

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

**FRIDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 1990**

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

**PETITIONS**

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

**Poker Machines**

From **Mr Dunworth** (129 signatories) praying that poker machines be not introduced.

**Literature and Films Boards of Review**

From **Mr Dunworth** (26 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.

Petitions received.

**PAPERS**

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

Report on the operations of the subdepartment of the Department of Health for the year ended 30 June 1990.

The following paper was laid on the table—

Order in Council under the Commissions of Inquiry Act 1950-1989.

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE**

**Death of Hon. Sir Thomas Alfred Hiley, KBE**

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.02 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Honourable Sir Thomas Alfred Hiley, KBE, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution, together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss they have sustained."

Thomas Alfred Hiley was a member of this House for 22 years, which—it deserves to be said—is a very lengthy period of service for a member of the Queensland Legislative Assembly. For instance, it is a longer period than that served by any current member of the Parliament. As the member for the then seat of Logan, Tom Hiley was one of my predecessors in this House. That seat, which was first established in 1872, was abolished in the electoral redistribution of 1949, revived in 1949, abolished again in 1971 and subsequently recreated in the 1985 redistribution. In April 1944, Tom Hiley entered Parliament as the member for Logan as a member of the Queensland People's Party, and held that seat until April 1950, when he contested and won the seat of Coorparoo. He held that seat until May 1960, when he contested and won the seat of Chatsworth, which he held until his retirement in May 1966.

Tom Hiley was the founding leader of the parliamentary Liberal Party in Queensland, and held that position from 1949 to 1954. In the first Nicklin Ministry in 1957, he was appointed Treasurer and Minister for Housing. In the second Nicklin Ministry in 1963, he continued his role of Treasurer until the end of 1965.

Tom Hiley was born in Brisbane in November 1905. He was educated at the Brisbane Grammar School and served three years in the Queensland public service before resigning to pursue a career in accountancy. From 1947 to 1948, he was president of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and also served as president of the Queensland Cricket Association.

Knighted in 1966, Sir Thomas Hiley will be remembered for his service to Queensland both as a member of the Legislative Assembly and as a Treasurer of this State. He will also be remembered for his efforts to expose and eradicate corruption in public life in Queensland. In 1982, he publicly revealed instances of corruption which he said had occurred over previous decades.

On behalf of the Government and the parliamentary Labor Party, I extend condolences to the family of Sir Thomas Hiley.

**Hon. T. J. BURNS** (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.05 a.m.): I join with the Premier in offering the condolences of the Government, my family and me to the family of Tom Hiley. As the Premier said, Tom Hiley was a member of this Parliament for 22 years. He represented three electorates in this Parliament. Tom Hiley was the last leader of the old Queensland People's Party in this Parliament and the first leader of the new Liberal Party. In fact, he was twice the leader of the Liberal Party, both in Opposition and again for 11 months in 1965 as part of the coalition Government. He was recognised as one of the most polished debaters of his generation, and his verbal jousts on economic matters with Labor Treasurer Ted Walsh are still remembered by political old-timers.

I remember Tom Hiley more importantly for what he did in Moreton Bay. He was a fisherman and a keen boating person. During his time as a fisherman, he recognised the problems that boaties experienced during westerly winds in the bay because there was no protection near Moreton Island. The hard sand there made it very difficult to get an anchorage. It was difficult to find protection in a strong westerly wind. Tom Hiley was the instigator of the idea of dumping old ships' wrecks near Tangalooma and making that area into a semiprotected harbour. Although the harbour is not highly protected, it is a better harbour than would exist if Tom Hiley had not been a member of this Parliament. As a Treasurer and Minister for Housing, Tom Hiley had some influence in this place. He suggested that those wrecks be dumped near Tangalooma, and that is what happened over a period. When I have been out fishing on the bay, on many occasions over the years I have said to my boating companions, "Tom Hiley was the fellow who put this safe harbour here for us." If Tom Hiley had not been around at that time, that harbour would never have been created.

Tom Hiley lived through a very interesting period in this Parliament. He witnessed the split in the Labor Party and the change of Governments. My memory of Tom Hiley is that he was a really decent, gentle, honest bloke who worked very, very hard for the State. I am sure that his family and those who knew him will miss him very much.

**Mr COOPER** (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (10.07 a.m.): The Opposition joins with the Government and the Liberal Party in supporting this motion of condolence. Without reiterating all that has been said, I endorse the remarks of the Premier and Deputy Premier and offer the condolences of the Opposition to the friends and family of the late Sir Thomas Hiley and to the Liberal Party.

Few honourable members may remember him personally. I do not remember him personally, but I certainly remember his reputation. As a much younger person, I read a lot about Sir Thomas Hiley. He had a reputation of which all people in this State can be proud. As has been pointed out, he was a chartered accountant and one of the very few in that profession to serve as Treasurer. It is probably fortuitous that he was the

first accountant to occupy the position of Treasurer. He laid the firm foundation for decades of very sound financial and economic management, about which all Queenslanders can be extremely pleased. Honourable members will acknowledge his contribution.

He began his career in the late forties as Leader of the Queensland People's Party. Between 1948 and 1954, and again in 1965, he was Leader of the Liberal Party. As a member of the coalition Government, he served as Deputy Premier, although I am told that he was not commissioned as Deputy Premier until 1974. However, he was certainly highly regarded as the Deputy Premier. In that coalition Government, he carved his niche as Treasurer and Minister for Housing and he made a great contribution to this Parliament and the people of Queensland. When he was in Opposition, his forte became governmental financial management to which he devoted himself. At a later time, the Opposition received the benefit of that solid work. Clem Lack, a well-known author, published a book entitled *Queensland Political History*, in which he described Sir Thomas Hiley as the most polished debater in the State Parliament since the late T.J. Ryan. That is a very high accolade indeed. Very high goals and standards have been set by those people. Honourable members have something to live up to.

Sir Thomas Hiley was a staunch coalitionist and held many prominent positions both in the community and in business. He reached a good old age, which was very well deserved by a man of such integrity and ability. His life and career have certainly impacted upon all Queenslanders and the State. The Opposition expresses its sympathy to his family and friends. I know his son, Ian Hiley, extremely well. It is to him, also, that I ask that our condolences be conveyed. Members of the Liberal Party would have very high regard for the man who made such a tremendous contribution and set an example for all of us to follow.

**Mr BEANLAND** (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.11 a.m.): I rise to support the motion moved by the Premier. Sir Thomas Hiley will be remembered as a great Queensland and a great Liberal. I am very proud to say that he was known to me personally. Sir Thomas served the people and the Parliament of this State for 22 years, from 1944 until 1966 when he retired as the member for Chatsworth. He was the first in a line of successful Liberal Treasurers who laid the foundations for this State's economic growth. As the Treasurer from 1957 to 1965 and Minister for Housing from 1957 to 1963, Sir Thomas made a significant contribution to Queensland's development. Sir Thomas, a chartered accountant, served on two occasions as Leader of the Liberal Party: from 1948, when the party was known as the Queensland People's Party, to 1954, and again in 1965. The first years when Sir Thomas was leader, were certainly turbulent.

As has been pointed out, Sir Thomas was a very polished and able debater. He made a very significant contribution to the politics of this State and the debates in this House. After his retirement from active politics, he remained committed to the Liberal Party and gave considerable support during the 1983, 1986 and 1989 State election campaigns, which is appreciated by all Queensland Liberals and supporters. Sir Thomas has a magnificent record of community service outside politics. Some of his achievements have been mentioned today, but I do not think that reference has been made to the fact that, at one stage, he was Chairman of the Brisbane Grammar School Board of Trustees, the school that he attended in his youth. He was also State Chairman of the Duke of Edinburgh Award committee and a member of local bowls clubs. He was a former president of the Queensland Cricket Association.

Sir Thomas was introduced into politics at the instigation of his friend and associate in war-time charitable endeavours, J.B. Chandler. Sir Thomas Hiley was instrumental in persuading Gordon Chalk to contest the 1947 election on behalf of the Queensland People's Party, which two years later became the Liberal Party. In 1957, as a consequence of being the most authoritative spokesman on finance within the Liberal and Country Parties, Sir Thomas gained the Treasury portfolio. He was a key member of the Nicklin

Ministry. In a book written by Cameron Hazlehurst entitled *Gordon Chalk. A Political Life*, Sir Thomas Hiley stated—

"At first the Cabinet was run in truth by Jack Pizzey, Ernie Evans and myself. We were the quick bigger men . . . the people who'd do our homework. We'd come in and blow the other fellows out of the water, if their case wasn't right."

I believe that. The Cabinet secretary, Colin Douglas, said that Sir Thomas was the most able and probably the cleverest member of Cabinet and that he contributed effectively to discussions on almost every subject. When he retired, Sir Thomas took time to ensure continuity within the Treasury Department by ensuring that there was no disturbance in administration. One of his last acts as Treasurer was to negotiate a new basis for Commonwealth assistance grants to the States. In his valedictory remarks when Sir Thomas Hiley left this place, Frank Nicklin said—

"Mr. Hiley brought to the Treasury a background of self-attained commercial eminence and a razor-sharp perception of the intricacies of finance. Among his notable achievements as Treasurer have been progressively increasing annual expenditures on developmental works and the preparation of a strong case for measuring the rise and fall of population, which has at last brought some justice to Queensland in the assessment of Commonwealth tax reimbursements to the States."

Sir Thomas played a very significant role in overcoming the discrimination against Queensland in view of its growing population. Nicklin and Hiley worked extremely well as a team at the various Premiers Conferences, but Hiley himself was responsible for devising the strategy to further Queensland's growth and interest.

Thomas Hiley was a great fighter against corruption, and that was evident in more recent times. In later years, he went to live on the Sunshine Coast, an area that he came to love dearly. On behalf of the Liberal Party, I extend my condolences and those of my parliamentary colleagues to Sir Thomas Hiley's family, many of whom are known to me personally.

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.17 a.m.): I rise to join with the Premier and other members to offer my condolences to the family of Sir Thomas Alfred Hiley.

As has been indicated already, Tom Hiley was one of the most polished debaters in this House and, on Tuesday, when members were discussing the repeal of the Public Accountants Registration Act, I recalled that Sir Thomas participated greatly in the debate when that Act was originally introduced. He foretold many of the problems that the Public Accountants Registration Board would encounter in the years ahead. Perhaps in some respects it was a fitting coincidence that on Tuesday, which was the day he died, this Parliament repealed the Public Accountants Registration Act.

As other speakers have said, Sir Thomas became the State Treasurer in 1957 when the coalition won office. At that time, he introduced significant accounting changes to the Budget papers. Sir Thomas Hiley had a distinguished career before he entered this place. He was born in 1905 and educated at Central Brisbane Primary School and Brisbane Grammar School. He joined the public service in the State Audit Office in 1921. In 1924 he left the State public service to go into the accounting profession and study accountancy. He studied through one of the accountancy bodies at that time, the old Federal Institute of Accountants, and later, because of his academic and practical work, was admitted to the membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 1933.

Thomas Hiley started his own practice in public accounting in Commerce House, Adelaide Street, in 1926, and in 1927 he joined with C. A. Le Maistre Walker, a Sydney accountant, to form a joint partnership between the Sydney and Brisbane firms. He continued to practise in Brisbane in what was then the new T and G Building on the corner of Queen and Albert Streets. He practised there up until the war years, when in 1942 the American armed forces took over the T and G Building as one of its regional headquarters. During the war years he ran a very significant practice virtually as a sole practitioner. His partner, Keith Jarrett, left in 1939 to join the AIF and his senior, Len

Doggett, left in 1940 to join the RAAF. Thomas Hiley, together with people who were formerly retired accountants and a number of women book-keepers, ran that practice throughout the war years. During that time, one of the ladies working for him was Thelma Noble, who is the mother of one of the former members of this House, Beryce Nelson. After the war, Keith Jarrett and Len Doggett returned and formed a partnership named T. A. Hiley, Jarrett and Doggett. Len Doggett was later a State chairman of the institute and a very long time member. I served with him on the Public Accountants Registration Board. In 1958 the firm took the name Spry Walker, which was the name of a major Australian firm, and used it as its Brisbane office name.

I first met Sir Thomas Hiley because of my association with the accounting profession. He served the accountancy profession on the State and Federal bodies for some period of time. He was State chairman from 1942 to 1944 and, as the Premier said earlier, he became President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 1946. He was the youngest Australian President of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and he held that record up until only a few weeks ago when the new president was elected. He was made a life member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in 1974. Sir Thomas Hiley had a great deal of interaction with the University of Queensland and the Faculty of Commerce. He was a member of the faculty board from 1935 to 1957, a period of some 22 years, and only left the faculty board when he became Treasurer of this State. During that period he also served on the status committee, a committee of the faculty board which reviews people's practical qualifications for the AAUQ. During that time he wrote a number of books, one of which concerned solicitors' trust accounts, which has been used as a standard book in this State.

In conclusion, I wish to read part of a citation that was read by the president of the professorial board when Sir Thomas Hiley was given the honorary degree of Master of Commerce. This sums up a great deal of his own personal history and what many people in the profession think of him. It states—

"Today we are honouring Thomas Alfred Hiley not least as one who exemplifies all that is best in the profession of accountancy. He has been intimately connected with its development as a profession for more than 30 years; he has played a most important part in the evolution of new techniques and standards commensurate with its status in the community.

Throughout, a keen analytic mind has served him well and has served accountancy well. He has maintained high standards of integrity and his personal example has contributed notably to the honour and respect accorded today to the profession of accountancy in this State.

This then is the distinguished citizen of this State whose outstanding service to the community we fittingly recognise today. So we come finally to the third stage of his association with this university. Hiley he is, highly we esteem him, and highly we rank him now with the award by the University of Queensland of the honorary degree of Master of Commerce."

I believe that history will judge Sir Thomas Hiley kindly. He was an outstanding accountant and did outstanding service for his accountancy profession. He was an outstanding member of Parliament and, I think, an outstanding Liberal. More importantly, I think he was one of the most outstanding citizens of this State. I believe that we are all a little richer because he passed by this place.

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn) (10.24 a.m.): I have listened with interest to the contributions made by other members of the Parliament. It is abundantly clear that Sir Thomas Hiley was a gentleman in the true sense of the word, one who was respected by members of all political parties. My recollection of Tom Hiley goes back more than 50 years. He was a close friend of my father's, a business associate and a longstanding friend.

I well remember as a child respecting the name Tom Hiley because it was a name that was respected throughout the business community of Brisbane—indeed, of Queensland. During a time of some political turmoil—when the United Australia Party was reduced to ashes, when Robert Menzies resurrected that party to eventually form the

Liberal Party, and when people of the ilk of Sir John Chandler and Tom Hiley and many other professional and businesspeople in Queensland brought together the Queensland People's Party, which later became the Liberal Party of Queensland—all of those successful businesspeople decided to enter politics and take an active interest in politics with a view to enhancing the role and reputation of this Parliament. I believe that the tributes that have already been paid to Sir Thomas Hiley indicate that, as a person, he certainly was most successful.

He served this State very well indeed, and his contribution to the role of the Parliament and to the efficiency of Government will long benefit the people of Queensland. I record my personal appreciation of Sir Thomas Hiley—the man and the politician—and extend to his family my sincere sympathy. There are still members of his family who are residents of my electorate of Auburn and with whom I have a close association. To all of them, I extend my condolences. Sir Thomas Hiley's record is one of which that family may justifiably be proud.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I suggest that honourable members rise for a brief period as a mark of respect.

*Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.*

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Report on Visit to Taiwan and Japan by Minister for Primary Industries

**Hon. E. D. CASEY** (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.27 a.m.), by leave: I desire to report to Parliament on the visit I made to Taiwan and Japan from 22 to 29 September, 1990.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members have their pagers in operation, and they are becoming increasingly annoying.

**Honourable members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr CASEY:** The overall purpose of the visit was to represent the Queensland Government at the Osaka International Greening and Gardening Expo and host its major reception. In transit, the opportunity was taken to visit Taipei to assess Queensland's trade links with Taiwan and opportunities for increasing sales of Queensland's agricultural products. While my major task in Japan related to the garden and greening expo, I was able to spend two days in Tokyo talking with major Japanese food import companies about promoting Queensland exports, in particular meat and processed foods. Before informing the House about the success of Queensland's pavilion at this major international event, I would like to speak briefly about my visit to Taiwan.

Taiwan offers opportunities for increased agricultural exports from Queensland, although it would be wrong to think of it as an easy market. The country is increasing its imports of basic and processed foods as it adjusts its own agricultural production, due to an increasing loss of available agricultural land, escalating environmental problems and a greater dependence on its secondary activities. In addition, the average per capita income of Taiwan has increased markedly in recent years with a resultant greater demand for imports. A formal briefing on the trade situation was presented to my delegation by officials from the China External Trade Development Council located in the new World Trade Centre. At the meeting with officials, it was agreed that increasing trade was in the interests of both countries and cooperation should be extended between officials in relation to opportunities or in relation to any difficulties that arise. The key meeting of my visit was discussions with the senior officials of the Taiwan Sugar Corporation. Due to the increasing scarcity of land, Taiwan is set to reduce the level of local production of sugar. This presents opportunities for the Queensland industry. Following on from these discussions, a trade delegation from the Taiwan Sugar Corporation will be visiting Queensland in the near future to evaluate prospects for trade in both the sugar and beef industries.

I hosted a dinner for Australians involved in the retail and wholesale trade, particularly in supermarket operations. This was most useful for obtaining onground feedback about problems confronting Queensland food-exporters who are seeking greater visibility and shelf share. Officials from my department will be following up opportunities arising from these discussions. My visit to Osaka, although eventful, was brief. The Osaka Gardening and Greening Expo was a major international exposition covering all aspects of the nursery and ornamental industries. A friendship agreement exists between the Osaka Prefecture and the State of Queensland. Osaka Prefecture, of course, participated in the Brisbane Expo in 1988. I am proud to be able to say that in the international section the Queensland pavilion was awarded the grand prize for an indoor display—one of only four grand prizes awarded during the whole expo. Given the size of the expo and the resources which went into the exhibits of many of the competitors, this award represents a most creditable achievement. I congratulate all those whose contributions made the quality of the Queensland pavilion so high. On behalf of the Premier, I hosted a major reception at the Australian pavilion for over 40 guests and businesspeople and those associated with the Queensland pavilion.

During the following two days in Tokyo, I held discussions with major Japanese firms involved in investment in Queensland or who are importers of Queensland primary products. The central focus of these talks related to meat imports and investment in food-processing. Useful meetings were held with Ashai Chemical Company, which has major investments in Queensland's smallgoods industry; Nippon Meats, which are prominent importers of Queensland beef; and Daiei Incorporated, Japan's largest retail food chain. These discussions offered a practical opportunity to follow up the Queensland Government's policy initiatives in promoting value-adding of Queensland's basic food commodities and in seeking greater domestic industry involvement in the marketing end of the system. I was accompanied on the visit by the director of my department's agricultural marketing and development group, Mr Derek Marrable, and my private secretary, Mr John Tanzer. In Taiwan, I was also accompanied by Dr David Rutledge from the Queensland Sugar Board.

#### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

##### **Maryborough Hospital Review**

**Hon. K. V. McELLIGOTT** (Thuringowa—Minister for Health) (10.31 a.m.), by leave: Honourable members are advised that over the past month my department has been carrying out a review of the financial management and operations of the Maryborough Base Hospital. The review was brought about as a result of information received from the honourable member for Maryborough, Mr Dollin, and the chairman of the Maryborough Hospitals Board about a carry-over of unpaid accounts of approximately \$250,000 into this financial year's hospital budget, and unacceptable proposals by the administration to severely curtail services to meet this overrun. As a result, the under secretary of my department directed that a review team consisting of members of the Health Services Team (Central) and Operational Auditors should be formed as a matter of urgency to examine the operations of the hospital.

The review team has now reported to me, and I have accepted the majority of its recommendations. I do not propose to release the whole report because certain matters in it are confidential and others are of a serious nature which require further investigation. However, I can state that the review has identified a series of serious problems in the administration and functioning of the hospital. The review team advised that the board of the hospital could not be considered culpable for the budget overrun. However, it found that the overall standard of management of the hospital by executive staff has not been up to the expected standards. As a consequence, changes will be made to the administration of the hospital. The review team advises me that the hospital can achieve budget without affecting patient-care standards by the initiation of a series of cost-reduction measures. It found that it is not cost effective to retain the present number of beds at the Maryborough hospital as its current in-patient occupancy rate is only 49

per cent. The hospital has 186 beds for acute general patients located in seven wards or units, and a daily average of only 105 general in-patients. The occupancy rate of the maternity ward is even lower. It is also apparent that the hospital is overstaffed when the present staff-to-patient ratio is compared with that of other hospitals of similar size.

