs are seen as being important potential predators and competitors. It has been suggested that the dramatic reduction in the cassowary population in the Daintree and southern Atherton Tableland area is largely attributable to the number of feral pigs which has, at times, reached almost plague proportions.

Besides its importance as a species in its own right, there are other compelling reasons why every attempt should be made to put in place an integrated management plan to ensure its continued survival. Ecologists point to the existence of keystone species whose presence is necessary in certain ecosystems for the survival of a large range of other species. If the keystone species is removed from the ecosystem, the composition of the residual ecosystem may undergo disproportionate change. The cassowary is Australia's largest terrestrial frugivore in the wet tropics and is considered by many to be the most important dispersal agent for over 100 rainforest plants. This is especially

so with plants bearing large fleshy fruits, berries, or compound fruits containing a single seed in each fruit. The loss of the cassowary would therefore mean the loss of many flora species which rely on the cassowary as a dispersal agent. There also exists a feedback loop whereby the survival and maintenance of cassowary populations in fragmented forest habitats may in fact depend on the continued availability of certain keystone plant species.

Research is urgently needed to ascertain the biological requirements of the cassowary and to identify those factors which have led to the species' endangerment. Research is also needed into those factors which retard or prevent its recovery. Protection of the cassowary and its limited remaining habitats is vital to meet its biological requirements, including breeding sites and feeding areas.

Any species confined to a small locality is vulnerable. Attention must be paid to linking the fragmented habitat areas by access corridors where possible. In this way, genetic exchanges between population nodes will ensure the long-term vigour and survival of a viable cassowary population in the wet tropics. I commend the excellent work being done by the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service. The forthcoming conference at Mission Beach is historic in that it is the first time across-the-board support for cassowary conservation has been achieved. It deserves the wholehearted support of all honourable members.

### Fire Services

**Mr SANTORO** (Merthyr) (12.14 a.m.): This evening, I wish to bring to the attention of the House an alarming position that exists within the Queensland Fire Service. I am referring specifically to the staffing levels that exist within the fire stations in Brisbane, and to illustrate my concern I wish to draw on the very recent experience within four inner city fire stations.

However, before doing so I wish to remind the House and, in particular, the Minister and members opposite what the ALP promised prior to the last State election. Page 4 of the ALP policy titled *Protecting Queensland Lives and Property* states—

"No real reform of fire services can be successful unless the question of funding is addressed.

Similarly, no reform process will be complete without a serious reappraisal of the quality and quantity of staffing, training and equipment used by the State's firefighters.

The quality of a fire service depends to a large extent on the maintenance of safe and workable staffing levels. Costs saved by under-staffing fire stations are more than outweighed by the cost to the community through loss of life and property under a sub-standard system."

On page 7, the policy further states—

"Staffing levels and the training provided to firefighters is a fundamental part of the quality of Queensland's fire services.

Figures show that the number of permanent firefighters has been decreasing in proportion to the State's population for at least 10 years."

The policy went on to say that a Goss Labor Government will—

"Establish minimum levels of staffing for particular fire appliances and fire stations and other equipment such as breathing apparatus."

According to the many firemen and fire officers who regularly contact me, this promise has not been delivered. In fact, since the Labor Party came to power, the situation has deteriorated and as a result life and property in Queensland and in Brisbane in particular are in greater danger than they have ever been. To illustrate my point, I wish to place on record the details of average manning levels in four inner-city stations and how they have declined dramatically since 1984 and again since this Government was elected.

	1984	1989	1990
Kemp Place	25 Firemen 7 Officers	15 Firemen 6 Officers	10 Firemen 3 Officers
Roma Street	13 Firemen 4 Officers	9 Firemen 3 Officers	7 Firemen 3 Officers
Annerley	9 Firemen 2 Officers	6 Firemen 2 Officers	3 Firemen 1 Officer
Windsor	9 Firemen 2 Officers	6 Firemen 2 Officers	3 Firemen 1 Officer

I have been supplied with an internal memorandum from Regional Commander Drummond dated 27 August 1990 which details the following optimum crew sizes—

