

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

**THURSDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 1990**

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

**ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF NICKLIN**  
**Report of Elections Tribunal**

**Mr SPEAKER:** I have to report that I have received from His Honour the Judge of the Elections Tribunal the following certificate—

" CERTIFICATE  
IN THE SUPREME COURT  
OF QUEENSLAND Petition No. 1 of 1990  
SITTING AS THE ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL

IN THE MATTER OF THE ELECTIONS ACT 1983-89

and

IN THE MATTER OF the election of one member of the Legislative Assembly to the Electoral District of Nicklin in the State of Queensland.

BETWEEN: NEIL JOHN TURNER  
First Petitioner  
AND: PEGGY SYPHERS  
Second Petitioner  
AND: ROBERT GEORGE KING  
Respondent

To the Honourable the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, Parliament House, Brisbane.

Dear Mr Speaker

In accordance with Section 152 of the Elections Act 1983-1989, I certify my determination that in the matter of the election of one member of the Legislative Assembly to the Electoral District of Nicklin in the State of Queensland, Robert George King was not duly elected and that Neil John Turner was duly elected.

I ordered that there be no order as to costs.

I have directed that the sum of \$400 paid into court with the petition shall be restored wholly to the Petitioners.

This certificate is accompanied by a copy of the transcribed record of proceedings before the Tribunal. Today, an appeal from this determination was dismissed with costs by the Full Court of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

DATED this Twenty-first day of November 1990.

K.W. RYAN J.  
ELECTIONS TRIBUNAL."

Honourable members, I now lay upon the table of the House a copy of the record of proceedings before the tribunal.

*Whereupon the document was laid on the table.*

#### **Amended Return of Writ**

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.03 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That the certificate of His Honour the judge of the Elections Tribunal declaring that Neil John Turner was duly elected and returned as member for the electoral district of Nicklin be entered in the journals of the House, and that the return be amended accordingly."

Motion agreed to.

#### **Member Sworn**

Mr Turner was introduced, took the oath of allegiance and subscribed the roll.

#### **PETITIONS**

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

##### **Tobacco Levy Increase**

From **Ms Power** (52 signatories) praying that the tobacco levy and that the proceeds be channelled into an independent foundation for health promotion, research and sponsorship of sport and the arts.

A similar petition was received from **Mr Prest** (22 signatories).

##### **Adoption Law Amendment**

From **Mr Fenlon** (45 signatories) praying for significant changes to the Adoption of Children Act 1990.

##### **Netting of Bait Fish, Hervey Bay**

From **Mr Nunn** (105 signatories) praying that the indiscriminate netting of bait fish be discontinued on Hervey Bay beaches.

##### **Miles Court House**

From **Mr Neal** (259 signatories) praying that the Miles Court House be retained.  
Petitions received.

#### **PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table—

Regulations under the Indy Car Grand Prix Act 1990

Statement of the expenses of Ministers of the Crown for the period 1 July 1989 to 7 December 1989 and the period 7 December 1989 to 30 June 1990.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Sale of Alcohol to Minors**

**Hon. R. J. GIBBS** (Wolston—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: The issue of under-age drinking and its associated health and crime problems is one of great concern to the community, particularly at this time of year. As Minister responsible for both youth and the Licensing Act, I share this concern and wish to place on record my abhorrence of those unscrupulous operators who prey on such a vulnerable section of the community.

Recent information from the Licensing Commission has convinced me that a minority of licensees and operators of nightclubs have persistently and deliberately flouted the Liquor Act's provisions regarding the sale of alcohol to minors. This is a Statewide problem, but I would like to take this opportunity—in the middle of what has become known as schoolies week—to direct my remarks towards liquor outlets on the Gold Coast. I am issuing a clear warning to those people in the industry who persist in flouting the law that the strongest possible action will be taken.