Changes proposed include rationalisation of bed numbers and wards, staff reductions by natural attrition as a result of the closures, reduction of staff accommodation and cleaning of staff accommodation, re-arrangement of medical staff rosters, and closure of one of the two kitchens where there has been a clear case of duplication. Other recommendations cover a series of proposed procedural changes. I want to stress that these changes will not affect the standards of patient care and that related staff reductions will only be by natural attrition.

After the review was announced, the honourable member for Maryborough received a flood of complaints alleging that patients in the hospital's nursing home and disabled persons ward were being mistreated and physically abused. Although it was not the original intention of the review, the allegations were of such a serious nature that I requested the review team to carry out a preliminary investigation and advise me as to whether further action was

warranted. The team has now advised that, as a result of its initial inquiries, there is sufficient evidence to suspect mistreatment of patients in both the nursing home and the disabled persons ward. I am therefore directing the Health Complaints Unit, which I have

established independent of the department, to undertake an immediate investigation into the allegations. In the circumstances, this is the only appropriate course of action.

I am confident that with the implementation of the strategies proposed in the report, significant savings will be achieved and that changes in managerial practices at the hospital executive level will result in improved staff morale and improvement in the quality of services provided by the Maryborough Hospitals Board. This case does highlight concerns I have had about ensuring that the best quality care is being provided by our hospitals. It reinforces the public sector wisdom of the Government's decision to regionalise the administration of health services, which will help to ensure that our hospitals operate efficiently and effectively, responsibly and responsively. But, in addition, I have decided to instigate a process of random audits of

hospitals to ensure that our objectives in the health arena are met and that the best use is made of the scarce health dollar to provide the best care possible to the people of Queensland.

Finally, I would like to thank the honourable member for Maryborough, Mr Dollin, for his very active role in both instigating and assisting the review of the Maryborough Hospitals Board. I am advised by the review team that the assistance provided by him and his office was invaluable.

### **SUGAR ACQUISITION ACT**

#### **Disallowance of Proclamation; Withdrawal of Notice of Motion**

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (10.36 a.m.): Because of advice that I have now received relating to a 75-year-old section, I seek leave of the House to withdraw the notice of motion for the disallowance of proclamation standing in my name, as the Sugar Acquisition Act 1915-1990 does not provide for such disallowance.

Leave granted.

#### **GENERAL BUSINESS—NOTICE OF MOTION NO. 1**

##### **Removal from Office of Industrial Relations Commissioner Swan**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! General business—notice of motion No. 1 in the name of Mr Cooper—is this formal or not formal?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Formal.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call Mr Cooper.

**Mr COOPER:** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! All the Leader of the Opposition can do is move the motion.

**Mr COOPER:** I move accordingly.

**Mr SPEAKER:** It cannot be debated.

**Mr COOPER:** It is a pity about that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is contained in the Standing Orders.

**Mr COOPER:** I move—

"That the following address be presented to His Excellency the Governor—

To His Excellency the Honourable Sir Walter Benjamin Campbell, one of Her Majesty's Counsel learned in the law, Governor in and over the State of Queensland in the Commonwealth of Australia.

'MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY:—

'We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislature of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, pray that your Excellency will be pleased to exercise the authority vested in your Excellency, by subsection 4.7 (4) of the Industrial Relations Act 1990, and we do so humbly pray by reason that:

'Whereas subsection 4.7 (4) of the Industrial Relations Act prescribes a means of removal of members of the Industrial commission established under that act identical to that prescribed by section 9 of the Supreme Court Act of 1867 as amended, and

'Whereas by reason of such provision the Parliament of Queensland declared that the standards of integrity and probity to be expected of a member of the said Commission were equivalent to those to be expected of a Supreme Court Judge, and

'Whereas Mr Justice Thomas of the Supreme Court of Queensland has written a book entitled "Judicial Ethics" wherein his Honour sets out the ethical standards to be expected of judges, and recommends the removal of judges found to be in serious breach of those standards, and

'Whereas certain sworn evidence given by Deirdre ... Swan, a member of the said Industrial Commission, to the inquiry conducted by Nelson Marshall Cooke QC, disclosed that she has repeatedly failed to comply with her obligations under the Income Tax Assessment Act 1936 of the Commonwealth, and

'Whereas in such evidence she stated that her failure resulted from receipt of advice from persons whom she refused to name to the inquiry, and

'Whereas the said Deirdre ... Swan is herself a qualified member of the legal profession, and such advice, if given, would clearly have been contrary to law, and

'Whereas by reason of the above matters the possibly of perjury or misleading evidence exists.'

'We, Her Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the Members of the Legislature of Queensland, in Parliament assembled, pray that you do forthwith remove Deirdre Swan from her office as a member of the Industrial Relations Commission, pending the establishment of a panel of Supreme Court Judges or retired judges to inquire into such matters and report to Parliament so that a final determination may be made by this legislature on the position of the said Ms Deirdre Swan.' "

Question put; and the House divided—

DIVISION

Resolved in the negative.

### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

#### 1. **Ross River Meatworks Dispute; Cooke Inquiry**

Mr HARPER asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations—

"(1) What action has he taken and what action does he intend to take to assist in resolving the industrial dispute which has thrown employees at the Ross River Meatworks out of work for some three weeks and cost the Queensland economy more than \$15m in lost production?

(2) Will he take action to give these employees and other employees who may find themselves in similar circumstances in the future, an opportunity to make a decision by spontaneous secret ballot?

(3) Is he prepared to continue to support legislation which facilitates minority views by trade union officials bringing about financial loss to employees, employers and producers in circumstances which are capable of resolution with the exercise of goodwill?

(4) In that same context, will he accept the recommendations of the Cooke Inquiry and, as a matter of urgency, amend the Industrial Relations Act to provide the controls and accountability needed to ensure that unions do represent the interests of the majority of their members?

(5) Is his Government prepared to provide funding to enable the inquiry being conducted by the Commissioner Marshall Cooke QC, to examine the activities of the AMIEU in Queensland, as that union relates to Queensland legislation, during recent years?"

**Mr WARBURTON:** In answer to the questions that have been asked by the honourable member, the following details are provided—

(1) I have been advised that Ross River meatworks employees returned to work on Monday, 5 November 1990. Since the Ross River meatworks is covered by a Federal award, the dispute was quite properly notified to the Australian Industrial Relations Commission and in fact was the subject of a number of hearings, which eventually

resolved it. Given this resolution, there is no need or requirement for the involvement of the Queensland Government.

(2 and 3) Since the matter has been resolved, it would appear that the current legislative provisions and industrial arrangements were quite adequate to deal with this dispute.

(4) I have indicated on a number of occasions that I am most concerned about the allegations that have been raised in Commissioner Cooke's reports. I have also indicated that proper consideration will be given to the commission's recommendations, and in fact this is being done. However, there are further reports to be presented, which will in all probability contain further recommendations for legislative change.

(5) The honourable member is no doubt aware that the terms of reference of the inquiry into the activities of particular Queensland unions enable the commissioner to make inquiry as to whether, during the period 1 January 1982 to 31 July 1989, any law of the State was contravened by any person in connection with elections of any trade union or transactions dealing with its assets. Such inquiry is open to the commissioner where he is of the opinion that it is necessary or desirable in the public interest to do so.

However, since the honourable member is making reference to a hypothetical situation, I cannot comment on a matter that is entirely Commissioner Cooke's prerogative.

## **2. Director, Division of Workers Compensation**

Mr HARPER asked the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations—

"With reference to his own admissions, perhaps even claims, in regard to the efficiency and actuarial soundness of Queensland's Workers' Compensation Scheme and its acknowledgment as a leader in that field within Australia—

(1) Will he explain the reasoning behind the dismissal of the Director of the Division of Workers' Compensation and the appointment of the Deputy Chief Engineer to what is essentially an administrative position?

(2) Was the respect in which the director was held by the Queensland business community and his obvious ability in his position not recognised by the academia which is religiously persecuting and assassinating dedicated employees within the Queensland Public Service?"

**Mr WARBURTON:** In answer to the questions that have been asked by the honourable member, the following details are provided—

(1) The level of the position of Director of the Division of Workers Compensation together with other positions was re-evaluated following some structural changes in my department. Subsequently, the positions were evaluated by the Cullen Egan Dell process and increased in classification. Under such circumstances, procedure determines that the positions are declared vacant and advertised to ensure that the best persons possible are appointed.

The selection panel of three chaired by the director-general of my department was given the task of recommending appointments. I am advised that the selection panel has decided to recommend a person other than the present incumbent. Until such time as the Governor in Council approves an appointment, the previous director has been granted leave on full pay and another person has been appointed to act in the position.

(2) An acting appointment has been made of the person holding the position of Chief Safety Engineer in the Division of Accident Prevention, a person who has both professional and administrative experience and responsibility. The decision taken by the selection panel was not subject to any political directions or interference.

(3) In regard to the general question concerning inefficiencies within the public service—these have been brought about by the ineffective personal and personnel practices allowed by the previous Government. It is the aim of this Government to ensure that appointments are made on the basis of merit.

**3. Moreton Bay Water Taxi Fares**

Mr BRISKEY asked the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development—

"With reference to the ever increasing fares being charged by the sole water taxi operator from Redland Bay to the Bay Islands of Russell, Karragarra, Lamb and Macleay--

What can be done to ensure that the residents of these islands receive an adequate service at a fair price?"

**Mr HAMILL:** I am aware of some concern from residents on a number of islands in Redland Bay, such as Russell, Karragarra, Lamb and Macleay, over the cost of water-taxi services. There are a multitude of water-taxi operators up and down the coastline servicing both tourism and island residents.

The provisions covering the regulation of water transport in the State Transport Act were ruled to be invalid and will be repealed on the proclamation of the State Transport Act and Another Amendment Act 1990. Therefore, the Queensland Government does not have the power to enforce any price controls on or licence the water-taxi operations in Redland Bay, nor in any part of the State. If another person wishes to establish a water-taxi service in the Redland Bay area, apart from certain water-safety requirements, there are no restrictions preventing that from occurring.

**4. Eastern Corridor Road Proposal**

Mr BRISKEY asked the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development—

"Is he aware of the concern being expressed by many constituents of my electorate over the Eastern Corridor Road proposal and the need to protect an extremely important koala habitat area?"

**Mr HAMILL:** The member for Redlands may be assured that the State Government shares community concerns that an important koala habitat in the Leslie Harrison Dam catchment be protected.

Recently, I inspected that area. To digress, I had a very strong representation made to me by one of the locals, a very small furry koala.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Did he mess on you?

**Mr HAMILL:** No, indeed he did not. However, he put his point so forcibly that I had to get a tetanus injection afterwards. I am convinced that the integrity of that koala habitat has to be preserved.

**Mr Schwarten:** Is the koala still alive?

**Mr HAMILL:** The koala is still alive but, contrary to rumour, he did not have to get rabies shots.

An essential element of the \$1.2m feasibility study commissioned by State Cabinet is to identify and address any environmental matters associated with the eastern corridor proposal. While the eastern corridor has been talked about for decades, no detailed feasibility study has ever been carried out. At the moment, there is only an indicative line on a map. The Government does not even know if the project is viable, which is another matter for this study to establish. The purpose of this study is to accurately identify a possible route and properly assess environmental concerns associated with it. The integrity of the koala habitat cannot be compromised. Queenslanders saw too much degradation of their important natural heritage because of the bulldozer mentality of the

previous Government. This Government's approach is different. That is why an environmental impact assessment has been given equal prominence with engineering concerns in the eastern corridor study. I can assure the member's constituents and people in the area from Redland Bay to the Gold Coast that no route has been determined.

Earlier this week, State Cabinet approved a freeze on land in the Gold Coast and Albert Shires that is part of the proposed corridor. That decision will ensure that rezonings are compatible with the proposed corridor. I assure communities along the proposed route that full consultation will be an integral part of any future planning for the corridor. Their views will be sought and fully considered in the planning process. The Labor Government has clearly established its credentials on community consultation and environmental issues.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

#### Government's Commitment to EARC Recommendations

**Mr COOPER:** I refer the Premier to his statement in this House on 9 May 1990, in answer to a question about the review of the electoral system, wherein he stated—

"In good faith my Government will abide by the recommendations of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission."

I also refer him to his statement yesterday which attempted not only to back away from his commitment but also to change the umpire from the commission to the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, where the ALP majority rules, and I ask: did he mislead the House on 9 May, or has something happened since that has made him change his mind?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I am just amazed that I managed to guess that this question might be coming and have with me a copy of my answer of 9 May 1990. I will read a passage from that answer and maybe on the second time round the Leader of the Opposition will get the message. I stated—

"The Leader of the Opposition should be aware, if he is not already, that there is a process laid out; that is, that the commission should report to the parliamentary committee on which his party is represented, that parliamentary committee must then report and make recommendations to the Parliament and the Parliament will then make a decision."

**Mr Cooper:** We decided all that.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** That is the process.

I also remind the Leader of the Opposition that the very first recommendation on page 370 of the original Fitzgerald report states—

"This Commission recommends that:

1. a properly authorized and satisfactorily resourced Electoral and Administrative Review Commission . . . which reports directly to a Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral and Administrative Review be established . . ."

and so on. That is the process. Now the Leader of the Opposition wants to jump the committee.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I presume that he is not aware of the fact that the two National Party members on the EARC parliamentary committee have unanimously joined in a call for public submissions. Is the Leader of the Opposition suggesting that the decision of his two representatives on the EARC committee should be ignored? The Government

is going to follow the process which is, firstly, EARC; secondly, the committee; and, thirdly, the Parliament, where it will be finally resolved.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to cease interjecting.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** There are two reasons why I want the committee to process this report. The first is that it is the proper course as recommended by Mr Fitzgerald. The second is that I know the Leader of the Opposition cannot count—that is obvious from the claims he made yesterday about the report. But the member for Burdekin can count, and I think the member for Lockyer just might be able to. As they are two representatives on the committee, I want to see them put their names to these recommendations, too, because that will be sweet indeed. That relates particularly to the member for Burdekin, given his shameless comments in the press recently.

The other thing that I want to say is that I want to expose——

**Mr Cooper:** Weasel.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** "Weasel"?

**Mr Cooper:** Yes, you're weaseling out.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Never before has the Leader of the Opposition been so articulate. I did not know that he knew the word "weasel".

The tactic that I want to expose is that of a desperate attempt to distract attention from the culprits, the people who are responsible for the electoral corruption that exists today, the National Party and the Liberal Party—the people who finetuned that gerrymander to the extent that it exists today. People on this side of the House can claim—and are the only ones who can claim—to have stood up year in, year out to fight against this electoral corruption. Members opposite do not know what sweet music it was to me, while driving along in the car in Mackay yesterday, to hear on country radio the news-announcer say, "And the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Cooper, today welcomed the EARC recommendation of one vote, one value." An hour later, I listened to the bulletin again and heard the same statement being made.

A transcript of the Channel 9 news shows that yesterday there was only one dissenting voice—and this is what members of the Opposition want to distance themselves from—and that was Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, who said, "Disgraceful, disgusting, despicable." It sounds like Daffy Duck and has as much credibility.

The tactic of members opposite is obvious to everybody. They are responsible for the corruption. I suppose if one wanted to be uncharitable to the member for Roma, one could say that he has almost shown contempt for the commission, because yesterday he claimed to be able to assert that Roma, his electorate, would survive. I am told that he said, "Don't you worry about Roma. There will always be a Roma." I suggest that a more appropriate song to sing would be *Arrivederci Roma*.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member for Lockyer under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Mr Speaker, you missed that. I said that a more appropriate song to sing would be *Arrivederci Roma*.

In conclusion—another suggestion that has been made by one commentator is that the dash by the Leader of the Opposition to embrace the EARC report, one vote, one value and the rest of it is a cunning attempt to lock in the Labor Party. It is happy to be locked in. As far as it is concerned, Christmas is coming; it has got the bright, shiny, new bike; it is not going to argue about the bell.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I call the Leader of the Opposition.

### Ministerial Staff Numbers

**Mr COOPER:** When we get a performance like that, I think we had better sit every Friday. How pathetic! We can come back every Friday and sit.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition that, when he is given the call to ask his second question, he ask it. I point out to him that he is not allowed to debate the previous answer.

**Mr COOPER:** I remind the Premier of his commitment yesterday to follow the Fitzgerald reform process to the letter and refer him to the deliberate removal from the Budget papers of details showing the number of staff attached to ministerial offices and to his refusal to answer in this House questions about the salaries and number of staff employed by him and other Ministers, and I ask: will he now respond to these legitimate requests in accordance with his Government's so-called commitment to full accountability? Further, will he act immediately to establish an all-party parliamentary committee to monitor the cost and workings of ministerial and departmental media activities and media units as recommended in the Fitzgerald report?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The question is a bit confused. It has been answered before. In relation to the discharge of recommendations made by the Fitzgerald report, that is a matter for EARC and the CJC, and we will abide by that process.

### Effect of Inflation and Unemployment on Queensland Economy

**Mr PREST:** I refer the Treasurer to inflation and unemployment figures released this week, and I ask: what are the real prospects for the Queensland economy?

**Mr De LACY:** The issue raised by the honourable member is important.

**Mr Elliott:** Tell us about the unemployment figures first up.

**Mr De LACY:** Yes, I will talk about the unemployment figures. I am pleased that the honourable member wants to hear something about them. They are important. At the outset, I want to say that nobody is pretending that we in Queensland, and certainly we in Australia, are not facing tough economic times.

As the Premier said yesterday, the international economy and the Australian economy are facing or already experiencing a severe economic downturn. Queensland cannot escape the consequences of that downturn. This Government recognises that the business community, the rural community and the community in general are hurting.

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** The member for Cunningham mentioned the attitude of the Prime Minister. I do not support the attitude of the Federal Leader of the Opposition, Mr Hewson, and other spokesmen for the Opposition in their attempts to talk down the economy every time that they get the opportunity to do so. We are all Australians, and Australia should come first. However, every time that bad economic figures are released, John Hewson appears on television barely concealing his delight with his prognostications of doom. That is the very same sort of thing that happens here with Opposition members. It is worth noting that John Hewson was missing in action this week when the latest inflation rate figures were released. When the June figures were released, Hewson appeared on television saying, "It can only get worse." This week, it was announced that the average Australian inflation rate for the quarter was 0.7 per cent, and in Queensland it was 0.5 per cent. Those are good figures.

Even though Australia is facing difficult times, Queensland is faring comparatively well. The inflation rate in Brisbane is 5.3 per cent, compared with 6 per cent nationally. Employment growth in Queensland is 2 per cent and only 0.4 per cent in the rest of Australia. In other words, employment growth in Queensland is five times the national average. According to the latest figures available, to the year ended 30 June 1990

Queensland exports grew by 13 per cent, whereas the national average was 9 per cent. Housing finance growth in Queensland was 26.3 per cent, whereas the national average was 4.6 per cent. Motor vehicle registration growth in Queensland was 16.5 per cent, but the national average was minus 6.3 per cent.

The member for Cunningham asked whether I am going to mention employment. Yes, I am. Unemployment figures do worry this Government. The figure of 8.6 per cent or 8.8 per cent, which was mentioned yesterday, is worrying. Queensland's unemployment figure is more than 1 per cent higher than the national average. That continues a trend that has existed for virtually the past decade. However, that does not make it any easier for Queenslanders to accept. The explanation is simple. I am sure that every honourable member in this House would know the reason, but it is worth repeating. Queensland's population and labour force are growing much faster than it is in the rest of Australia. They are growing at a faster rate than employment growth can accommodate. As I said before, they are growing five times faster than populations and labour forces in the rest of Australia.

**Mr Elliott:** You fellows used to chuck off at us when we used that in the past.

**Mr De LACY:** I am pleased that the honourable member still accepts it. That is the main thing.

The labour force participation rate in Queensland of 64.6 per cent is a full percentage point higher than the rate for the rest of Australia. If Queensland had the same participation rate as the rest of Australia, its unemployment rate would be pretty much the same as that of the rest of Australia. Mr Speaker, I notice that you are getting nervous and wanting me to sit down.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am certainly not nervous. The Treasurer will quickly conclude his answer.

**Mr De LACY:** Queensland's economy is performing better than every other economy in Australia. I would not want to send out the wrong signal to the Queensland Sheffield Shield team. In this morning's *Australian*, Simon O'Donnell said that the team was going to use the bad economy in Victoria to motivate it to win the Sheffield Shield. I believe that Queensland can have the best economy of any State in Australia and can win the Sheffield Shield.

### Sunshine Motorway

**Mr PREST:** I ask the Minister for Transport: what was the outcome of his meeting yesterday with the Maroochy Shire Council to discuss the future funding arrangements for the Sunshine Motorway? What support did he receive from the council for his proposals?

**Mr HAMILL:** I am pleased to report to the House on the outcome of the discussions that I had yesterday on the Sunshine Coast. I believe that honourable members would consider the proposition that I put to the Maroochy Shire Council to be a very reasonable one. The council had four points: firstly, that the work that had been requested by the Sunshine Motorway Company to change ramps on the Sunshine Motorway would cease altogether. In fact, that would embody the moratorium that was already announced by the Premier and me a couple of weeks ago at Parliament House at a meeting with the toll-buster group.