1. Pump appliance—all stations
 

Optimum	1 Officer	3 Firemen
Base	1 Officer	2 Firemen
2. Telescopic pump
 

Optimum	1 Officer	4 Firemen
Base	1 Officer	4 Firemen
3. Rescue/Salvage Tender
 

Optimum	1 Officer	1 Fireman
Base	1 Officer	1 Fireman
4. Hydraulic Platform
 

Optimum	1 Officer	2 Firemen
Base	1 Officer	1 Fireman
5. Turntable Ladder
 

Optimum	1 Officer	2 Firemen
Base	1 Officer	1 Fireman

The memorandum goes on to state—

"Where it is not possible to provide the 'base' cover in the Region, then appliances will be taken off the run in the following order:-

1. Third pump—Kemp Place
2. Aerial pump—Kemp Place
3. Second pump—Windsor
4. Second pump—Annerley".

That is in fact what happened last Saturday night. In several critical areas, the base cover was not able to be provided and, as a result, in the opinion of many fire-fighters, life and property in inner Brisbane were in above-average danger. This can be verified by a close examination of the experience in the previously mentioned four inner-city fire stations. For example, at Kemp Place, one turntable ladder had one officer and one fireman, not Drummond's recommendation of one officer and two firemen. One emergency tender was off the road for a couple of hours, and when on the road had only one officer and one fireman, not one officer and two firemen as required by Drummond. In Roma Street, both aerials—a turntable of 130 feet, which is a ladder, and a hydraulic platform of 90 feet—were off the run for three hours. What if multiple fires had occurred in high-rise city buildings during this time? Trapped people would not have stood a chance.

I refer now to the Windsor station, which is a two fire appliance station. On Saturday night only one appliance was on the road; the second was idle. I remind the House that this station services the Prince Charles Hospital area. The Annerley station was exactly the same as the Windsor station. I remind the House that the Annerley station services the Princess Alexandra Hospital area. I suggest to the House that God alone could have helped anyone who may have been in danger if a fire in the vicinity of those stations had occurred last Saturday. The Minister should accept his responsibility to support the Queensland Fire Service and at the same time accept the ultimate responsibility of delivering to the public of Queensland adequate fire protection. He must clearly display to the professionals within the fire services and in the other emergency

services that he is a Minister with clout and that he is capable of getting the funding that he promised and which is essentially needed within the Queensland Fire Service and the other emergency services. Unless he does so, life will be in danger to the point at which it will be lost and property will be destroyed at a far greater rate than what is already occurring. There is a very big morale problem within the Queensland Fire Service that is a direct result of understaffing.

Time expired.

### Queensland Rail

**Dr FLYNN** (Toowoomba North) (12.20 a.m.): I would like to take this opportunity to talk about some of the issues involved in the current rebuilding of Queensland Rail. I use the word "rebuilding" quite deliberately, because I want to talk about some of the positive aspects of the current changes. At the outset, I thank the Minister for recently providing me with an opportunity to meet Mr O'Rourke, the new Commissioner for Railways, and to get a briefing from him. I also thank the Minister for making the time available next week to come to Toowoomba to talk to railway workers there about what is happening to them and in their industry.

Earlier this year in my maiden speech, I referred to the problem of railway workers in Toowoomba suffering a very serious morale problem. There were two major reasons for this. The first was that during the latter half of the 1980s there had been a significant decrease in staff numbers in Toowoomba and throughout the south-west region and that in that time staff numbers had declined by approximately half from 3 000 to 1 500. Naturally, from their point of view, this seemed unplanned and they were uncertain about their future.

The second major cause of their morale problem was that they felt very remote from the decision-making process. At the same time as they saw their own staff numbers in Toowoomba shrink, they seemed to see the bureaucracy in Brisbane grow. After they lost their Toowoomba regional manager, who had formerly been in charge of the south-west region, they felt even more removed than ever from the decision-making process. In my maiden speech I spoke about the inverted pyramid management model in Queensland Railways—basically too many chiefs and not enough Indians. It is not surprising that railway workers in Toowoomba have felt remote from the decision-making process. I have recently learned that there are between 15 and 17 layers of bureaucracy between the boss and the forwards doing the job—the drivers, the shunters, the porters, the maintenance tradesmen and others. Obviously with so many hands in between where the decisions are made and where the job is done, it is no wonder that the people doing the job felt removed from the decision-making process. This brings forward one aspect of the reforms that are currently taking place. The Minister is to be congratulated on implementing a flatter management structure in the railways. Shortly, there will be only seven layers between the boss and the front-line troops. That still sounds a lot, but obviously it is a vast improvement and there is also room for further improvements in the future.