I have instructed the Licensing Commission to show no mercy to hotel and nightclub operators who deliberately thumb their noses at the law. The chairman of the commission, Mr John McKnoulty, is similarly determined to run those people out of business. As members would be aware, the Liquor Act has been reviewed and the recommendations of that committee are with a Cabinet subcommittee. Legislation to be introduced in the new year will toughen the penalties for all concerned with under-age drinking and give the commission wider powers to combat the problem.

In the interim, I have instructed the Licensing Commission to do everything in its power to crack down on the corrupt operators. Provisions include the withdrawal of all privileges such as entertainment and tourist permits and special dispensations granted during the Christmas/New Year period. Offending nightclubs will find the Liquor Act observed to the letter of the law without further leniency or tolerance which has been shown to reflect social mores during the past five years. Licensees convicted in the courts of selling alcohol to minors will be hit with show-cause proceedings seeking the forfeiture of their licences. In short, we will make it so hot for those chasing dirty dollars without any concern for the community that they will be forced out of business.

This Government will legislate to give teeth to the Liquor Act in relation to under-age drinkers. There will be significant increases in penalties for licensees, staff and the young people who offend. The Licensing Commission will be given greater power to detect and deal with offenders. This has been the subject of recent discussions between senior police and officials of the commission.

In closing—I am at present considering the possibility of introducing a photographic proof of age card. If that scheme is shown to be viable, it will be available at low cost and will be of tremendous benefit to licensees and the estimated 25 per cent of 18-year-olds who do not hold a driver's licence or a passport—two accepted forms of identification.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Mr G. Cheers; Unlicensed Motor Dealers**

**Hon. G. R. MILLINER** (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: I wish to draw the attention of the House to the inexcusable behaviour of an unlicensed motor dealer, a Mr Gary Cheers, who continues to take advantage of unsuspecting Queenslanders. On 26 April 1989, Mr Cheers was convicted and fined for contravention of the Auctioneers and Agents Act. A second brief for prosecution is currently being prepared.

I advise consumers to steer clear of Mr Cheers and his associates, Mr S. McKnight, Mr Steven Jordan and Mr Wayne Govan. They operate from 26 Moore Street, Deception

Bay, from 69 Bancroft Street, Deception Bay and from the roadside on the Deagon deviation. Unfortunately, buying cars, trucks and motor cycles from vendors operating from the side of the road, from vacant blocks of land or from back yards can prove to be a very dangerous business. By doing so, the consumer has no protection. If the vehicle proves to be stolen or has finance owing on it, the consumer can be left without a car and out of pocket, even though the car may have been purchased in good faith. However, dealing with a licensed dealer means guaranteed clear title to the vehicle. The consumer is protected and, if things go wrong, can apply for full restitution from the fidelity guarantee fund administered by the auctioneers and agents registry in my department. In short, consumers should not be fooled by an apparent good deal from a roadside or backyard vendor—the risks are not worth it. Consumers should deal with a licensed dealer to protect themselves.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**Mr ARDILL** (Salisbury) (10.12 a.m.), by leave: I have been severely maligned in this House by another member and I want to set the record straight. In doing so, I apologise to the House for my honest belief that the member was indulging in a capacity for severe prevarication. Last night in the House, I used words to that effect. It has been pointed out to me that the member's conduct was not caused by his capacity for prevarication but possibly by his diminished intellectual capacity.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Salisbury will get around to saying how he was personally affected or personally misrepresented.

**Mr SANTORO:** I rise to a point of order. I find the comments that have been made by the honourable member offensive. I ask that he withdraw them.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the member for Salisbury to withdraw those comments.

**Mr ARDILL:** I did not name any member. However, at your request, Mr Speaker, I will certainly withdraw the comments.

I believe that the member has no understanding of the situation and that is the reason why I, along with other members of the House, was maligned by that member. Mr Santoro claimed that I, along with other members, am an official of a union and receiving emoluments from, and actually carrying out activities for, that union. Mr Santoro may not know, as all other members of this House know, that being a member of a union is an honoured position in this society. It is an honourable position and it is an honour to be a member of a union. I have been a member of a union for 17 years, but never at any stage have I been an official of a union, and I am not an official of a union.