Secondly, the council suggested that there should be a reduction of the toll at the Mooloolaba toll plaza to 40c. That is another reasonable proposition. From my reading of an article that appeared last week in the *Courier-Mail* and correspondence that I received subsequently from traffic-management consultants, it came to my notice that, with a toll reduction to 40c, it would cost more for individual motorists to avoid the Mooloolaba toll plaza than to pay the 40c toll. In fact, it would cost them 55c to avoid the toll plaza. By using that motorway and paying for the benefits that they receive,

people in that area would be better off in terms of convenience and savings in their hip pockets.

Several traffic measures were put to the Maroochy Shire Council. One involved the banning of U-turns at a particular point. The council was happy to monitor that. To avoid paying the toll, greater numbers of motorists were doing U-turns on that fairly busy road. The council was happy to adopt the suggestion of putting in place bikeways for ramp crossings. I am pleased to report to the House that council adopted those points and that the monitoring of traffic flows was agreed to by over two-thirds of council members. That is significant. It demonstrates that there is common sense and reason in relation to the road development issues on the Sunshine Coast.

I compliment Councillor Fred Murray and the other councillors of the Maroochy Shire Council for their commonsense approach to this matter. Following the meeting with the council, I met again with representatives of the Tollbusters protest group. That was the third such meeting that has taken place. However, I was disappointed to learn that, although understanding, reason and common sense were demonstrated at the council meeting, when the meeting took place with the protest group that spirit of compromise and reason was not to be found. Unfortunately, contrary to an agreement that both sides would return with a proposition, the Tollbusters group had nothing further to add to what they had said over two weeks ago at a meeting with the Premier and me. We brought forth a proposition; they did not. With the result of yesterday's meeting at the Maroochy Shire Council, those decent Queenslanders who want to see an adequate solution to the road problem on the Sunshine Coast have triumphed, and those individuals who want to pursue a negative, or perhaps political, campaign have nothing further to say.

#### **Conservation; Fraser Island**

**Mr BEANLAND:** In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to statements by conservationist, Mr John Sinclair, who has publicly stated that Fraser Island would be safer under a National Party Government than under the Labor Government, which is dominated by Australian Workers Union factional politics, and I ask: does the Premier agree that Mr Sinclair shares the opinion of most leading conservationists in Queensland that the Government can not be trusted to fulfil election promises on environmental issues?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** In relation to one aspect of Mr Sinclair's comments, I agree with him absolutely, and that is that in all of the comments that he made about political parties, he did not deem the Liberal Party relevant enough to even mention it. That was very appropriate. In relation to the other comments by Mr Sinclair —

**Mr Cooper:** You should have schooled your mob up.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The honourable member is not happy today, is he? Has he finally worked out what is in the report?

Turning to the question in relation to the conservation movement, Mr Sinclair's position is very clear: he is so passionate about Fraser Island that he can see nothing else. He is not interested in the fact that the commitment given by the Government was threefold—firstly, to expand the national park, which we did; secondly, to protect certain scenic spots or beauty spots, variously described, which we have done; and, thirdly, to hold an inquiry to develop a long-term conservation and management plan for Fraser Island, which is under way at the moment. They are the commitments to which the Government is adhering. In addition, the Government has gone beyond its commitment. Under the sponsorship of Mr Fitzgerald's inquiry, as a result of a very responsible agreement that was reached between the timber industry and the mainstream conservations groups—which I suggest are responsible and reasonably level-headed about the issue—substantial limitations have been placed on logging in significant areas. That is beyond what the Government promised. It is a substantial achievement that was

reached—I stress again—not only with the agreement of the mainstream conservation groups but also at their suggestion, which was in their submission.

The Government has met the requirements and the request of the mainstream conservation groups. It will not be diverted from its commitment to have an inquiry. In common with a number of other well-meaning people, Mr Sinclair is very passionate about Fraser Island. He does not want to see some parts of the truth, and we have to put up with that. As for cheap shots that Fraser Island would be better off under the National Party, nobody seriously believes that.

#### **Queensland Nurses Union Claim**

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In directing a question to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, I refer to the fact that, on a number of occasions in this place, the Minister for Health has outlined his commitment to enhancing the position of nurses in Queensland—one of the issues of concern being nurses' remuneration—and I ask: what is the present position of the Queensland Nurses Union application before the State Industrial Commission?

**Mr WARBURTON:** I thank the honourable member for that very important question. It is important that honourable members are able to indicate to their constituents the true position. It has taken some considerable time to put this matter on course and I am very pleased to say that it is now on course. The matter has been complicated because the nurses union sought to put the matter before the Australian Industrial Commission as well as the Queensland Industrial Commission. That was subsequently a matter of appeal. Although a decision from that jurisdiction has not yet been made, , Commissioner Hancock of the Australian Industrial Commission has given an indication that the appeal against that decision in his jurisdiction will not be upheld.

I am pleased to say that the cooperation that has been given by the Minister for Health, particularly his industrial relations section, in this matter has been very good. We now have complete cooperation with the Queensland Nurses Union and I am advised that the union will pursue amendments to their award in the State Industrial Commission. That is tremendously important for this State and I am pleased that the union has made that decision.

Next Tuesday, the State Industrial Commission will proceed to hear the matter even though the decision from the Australian Industrial Commission is not before it. I suggest to honourable members that it appears that the matter is on track and that in the very near future the nurses of this State will get the sort of remuneration and standards that the Minister for Health has talked about in this place on numerous occasions.

#### **Night Parrot**

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In directing my second question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage—

**Mr Cooper:** Ask Deirdre.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I refer the Minister to a recent newspaper report—and honourable members opposite will have been waiting for this one—on the finding of a night parrot in north-west Queensland.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Wait for it. I ask: will the Minister detail to this House the significance of this find, particularly in the context of this Government's work on endangered species?

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr COMBEN:** I did not hear what he said.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister indicates that he did not hear the question and honourable members are wasting question-time. I suggest, firstly, that the member

for Archerfield does not read questions out in instalments and, secondly, that members on my left allow the Minister to hear the question out.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I will get annoyed soon.

**Mr COMBEN:** I have been told what the question was. The honourable member asked me about a bird called a night parrot.

**Mr Gibbs:** Jim Randell.

**Mr COMBEN:** It is not Jim Randell; members on the other side are only galahs, not night parrots.

The finding of the night parrot on the road to Boulia has to be the second-greatest ornithological find in Australia this century.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr COMBEN:** Hear, hear!

It is unfortunate that the parrot was dead. It was, in the words of John Cleese, an "ex-parrot". Frivolity aside, the finding of the night parrot that had not been seen since 1912—

**Mr FitzGerald:** Getting a bit old, wasn't it?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That was a very good one. I liked that.

**Mr COMBEN:** May be that explains why it was an ex-parrot. Certainly, it was a substantially old parrot. No night parrot has been seen since 1912. There have been a number of questionable sightings. We knew vaguely that it was in the west and had tried to find it on a number of occasions.

I will relate to the House the exact details of the finding. Two cars full of bird-watchers were travelling back from the Kimberleys. One car had fallen behind on the road, so it was decided to stop.

**Mr Hamill:** They ran it over.

**Mr COMBEN:** I am not answering that to get it in *Hansard*!

The car stopped and one of the gentlemen decided it was time to answer a call of nature. He went to the side of the road, and in front of him was a dead night parrot.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am concerned about the decorum of the House.

**Mr COMBEN:** I am worried about the decorum as well. This is a major ornithological question that must be answered and there seems to be some frivolity in the House.

The chances of a person who knew what one looked like finding a dead night parrot when he stopped on a road several hundred kilometres long is quite incredible. However, it was found and we now have to find its habitat. We must find out whether the parrot actually died there or if it was hit by a large motor vehicle driven by a National Party member, and held on the front radiator by the fans and the bull bar. After it dried out, it probably dropped onto the side of the road.

This bird has come back from extinction. This Government said that it would look after the fauna of Queensland and it certainly has— we have brought this animal back from extinction. The reality is that the bird could have been hit anywhere between the Kimberleys and Boulia. It will be a very hard task to find a management plan for it because we have to again find a bird that could be anywhere within two-thirds of Australia. If any members of the Opposition want to offer to go out there at some stage,

they are welcome to come with me. It is pretty hard going because it is spinifex country. The serious question about its management must be raised.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The House has been delighted with the question, but the Minister should bring his answer to a conclusion.

**Mr COMBEN:** I want to finish by saying that research is an important part of this Government's policy. It has reinstated the research grants of the department and is now involved in serious fauna research. In the old days, the only fauna that was researched by the then Government was "faunification".

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Minister to withdraw that comment.

**Mr COMBEN:** I withdraw.

#### **Police Rally; Rostering of Additional Police on Gold Coast during Schoolies Week**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In directing a question without notice to the Minister for Police, I refer to his assurance to the House yesterday that the rostering of 23 additional police on the Gold Coast on the premise of additional manpower for schoolies' week is not related to a planned mass protest meeting, and I ask: does the roster in question apply for the entire period of schoolies' week, or just one day, and will similar arrangements apply for additional manpower to be allocated to the Gold Coast for the following holiday period?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** The rostering is for a particular operation. Because he is the member for that area, I will tell the honourable member in private what the operation is, but I do not intend to make it public. Plans for this operation were formulated by the police before the union decided to hold the rally. It has only been in more recent times that police on the coast have been advised as to the numbers required. My understanding is that that is 23 police officers. Yesterday, I said that if the members on the coast wish to go to the rally, perhaps they should speak to their commander about it; but perhaps there are some who do not want to go. I think that even the police unions recognise that not everybody wants to go to the rally. They could do that, but my understanding is that as they do not start work until 3 o'clock, they could go to the rally and then proceed back to the coast. Even if they wanted to attend the rally, they could still arrive in time to go on duty. Attendance at the rally will not actually interrupt their work if they wish to do both. As I understand it, that depends on whether anyone on the Gold Coast who wants to attend the rally will be provided with free bus transport by the union.

#### **Sale of Gladstone Power Station**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to his abysmal record in negotiating major industrial development projects for Queensland and, in particular, to the announcement by the Tasmanian Government of a \$1.2m feasibility study with Comalco in relation to the possible expansion of the Bell Island smelter in Tasmania. I ask: what action has he taken in respect of reports that Comalco may invest in Tasmania or in Chile as a result of his failure to resolve the Boyne Island smelter bungle?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Let me deal with the question in two parts. Firstly, in relation to the operation at Gladstone, there has been no bungle. The Government's position is quite simple, and that is that a decision has been made to sell the power station and we are quite prepared to do so tomorrow.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Unlike the National Party and the Liberal Party, we will not sell the public of this State short.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The Government will not come into a deal that results in higher electricity prices for Queensland consumers. With respect, I point out that the company acknowledges that it should not get a subsidy and it does not want a subsidy. The deal comes down to a determination of a fair and reasonable value.

The disgraceful dishonesty of the National Party and the Liberal Party is exposed by the fact that the former Premier and his predecessor, Mr Ahern, had in their possession valuations from within the public sector and private valuations indicating that the power station is worth double what they were prepared to flog it off for, to score cheap, interim political points.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** In their desperation in the lead-up to the last election, they were prepared to sell the people of this State short, but we are not prepared to sell the people of this State short.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member for Surfers Paradise under Standing Order 123A with a smile, but not for long.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Secondly, the honourable member referred to a \$1.2m feasibility study in Tasmania. At the moment, Comalco is undertaking a \$10m feasibility study in Queensland on Cape York. If he wants to talk about figures and feasibility studies, he should multiply what is being done in Tasmania by 10. Elsewhere, the Queensland Government is involved in major resource projects via two sectors—the QIDC and the Queensland Government, which have provided up to \$5m for another feasibility study in relation to the Gladstone special steel-mill.

When it comes to projects that are real and where there is a net benefit to Queensland, this Government will do whatever is necessary. We will not sell the public short and, as well, we will not engage in the knocking that the National Party and the Liberal Party are undertaking in relation to the Gladstone Power Station deal. They are trying to drive down Queensland's economy. Their attitude and their knocking are designed to do damage to Queensland. To the extent to which they are able, they are happy to do damage to Queensland so that they can score a cheap point. The public can see through it and we can see through it. This Government will do what is best for the people of this State and will not engage in a dishonest and irrational allocation of scarce public resources.

#### **Animal Protection Act**

**Ms ROBSON:** In directing a question to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government, I refer to his announcement of reforms relating to the Animal Welfare Act and I ask: will he explain the nature of the proposed reforms and indicate when they can be expected to be enacted, particularly as they relate to animal experimentation?

**Mr BURNS:** I thank the honourable member for Springwood for the question. For a number of years, Molly Robson has been working in the animal welfare field and has always been a strong supporter of a change to the animal welfare legislation. Honourable members would know that the Budget presented by Mr De Lacy earlier this year provided for an increase in funds from \$40,000 to \$260,000, which signalled very clearly that the Government is trying to improve animal welfare efforts. The RSPCA previously received \$15,700 a year but will receive \$150,000 a year from the Goss Labor Government to assist the organisation in the work that it performs. More importantly, this Government has appointed the State's first animal welfare officer, Alan Mackinnon, whose job it is to draw up a new animal welfare and animal protection legislation.

The problem is that the current legislation has been in existence since 1925. When the Government tried to introduce regulations associated with it in relation to experimentation, it was very, very difficult. In fact, the Government was informed by the Crown Solicitor that it is difficult to try to address the problem of animal experimentation. Therefore, the Government intends to amend the Act to provide for animal protection as far as experimentation is concerned. The Government intends to introduce the Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes and will also ban LD50 testing, Draize testing and any testing of cosmetic toiletries or their ingredients. As I said, those amendments will probably be ready for introduction at the end of this year.

In the meantime, Alan Mackinnon and a widely representative group—comprising all sections of the animal welfare industry and the animal industry, such as people from the UGA, the meat industry and the chicken-processing industry—will be brought together to work on this committee. The committee's job will be to draft prior to Christmas a Green Paper on animal welfare. When the Green Paper has been prepared, I will circulate it widely in an attempt to elicit the views of the community. I hope that by the middle or the end of next year we will have new animal welfare legislation in this Parliament.

Finally, I thank all members of the Parliament who supported the first pet week in Australia, which was held recently in Queensland. The support of the education system and the young children who entered the competition was marvellous. I was pleased to see the work that was done and the interest that was shown. I thank the members who supported that initiative and I thank Molly Robson for the work that she has done.

### **Neutralysis Process of Waste Disposal**

**Mr ARDILL:** In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer to the neutralysis process of waste disposal. I ask: can he give the House his opinion of the success or otherwise of that process and its potential role in waste management in Queensland?

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member asked my opinion on the process of neutralysis. It is probably not appropriate that I give an opinion as such, but it is an important issue in terms of its place in waste management in Queensland. At present, we have a multimillion-dollar contract with the Brisbane City Council being let and a number of concerns with waste minimisation in other parts of the State, particularly in the northern parts such as Mulgrave and Cairns, which are looking for a regional approach to waste minimisation. As well, Logan and Gold Coast will shortly be looking at a similar regional approach. It is necessary to look at neutralysis as a Queensland-based industry which is able to both use and recycle some of our waste. Waste management must be about minimisation of waste, but it must also be about recycling. I expect and hope that neutralysis will be an integral part of any waste-disposal scheme being considered anywhere in the State.

Neutralysis has been through a long period of consideration. It is something which may still have to go to my department for full accreditation as to its appropriateness. When I have documents such as a summary from the department of chemical engineering from the University of Queensland and an environmental audit of the neutralysis pilot plant saying that the past problems have been solved, and that it is a process that can be used safely in appropriate locations in Queensland, I will start looking at it as a means of waste minimisation. Because of the benefit to Queensland industry, I want to see neutralysis taken up by some of our local authorities. We cannot afford to have that industry go to another State. The technology should be developed and exported. We should be using it for the promotion of this State. I will be giving every support to ensure that neutralysis gets a proper hearing and is appropriately located.

**Mr Hamill:** It was supported on our last trade mission.

**Mr COMBEN:** As the Honourable Minister for Transport says, it is an industry which was supported on the last trade mission which the Premier and he carried out.

That is the Government's approach to neutralisation: a Queensland company needing support, getting the right answers and answering our waste-management strategies. We will certainly be giving it all the support that we can.

### **Sugarcane Harvesting Procedures**

**Mr RANDELL:** I direct a question to the Minister for Primary Industries. With regard to his past public comments regarding his intention to endorse the harvesting of sugarcane from unassigned ground, I ask: is he aware of the major concern felt in the cane-growing sector of the industry about that dramatic departure from the regulation and current procedures governing the functions of the sugar industry? Has he taken steps to allow that action to be made possible? If so, when will it commence?

**Mr CASEY:** I can answer the latter part of the honourable member's question as to when it will commence. It commenced last month when the proclamation went through. It is virtually completed in areas of Queensland where there was any surplus sugar this year. The whole idea of that proclamation—incidentally, that was the proclamation which the member for Burdekin rushed into and had to withdraw, because he was out of order in this place once again—was to enable the Queensland industry to attempt to make up some of the shortfall it has in orders by the Queensland Sugar Board to meet contractual arrangements for sugar this season.

In some respects the sugar had been sold prior to the commencement of crushing. It had been presold. Because of the delays in restructuring the industry by the previous Government, Queensland was about 500 000 tonnes short of sugar to sell on the world market. \$150m was being lost to the Queensland market because the action had not been taken to expand the industry. Consequently, earlier this year—very early this year—I made a commitment that that would be the case for this season and, if necessary, again for 1991. The proclamation was made by Cabinet and tabled by me in Parliament so that, in accordance with this Government's policy of openness and accountability, all members of Parliament would be aware that it was only for the 1990 season. There were not many areas in Queensland—including the Mackay region, which is the biggest growing area in this State—where it was necessary to harvest unassigned cane for this year. However, of course, it was beneficial to the area that the honourable member for Mirani represents because growers in that region were able to sell all of their cane or have it all harvested through the mills and thus contribute their share to the shortfall that the Sugar Board was experiencing in regard to its contracts.

In answer to the first part of the honourable member's question—some people in the industry were advocating as an alternative that the Government ought to issue temporary assignments. That is absolutely crazy because of the length of time that it would take and the expectation by people who received those temporary assignments that they would go on for a further period of time. The simple fact was that the cane was there; the sugar had to be sold; and the Government allowed it to be harvested. If that is not a practical business operation, I will eat my hat and the honourable member for Mirani's hat, too.

### **Regulations Regarding Rehabilitation and Disposal of Acid Water at Collinsville Coalmine**

**Mr SMYTH:** I ask the Minister for Resource Industries: what are this Government's regulations regarding rehabilitation and disposal of acid water at the coalmine at Collinsville? What is the Government's position in regard to imposing regulations on MIM? Does the Minister feel that these regulations will have a detrimental effect on the employment of more than 700 mine workers at Collinsville Coal Pty Ltd?

**Mr VAUGHAN:** In answer to the honourable member's question—rehabilitation and disposal of acid water at the Collinsville coalmine is regulated under the Mineral Resources Act—previously under the Mining Act—and also the Clean Waters Act. To

a lesser degree, it is also regulated by the Water Resources Commission under the Water Act. So quite a few bodies are involved.

Concern has been expressed by the Department of Resource Industries to the owners of Collinsville coalmine about compliance with the lease conditions, going back to October 1985, if not earlier. This concern has been very plainly stated since December 1989 when the owners were requested to take action to deal with an acute acid mine water problem. However, the concerns still have not been addressed. Recent requests from my department have concentrated on planning and research by the mine-owners into a reliable means of accomplishing rehabilitation and water management and also in regard to action to avert the immediate risk of polluted water affecting downstream users. The assistance and cooperation of the owners has been sought in ensuring that future ongoing mining at Collinsville improves rather than worsens the current serious acid problem. The planning and research requirements provide the mine-owner with the opportunity to work out the most effective and efficient method of moving towards compliance with the long-established lease conditions.

Whilst these recent actions by my department undoubtedly require the owner to outlay funds for long-term planning and some urgent mine water management works, no new regulations have been imposed on the company. The accumulation of the backlog of work has been a result of the owner's decisions. Whilst pressure has been applied on the owner to initiate an effective and permanent rehabilitation program, as yet no timing has been imposed and the greater part of the costs involved could still be capable of being deferred. In other words, my department has not imposed unreasonable or excessive demands on the company and its operations but, rather, has adopted a realistic approach to the problem.

#### **Relations between Government and Business Regarding State Tax Matters**

**Mr SMYTH:** I ask the Treasurer: what is the Government doing to promote and foster relations between the Government and the business community in regard to State tax matters?

**Mr De LACY:** I think honourable members would know that for a long time the tax professionals in this State have been requesting of Government a formal consultation mechanism so that they can have an input into tax legislation and so forth. When I became the Treasurer, they asked me to form a tax liaison group. I have had a good look at it, and I think it is very much in line with this Government's commitment to accountability and consultation. I would like to announce that I intend to establish a tax liaison group.