There will also be delegation of decision-making so that some decisions will be allowed to occur out in the regions closer to where the job is being done. The new management structure also moves away from the traditional concept of engineering and operational considerations being the major factor motivating the administration of the railways. It will move towards a customer-driven model of management. Basically, that means that we must get business back to the railways. If we are to do that, we must manage Queensland Railways in a way that the customers want.

I turn now to the integrated transport project. I stress that I am fully in support of the aims of the project. One aim of the integrated transport project is to get freight business back onto Queensland rail by providing what the customer wants, namely, door-to-door delivery. I certainly curse every time that the Parliament sends one or two boxes of stationery to my office in Toowoomba. Although the railway station is about half a mile away, I have to walk a couple of hundred yards to the car, drive to the

railway station, pick up the package, drive back, park in the unloading bay, unload the cartons, then get the car and put it back where it should be parked. With door-to-door delivery, such a package will come straight to my door, and that will make me much happier. The only way to increase the productivity of Queensland Railways is to get more business back onto the railways. The depressing productivity figures that can be seen in any analysis of the freight-handling sections of Queensland Railways are not created because the work force is lazy or is not committed to rail transport but because of inefficiencies within the system and the low level of business that Queensland Railways handles. Under the new system, for the first time many people in small communities will be able to receive parcels delivered to their door by rail. Some of those places do not have a rail service at the moment.

Time expired.

### **South Burnett TAFE College Hairdressing Course**

**Mr PERRETT** (Barambah) (12.25 a.m.): I bring to the notice of this House an action by Minister Warburton that is of serious concern to South Burnett residents. The successful pre-apprenticeship hairdressing course offered by the South Burnett College of TAFE is to be discontinued at the end of this year. The hairdressing course will be transferred to the Toowoomba College of TAFE. The Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations has given no reason for transferring the course. The only reason that I can imagine is that the department has decided on the move within a rationalisation program. It appears that a computer planning model, which takes no account of socioeconomic conditions of the region, has been used. It seems odd that the course will be discontinued when it was listed on the college budget and funding for it had been approved.

The hairdressing course is one of the college's most successful courses. It has had a 90 per cent success rate in terms of placements of participants. It was above average in the efficiency of the course in terms of cost. There will be lost opportunities in the South Burnett region as a whole, because those people will now have to go to Toowoomba and other places to undertake prevocational courses. Because the course offered 28 places each year, the closure of the pre-apprenticeship hairdressing course will disadvantage many people in the community. Many students in that course will not have the opportunity to seek employment in other fields and will be unable to continue in hairdressing because their parents will not be able to afford to send them to Toowoomba.

There is no sustainable argument that it is cheaper to provide that course away from the region. It is one of the more efficient colleges, even though it deals with small numbers. The Bureau of Regional Development recently released a report titled the *Wide Bay South Burnett Social Development Study*, which stated that there was a need for the course in the region. It was obvious that the various Government bureaus were not communicating with each other when that decision was taken. The role of the college council is to provide advice to the college director and the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. However, the decision to discontinue the hairdressing course was made without consultation with the council. I ask: what is the value of college councils when they are not consulted about such decisions? Are members wasting their time by serving on such councils?

The Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations should explain his reasons for the course closure in Kingaroy. I have heard that the department is conducting a rationalisation of hairdressing and plumbing courses in TAFE colleges. Those courses are being removed from a number of TAFE colleges throughout the State. The decision to discontinue the hairdressing course at the South Burnett college could not have been made on the basis of efficiency and popularity of the course.

Over the past three semesters, applications to fill the 14 student vacancies at TAFE were as follows: in the second semester of 1989, 34 applications were received; in the first semester of 1990 there were 58 applications; and in the second semester of 1990, 25 applications were received. Of all applications received, not one came from the

Toowoomba area. Ninety per cent of all students gained employment in the hairdressing field. Seventy-one per cent actually obtained apprenticeships. The course has run at peak efficiency. The teacher has taught for 800 hours per year which, according to the department, is peak efficiency. That teacher will instruct for 819 hours this year.

The South Burnett TAFE College submitted a five-year plan to the department, including a 12-month plan for hairdressing, which was endorsed by the department. No doubt the Honourable the Minister is aware that the recently released Wide Bay/Burnett development study identified his department as one that could overcome the socioeconomic problems confronting the South Burnett region by providing training opportunities through TAFE colleges and other sections of the department.

In the light of this, the Minister should explain why the course for prevocational hairdressing, which has had a 90 per cent placement rate, led to 71 per cent of students taking up apprenticeships and met other performance criteria, has been taken out of the South Burnett region and transferred to Toowoomba? Further, in the light of the Green Paper, by which the Minister will require the commission to focus vocational education on outcomes that will facilitate social and economic development, why did consultation not occur with the community concerned before the decision was made? Is this another example of open and accountable Government? The community is furious at the decision. The Minister should immediately take steps to reinstate the course or at least give valid reasons for its transfer to Toowoomba.

Because of the decision, many young people from the Burnett region will not have the opportunity to train for their desired career. Therefore, with a drastic shortage of employment vacancies in this State—which is worse in rural areas—they may have no option other than to go on the dole. This is just another example of this Goss Labor Government's blatant contempt for country people. Decisions are made in padded swivel chairs in air-conditioned offices without any consultation with the very people whom they will hurt the most.

#### **Milk Deliveries and Milk-pricing**

**Mr WELFORD** (Stafford) (12.30 a.m.): I wish to speak briefly on a matter that is of concern to a number of residents in my electorate, and that is the question of milk deliveries and milk-pricing. The Government is tackling that very difficult question at a time when it is a victim of history and timing. The problem of milk-pricing and the cost of delivering and distributing milk within the system is one that the previous Government successfully managed to put off and put off until, eventually, it did not have to make a decision about the matter because it was out of Government. The Government is now faced with the difficulty that Queensland milk prices are significantly higher than those in other States, and the Government has to decide what it will do about the matter in order to rationalise the cost of milk to the consumer and the cost of delivery.

There are a number of players in this industry: the dairy farmers themselves who produce the milk, the processors and the milk vendors who are the small businesspeople, many of whom operate in my electorate and have contacted me out of great concern for their business. I understand their concerns. One of the difficulties that the Government faces is that, although some measure of productivity improvement has been possible through mechanisation and technological improvement in the production and processing sectors of the industry, the fact is that milk vendors have only two legs and there is a limit to what they can do. Their ability to increase profits from their businesses is limited by the margins that they can draw from the unit price of milk. In those circumstances, the difficulty that the Government has is that the only way in which milk vendors—particularly those who, in recent years, purchased milk runs in a market in which the goodwill of the business has been significantly overvalued with regard to the returns from those runs—can continue to have viable businesses is by the Government continually increasing the margin that the milk vendor can draw. If that is done, and if the general price of milk is regulated so as to protect that margin, Queensland runs the

risk of having a milk price per litre that is significantly greater—more than 10c or 12c per litre greater—than that in the other States, including Victoria.

We witnessed the debacle that occurred on the New South Wales/Victoria border over the imbalance of milk prices in those two States. There was a flow of cheap milk across the border from Victoria into New South Wales, and all sorts of difficulties arose for the New South Wales Government. Unfortunately, no Government can resist a deregulated market and protect a local industry simply in accordance with State borders. The Government must try to find a system of milk production and distribution that can best serve the interests of the consumer and, as far as possible, cushion the adverse effects that might result for any player in the production and distribution sector of the industry.

In the interim, the Minister for Primary Industries has levied a 0.25c a litre charge upon the production and processing sectors of the industry to build up a fund that can be used by those milk vendors who have viable runs to purchase less viable neighbouring runs. However, as I understand the position from the Milk Vendors Association, the difficulty is that, because those vendors who already have viable businesses are content with what they have, they are unlikely to want to purchase an adjoining run and thereby increase their workload even if the funds are available at a subsidised interest rate. The viability of that proposal is yet to be tested.

**Dr Flynn:** But they might lose some of their business with the price differential.

**Mr WELFORD:** That is right. If the price differential between Queensland and other States increases further, we run the risk of destroying our entire dairy industry, not just making some vendors lose out. The vendors must understand that the Government is doing its best to preserve the vending of milk in Brisbane and in other towns. The Government wants people to have access to delivered milk. Many elderly, disabled and family people rely on milk being delivered to their homes. I certainly appreciate that convenience. In addition, milk that is delivered to the home is usually in bottles. That is an environmentally preferable way of packaging milk than the plastic containers and cartons that are predominant in supermarkets. There are no easy solutions to the problem. The Government is tackling the problem and has called upon the industry to look for options that will satisfy the needs of all sectors of the industry as well as the consumers.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.35 a.m. (Wednesday).