Honourable members will be aware that in the Budget it was revealed that a new Office of State Revenue would be created. The director is about to be appointed. One of the first duties of that director will be to put in place this tax liaison group. The Government will be asking the different professional groups—the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the Taxation Institute of Australia, the Law Society, the Metal Trades Industry Association; in fact, any group at all—to have an input if they wish to do so. The Government intends to run past them any new legislation—

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

#### **REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 1990** **Disallowance**

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (11.45 a.m.): I move—

"That the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices (Amendment) Regulations 1990 tabled in this House on 23 October 1990 and published in the *Government Gazette* on 11 August 1990, No. 120, page 2260, be disallowed."

In moving for the disallowance of this regulation, I must say that it is again clearly indicative of the sorry saga of mismanagement that is being undertaken not only by the Goss Government generally but particularly by this Minister. Today, the time of Parliament and the time of the people of this State is being wasted.

**Mr Livingstone:** You are doing it.

**Mr STONEMAN:** That is right. I am doing it to show the people of this State what an inconsistent, poor manager this Minister is. Mr Casey is covering his tracks. The position is that it will not apply because, sooner or later, he will introduce legislation that will make it irrelevant. This regulation will never apply.

I wish to read from a letter dated 7 September 1990 from the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board to people in my electorate. In part, it states—

"The board, it may be said, has some doubt about the validity of the Regulations and you are invited by yourselves or your legal advisors, to make submissions on that date . . ."

That was referring to a proposal at the hearing on 28 September 1990.

**Mr Casey:** What is the date of that?

**Mr STONEMAN:** 7 September 1990. It further states—

". . . restricted to the legal situation which has arisen by reason of the issue of the particular Regulations."

That letter was from the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, which I am given to understand had, prior to the sale on 17 August this year in the lower Burdekin, advised the Minister, not only verbally but also in writing, that the Act did not contain the head of power to allow the processing of this regulation. Leaving aside all of the other arguments, which my colleagues will address, that letter alone raises serious questions.

The Queensland Cane Growers Council received an opinion that paralleled the advice given to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. Not only was that a sloppy ploy, but also it treated the legal advice given to the Minister and the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board with contempt. Basically, it threw the propriety of that operation out the door. Not only is that a sad reflection on the way in which this Minister is treating that board, which, over the years, he has maintained is sacrosanct, but also it is a reflection on the uncertainty that has been injected into Queensland's great sugar industry, at a time when there is uncertainty over world markets, production and many other matters. This flies in the face of tradition in the sugar industry. Growers spend a lifetime building up their assignments to an effective income level. Over that lifetime, they battle and strive to achieve that income level. In this instance, without respect for or consultation with the industry, the Minister proclaimed that 80 hectares of assignment should be attached to farms. That is double the local acceptable level; in fact, 30 hectares is the size recommended by the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. It flies not only in the face of tradition, but also the many statements made by the Minister over the years.

On 16 September 1986, during the debate on the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act Amendment Bill, the then Opposition spokesman, Mr Casey, at page 1482 of *Hansard* stated—

"At the time when that report . . ."

He was referring to the Savage report—

". . . was first released, I claimed—I still stand by those claims—that three principles had to remain sacrosanct. They were the assignment system, which is necessary and is the basis of control of the industry; a peak system, which is required because it is the basis of farm value and the basis of income in the industry; and that the central board be left untouched as the industry's own judicial controlling body. I claimed that it had to remain in that role. What did the industry see from the Government? The Government wanted to erode those principles in whatever way

possible. The worst aspect was the proposal to take away the power of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board and give it to the National Party Cabinet; in other words, to politicise the State's sugar industry."

He further stated—

"That is when the industry started to buck; that is when the industry really began to show it was prepared to dig its toes in and make sure that it was saved in a manner that, hopefully, will be achieved in part by the Bill."

He further stated—

"The second thing to stand out has been the determination of brave people in the industry to retain independent control of their industry."

He further stated—

"They commenced as very small voices until finally the crescendo grew so loud that everybody had to listen. As a result, the Government backed away from steps that it had intended to take, which would have been to the detriment of a great industry that provides so much employment for people along the coast of Queensland."

The Minister stated the position well then, yet honourable members almost have to ask themselves: is this the same man? He has done a total somersault. I cite *Hansard* of 1989, just over a year ago, during the debate on the Sugar Milling Rationalisation (Far Northern Region) Act Amendment Bill, when Mr Casey stated—

"The roaming provisions under the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act are causing problems. They are getting out of hand. Who is growing what and where they are growing it is like a pakapoo ticket. The controlled industry growth and the controlled production of cane and the raw sugar crystal was the very basis of the industry."

Further on he stated—

"The sugar industry does not want that ministerial control. It is quite capable of looking after its own affairs under proper legislation. That provision should be removed from the legislation as quickly as possible. The industry requires consultation, which is what it will get from me in a Goss Labor Government."

It will be clear to all honourable members that the Minister has done a total backflip on his statements about consultation with the industry, his respect for the central board and farmers as individuals within the industry but, most importantly, on his respect for the Act of Parliament that controls that whole process. This regulation will never see the light of day. Not only is it sloppy, but also it was clearly designed to pump up the price of the farms for the Burdekin sale, and it failed. At that time, obviously there was not the expected enthusiasm for that sale. What did the Government do? It came up with the idea of auctioning off a cane assignment. That had never been done before. It held out a big carrot.

With the exception of one block, which raised more than one would have otherwise expected, the Government's intention was a flop. That happened a couple of times. It mistreated—and I would have to say that, sadly, the commission was involved in this—an individual to such an extent that in an unprecedented show of support people did not bid against a particular farm so that the person who rightfully should have had that farm was able to purchase it at the upset price. Tactics were tried to have another auction later on. Again, the people stood solid and said, "No." So Mr Alec Christensen and his family were able to be given justice, not by the Government or by the Water Resources Commission, but by the people who had the fortitude and the integrity to recognise what was being done.

I am not speaking alone on this matter. This has been raised at every level of the sugar industry. I refer now to the letter of 7 September from the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. Point 5 in the final paragraph states—

"From consideration of the events which happened and documents in possession of the Board, it seems obvious that the Regulations in question were gazetted for

the purpose of boosting crown revenue and as a first step in what would appear to be a further expansion of the industry because apart from the 9 blocks of land which were sold, the Board understands that similar sales will be conducted later in 1990 or early in 1991."

That is a damning indictment of the Minister's contempt for the industry and for the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, which, prior to becoming Minister, he upheld as not only a paragon of virtue but also a vital component in industry operations. I endorse his earlier remarks. I just wonder what he has done to give leave of his senses in this case. There is no doubt whatsoever that Mr Casey is undertaking this charade of debate today simply because he has been challenged by me in this House and publicly on numerous occasions to table the regulations that were upheld at the auction in the Burdekin as being proof positive of the validity of the Government's intention.

There is no doubt about the Government's intention. The Government's intention is to fly in the face of tradition, to fly in the face of support for the industry and to use this shoddy tactic, this poorly put together regulation, which, I would have to say, does not even refer to the mills in question. Usually, an assignment attaches to a mill area. That is not mentioned anywhere. My colleagues Mr Rowell, who will second the motion for disallowance, and Mr Randell have far more practical experience as cane-farmers than I have. I suggest to the Minister that they will be able to show him, without any doubt, that this is unprecedented in the history of the State. The problem is that it opens the door for similar occurrences in the future.

A letter of 25 September from the acting secretary of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board to solicitors in my electorate states—

"Dear Sirs

In a letter to the Board, the Minister for Primary Industries has pointed out that the need for assignment over land recently sold at auction in the Burdekin area does not arise till next season. The Minister has informed the Board that prior to that time the new Industry Legislation will be in place and that the legislation will ensure that the undertaking of the Government to provide assignment to the land in question will be complied with, in regard to the purchasers of the land.

In view of this the Board will not proceed with the hearing presently fixed for Friday, 28 September 1990 or with further action in respect of your clients' applications for assignment."

In other words, the Minister had advised that the regulations were not going to be used. Yet to save face, this man who is attacking the industry from every side has tabled the document in this House so that we have to go through what can only be best described as a charade. I welcome that in the sense that it allows us to put on the public record the Minister's contempt for the industry that he is supposed to support. It is a sad situation when a Minister for Primary Industries in this State walks away in such an unprecedented manner from the 75 years of controlled operation of the sugar industry. I acknowledge that there needs to be change and that there needs to be a process involving greater flexibility. But this is not the way to do it. The Minister has been caught with his fingers in the honey pot. Now he is trying to extract them. I say to the Minister, "Shame! Shame!"

As I said earlier, it creates a precedent for future similar actions to be taken. It is a bit like the proclamation—and unfortunately I was out of the House when I understand the Minister made some derogatory remarks about me—

**Mr Casey:** No, I answered a question.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Right. Fine. The proclamation about which I spoke today, and on which in all sincerity I moved a motion, is a similar means by which on an annual basis the Minister will be able to proclaim that a particular section of an Act is invalid or out of date for the time being. As a result, the security base of the sugar

industry will be not only eroded but also shattered. I have here plenty of letters from which I could quote. They are solicitors' letters to the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board trying to find out from the Government and the Water Resources Commission what the heck is going on. It is all very well for the Minister to say, "Yes, you can grow cane and later on we will validate it." Those cane-farmers have to borrow money in order to clear the land and to plant cane. Assuming that what the Minister says is correct, they then have to sustain the growth of the crop with fertiliser and water, pay power charges and so on, as well as supply manpower over the next 12 months.

The Minister's intent might be one thing, but when people have to go to their bank manager to borrow money, write out cheques on their own account and make sure that the money they are spending will give them a return, they need to know legally where they stand. The Minister's actions reflect a disgraceful instance of the way in which this great industry is being humbled and brought to its knees by a man determined to have his way.

**Mr ROWELL** (Hinchinbrook) (12 noon): I second the motion for disallowance. There is considerable doubt regarding the validity of the manner in which the Minister appropriated assigned land to be attached to Crown land sold in the Burdekin auction some months ago. The Government's action to open nine assigned cane farms in the Burdekin with an area of 80 hectares left the industry bewildered. This area was significantly more than the average size of existing cane farms. If more thought had been put into distributing that assigned area and making it available to many smaller growers, that would have assisted to make more units viable.

ROWELL (LOQ)

The size of the holding and the eventual price was well beyond the capacity of young farmers, especially after the updated interest rates with the QIDC, which made it prohibitive for young farmers to participate in the auction. The Minister has placed emphasis on young people having an opportunity to get onto cane farms. The Burdekin experience is targeted at the person who has access to substantial funding, thereby blocking out those with limited resources. The area of land contained in the Minister's direction was well in excess of the board's recommendation of 30 hectares for new farmers.

The Government has profited from the infrastructure set up by the sugar industry. That industry responsibly implemented and paid for the transport, loading, storage and marketing facilities with very little Government involvement, except for the necessary approvals required, for example, in the construction of ports. The Minister has traded on the hard work and forethought that has been established by the industry over a long period. The selling of land plus assignment creates a precedent in the Queensland sugar industry. Never before has a Government endeavoured to enhance the value of a land sale by selling land with an assigned area for the growing of sugarcane. No indication has been given that the Government intends to return to the industry the difference between the value of the land unassigned and the sale price received from the sale of the nine Burdekin farms with 80 hectares of assigned area.

**Mr Casey:** Who do you think the money should be returned to?

**Mr ROWELL:** I have just said that it should be returned to the industry.

**Mr Casey:** Not the people of Queensland?

**Mr ROWELL:** The industry put the infrastructure in place.

In his determination, has the Minister considered the ramifications of the crushing capacity of mills in the Burdekin? This critical element needs close attention, because the capacity of mills to remove the crop will affect not only the immediate crop but also the crops that follow. If the time taken to remove the crop is excessive, a loss will occur in sugar levels and growth potential for the future.

The cane-growing sector of the industry is mostly disadvantaged by prolonged seasons. The wet-weather pattern on either side of the optimum crushing period is often detrimental to both sugar levels and ratooning prospects of the following year's crop.

The whole issue of a finely tuned arrangement between millers and growers to remove the crop in the optimum period is absolutely essential. Because over 80 per cent of the crop is committed to world markets, maximum efficiency must be achieved in all segments of the industry. That factor has made the Queensland sugar industry amongst the most efficient in the world. The industry must battle high input costs created by the poor state of the Australian economy.

Prior to the Labor Party coming to power on 2 December 1989, interference in the sugar industry at Government level was not supported by the Minister. Many of the comments referred to by the member for Burdekin reinforced the Minister's intentions. The *Hansard* record shows that, on several occasions, the Minister spoke about those aspects of Government involvement with the industry. One must ask: why was the Burdekin singled out for Crown land to be auctioned? Other cane-growing areas contain ample Crown land that could have been used. Was there any consultation with mill-owners and the cane-growers' organisation to gauge the impact on the crushing capacity of the Burdekin or any other region of the 70 000 tonnes of additional cane? That is a very important aspect of the infrastructure of the industry.

The matter of the State Government deriving financial reward from the industry is new. The industry contributes to the State Government's coffers through a number of taxes and charges, such as inspection fees and stamp duties. However, very little is returned to the sugar industry by way of services in the form of advisory bodies. The \$900,000 that goes towards the sugar experiment stations represents approximately only 2.5 per cent of the current budget for Primary Industries. The industry generally funds extensions and research work itself. In many sectors, such as plant-breeding and cane-harvesting technology, Australia is recognised as a world-leader.

**Mr Casey:** What has this got to do with the irrigation of Burdekin farms?

**Mr ROWELL:** I am speaking to the disallowance motion. The issue raised in this motion about the action taken in the allocation overrides the authority of the industry. That allocation has not been designated to any particular mill. The very important issue of how the Burdekin area will slot the 70 000 tonnes of cane into its system has yet to be resolved. The allocation is in addition to the 8 per cent increase that was recently handed down .

Lengthy negotiations often occur between mills, cane-growers and unions to determine crushing capacity and starting and finishing dates to facilitate a compromise between the relevant parties. It must be considered that the introduction of 70 000 tonnes of cane into the system unannounced will create an additional seven crushing days for the average mill. If millers are reluctant to provide the necessary additional capital investment, growers and the district could very well be disadvantaged by an excessively long season. This is a very important part of the existing regulations of the Sugar Cane Prices Act, namely, section 64, which must be considered in the context of unpeaked expansions.

The fact is that sugar-millers rely purely on operating existing plant for longer hours whereas cane-growers take the investment risk. If the season has started early, sugar levels will be affected. If the season continues beyond a reasonable time towards the end of the crushing—especially in the tropics with the advent of the wet seasons, the growth potential for following crops can be impaired. The decision to open up those farms is outside the framework of a well tried and proven system. The allocation by Government regulation of assigned areas for the growing of sugarcane is unparalleled and could cause disruption in the well-organised sugar industry. It is not my intention to disadvantage those who spend good money to buy cane farms, in the Burdekin area. The Government has decided to go outside of the provisions in the existing legislation.

As a cane-farmer, I am very concerned about what is happening in the industry. I know that new guidelines will be provided with the establishment of a sugar corporation, but the Government must work within the existing legislation. By putting these farms in the Burdekin area up for auction, the Minister has gone against those provisions. We

must all abide by the rules. As a whole the industry could be severely disadvantaged by the Minister's actions. Prior to the election, he was adamant that he would consult with the industry.

Time expired.

**Mr KING** (Nicklin) (12.09 p.m.): The mover and the seconder of this disallowance motion have stated clearly the genuine reasons behind it. I have no intention of taking up the time of honourable members by repeating unnecessarily their comments. However, I agree with nearly everything that they said. I have had discussions with people in the sugar industry who confirm the criticisms that are being levelled at the Minister over his actions on this matter.

The regulations were introduced to make money on the sale of land by the Queensland Water Resources Commission. When the land was sold, the industry expanded and increases in assignment were sought. Those increases amounted not to 80 hectares as granted in the legislation, but to 30 or 40 hectares. This matter has not been handled properly; the land is still not assigned. As the member for Burdekin pointed out, the Government may not even have the legal power to assign the land. However well intentioned a Minister may be, it is better to work within the system. I repeat: it is better to work within the system. The approach adopted by the Minister could lead to ministerial abuses, which must be avoided. His one-off approach is unwise and unwarranted. It sets a bad precedent and is certainly seen as such by the whole industry.

If the Minister is determined to distribute more assignments, he might consider making those assignments to some of the smaller sugar-producing areas such as Moreton and Rocky Point, which are struggling for long-term survival. As urban and other developments gobble up suitable caneland that is capable of sustaining, and is necessary for, future expansion and viability, those areas are under constant and increasing land-usage competition. Extra assignment now would help to preserve that suitable land for future cane-growing. Farmers in those areas are ready and willing to take up the big assignments that are being handed out by the Minister to make more attractive his land sales in north Queensland.

I was born in the Burdekin area; I have cane-farming friends there; I have spent much of my life in north Queensland; and I spent 17 years in the sugar-growing and milling areas of the Sunshine Coast. I can assure the Minister that, despite his sarcastic opinion to the contrary, I am conversant with many of the problems in the industry. Although he must be aware, I also assure him that most of the people in the sugar industry do not appreciate his heavy-handed non-consultative way of dealing with them since coming to office. This matter is another prime example of action without adequate consultation with the industry. The Liberal Party supports the motion to disallow those unpopular and unwarranted regulations that set a bad precedent.

**Mr RANDELL** (Mirani) (12.13 p.m.): It does not give me a great deal of pleasure to speak to the disallowance motion. I am concerned about what the Minister has done in the Burdekin area. He put the blocks up for sale under false pretences. In order to create a huge demand and make a windfall profit, he created false expectations.

**Mr Casey:** Nothing false about it. Everybody was told and everybody knew—nothing false.

**Mr RANDELL:** Certainly, the Minister's action was unprecedented.

**Mr Casey:** You are using wrong words.

**Mr RANDELL:** The Minister created his own rules in the Burdekin area. He did not consult with the millers or with the central board. He went ahead and sold the blocks with the implication that they would have an assignment. The Minister put an 80-hectare assignment on the new farms. As far as I know, throughout Queensland no farm has ever received an assignment of more than 40 hectares. As a result, 70 000 tonnes of cane could

be grown without assignment, and unless legislation is introduced in this session of the Parliament, which would extend the crushing and affect the c.c.s. of existing cane-growers. It is no wonder they are upset about it. That legislation must be passed this year.

I refer to the Minister's speech in April 1989 during the debate on the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act and Another Act Amendment Bill, in which he said—

"The Central Sugar Cane Prices Board has always been the umpire of the industry, which has respected and obeyed it. Various industry organisations have not necessarily liked the board's decisions but they have accepted, respected and obeyed them. Now that board will have its teeth pulled. Ministerial direction will replace the powers of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board. The system of peaks and assignments throughout the industry will be destroyed by this legislation because powers will be taken away from the industry and given to the Minister."

What is the Minister doing now? He has overridden the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board and gone back on what he said in this House. The Minister has taken the powers away from the board and overruled it. It is here in *Hansard* in black and white. During the debate on that legislation the Minister said—

"I make the accusation in Parliament now that the provision relation to transfers is designated only to assist CSR Limited and the Burdekin cane-growing area, especially CSR in the Burdekin district.

...  
If CSR Limited thinks that it has milling capacity that can be used in that area, I do not object; but it has no right to wreck the industry in other districts of Queensland to achieve that goal. It has no right whatsoever to shatter existing sugar legislation that has stood the test of time in this State in order to achieve its objective of co-ordinating all its milling operations and controlling the cane-growing industry in the Burdekin . . . "

Further on in his speech the Minister said—

"I have news for CSR. It will be in for a shock when a change of Government occurs at the next State election. It will not be able to carry out its manipulation. There is no way in the world, if I become Minister for Primary Industries in the next Labor Government in this State, that any transfers that are an obvious manipulation by CSR will be approved. The industry will be able to get back to organising its own affairs."

Effectively, the Minister has overruled everyone and acted contrary to the statements he made in this Parliament. He said that CSR was out to wreck the industry and take the assignments and that the National Party Government did everything it could for the industry. As soon as Mr Casey became the Minister he did exactly what he said CSR would do. Unless the Minister introduces legislation those farmers will be in very serious trouble.

I have a letter from a Mr Gaviglio that states—

"However, there appears to be some confusion in relation to the matter and we have several farmers who have, relying on that statement, planted cane in the year 1990 for harvest in the year 1991.

When the writer spoke to you in Mackay on 28th June, 1990 you indicated that you expected to have the new Legislation in place at the October sittings of the Queensland Parliament."

That was last month. The letter continues—

"It appears that there now appears to be some doubt that the Legislation will be passed by the Parliament in October, 1990"—

which did not happen—

"although in recent correspondence to our firm, you have indicated that it is the firm intention of the Government to have the Legislation in place prior to harvest 1991."

**Mr Casey:** What is the date of that letter?

**Mr RANDELL:** 9 October. It continues—

"We note that this statement has been made in relation to the provision of 80 hectares of assignment which purports to be attached to the parcels of land sold in the Mulgrave, Northcote and Leichhardt Downs sections of the Burdekin River Irrigation Scheme auction held on 17th August, 1990."

**Mr Casey** interjected.

**Mr RANDELL:** I would like the Minister to listen to the next part of the letter, which states—

"Accordingly, if the Legislation is not passed in the current sittings of Parliament or in any sittings of Parliament prior to 28th February, 1991 then, any farmer who has grown cane on unassigned land will be required to either lease assignment or grow other people's 'roaming' to enable their cane to be harvested in the 1991 sugar crushing season. The alternative is to take a 'gamble' that either the Legislation will be introduced prior to harvesting of the 1991 crop or further that you will instruct the lifting of the penalty provisions for growing cane on unassigned land in respect of the 1991 sugar crushing season . . ."

That is essentially the reply the Minister gave me this morning in answer to a question. He is covering his tracks. He is taking away the very backbone of the industry in Queensland; the growing of cane on unassigned land. The only sector that will benefit is the milling sector. Effectively, the Minister has risked cane; he has not risked sugar.

**Mr Stoneman:** Risked farmers.

**Mr RANDELL:** Yes, he has risked farmers. He is making them put their whole livelihoods on the line.

Assignments are the backbone of the industry. These assignments have been earned over many years through the sheer hard work of farmers who have bought them on an open market. The Minister intends to throw that work out the window. The Minister would know very well that the first thing the bank manager asks a farmer for when he goes to the bank for a loan is security. He will ask, "What is your peak and what is your assignment?" Now farmers will have to say that it is an open field and anyone can grow cane wherever they like. There is no security; it has all been thrown out the window.

The Minister has allowed it to happen in 1990 and has said it might happen in 1991, but in the future it will be at the Minister's discretion. He can throw it open any time he likes to unassigned cane-growers. I wonder what is behind the Minister's decision. In effect, the Minister has thrown one more regulation out of the door. Growers can be forgiven for leaving the industry. This decision reinforces what they already know, that this Government and the Federal ALP Government are determined to bring growers down to the status of peasants.

**Mr Casey** interjected.

**Mr RANDELL:** There is no doubt at all that that is what the Government intends to do.

I do not know why the Minister is attacking the cane-growing sector of the Queensland sugar industry. It is open slather. It costs an enormous amount of money to get land, clear it and plant it. Mill-owners will merely sit back and extend the crushing period in order to take the cane. When the crushing period is extended the c.c.s. is diluted. The money that a grower receives for his cane is determined by the level of c.c.s., which has always been the case. The Minister knows that.

**Mr Rowell:** What about next year's crop?

**Mr RANDELL:** And next year's crop.

**Mr Casey:** The mills determine the length of the sugar season; you know that.

**Mr RANDELL:** Of course, but the farmers have no say in it. The more cane that is grown, the more the mills want. Sugar-millers in this State can make money at 8 c.c.s. but cane-growers will not make money unless they get 12 c.c.s. Some mill-owners would welcome that sort of c.c.s. coming into their mills.

**Mr Casey:** This is about a proclamation, not c.c.s.

**Mr RANDELL:** Yes, but I am referring to what is happening to the cane-growers in this State.

The mills are operating for longer periods and, as I keep repeating, cane is being risked. Farmers have to clear the ground, plant it, buy fertiliser and employ people to look after the cane. If they choose, mill-owners can simply sit there with their facilities. Thank God that some mill-owners are recognising what is happening! The mills simply have to extend the crushing period, which dilutes the c.c.s. and therefore the amount of money that growers receive.

The sugarcane industry in Queensland is a major contributor to the Australian economy and generates export earnings of more than \$1 billion. It is the second-biggest export-earner in Australia. Queensland growers contribute 95 per cent of Australia's raw sugar production. Furthermore, for the information of some of the Government back-benchers, I point out that 14 000 Australians are employed in the sugar industry, and another 20 000 are employed indirectly. That is a conservative estimate; the figure is probably closer to 50 000 people. This has been achieved by a regulated industry that prides itself on its efficiency. It has earned a world-wide reputation.

**Mr Stoneman:** It has been well administered by previous Ministers.

**Mr RANDELL:** Yes, it has been well administered. The industry has been a good, reliable and stable supplier of high quality sugar. It is ironic that the base controls and regulations that have existed for approximately 75 years were set up by a Labor Government.

**Mrs Bird:** It has survived for 75 years.

**Mr RANDELL:** Why does the honourable member not rise and join in this debate? She has not said one word in this House in support of the cane-growers in this industry—not one word.

Time expired.

**Hon. E. D. CASEY** (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.23 p.m.), in reply: There is obviously a lot of confusion among members opposite about this debate, which is all about the move made by the member for Burdekin to disallow a regulation—a move commenced by him several months previously. He had to withdraw the motion because the regulation had not been tabled in the House. Earlier this week, he made the same mistake when he tried to move for another disallowance in relation to a particular proclamation which I, as Minister for Primary Industries, tabled in this Parliament in the interests of open and accountable government, and so that everybody could be kept informed and be given the opportunity of perusing and pursuing what is happening. It was another case of the member rushing in for a disallowance and finding out that under the Standing Rules and Orders of this Parliament and under the Acts applying to the sugar industry, it was not on, and he could not do it. That shows how much he knows about the sugar industry and how much of an expert he really is; yet he has the hide to rise in this Parliament and allege, in his opening remarks, mismanagement of the sugar industry by me and by my Government.

Mr Speaker, allow me to digress for just one moment to quickly tell the House a story. On my very first working day in office as a Minister, I received a fax from the Barley Marketing Board of Queensland marked "urgent". It sought information on what had happened to the board's correspondence dated 26 October—which was approximately six weeks previously—that sought urgent approval for a progress payment to be made

from the pooled funds to growers controlled by the barley board. In common with most other Ministers of this Government, when I got to the ministerial office, everything had been shredded and it was all gone. It should be borne in mind that the member for Burdekin sat for six weeks on an important matter such as a progress payment that would have been made to growers in a rural community. One could hardly say that barley-growers on the Darling Downs are an enclave of the Labor Party. These people are his supporters, but he just gave them the big A, as Australians would say, and let them sit and stew. There was no money for them, in spite of the fact that they were waiting to pay their bills prior to Christmas and were waiting to pay employees wages. This former Minister absolutely disregarded the request, yet he alleges mismanagement on my part.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Minister to get back to the debate.

**Mr CASEY:** Yes, Mr Speaker. Earlier, I sought your indulgence.

The point I make is that as far as the sugar industry is concerned, this Government has clearly demonstrated that it is prepared to get on with the job and its actions must be compared with those of the previous Government which displayed indecision, inaction, failure to facilitate expansion of the industry and adjust the industry to modern-day terms and technology, and a complete failure to rationalise and modernise in any way whatsoever. This particular regulation was put forward following consultation with the industry. The industry was consulted in relation to it and was informed. The industry knew that it was going to happen. It was personally discussed by me.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. At no stage was I given to understand that this was discussed with the industry. It was the subject of a press release only.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Burdekin is not allowed to debate a point of order. There is no point of order. The honourable member has got his point across.

**Mr CASEY:** The member is certainly not privy to my personal conversations and discussions with people in the industry and industry organisations. Therefore he is simply trying to mislead the House once again to try to cover up his own deliberate mischief. I point out that, in relation to this deal, it was the deliberate mischief of the member for Burdekin in his own electorate that cost this Government approximately \$600,000 that would have resulted from sales if he, together with other people, had not put on an act prior to and at the auction. I will refer to this matter in greater detail later. Contrary to what the honourable member is saying, the sale realised between \$600,000 and \$700,000 more than had been expected by the Water Resources Commission.

The problem with members of the National Party is that they cannot accept that they are now in Opposition. They cannot accept that the grower organisations in the sugar industry, the grain industry, the dairy industry and in all the other industries in Queensland are prepared to say, "You lost office on 2 December. We will talk to the new Government because industry organisations deal with Government." After 22 years in Opposition, I ought to know that, because I spent most of my time running around and trying to talk to industry organisations.

Allegations have been made that, in my previous speeches in this House, I swore by things that had to be sacrosanct, and one of them was assignments. Let any member on the opposite side of the Chamber prove to me or to this House—they certainly have not done so in this debate—that this Government has taken away the assignment system in Queensland. Under legislation that will be brought forward, it is preserved. Let me also refer to the peaks in the sugar industry. Again, the allegation was made that this Government has gone back on what I considered to be sacrosanct. Peaks are still in existence, but the problem is that they were watered down by the former Government that decided to allow peaks to get out of kilter with assignments. The industry supported that move, and it now has problems in relation to it.

I point out also that judicial representation is still involved in the central board's operations. The board is simply being updated and modernised. Under the new legislation that will be brought before this House, it will be modernised and, for the first time, a Queensland Government will put a stop to the centralisation that went on in the sugar industry and get the power back out into the local areas so that local people can determine their local problems and sort them out that way. If they cannot do that, they will still have a final right of appeal to the sugar industry tribunal.

The other point that the National Party cannot accept is that five or more years ago it was party to an inquiry called the Savage inquiry. When the sugar industry was on its knees, through the Queensland Government the Commonwealth Government was approached by the industry to do something about it. The Savage committee was set up and it brought down numerous reports. However, as soon as the price of sugar increased, after consultation with members of the National Party Government at the time, those reports were put into the too-hard basket and pushed aside. Since this Government has taken office, it has taken those reports out of the too-hard basket and set about resolving those questions. We set up the sugar industry working party, which was accepted by all sections of the industry. Following that working party's report, we have gone down the track of consultation to attempt to bring forward new legislation to assist the industry. Following completion of consultation, that legislation will be brought before Parliament. Of course, the National Party in Queensland cannot accept that consultation did occur and that there was a further working party report. The proposals put forward in that working party report are not Casey proposals or Goss proposals, they are proposals that have come from the industry. That is another point that the National Party cannot accept. Consequently, all the points that have been made today by Opposition members about the proclamation's effect on the industry have missed the point. All they have done is to continue with their scaremongering in the industry.

I will summarise to the House what happened. The Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act amendments were designed to ensure that nine blocks of land in the Burdekin area received sugarcane assignments—assignments that would allow the farms to be sold as a going operation by their owners. Last night in this House, honourable members would have heard the bleating cries of Opposition members about the rural crisis, about problems in rural industry and about people who had gone on the land and were not able to carry on because of the problems that they were experiencing. This Government wanted to ensure that the people who obtained new farms in the Burdekin went onto a viable farm. The blocks in question were owned by the Water Resources Commission and were set up to be auctioned with the right of assignment. Following inquiries about the powers of the Governor in Council, the regulations were prepared in good faith and in accordance with Cabinet's requirements, which were drafted and certified by the Parliamentary Counsel.

Some honourable members raised questions as to whether the regulations were lawful. Irrespective of claims by Opposition members, I point out that the Order in Council is legal. Despite all the scaremongering letters and other things that were tried to be pushed at the behest of the honourable member for Burdekin, the hearing into the application for assignment before the central board which he referred to this morning was scrubbed. By whom? The central board! It was scrubbed by the chairman of the central board because he realised the full situation. An assignment is not completed until such time as the crop is grown. Members of the industry would know that to be true. By the time the current crop is grown, new legislation will be before the Parliament that will dispel any doubts in anyone's mind—even those in the mind of the member for Burdekin—that it is a lawful and legal step. Despite the allegations, the policy to put that into place was discussed with the central board and other people. There was never any endeavour on my part—there was on the part of the member for Burdekin and a few of his National Party friends and supporters in the Burdekin area—to try to denigrate a former judge of the Supreme Court with allegations about the central board.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I rise to a point of order. That was not the case. Previously, I made a statement in this House. The Minister is trying to imply that I cast aspersions on the judge who is the chairman of the central board. I ask that that be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member seeks that that comment be withdrawn.

**Mr CASEY:** The honourable member has inferred from what I said that I was casting aspersions on the judge. I have never cast aspersions on the judge. What happened was that private correspondence between the judge and me was mentioned at a public meeting in the Burdekin district. That cannot be denied.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Under Standing Orders, if a member requests remarks to be withdrawn, the honourable member has no choice other than to withdraw them.

**Mr CASEY:** I accept your ruling, Mr Speaker. I certainly withdraw it. However, I repeat that information contained in private correspondence between me and a retired judge who had been a chairman of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board was passed to people in the Burdekin by other people who were in the office of the central board and was used for political purposes by people in the Burdekin to attempt to negotiate a deal with the Government. If there was any mischief involved, that is where it occurred.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is implying that I was privy to the contents of the letter or that it was widely distributed in the Burdekin. That is certainly not the case. I have never seen the letter.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order and no such implication. The Minister said "to people" and "by other people".

**Mr CASEY:** Mr Speaker, that is exactly correct. Your ruling is an excellent one. The unfortunate position is that, if the cap fits, somebody else has to wear it.

Once agreement was reached on the proclamation, the Order in Council was put out as the legal authority for those assignments to be given to the people who purchased the farms so that they were operating lawfully. That is the amazing part about this. Honourable members should remember that the Government was not putting extra assignments into my electorate, not putting extra assignments into the electorate of the honourable member for Whitsunday or in those of many other Labor members in this place who represent sugar electorates in Queensland—it was putting additional assignments into the Burdekin area in the electorate of the honourable member for Burdekin. This morning in the House he virtually intimated that he does not want an increase in sugar assignments in his area, that he does not want progress in the sugar industry in his region. I am very pleased to hear that because in the future this Government may have to give more consideration to additional assignments in areas other than the Burdekin. The local member does not seem to want progress in his area. He has moved a motion for disallowance of regulations that, if agreed to, will reduce and weaken the economy in the Burdekin area.

**Mrs Bird:** I'll have it.

**Mr CASEY:** The honourable member for Whitsunday would be very pleased to have it. I inform the honourable member for Whitsunday that at present the Government is giving consideration to a particular region in her electorate where, with the help of an irrigation system, there may be able to be an additional expansion.

I turn now to a point that was made by the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, who does not seem to be aware that he cannot interject from other than his usual place in this Chamber. The honourable member tried to indicate that the money from irrigation sales should be paid to the industry. He said that the extra \$600,000 should be paid to

the industry. If such was the case, then the converse ought to apply, and if the industry wants a dam, it should buy the water——

**Mr ROWELL:** I rise to a point of order. What I did say was that the infrastructure of the industry was the main reason that this sale——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member cannot debate what he did say. That is not a point of order. I ask the honourable member to resume his seat.

**Mr CASEY:** The honourable member cannot change my interjections in *Hansard*, either.

I also point out to the honourable member for Hinchinbrook that the dams for that particular area were not provided by the industry; they were provided by the taxpayers of Queensland and Australia, who are entitled to get the best economic return possible from such consideration. The taxpayers of Queensland and Australia got that consideration back in the best possible way, that is, by a public auction. I am sure that the Liberals would agree that market forces ought to prevail and set the value of the farms, with or without assignment, and the return that they ought to provide to the taxpayers of Queensland.

I remind honourable members that the system of water auctions was introduced by the previous Government—the Government that was constituted by the Liberals and the Nationals. Those auctions have established very good and firm values, and they will continue.

**Mr Harper:** Are you going to move the industry to the Burdekin?

**Mr CASEY:** The member for Burdekin has moved a motion of disallowance. The problem is a serious one. Perhaps the Government will need to campaign a bit more under the new rules established by EARC and make sure that the Burdekin gets a Labor member. That would fix the problem.

I turn to the contribution the member for Nicklin, Mr King, made on behalf of the Liberals. He spoke for two minutes—20 per cent of his allocated time. That shows the interest of the Liberal Party in the sugar industry.

I do not think that any of the comments that were made by the honourable member for Mirani are really worth replying to. He tried to make up for the slug over the ear that he got in an answer to a question that he asked this morning about the actions of the member for Burdekin. It is not my fault if the member for Burdekin does not know or understand the Standing Rules and Orders of the Parliament and on numerous occasions has to withdraw notices of motion that he was not entitled to move.

I want to reiterate an interjection that I made in response to a comment by the member for Mirani. This decision was suddenly made the day before the member for Burdekin gave notice of a motion for disallowance. Back in May this year, an indication was given to industry leaders. After I had announced what was to happen, comment was made about it in the media, and the chairmen of the Queensland Cane Growers Council and the Australian Sugar Milling Council rang me in Japan where I was on a trade mission for this Government to offer me their support for what I was doing. The point is that this Government has gone out and done a job and done it legally, and there can be no support whatsoever for the motion moved by the honourable member for Burdekin.

Time expired.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

## DIVISION

Resolved in the negative.

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REGULATIONS 1990**  
**Disallowance**

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn) (12.52 p.m.): I move—

"That the Industrial Relations Regulations 1990 tabled in this House on 23 October 1990, be disallowed."

At a time when unemployment in Queensland has increased by 30 per cent, with an additional 20 000 unemployed people, this Government has adopted policies that are negative to productivity incentives and negative to small business generally. In New South Wales, the coalition Government is moving to boost productivity and worker reward by introducing the very incentives that the previous National Party Government gave Queensland and that this Government has taken away from both employers and employees by the Act to which these regulations attach.

Make no mistake, when the members of the National Party return to the Treasury benches next year, or perhaps the following year—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** Members opposite may laugh, but make no mistake, a National Party Government will reinstate those incentives and those standards of accountability.

In recent years, the greatest backward strides in Queensland have been taken in industrial relations legislation, with the abolition of voluntary employment agreements, the repealing of the political objects fund requirements, the repealing of the Essential Services Act and the repealing—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Campbell): Order! The honourable member should speak only about the disallowance of the regulations, not other Acts.

**Mr HARPER:** I am aware of the fact that I have only 15 minutes in which to cover the field. I am referring to the principal Act to which these regulations attach, and it included the repealing of the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act.

As I have said, this is at a time when incentives to improve the economy are most needed. Additionally, these regulations do not provide adequately for accountability by trade unions and trade union officials, do not meet the needs of today's society and do not protect adequately the hard-earned financial contributions that members of the work force are forced by this Government to make to trade unions.

Trade unions are big business and their audit procedures, their accountability to the public, should be at least as stringent as applies in the Companies Code. I cite division 2 of the regulations, rules of industrial organisations, in particular the section relating to secret ballots. An industrial dispute—a strike—threw employees at the Ross River meatworks out of work for more than three weeks and cost the economy approximately \$15m in lost production, quite apart from wages lost to employees and the flow-on effects from that. A simple secret ballot could have avoided that strike, because the employees did not want it. I suggest to the Minister that he consider the validity of allowing employees in a similar situation to hold a secret ballot. The Minister knows that is the only way that employees can effectively express their views. It would be quite simple to provide in the regulations or in the legislation provisions to allow those employees, within a matter of hours of strike action being considered, to have a secret ballot. If the Minister wants further details of the mechanism, he has only to ask some of the employees in that area—or I would be happy to talk to him about it.

Of course, there should be a legislative provision that an industrial organisation of employees should not incite, advise or encourage any person to participate in a strike that does not occur with the support of a ballot. It is as simple as that. But the Minister is not prepared to go down that track with these regulations. I ask the Minister whether, in the future, the Goss Government will take action to give these employees and other employees who may find themselves in similar circumstances an opportunity to make a decision by spontaneous secret ballot. Is this Government prepared to continue to support legislation which facilitates minority views by trade union officials, bringing about financial loss to employees, employers and producers in circumstances which are capable of resolution with the exercise of goodwill?

As with the Act for which the Minister is responsible, these regulations discourage the formation of small employee-controlled unions. If productivity is to be increased, the very opposite should be done. The regulations should encourage enterprise arrangements negotiated by employees without interference from the heavies of the big trade union conglomerates. That brings to mind Commissioner Dempsey and his attitude to the principal of that small business enterprise Mini Movers Pty Ltd and to the agreement filed by the AAESDA and allocated to Commissioner Dempsey for hearing. There can be no question that, before he was ever appointed to the Industrial Commission, Mr Dempsey was compromised by his own words. At the same time, the words of another Labor Government nominee, Deidre Swan, have obviously compromised her position also. I ask the Minister: what is he going to do about this intolerable position into which those two commissioners have placed this State's Industrial Commission?

Section 3.13 of these regulations is restrictive and overbearing, as are the Act's provisions, which provide that an appeal to the Industrial Court by a person aggrieved by the decision of a commissioner would only lie on the ground of an error of law or excess, or want, of jurisdiction. That is simply intolerable. At the very least, merit should be a ground for appeal. Regulations relating to this legislation should facilitate the ability of those who feel aggrieved to take their case before a tribunal that can resolve the problems in a way that is conducive to resolution in an amicable fashion.

Section 3.15 of the regulations deals with a request for the Industrial Registrar to conduct elections and again calls to mind recent events. In the light of Commissioner Marshall Cooke's report, obviously there is need for tightening of both the Act and the regulations in this area. The Opposition and the community expect the Government to act on the recommendation to delete sections 13.41 and 13.42 of the Act and to insert new sections. Likewise, they expect the Government to heed the commissioner's advice in regard to the need for further legislative amendment. I am appreciative of the undertaking given in the House earlier today by the Minister, whose word I trust and take, that he is seriously considering those recommendations and that he will act on them. I give an assurance that if he is prepared to do that, he will certainly have the support of the Opposition.

Section 3.38 deals with the custody of envelopes containing ballot-papers. It is a pretty opportune time for Government members to think about the matter of the custody of envelopes containing ballot-papers.

**Mr Warburton:** Which particular part of the regulations was that again?

**Mr HARPER:** I am dealing with section 3.38. I am told that it is common knowledge that progress reports are available for AMIEU elections. So it would seem that, here again, that is an area that needs close supervision and genuinely independent supervision. Section 3.40,,, dealing with scrutineers, should make it clear that a scrutineer must not touch a ballot-paper. The penalty imposed under that section is surely a joke.

I turn now to Division 7—Accounts and Audit. This raises the very serious question of the political objects fund provisions which the Minister deleted from the industrial relations legislation. The second report of the Cooke inquiry clearly demonstrates that the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union of Australia, Queensland Branch, has consistently flouted the law as it existed until the Minister repealed the provision on 15 June this year.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr HARPER:** Before the luncheon adjournment, I was talking about how the Queensland Branch of the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union of Australia has been flouting the law. Between 1983 and 1989, \$123,888.83 was paid by that union to the Australian Labor Party. Between 1983 and 1987, \$7,699 was donated to political parties—the Australian Labor Party and the Young Labor Alliance—or candidates. It is appropriate during this debate on the motion for the disallowance of the Industrial Relations Regulations 1990 that the Minister indicate to the House what action his Government will take against those who have very deliberately and systematically flouted the law. Surely the independent recommendations of Hanger, QC, and Cooke, QC, must prevail and the political objects fund requirements must be reinstated in our industrial legislation.

Much has been said in this House about the Fitzgerald reforms and recommendations, industrial relations, the recommendations of Hanger, QC, in what has become known as the Hanger report, and Marshall Cooke, QC, who is the commissioner inquiring into the activities of various unions. Each of those learned counsel expressed the view that the political objects fund requirements should remain in place. It is up to this Government to reinstate that provision within our industrial legislation.

The regulations and the Act itself do not provide for adequate accountability by the trade union movement to those who provide the movement's financial resources. I am not union-bashing; far from it. On many occasions I have expressed support for the trade union movement. However, I do not support those union officials who use those tactics that are so common, particularly those in the Liquor Trades Union. Contrary to what is happening in Queensland, the coalition Government in New South Wales has decided to make unionism non-compulsory. That is the way that the former National Party Government wanted to go. This Government is forcing every employee to become a de facto member of a union. Because the Government is actually forcing people to join trade unions, it is only fair that the trade union movement and its officials be made adequately accountable. Employees of all political persuasions who are forced to contribute to trade unions must be assured that their funds are protected and are not used for political purposes. The regulations do not protect the community from coercion and secondary boycotts, which are the skills of the Liquor Trades Union. Members of the Government could not disagree with that.

This Government must recognise the error of its ways and amend the legislation and regulations to reflect the views and needs of the community in this period of recession. Until the Government is prepared to do so, the Opposition will oppose the regulations. The Opposition seeks the disallowance of the regulations until they adequately reflect the views and needs of the community and take account of the prevailing circumstances.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs) (2.35 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** It is interesting to hear Government members heralding my contribution to this debate. I second this motion moved by the honourable member for Auburn. I believe that what the Government has done is not in line with the thinking of the general community.

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

**Mr LESTER:** It is true. This country is opening up the free market and assisting free enterprise. It is not unreasonable to say that this Government has gone back 30 years to the old-fashioned methods, which do not guarantee export orders or the best productivity. If Queensland is competitive in today's markets, more businesses will make a profit, more people will gain employment and employees will receive more money. That is the ultimate aim.

I remember the absolutely unfounded criticism that I received when the former National Party introduced voluntary employment agreements. Members of the Labor Party believed that companies would go broke and employees' conditions would return to those of the Dark Ages. However, Power Brewing has done very well. Its productivity is far better than that of any other beer company in Australia. From a very small beginning, that Queensland company has become the third-largest brewer in Australia. Its productivity rate is far in excess of that of any other company. Furthermore, the people who work for Power Brewing are getting more money in their pockets than the people who work for other companies, which are all on the financial borderline; they may all go broke tomorrow. No-one knows what will happen to the people who work for Fouxex or Fosters. However, the people who work at Power Brewing have security of employment.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** I rise to a point of order. The Honourable the Minister must be having great difficulty hearing what is being said above the rabble from the other side. It is important that he does hear what the Opposition has to say.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Campbell): Order! The honourable member for Peak Downs has not asked for the protection of the Chair, and the Minister has definitely not advised me that he could not hear.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I thank the honourable member opposite, but not one person has talked about the regulations yet, so there is no much reason to listen.

**Mr LESTER:** What we are talking about affects all of Queensland. In these difficult economic times, what we are most interested in for the good of the State is more employment. Since the Government has come to office, unemployment has blown out. However, the Power Brewing Company, has increased the number of its employees; Metway Bank is going from strength to strength and opening branches in other parts of Australia; and the position is the same with all those companies that have used voluntary employment agreements. The workers at Power Brewing made threats to the Government because they were on better conditions under VEAs. This Government—the Government of the worker—took away their basic rights and conditions and the extra pay that they received. In some instances, workers lost up to \$10,000 a year. Instead of standing by the worker, the Government is against the worker.

It is all very well for industrial inspectors to carry out a great purge on small business. When I was a Minister, I was always interested to see that employers did the right thing and paid the right wages. The former National Party Government instituted a very significant inspection system, but, rather than pouncing on employers in the middle of the night, it tried to educate them. The former Government achieved a better understanding between employers and employees, which meant that many employers

could continue in business. Employers and employees must work together. I agree that, in some instances, usually owing to lack of understanding and experience, difficulties have arisen with both management and employees. Through holding seminars, the former Government tried to get together the employers and the employees to help them to understand work practices, productivity and, ultimately, competition, which would enable Queensland companies to compete with their interstate and overseas counterparts.

I hate to say that, the imposition of these regulations has been to the detriment of employment opportunities in this State. The rate of unemployment is increasing at a rapid rate. If the Minister could say, "Vince, when you were Minister, unemployment was at a certain rate but now that I am Minister, the rate of unemployment has decreased.", I would be the first person to commend the Government. I would say, "Good on you. You have done a good job." Unfortunately, that has not happened. That is why I must be critical. The Government should not introduce regulations that will lead to a reduction in employers' confidence. However, that is what is happening. Employers do not have the confidence to employ more people, because they do not know what they will be hit with next. If Queensland companies are to be competitive with overseas companies, the Government will have to free up the wages system. Successful countries overseas have done that and are now beating Australia in the export trade. I am awfully concerned about that, because our children could be affected. Mr Deputy Speaker, I know how interested your sons and daughters are in the proceedings of Parliament. Many children have written to us wanting to know what we do. Most of us have replied. I would hate the Government to do anything that would cause difficulties for our children to gain employment in the future.

I object very strongly to the Minister's actions with respect to political objects funds. It is not cricket.

**Mr Schwarten:** It's industrial relations.

**Mr LESTER:** Well, it is not achieving the result that we want, which is more employment. I formally second the motion.

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton North) (2.45 p.m.): This morning in this House I listened to the member for Burdekin refer to wasting the time of Parliament. At least he was honest about it, because the mumbo jumbo extolled by those two industrial ignoramuses on the Opposition side of the House has been a complete waste of time. I did not hear one reference to the regulations. It is apparent to me that those two individuals over there do not know the difference between the Act and the regulations. For their benefit I will hold up both documents—this is the Act in my right hand and these are the regulations in my left. This House is not debating a disallowance of the Act; it is debating a disallowance of the regulations.

**Mr HARPER:** I rise to a point of order. I find the accusations made by the honourable member offensive. During my address to this House the Minister sought to interject and I paid him the courtesy of not taking the interjection because it showed that he had not read the regulations. He challenged me as to whether I was referring to the regulations.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Campbell): Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member has had his 15 minutes in which to speak.

**Mr HARPER:** I make the point that in claiming that the Opposition was not referring to the regulations, the honourable member was in error. The Opposition quoted numbers and sections.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! That is up to me to decide. I call the honourable member for Rockhampton North.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** Unlike earlier speakers, I will refer chapter and verse to the regulations. I will advise members of the things that members opposite disapprove of. To begin with, they disapprove of section 3.5, the review of the registration of small

industrial organisations. In other words, they want to continue along the same track that Queensland has followed for years, that is, having tin-pot unions with half a dozen members here and there. Section 3.7 of the regulations concerns the opposition to registration as an industrial organisation and members opposite do not even want to have these organisations registered. Members opposite do not want these associations to make application under section 3.8 for registration of the hearing of applications. The list goes on.

I heard the honourable member for Peak Downs talk about going back to the Dark Ages. It is obvious to me that he learnt nothing when he held this portfolio, because one of the things that will get Australian industrial organisations out of problems they are in today is the amalgamation of the smaller unions. By seconding this motion and by his speech the honourable member has opposed such amalgamations. Opposition members do not want to allow the service of documents in respect of proposed amalgamations or prescribed grounds of objection in respect of a proposed amalgamation.

The other matter that Mr Harper harped on about this morning concerned the secrecy of ballots. That very matter is referred to under regulation 3.33. This morning in this House, Mr Harper claimed that this Government opposes secret ballots. It is in the regulations in black and white! Members opposite are the ones who are opposing it and they even oppose the manner of voting and the custody of envelopes containing ballot-papers. It is a little like a National Party plebiscite. The Opposition does not want to have any security in place over the counting of ballots. This Government is ensuring through these regulations that all the loopholes that Opposition members left open are closed. They do not like it and are whingeing about it now. They know that they are industrially inept.

The fact is that Opposition members are really frying another fish here today. They are attempting to hark back to their rehashed speeches that they made when opposing the industrial legislation. I understand why they want to use this vehicle. This is an attempt to deride the Act that is now in place and which, much to their horror, is working very well. The lights are still on in Queensland and the number of industrial disputes is down. This is a cheap, underhand shot at the industrial legislation. Honourable members will remember that on the evening when the legislation passed through this House, Opposition members even objected to the title of the Bill. I do not know if they wanted to call it the tropical rainforest Bill, the fruit-loop Bill or the Harper's Bazaar Bill, but they objected to the title of the Bill. That is the tactic they are trying today. Contrary to what members opposite would have us believe, the Act is operating very well and has been very well received out in the community. Power Brewing has not gone broke overnight because of the legislation. That company sought to comply with the Act and is still making a quid out there. The President of the Industrial Court has welcomed the legislation, but the industrial illiterates on the other side of the House have been unable to read it and accept the issues. As far as I am concerned, if anyone in this place should be condemned, it is members opposite for the underhanded and deceitful way they have chosen to attempt to undermine this Act. They made no reference to the regulations and, for the life of me, I do not know why this group of people want to waste the time of this Parliament by saying that they understand the difference between the Act and the regulations, because they certainly do not.

The fact is that the Queensland Industrial Relations Act is flagship legislation. Other States around Australia are already looking at it. Because it has been appropriately developed through consultation and not confrontation, the regulations that have stemmed from the Act are both sensible and appropriate. They have been through the Parliamentary Counsel and not one of the members who sit on the Subordinate Legislation Committee raised anything about it.

**Mr Santoro** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** The loudmouth from Merthyr did not raise anything about it either.

The regulations were all right at that stage. When they had the appropriate channels to go through, not one member in this place chose to raise the issue at that point. One would have to question Opposition members' sensibility and their qualification to speak on these matters.

**Mr Hayward:** And their sincerity.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** Most assuredly, and their sincerity. I took that as read because they do not have any sincerity. There is no doubt about the fact that the gentleman who sits on the other side of the House not only supported a disgraceful industrial Act that dated back to 1916, but also did nothing about it.

**Mr Santoro:** It was a good Act; your Act.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** It was a shambles; it was a laughing-stock and it was a veritable pakapoo ticket. No-one could understand the jolly thing, yet the honourable member has the hide to stand in this place and criticise this Government. He has already been removed by his own party from his responsibilities as Whip and it is totally inappropriate for him to speak on these matters. The responsibility for his former duties has been handed over to someone else who does not know any more about it than he does.

The situation has gone from the sublime to the ridiculous. The National Party has the hide to waste the time of this Parliament with a ridiculous motion for the disallowance of regulations in the vain hope that they will be able to scratch up enough numbers to knock off the regulations so that they cannot be enforced. What a lot of rot! What a waste of time! What a lot of frauds members of the National Party are. They could not cop the fact that better legislation has been introduced.

**Mr LESTER:** I rise to a point of order. I am personally aggrieved and offended that my colleagues and I have been called frauds. I ask for those remarks to be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Campbell): Order! There is no point of order. The reference was not at all personal.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** The honourable member has been a member of this Parliament for years, but he still does not know to take a point of order.

The fact of the matter is that, as far as this Government is concerned, the feeble efforts of the Opposition will be seen for what they are. Their weak efforts to undermine this legislation will be seen by people who support the Act—and that is the overwhelming majority—and by those who see the sense of the legislation to warrant condemnation. They will be condemned for this attack in the same way as they were condemned for introducing legislation that was both draconian and oppressive. Quite frankly, if that is the best that members of the Opposition can come up with, we in the Government will be here for a long period.

**Mr SANTORO** (Merthyr) (2.55 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the disallowance motion. In expressing that support, I will begin by referring honourable members to the personal attacks that have been perpetrated on members of the opposition parties by those who have spoken during this debate. I refer mainly to the member for Rockhampton North. In a manner that was similar to the way in which the Minister responds to the media and to questions asked in this place, the member for Rockhampton North decided to denigrate people personally rather than to address the issues.

The regulations that are being considered today deal with several aspects of union affairs, including the conduct of ballots, the administration of union funds, and the accountability of unions and union management to members. The debate centres on some of the regulations that allow that type of conduct to occur in the union movement. In that context, it is legitimate for members of the opposition parties to refer to the way in which omissions in these regulations and in the legislation that they serve have impacted on the industrial relations system. Unless I am gravely mistaken, there is absolutely nothing wrong with the attitude adopted by the Opposition in relation to

the matters that are being discussed. It is because of the lax terms of the regulations that Cooke uncovered the excesses of which members of the Labor Party are so afraid and ashamed. As the honourable member for Auburn said, it is all very well for the Minister to rise in this place and say that the reason that Cooke uncovered fraudulent practices is that the regulations have been so lax. The regulations that are the subject of this disallowance motion do not improve that. That being the case, when Opposition members refer to the impact of the regulations, members of the Labor Party should not whinge or squirm, because what is being said is true. The commission of inquiry found out what the Labor Party's fraudulent legislation has allowed to happen.

As I said at the outset, these regulations are part of the effect of legislation that, in the view of members of the Liberal Party, has allowed a wholesale transfer of industrial relations power to the unions. The regulations effectively compel people to join unions, favour the big players to the exclusion of the smaller players, inhibit the desirable process of enterprise and productivity bargaining, direct superannuation funds away from the workers into union-controlled superannuation schemes and prevent workers from exercising proper control over union funds.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** I ask honourable members to listen again to what I am saying. The effect of the legislation is a wholesale transfer of power to the union movement; in other words, the powerful unions become even more powerful. I suggest to honourable members that absolutely powerful bodies should be absolutely accountable. The legislation and the regulations do not make the union movement accountable, and the honourable member knows that. Cooke has demonstrated that fact and members of the Liberal Party will keep reminding the Labor Party of the effect of its legislation and regulations.

The Minister knows that his industrial relations legislation and the awards to which the legislation gives effect make sure that only preferred superannuation funds have money directed to them. Those superannuation funds are run by boards of trustees who exercise all the power. They tell all the other members of the board that, unless the employer organisations and the individual employers comply with the fund's wishes, they will blackmail them industrially. The Minister knows that that is the net effect of these regulations and he cannot get away from that.

**Mr Hayward:** Who runs them?

**Mr SANTORO:** At an appropriate time, I will tell the honourable member exactly which companies they are.

Let me turn now to the omissions inherent in the regulations. For example, under the existing situation, applications to query elections need to be made to the Industrial Commission rather than to the Industrial Court. The honourable member for Auburn asked who sits on the Industrial Commission, and the answer is that those people are former union hacks--Dempsey, Swan and Fisher. When somebody seeks to initiate an inquiry into conduct, what does Cooke recommend? He recommends that the court should have the same power under the Commissions of Inquiry Act and may refer to the police. What currently exists? What is the Minister allowing to exist? Restricted application to the commission. Who sits on the commission? Dempsey and former union hacks. When we talk about the conduct of elections, who does Cooke suggest should be made the returning officer? The principal electoral officer who, under the Electoral Districts Act, has very responsible duties to discharge. To whom do the regulations and the Act give the power to conduct ballots? Anyone, including union officials. I would like the Minister to deny that. He might be smiling, but will he tell me that a union official cannot conduct his own elections? Will he tell us that Brian Elton acted according to the responsibilities that the principal returning officer of Queensland would discharge?

I refer to the other recommendations from the Cooke inquiry which refer to omissions and the management of resources. Cooke said that the resources of industrial organisations are not to be used for election purposes to promote the candidacy of any person, group of persons, team or voting ticket against the candidacy of any other person, group

of persons, team or voting ticket. I would like the Minister to show me within the regulations—or within the legislation that the regulations support—where that intent is given effect. In relation to the disclosure of campaign funds, Cooke suggested that there should be a full reporting function. Where are those recommendations reflected in the regulations? Reports that must be tendered by the returning officer need to be published in union journals and published generally. Where are those requirements? The Minister has said that he will consider the recommendations of the Cooke inquiry and see whether he can incorporate them. It could take a year before the Minister starts to consider those recommendations. He is using the excuse that Cooke might change his mind and make alterations to the recommendations that he has already made.

Since the middle of last year, evidence has been heard before the Cooke inquiry. The Minister does not have to wait another year before he stops the fraudulent abuse of union power that people such as Elton and Hardie and other members of every union that has been investigated have demonstrated. For the Minister to sit tight and allow the same sort of regulations and legislation that has perpetrated the sorts of abuses that the Cooke inquiry has uncovered is shameful. He should be acting now. He should not rush through the regulations. He should have examined the evidence tendered before the Cooke inquiry and had the courage to be the watchdog—the conscience—of the ordinary union members who have been ripped off. However, he does not want to do that because he does not want to admit any sooner than he has to that his union mates—the people whom Minister Gibbs supported—have broken the rules and regulations and have benefited enormously. I will not go into detail about the amounts that the two previous Opposition speakers dealt with—the \$123,000 in affiliation fees, the \$5,000 donation to the ALP and the \$1,000 donation to Mr Gibbs. If the regulations and the legislation had contained a provision for a political objects fund, those donations would not have been made illegally, as the Cooke inquiry discovered. Neither would the sort of other industrial relations bastardry that has been perpetrated by the people in his party and in his greatest support base, the union movement, have occurred.

That is why the Minister is going slowly. That is why we keep reminding him of those excesses. It is the omissions rather than the inclusions that are leading to the downfall of an industrial relations system which, under previous administrations, was getting back on track. Government members are industrial relations vandals. We will keep reminding them of that. When they claim that their industrial relations legislation has been supported, they have their heads in the clouds. It has not been supported. It is a disgrace! If honourable members went to the workplace and spoke to people about the impact that the legislation is having, they would realise that it is a sham and a fraud, and it will continue to be that way.

Time expired.

**Mr ELDER** (Manly) (3.05 p.m.): What we see again today by the action of Opposition members is an Opposition that is still lacking initiative, lacking credibility and unable to come to terms with, or even accept, the need for much-needed reforms in the industrial legislative area to address the problems of its neglect in the past. Again, we have heard an attack against unions by the honourable member for Merthyr. The only union that he has not attacked is the Cattlemen's Union. I wonder whether he has read the EARC report and is starting to change sides. Or perhaps he is looking to lead his party into coalition with his National Party friends. That is probably the only reason why the Cattlemen's Union has not copped a bucket. If the dinosaurs on the Opposition side of the House continue to act in the manner in which they have, they will ultimately go the same way as their reptile cousins. Collectively, when it comes to industrial legislation, they have the foresight and vision of the Spanish inquisition.

The Industrial Relations Act, along with its regulations as an integral part, introduces much-needed industrial legislative reform. The introduction of that Act created a single code of industrial legislation for Queensland. Previously, the Electricity Authorities Industrial Causes Act and the Electricity (Continuity of Supply) Act were repealed by

the new Act. That legislation was, arguably, a breach of the conventions of the International Labour Organisation and was found by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to infringe on a number of basic human rights. The repeal of those Acts returned employees of electricity authorities to the jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission and thus ended the fragmentation of the State tribunal system. The Industrial Relations Act, with its regulations, also repealed the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act. That nasty piece of legislation was introduced in 1984, purportedly to mirror the secondary boycott provisions of the Federal Trade Practices Act, and was extended on a number of occasions by the previous Government in an attempt to outlaw an entire range of industrial action. The Act was impractical, unnecessary and unworkable legislation. Its draconian provisions tended to create discontent rather than industrial peace, frequently casting a pall over relationships between employees and employers.

The Industrial Relations Act repealed the most draconian piece of legislation ever enacted by a Government in this State. I refer, of course, to the essential services legislation--yet another ill-founded legacy of the previous Government's counter-productive and impractical ideology.

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** My views on industrial relations are not clouded by the ideological bias of the honourable member. That is the difference between us.

The removal of that legislation, complemented by the Act's enhanced compliance provisions, has helped restore a sound basis for good employment relations in Queensland. To enhance sound industrial relations practices in this State, the Industrial Relations Act and its regulations—its most necessary regulations—enshrined the establishment of a tripartite consultative committee to give ongoing advice to the Government on further changes to the State's industrial relations framework. It means that, for the first time ever in this State—and this is what members of the Opposition cannot come to grips with—organisations representing not only employers but also employees have a direct say, or a direct input, into legislative provisions relating to the very important matter of industrial relations. That is the difference.

**Mr Stephan:** The employers and employees wanted VEAs, though, didn't they?

**Mr ELDER:** The member for Peak Downs mentioned VEAs, and he mentioned Power Brewing. Surprisingly enough, the provisions relating to the employees of Power Brewing and the success of Power Brewing have not changed. The only difference is that for the first time those employees have a legitimate industrial agreement under the auspices of the Industrial Commission. That is the difference. The VEA argument is thrown out the door. Bernard Power was able to demonstrate that by going to the Industrial Commission and getting the agreement. Why does not the honourable member for Gympie have a chat with Bernard Power? He will enlighten the honourable member on that subject.

In his second-reading speech on that Bill the Minister said—

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

I do not think anyone—certainly not any member of the Government—would disagree with that.

The regulations that will now apply to the Industrial Relations Act—very reforming regulations—deal with all the issues that members of the Opposition continually raise. They deal with the rules of industrial organisations and, in particular, they deal with ballots. Members of the Opposition talk about secret ballots. I suggest that they read the legislation and the regulations and see what provisions are contained in them.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** The member for Gympie would be somewhat enlightened—and I know that that would be difficult to do—if he read the provisions contained in the regulations.

After all these years, with the Industrial Relations Act we now have in place a system that will allow Queenslanders and Queensland to derive the benefits of sound and sane industrial relations procedures and practices. I support the Minister.

**Hon. N. G. WARBURTON** (Sandgate—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (3.11 p.m.), in reply: I will make some preliminary remarks. The National Party seems to be unable to understand that it is now firmly in Opposition.

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** The honourable member does not seem to understand that.

Members of the Opposition similarly cannot accept that their draconian, repressive legislative ways are down the tube. That has all gone. It is history; it is extinct. Honourable members have heard from Mr Harper, Mr Lester and Mr Santoro. Of course, honourable members always hear from Mr Santoro. Those honourable members purportedly addressed the regulations that they seek to have disallowed. I state very clearly that I think that the three of them have abused their rights as members of this Parliament because they have not addressed the regulations proper; they have not pursued what they indicated they set out to do, that is, properly debate the disallowance of these particular regulations. In fact, they have very purposely and very deliberately used this occasion to reopen the debate on the Industrial Relations Act. That is the clear position. In saying that, I do not cast any reflection upon the Chair because the regulations are complex. Mr Harper might say, "What I was doing was referring to section 3.15.", or whatever it was. In respect of these regulations, I asked him, "What are you talking about?" Quite frankly, Mr Harper did not answer because he was referring to nothing whatsoever in that document.

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** The honourable member abused his right as a member of this Parliament, as did Mr Santoro.

In regard to the contribution by Mr Santoro—I suppose his position was somewhat worse than that of Mr Harper because in addition to abusing his rights as a member of this Parliament, he revealed the most abysmal lack of understanding of the regulations and of industrial relations generally that I have ever had the misfortune to hear. It was hopeless drivel.

I will outline the reasons behind these regulations. Of course, there was a lack of argument against them, but I will clarify the position. These regulations, which the Opposition seeks to disallow, have been made pursuant to section 15 (22) of the Industrial Relations Act 1990 and accord with the requirements of that section—and this is very important—in that their provisions are not inconsistent with the Act—and no argument has been heard about that—they have been made with respect to matters that are required or permitted by the Act to be prescribed—there was no argument about that—they are not in respect of any matter the prescription of which is specified in the Act; and, finally, they are in respect of matters that are necessary or expedient to be prescribed for the proper administration of the Act or for achieving the objects of the Act.

These regulations, which members of the Opposition are suggesting should be thrown out the window, ensure that the provisions of the Act can be applied effectively and, frankly, are necessary for this to be achieved. To disallow these particular regulations would be an absolute nonsense. Their disallowance would continue in force those regulations made under an Act which has been repealed and replaced by the Act, as has been said on this side of the Chamber on many occasions, that is designed to meet the needs of modern industrial relations. That was pointed out by my colleague Mr Elder.

Any continuation of the previous regulations will inhibit the effective operation of the Industrial Relations Act, which is what the Opposition seeks to do. As I have announced on previous occasions, certain uniformity in State and Commonwealth industrial legislation has been achieved by the Queensland Industrial Relations Act adopting provisions of the Australian Industrial Relations Act. This uniformity is continued by these particular regulations adopting relevant regulations made under the Australian Industrial Relations Act. The result is that the regulations have application mainly to matters relating to industrial organisations of employees or employers. They also contain procedural matters that enhance the administration of the Act.

The following points are very important. Those matters in the regulations relating to industrial organisations are registration, amalgamation, auditing of accounts and cancellation of registration. Members opposite used today's debate to raise the issue of ballots generally. The position is either that they do not know what the regulations contain or, as I said, they have abused their positions as members of this House, because these regulations are about ballots and amalgamation. For the information of Mr Harper, who has questioned me on this matter in this place, and particularly the gentleman up the back, Mr Santoro, with his abysmal knowledge of industrial relations, I state that I have deliberately refrained from introducing regulations about union ballots generally. The reason for that is that the Government is waiting for the two further reports of the Cooke inquiry, because it may be that it will be adopting many—maybe even all—of the recommendations about ballots emanating from the Cooke inquiry. For that reason, I have deliberately refrained from introducing regulations about ballots. What honourable members heard today from the member for Merthyr was absolute nonsense and shows his abysmal lack of knowledge of the present regulations.

The more stringent controls over the accounting and auditing procedures of industrial organisations contained in these particular regulations are a more important matter. Did honourable members hear anything from members opposite about the tightening of the regulations in relation to accountability? Did they hear anything from them about the more stringent controls that the Government has applied as a result of the new Act and about these regulations in respect of employer and employee organisations? Not one word! Yet, Government members heard the member for Merthyr and the Opposition spokesman criticise the Government for not proceeding with issues arising from the Cooke inquiry. I have to repeat: quite frankly, it just shows their abysmal lack of knowledge of industrial relations.

Another important facet of these regulations is that they strengthen the Industrial Registrar's control over the issuing of authorisations to officers and employees of industrial organisations wishing to exercise their right in relation to certain functions under the Act. These regulations that the Opposition seeks to throw out also establish the framework for the issue by an employer to an employee, at the time of ceasing employment, of a certificate of employment containing certain information. That is an important addition to the previous legislation. The certificate to which I refer will contain the name of the employer and the period of employment. That is important material, and yet this Opposition wants to remove that regulation.

Finally, the regulations have been designed—very important—so as to be compatible with the rules of court recently established by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, thereby ensuring that the Act, the rules of court and the regulations can operate without conflict.

I will not respond further to the Opposition speakers because I remain firm on what I said at the outset. I do not believe that those speakers addressed the content of the regulations in any shape or form. I repeat that I believe that they abused their positions as members of this place. They have taken advantage of this debate to pursue issues that they should never have pursued. I call on all honourable members in this place to defeat the motion put forward by the Opposition spokesman.

Question—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

## DIVISION

Resolved in the negative.

**WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY ACT AND OTHER ACTS AMENDMENT BILL**  
**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 24 October (see p. 4214).

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn) (3.30 p.m.): I trust that in affording the Parliament an opportunity to debate this Bill, the Government will be more understanding and tolerant than it was during the passage of the Industrial Relations Bill. Although this Bill is not of that length, I hope that we do not see a repetition of the tactics that were used on the occasion on which it was before the House, when the Opposition was not allowed an opportunity to debate that Bill in the Committee stage. As you would recall, Mr Speaker, 55 minutes was allowed in which to discuss the very many clauses and to put meaningful comment before the Government and before the House. I trust that, in regard to the Workplace Health and Safety Act and Other Acts Amendment Bill, we will be afforded an opportunity to at least put forward our views although, as I said, they will not be nearly as lengthy nor as exhaustive as was our desire in regard to the industrial relations legislation. I hope that the Minister understands that some of the frustration that he feels from time to time as a result of the tactics that were used in the debate on the Industrial Relations Bill in the Committee stage brought on the response that he is receiving and will continue to receive from the Opposition if similar tactics are used.

The Opposition considers that, in regard to this Bill, the Government has put the cart before the horse in bringing forward the amendments to bring within the jurisdiction of this Act "persons, plant or substances involved in rural industry". Accordingly, the Opposition will seek to amend the Bill in that regard. The Minister's claim that no logical rationale exists for the exclusion of rural industry from coverage by workplace health and safety legislation simply is not valid at this time. I emphasise "at this time". That is a fact which I believe is borne out by the actions of the Federal Government because, by its National Farm Safety Secretariat, it has made available considerable finance for the development of workable standards within rural industry.

The Opposition acknowledges the need to develop and coordinate education and training within the rural workplace, health and safety field, but it is opposed to the intent of the Bill until such time as the results of current surveys and discussions are available

and something workable is able to be promulgated so that rural industry may make an appropriate response. The industry must continue to be involved in the development of codes of practice, which must not be allowed to become regulations or de facto regulations. With a degree of satisfaction, I note the indications from the Minister that it is proposed that no regulations specific to rural industry are to be developed and that "under an Act, which incorporates a duty of care and a self-regulatory philosophy, it is incongruent to develop highly prescriptive regulations."

Whereas it is important that no regulations specific to rural industry be developed, it is equally important that any regulations that are developed recognise that rural industry has very special needs and must be exempted from overbearing legislative control, that is, highly prescriptive regulation. For instance, I understand that there is an intention to exclude animal and stock handling. I seek the Minister's assurance on that point. It would be a nightmare for all concerned—employers, employees and Parliamentary Counsel—if that were not the case. If there is an intention to make the codes of practice something other than guidelines, the impact may very well be more detrimental to employees than to employers.

As a result of an unfortunate accident that might occur, the present availability of workers' compensation could well be prejudiced by an employee—wittingly or unwittingly—not having complied with a de facto regulation in circumstances that inhibited or prevented such compliance. Any honourable members who have experience in rural industries could very easily conjure up circumstances of the type that I have described. Indeed, I believe that many honourable members would have experienced instances that could create such circumstances if regulations became overbearing and guidelines became specific regulations. That is one reason why any codes of practice for rural industry must not and cannot be too specific. Unless codes of practice are promulgated as guidelines and if they are specific and seek to regulate rather than guide work practices, almost certainly they will be counterproductive and detrimental to safe working practices. I am sure that is not the Minister's intention or that of this Government. This Bill contains no reference to that crucial point.

The Minister mentioned discussion with rural industry. A proposed delay in commencement of the relevant sections is intended "to provide reasonable time for rural industry and the Government to develop and implement procedures to allow compliance with respect to the inclusion of rural industry under the Workplace Health and Safety Act". That is not good enough. The Opposition acknowledges and supports the intent, but will not support the passing of the amendment through the House until there is recognition of the need for codes of practice or procedures to be identified as guidelines and until the Opposition is made aware of those procedures, guidelines or codes of practice. In short, the Opposition is not prepared to sign a blank cheque for this Government.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, why has there been such a sudden rush? Why does the Government not take advantage of the consultation that is in train at State and Federal levels to ensure that, at least at the Federal level, there is meaningful discussion and the development of meaningful, workable procedures? Why take this action in haste? I trust that the very considerable achievements attained last year by the National Party Government during development of draft legislation covering the use of agricultural chemicals will not be lost to rural industry and the community generally. Those of us who were involved at the time would recollect that very worthwhile discussions took place over a long period. In the conference room, which served as a temporary Chamber in the Parliamentary Annexe, we held a most successful discussion with industry leaders. Consultation and discussion involving a great deal of effort by members of Parliament, rural and associated industry leaders and departmental staff went into producing a model for such legislation. It should not now be lost. The work that was put in by industry representatives, members of this House and members of the public service—dedicated people in each of their own fields—must not be lost. If the Minister is not aware of and does not have copies of the results of that effort—that discussion, that consultation—I suggest that he obtain them from his colleague the Minister for Primary Industries, who undoubtedly has them. Prior to amending the

legislation, on behalf of rural industry we in Opposition have a right to know what the Government proposes and what the procedures or codes will be. Until we do know what the Government intends for rural industry with regard to workplace health and safety, we will oppose the appropriate clauses in the Bill. Of course, even then, one must ponder the question whether the end result will achieve anything more than does the present responsibility of care required of an employer.

At the Committee stage, the Opposition will seek to move several amendments. For obvious reasons, we consider that the membership of the council as proposed under the new section 38 must include a senior officer from within the Department of Primary Industries. To maintain balanced representation from the industries themselves, the number of their representatives should be increased. I am loath to support an amendment that diminishes ministerial responsibility—which would appear to be the effect of repealing section 36—and which puts in place the Workplace Health and Safety Authority, comprising two Ministers. Ministers should be prepared to accept their responsibilities. As the taxpayers would say, "That is what they are paid to do, surely."

I will reserve further comment to the Committee stage, except to say that the principal amendment relates to the inclusion of rural industry in the Workplace Health and Safety Act. Until now, contrary to the thinking of the Minister but, for very good reasons, rural industry was excluded from the Act. I reiterate that, until we in the Opposition know the intention of the Government—until we have it in black and white—we are not prepared to give the Government a blank cheque by approving the legislation before the House.

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton North) (3.43 p.m.): The issues before us revolve around three major amendments, which relate to: the dual ministerial arrangement that currently pervades the Act; the inclusion of the rural sector, to which the honourable member for Auburn referred; and the amendment to section 62, which will entitle employees to elect a workplace health and safety representative.

Frankly, if the previous Government had listened to the wisdom of the former Opposition shadow Minister for Industrial Relations last year, there would be no necessity for honourable members to discuss this issue. We all know that that person is now the Minister. In reading through *Hansard* I find myself agreeing with the points that he made in his second-reading speech, in which he spelt out quite clearly what the Government seeks to change in the Act. I have with me a number of copies of the relevant pages of *Hansard*, and I think it timely and reasonable to refer to them at some length. On 18 April 1989, the shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Warburton, had this to say—

"At the outset I must say that it is a crying shame that a greater degree of State-by-State uniformity has not been achieved in occupational health and safety legislation . . . However, the Bill provides the framework for the type of legislation that I envisage a Labor Government would introduce."

As good as his word, the Minister is introducing the type of legislation to which he referred. He went on to say—

"Before us tonight is a very, very important Bill, which is lacking in precision and does not cover the sorts of provisions that are contained in the other, more progressive Acts of other States, wherein is spelt out what the Opposition expects to be in this legislation."

The issue that appeared to receive some bipartisan support on that occasion was the issue of dual ministerial responsibility for the Act. At that time the Liberal Party spokesman was Sir William Knox. Referring to the current provision of the Act, he said—

"I could not imagine a more ridiculous situation than one in which each Minister is allowed to operate separately and without reference to the other. With respect, I point out that the Minister's interpretation that Ministers will work together is not correct because the legislation specifically provides that the Ministers are severally responsible and can work separately."

I could not have put it better myself. It amplifies the problem of an Act that has two Ministers looking after it. The result will be that the right hand does not know what the left hand is doing. For the life of me I cannot see any good reason why that provision should remain. It is obvious to me that bringing the whole Act under the one Minister is the commonsensical approach. I will be interested to hear what members of the Opposition have to say in defence of retaining that provision.

The election of workplace health and safety representatives is the bottom line and represents what this Act is all about. This Act is designed to protect people in their jobs and to ensure that not only employers, but also employees have some responsibility for their actions on the job. Employees feel that they are part and parcel of an Act if they have to rely on the say-so or approval of their employer before they can participate at the bottom of the spectrum. During a debate on 18 April, Mr Warburton, as Opposition spokesman, said—

"I read and took notice of a submission"—

and he was talking there about a submission that had come in as a result of the Green Paper—

"that it must be recognised that the role of health and safety representatives is absolutely critical to the functioning of the legislation. It is absolutely correct that health and safety representatives must perform a significant monitoring and enforcement role if the law is to achieve its objectives. I stress that their activities constitute the single most important dimension of employee participation in this legislation.

As remarkable as it may seem, bearing in mind the stated philosophy being legislation of this type, the election of a health and safety representative is, would honourable members believe, contingent upon agreement by the employer. I find that incredible . . . There can be no doubt that the election of a health and safety representative should be the province of the employees, and the employees alone."

I could not concur with that statement any more than to say that, if this legislation is to work, the people whom it will affect at the bottom line have to feel as though they are being represented by the people whom they have elected. It must not simply be the case that the employer wants them there so that they can get the nod; and, under the amendments before the House today, those people will be there as of right and elected by their peers. I cannot see what is wrong with that. I do not believe that the Act should require participation from all groups of people in the workplace and yet deny a certain group of those people the right to choose whom they want to represent them as a workplace health and safety officer.

I turn now to what is obviously the more contentious issue here today, and that is the one raised by the current Opposition spokesman on Industrial Relations, the honourable member for Auburn. He cannot understand why it is that this Government wants to include the rural sector in this deal.

**Mr Hayward:** He can see it.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** Whether he can see it or not, he does not agree with the statement that they should be included.

**Mr Harper:** Not until we know what's going to be thrust upon them.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I take the honourable member's word for that. I have seen some pretty deplorable things happen on properties through ignorance of safety procedures. Some very serious accidents could have occurred. One such incident was brought to my attention this year. A newly arrived constituent of mine complained to me about having to put down a number of poisons on a property in central Queensland. He brought me a whole host of labels off the poisons and I had them examined. I was told that if they had been used, the employer would have been prosecuted under the Workplace Health and Safety Act. I was told that these people did not come under the jurisdiction of the Act. This is an unfortunate incident and I do not blame the employer because

quite often the employer does not know that such things are as poisonous or as detrimental—

**Mr Rowell:** Was it ground up, the chemical? Do you know?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** No, it was not ground up.

**Mr Harper:** What was it?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I cannot recall what it was. If the honourable member reads the speech I made during the Matters of Public Interest debate on that morning when the honourable member interjected on me—as he is wont to do—he can find out the names because I read them out on that day. The names escape me at this point in time. I was assured by chemists and various other people, especially those from the Department of Accident Prevention, that those poisons were in fact banned and should not have been used on that property. It is pleasing to note that the Government is proceeding in the direction of ameliorating that particular situation. If for no other reason than that the Opposition will not grasp the purpose of the legislation, they should realise that, during the last 12 months, workers' compensation claims worth \$5.2m have been paid to the rural industry, and that represents approximately 4.8 per cent of the total number of workers' compensation claims. We are not talking about an insignificant group of people.

**Mr Rowell:** It is not very much, is it?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** It may not be very much, but I would not like to be one of the people who has been hurt on the job.

**Mr Rowell:** What about all the old people who are involved?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** There is a higher incidence of workers' compensation claims in rural industry than there is in industries such as construction and manufacturing. That is a fact of life. We are not talking about a couple of people who have fallen off a tractor or a wind-mill, we are talking about a serious problem, and we are not going at it like a bull at a gate. The Government has received a good deal of cooperation from rural industry on this issue. The Minister has already outlined that there will be a phasing-in period. Obviously, the Government is not going to race out and say, "This is what is going to happen."

**Mr Harper:** But there is no requirement on the part of the Government to consult. There is nothing in the Bill to say that it will.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** No, but let us look at the record of this Government's approach. Extensive consultation has already taken place between the Farmsafe Committee and a number of organisations such as the Queensland Rural Industry Training Council, the Queensland Farmers Federation, United Graziers Association of Queensland, the Committee of Direction of Fruit and Vegetable Marketing, the Queensland Grain Growers Association, the Queensland Cane Growers Council, the Australian Workers Union of Employees, the Country Women's Association, the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations, the Division of Curriculum Design and Development, the Division of Accident Prevention, the Department of Primary Industries, the Queensland Rural Doctors Association and the Gatton campus of the University of Queensland. The only person who has not been consulted is the Pope.

It is an unfair criticism to say that the Government is not consulting with interested groups. The organisations that have been consulted are coming round to the Government's way of thinking because they realise that for all the effort that they invest now, at some time in the future it will save them a buck. That is the way that it is working.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I realise that the honourable member cannot understand that, and that is why he will remain a member of the Opposition.

**Mr Harper:** Why not wait until you have got the legislation in place and then we will go along with it.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I would have to take the honourable member at face value on that, but I do not believe that his criticism about consultation is warranted. I really do not believe that it is. I do not believe that the honourable member's constituents are being badly treated. They are certainly being represented by a group that I regard as their union in these consultations.

**Mr Harper:** They do not trust you.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** They certainly do not trust members of the National Party, either. The reason that members of the National Party are in Opposition is that a lot of these people did not vote for them at the last election, and I can tell members of the National Party that they will not vote for them in the future, either.

Another program that will be set up will be the development of farm safety action groups in five local communities; the development and distribution of informative brochures, show displays, safety booklets, etc; the development of training programs for users of hazardous substances to be delivered through rural TAFE colleges and supervised by the Gatton campus of the University of Queensland; and surveys of rural injuries caused by tractors and other machinery. Earlier, the honourable member for Auburn mentioned the problem of overregulation of industry and enforcement of regulations. It is proposed that codes of practice be developed rather than regulations that are specific to industry. The legal duties of care that require all workplace parties to protect health and safety at the workplace will apply under the Act and will provide umbrella protection in all-risk situations. To date, members of the Queensland Farmsafe Committee have been satisfied with suggested provisions to be included in prospective codes of practice. For the life of me, I cannot understand what all the kerfuffle is about. Members of the National Party say that they do not trust us but, quite frankly, I think they are trying to turn these issues into a political football that they can kick around in National Party electorates. I understand the way in which the political game is played.

**Mr Harper:** We are just not prepared to give you a blank cheque.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** We do not want a blank cheque.

**Mr Hayward** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** That is right. They are not prepared to give credit to their own supporters. By and large, I believe members of the committee will do the right thing. They will not be stood over by the Government. Slowly but surely, the organisations that are involved with the committee are realising that they should be involved and should have some access to training and development programs.

**Mr Harper:** There is nothing in this Bill that requires the Government to consult or take notice of the result of consultation. We are simply saying that until legislative requirements are placed on the Government—

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I was prepared to listen to the honourable member, but I think that the runs are on the board. I think that the peak councils that are representing these employers have already addressed that issue. Those organisations are sitting down and discussing the issues with the Government. The biggest problem is that members of the National Party go out into the bush and scaremonger. These people become confused and frightened and think that Big Brother is going to take over. I have already said that the Government has provided a six-month implementation program.

**Mr Rowell:** Why didn't you do that first?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** Before the Act was introduced? The Act provides for the implementation program, and we are not about to take a sledge-hammer to country people. That is not what this Government is all about at all.

**Mr Rowell:** Why didn't you do it at that time?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** It does not make sense to do it then. Either those provisions are contained in the Act, or they are not. It is the Government's intention to have these people covered by the Workplace Health and Safety Act. It is pointless to say, "Put them in afterwards", or, "Put them in before." We want the rural workers—a significant group of the working population and a significant employer group—under this Act. Opposition members must get that point into their heads. We are not taking to those people with an axe. We are saying to them, "Look, this is the Act that is going to prevail in your area. We understand, however, that there are certain limitations in the way that you work." We do not want to go for an overkill situation. We want regulation for a code of practice, which implies that those people will self-regulate.

**Mr Harper:** Guidelines, in other words.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** That is what a code of practice implies. Surely there is no objection to that.

I cannot see why rural people want to be exempted, anyway. When some of those people analyse how much they pay in compensation and the amount of time they lose through injury, they will realise that they have to spend a quid to save a quid. I have not always lived in Rockhampton. I have lived on properties as well and have seen some very unsafe work practices. I challenge Opposition members to disagree with that observation. Those unsafe work practices are still occurring. This legislation will go a long way towards correcting those problems. Not only is it inappropriate for an employer to have a worker working in an unsafe environment, but it is totally inappropriate for that worker to put himself or herself in that position.

In Government, we have a responsibility to ensure that all workers in this State are treated equally in regard to this Act. Accordingly, I support the Bill before the House.

**Mr KING (Nicklin)** (4.02 p.m.): The Liberal Party is opposed to two of the three main proposals contained in this Act. The first and foremost objection relates to the major proposal of the inclusion of rural industry under the Act. Our reason for opposition to the removal of the current exemption of rural industry from the Act is that we believe it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to establish simple and effective safety standards to cover the huge variety of situations that can arise in agriculture and livestock operations. There is little common sense in introducing a new Act if the realities are that, in day-to-day operations, it is not workable.

As with so many problems in life, the real answer often lies in education. Such a solution is currently in place—and I refer to the existence of the Queensland Farmsafe Committee. As the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, that committee is a tripartite consultative body established by the Queensland Farmers Federation. It is chaired by an industry representative and is comprised of representatives of farmer organisations, the Australian Workers Union, the Department of Primary Industries and other bodies with rural interests. The Division of Accident Prevention is also a member of that body and is actively supporting its activities. The Minister, surprisingly, went on to admit that what we are suggesting, that is, relying on education to satisfactorily address the problem, is correct. He stated—

"This initiative"—

that is, referring to the establishment and operation of the Queensland Farmsafe Committee—

"is consistent with national and international experience which has found that, whilst legislation has some effect"—

I emphasise the words "some effect"—

"in improving rural industry health and safety standards, the most effective response is achieved through raising awareness, education and knowledge of local problems at regional level."

To further support that emphasis on the importance of education, I refer to a very good example of a serious problem which existed in my area of the Sunshine Coast in relation to the problem of drifting agricultural chemical sprays. The situation arose where there was a huge increase in urbanisation spreading out amongst the local farms. We even had some instances of small crops such as avocados, which can be grown on relatively small properties, being introduced amongst existing rural residential areas. The country was mountainous and helicopter spraying was employed. There was a very serious problem with people getting covered with agricultural chemical sprays. The local council attempted to get the Government to resolve the problem, but it was unsuccessful. The council then attempted to bring in its own by-law to cover the situation. Because of the great concern felt by farmers and the residents, much media coverage was received. Eventually, the council formed its own Maroochy Agricultural Chemical Action Group—MACCA—which comprised members of council, residents and farmers. Several seminars were conducted in which the farmers were invited to participate and be brought up to date with the best methods of applying chemicals. Since that time, the Maroochy council has had a reduction of well over 80 per cent in the number of complaints lodged with it about the problem. Although I believe that a need still exists for the law to give the same sort of protection as one farmer's crop is currently given against another farmer's actions, the same sort of legal protection should apply equally to a person who is covered by his neighbour's spray. The point I am trying to make is that education can play a very significant role in reducing that problem.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister admitted that rural industry is so diverse in its operations that no regulations specific to rural industry will be developed and that regulations will not automatically apply to rural industry in situations where the industry indicates they are unsuitable. In view of those statements, one wonders why this Bill is being brought before the House at all. Possibly it is only because the Minister and others on the Government side, when in Opposition, criticised the exclusion of rural industry from the original Bill, and therefore now feel obliged to do something about it irrespective of the facts of the matter, which do not support such action.

The second of the three proposals provided for the nomination or election of workshop health and safety representatives by employees at all work sites. I ask: is the Minister really serious? Does he really mean that he wants a union representative on each and every farm, where there may be only one employee and the farmer, or even just the farmer? One can only assume that Labor wants to unionise all farms in the State. Obviously, because of this proposal, the Liberal Party will oppose the Bill.

The third and final proposal is for the Act to be administered by one Minister only. This, of course, is a sensible proposal and something that should have applied, for obvious reasons, in the original legislation as well. In the debate on the original Bill on 18 April 1989, the Liberal Party's Sir William Knox pointed out this problem to the Minister. He said—

"This legislation contains a very serious flaw. This has not been explained by the Minister; nor has it been raised in this debate other than in passing. I refer to the matter of two Ministers being responsible for administering the legislation. I have searched the records of this State. I have looked at the Acts Interpretation Act, the Officials in Parliament Act, the Audit Acts, the Financial Administration and Audit Act and every other piece of legislation that I could lay my hands on, but I could find no provision in any of it for two Ministers to administer a Bill."

Finally, the Liberal Party has consulted the people who will be directly affected by this legislation—the people of rural Queensland, who produce the primary product without which the economy of this State would perish. These people believe, as does the Liberal Party, that the education-style methods that I have described are the way to proceed and that workers are currently covered adequately because—

**Mr Elder:** Give me one name.

**Mr KING:** The United Graziers Association.

As I was saying, the workers are currently covered adequately because the taking out of workers' compensation insurance by the employer is compulsory; the employer has a duty of care and a responsibility to provide a safe working environment; and, if negligence occurs, common law action is available.

For all of the above reasons, the Liberal Party believes that this legislation is, at worst, unnecessary and unworkable or, at best, premature to a reasonable trial period of educational measures, and as such it will oppose it and will call for a division at the appropriate time.

**Mr PEARCE** (Broadsound) (4.10 p.m.): Queensland's Workplace Health and Safety Act 1989 does not apply to the rural industry. This Bill seeks to achieve that, as well as to establish a consultative process and training program in regard to farm safety. Farm fatality and injury statistics have highlighted the urgent need for the introduction of the Workplace Health and Safety Act and Other Acts Amendment Bill. Up until now, farmers have been exempt from the Workplace Health and Safety Act because the previous National Party Government did not have the intestinal fortitude to stand up to rural groups and introduce legislation that applied to the man on the land, as it applied to other industries.

The State director of the National Safety Council has been reported as saying that it was unacceptable that the work safety legislation that became law on 1 August 1989 did not include the rural industry because of its widespread and diverse nature. In the *Courier-Mail* of 12 July last year, he said—

"Farming is one of the most dangerous occupations in the State and it needed these reforms as much as any other industry covered by the new Act."

Rural workers are five times more likely to be killed than their urban counterparts.

**Mr Rowell:** What a load of rubbish!

**Mr PEARCE:** The honourable member should look at the figures.

It could be said that the rural industry provides one of the State's deadliest workplaces. In fact, after mining and transport, farming is the third most dangerous industry in Australia. A worksafe study compiled last year from coroners' records in all States revealed that farming accidents accounted for 14.5 per cent, or 224, of 1 554 work-related deaths for the period 1982 to 1984. In the same period, 34 people aged 15 years and under, including 11 children under 5, died in farming accidents. This is an interesting point. Farmers aged 60 and over accounted for 26 per cent of farm fatalities, and 19 per cent of all farm deaths involved hobby farmers. Elderly farmers are at a greater risk due mainly to poor health and a decline in physical ability. Further to this, there seems to be a rise in incidents involving hobby farmers, who are not properly trained at such things as driving tractors or handling animals or machinery.

**Mr Rowell:** Professional farmers don't have a problem.

**Mr PEARCE:** The honourable member should sit and listen. He is one of the people who has cost many people on the land—mainly working people, for whom he has no consideration—their lives and the ability to work—

**Mr ROWELL:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is accusing me of endangering the lives of my workers.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hollis): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr PEARCE:** Other factors that could account for higher accident and death rates among older farmers could be the relative isolation of many farms from emergency medical treatment. People who live on the land would understand that. Long delays between the time of an accident and the location of the injured victim are a factor. Anyone who lives on the land and who understands the land would appreciate that point. There are probably more elderly workers in the rural industry than there are in

other industries. That is common sense, because people work the land until they cannot continue to work, whereas in other industries people retire at a designated age.

Statistics are useful in trying to prove a point, but they do not tell half the tragic story. The general public would not be aware of the families that have been devastated and of the properties that have been sold and broken up because serious injury does not allow the farmer to continue working his land. Perhaps the saddest figures show the number of children who have been killed in the period mentioned, that is, between 1982 and 1984, when twenty-one children under nine years of age died in farming accidents in Australia. Members of the Opposition should listen to this. The honourable member should consider the facts. If that many children had died as a result of automobile accidents, there would have been an outcry, but when 21 young Australians died in isolated farming accidents, there was not even a whimper. In some cases, those youngsters' lives could have been spared had people been more aware of the dangers of machinery and farm animals.

**Mr Welford:** They treat them like sheep.

**Mr PEARCE:** That is dead right.

Unfortunately, the incidence of child deaths related to farm life is not taken seriously enough. Although children are not part of the labour force, farms are workplaces and their way of life is such that work and domestic activities often overlap. Deaths in rural areas because of farm accidents, whether they be the elderly, the middle aged or young children, are traumatic for the relatives and friends of the deceased people. The Government must act responsibly and put in place legislation that will require land-owners to look very closely at work practices on their properties. Life is our most valuable gift, and it makes me very angry when members of rural industry organisations complain about how much, in dollar terms, it will cost to make alterations to machinery, which may in fact protect their own family members and their employees from serious injury or death.

In 1988, a Queensland Graingrowers Association vice-president criticised proposed occupational safety and welfare legislation.

**Mr Perrett:** That same fellow has done more for the rural industry than you will ever do.

**Mr PEARCE:** In November 1988 in the *Queensland Country Life*, Mr Ian McFarlane, at the time vice-president of the Queensland Graingrowers Association—

**Mr Perrett:** He could not say truer words.

**Mr PEARCE:** The honourable member should listen to what I am saying. Many people work on the land, but it is attitudes such as those displayed by this character that today cause many people to suffer. They cannot get compensation for their injuries. Some people on the land just do not care about their employees. There are many good people on the land, but some do not care.

At the time, Mr McFarlane stated—

"The proposed legislation would have severely disadvantaged the rural sector financially and left farmers wide open to litigation by the people they employ."

That was certainly a one-sided argument put forward by Mr McFarlane, who showed little concern for workers. They are the ones who stand to lose the most—their lives and their ability to earn a living to support their wives and families—as a result of unacceptable work practices and unsafe machinery. I firmly believe that if employers are not prepared to look at providing a safe environment for their workers and injuries result because of their lack of genuine concern, then they should be taken through the courts. Mr McFarlane further stated that it was refreshing to see the attitude of Mr

Vince Lester, the then Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. He stated—

"It was refreshing when Mr Lester took the responsible course when he stated in July 1988 that the proposed legislation would not apply to farmers."

That was later confirmed by the then Primary Industries Minister, Neville Harper. The then Premier, Mike Ahern, supported his Ministers, despite lives being lost and rural workers being seriously injured doing their jobs. Mr McFarlane was so excited that he went on to say—

"This exemption will save Queensland farmers millions of dollars by negating the need for them to defend endless legal arguments on liability."

Mr McFarlane demonstrated by those comments that he had no compassion for workers and he should stand condemned.

I wish to make one further point very clearly. Honourable members know that I have some rural background. I know the men on the land. The majority of them are decent country people who work very hard, at times under extreme difficulties. The majority of them do care about the safety of their workers and they will do what they can to protect and retain good workers. They should be recognised for being decent and caring employers. Unfortunately, there are still some rural employers who leave a lot to be desired, who consider the worker as a slave who is expected to work long hours for small wages and to handle animals and machinery without consideration of safety.

**Mr Stephan:** Who are they?

**Mr PEARCE:** They are out there. The honourable member should not worry about that.

Rural workers need protection from those unscrupulous employers and the legislation now being debated in this House gives them some hope of survival. There has to be a change in that uncaring attitude because major changes in the level of rural workplace death and injury rates will not occur unless safe work practices are adopted. There is a need for safety induction training, which will save lives and prevent serious injuries. Machinery danger spots need to have safety guards positioned and roll bars should be compulsory on all tractors. In the past decade, an average of eight lives a year have been lost due to tractor accidents, despite since 1978 Australian standards requirements for new tractors to be fitted with roll bars. Queensland farms are as safe as they can be, and I agree that there is no such thing as a risk-free farm.

Statistics must be taken seriously. A life is a life and must be valued. If this legislation saves one life, then the effort will have been well worth it. I wish to cite some statistics dealing with rural workplace fatalities. I will repeat that slowly so that members opposite understand—fatalities. In 1984-85, 18 people lost their lives in rural industries; in 1985-86, there were 21 deaths; in 1986-87, there were 18 deaths; in 1987-88, there were 25 deaths; in 1988-89, there were 13 deaths; and the figures are not complete for 1989-90, but so far 11 people have lost their lives. There are approximately four child deaths per year related to machinery accidents. Males account for 90 per cent of those deaths. Tractors are involved in 35 per cent of fatal accidents on farms.

Certain areas in this State registered a high level of fatal accidents. In the period between 1984 and 1990. Possibly because it is a sugar-growing area with a heavy incidence of machinery use in the rural sector, Cairns recorded a high incidence of fatalities. Innisfail recorded a loss of six lives; Mackay recorded 13 deaths; Toowoomba recorded 16 deaths; and Townsville recorded 15 deaths. All those fatalities occurred as a result of rural activities. As I have said, the facts cannot be ignored. People are losing their lives, being seriously injured, and the lives of families are being shattered because people are resisting legislation that will benefit workers, employers and the Queensland economy.

I believe that this legislation will bring about a change of attitude for rural people. One concern of mine is that diseases can be contracted by humans from animals and from the use of poisons. I wonder how many workers in the rural sector are aware of

the diseases that can be passed on to humans from animals? It is important to note that many human diseases acquired from animals do not necessarily have a noticeable effect on the animal involved. I will cite an example. Tetanus bacteria are normal residents of the gut of healthy horses but, once leaving the animal, they can produce an infection if they gain entry into an open wound. Subsequently, the toxin they produce may result in severe, often fatal, diseases in people. Fortunately, the disease is preventable by immunisation. How many workers in the cattle industry know about and understand the disease Q-fever? Animal-handlers, veterinarians, abattoir workers, meat-inspectors and research workers are all at risk. Queensland usually has the highest number of reported Q-fever cases each year.

But what are the symptoms? Animals do not normally display any ill effects from infection with *coxiella burnetti*, which lives in a variety of domestic and wild animals such as cattle, sheep, bandicoots and kangaroos. The organisms may multiply extensively in a female animal during the latter stages of pregnancy and the placental tissues and birth fluids may contain large numbers of the organisms. Humans can become infected by inhaling infective materials from tissue and fluids or by the ingestion of unpasteurised milk and by contact with waste products or contaminated straw, wool, hair and hides. The disease in people can come from a small number of organisms some 16 to 18 days after contact. Muscle pains, severe headaches and high fever are the usual signs. Many people who go to work on the land do not understand some of the problems that they may encounter. How many times have muscle pains, severe headaches and high fever been passed over for a simple case of influenza?

Another disease, leptospiroses, is widespread in cattle, pigs, sheep and a variety of native animals, especially rats.

**Mr Schwarten:** Rodents.

**Mr PEARCE:** Rats. I will hesitate on that word so that it sinks in.

Cows suffer a loss of appetite, fever, a sharp drop in milk production and inflamed udders. Abortions and blood in urine may occur in cattle and pigs, and the birth of weak, stunted piglets may occur. Humans may develop fever, vomiting, muscle pain, headache and frequently jaundice. Kidneys may be affected and internal bleeding may occur, which can be fatal in this form.

There are a number of other diseases that can be passed from animals to humans, including brucellosis, hydatid disease and salmonella infections. The point I want to raise is: just how many rural workers are aware of the everyday health risk of being a worker on the land? How many rural employers sit a new employee down and tell him about the dangers of working on the land? I have been around the country a fair bit and I can never remember that happening.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr PEARCE:** About the only briefing that the mob on the other side of the House would give would be to the rats in the haystack.

How many rural employers have sat down and explained to new employees the health risk when working with livestock—what to look out for, the symptoms, and what action to take? Employers have a responsibility to their workers. Standards must be set and the legislation put in place to ensure that these standards are adhered to.

I turn now to another area of concern, that is, the use of chemicals by the rural industry. I believe there is a need for a more effective education program for people using insecticides and chemicals. There should be a greater role for extension services in promoting an understanding of the use of farm chemicals. Companies producing chemicals have a role to play and should develop safety alternatives for potentially deadly agricultural chemicals. In the meantime, clear labelling of products, proper education and provision of safety equipment could become part of the selling program of the chemicals they produce.

The rural industry must be positive in its attitude toward chemical use, and those using chemicals should be trained in their use. Agricultural chemicals are excellent tools but they are frequently in the hands of amateurs and often recommended and sold by ill-informed sources. Once again, I think it is fair to say that all farmers have had to suffer because of the bad image created by a few.

This Bill will guarantee a change in the attitude in the rural industry and it will ensure that the industry moves to putting in place training and safeguards for farmers and their employees. I support the Bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr Rowell, adjourned.

#### **SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT**

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (4.29 p.m.): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 20 November 1990."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 4.30 p.m.