**Mr Santoro:** As an officer? How about an officer?

**Mr ARDILL:** I am not an officer nor an official of a union. Along with all other members of unions, I pay a fee for the right to be a member of that particular union. In return, I receive no salary, no emolument and no funding from that union—none whatever. I carry out no duties for that union. As I said, my only connection with the union is that I pay a fee to be a member. I am honoured to be a member of the union.

#### PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**Mrs EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: I feel that over the last week I have been maligned by innuendo and by being named by the member for Merthyr in his continuing claims that I receive payment from the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union. I belong to a number of professional bodies. I belong to the Australia New Zealand Society of Nuclear Medicine. I pay for that privilege and I receive no remuneration. I belong to the Australian Institute of Radiography, for which I pay a subscription, and I receive no remuneration. I am a member of the working party for

the Society of Nuclear Medicine in my capacity as an educational officer, for which I receive no remuneration.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the honourable member gets around to explaining how she has been personally misrepresented.

**Mrs EDMOND:** Yes, Mr Speaker.

It has been claimed that I receive remuneration from the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union. I am entitled to belong to that union under a number of categories—that of radiographer, that of nuclear medicine technologist, that of domestic and that of public relations officer. The Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union lists me as a member—a paying member. I believe that being a public relations officer is part of my role as a representative of my constituents.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mrs EDMOND:** The member for Surfers Paradise may not do so, but I act as a liaison between my constituents and this Parliament, and I am proud of that.

### QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

#### 1. Proposed Shopping Centre, Sandgate

Mr BEANLAND asked the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing—

"With reference to an application for the rezoning of land at Sandgate owned by the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, McD and E Properties Pty Ltd and the Racing Development Corporation—

(1) Is he aware that all owners must give their consent before an application for rezoning is lodged and that the Corporation's land is essential for the development of the proposed shopping centre?

(2) As the Racing Development Corporation is a corporation sole of which he is the corporation sole, did the Government approve the corporation's or his seeking of this approval?

(3) Did he consult with either the Minister for Environment and Heritage or the ALP municipal caucus before a decision in favour of the rezoning was taken?"

**Mr GIBBS:** (1 and 2) With respect to any application for the rezoning of land owned by the trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, McDonnell and East Properties Pty Ltd and the Racing Development Corporation—I cannot speak for the trustees of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese or McDonnell and East Properties Pty Ltd, but I can say that the Racing Development Corporation has not made any application for rezoning of land in that vicinity.

Furthermore, acting as the Racing Development Corporation, which is a corporation sole, I advised Mr Barry Maranta, the director of McDonnell and East Limited, by letter dated 15 January this year, of my consent for him or his nominee to make application to the relevant authorities for rezoning of land owned by the corporation adjacent to Deagon racecourse. This merely reaffirmed the consent that two previous Racing Ministers had given in earlier negotiations extending over two years. I do not know whether anybody considers the corporation's land to be essential to any proposed shopping centre development.

(3) As I did not make a decision in favour of rezoning, there was no need for me to consult with any of my ministerial colleagues. I might add that the land is still owned and held by the Racing Development Corporation.

**2. Ensham Authority to Prospect**

Mr BEANLAND asked the Minister for Resource Industries—

"With reference to the recently granted authority to prospect to the new Ensham consortium—

(1) Are the conditions associated with the new authority to prospect the same as the conditions imposed on the original consortium?

(2) If not, how do they differ?

(3) Was the offer to grant the authority to prospect conditional on the consortium accepting the State's practice on rail freights and port charges as a condition to the consortium being granted a mining lease over all or part of the authority to prospect area?"

**Mr VAUGHAN:** (1 and 2) The conditions associated with the new exploration permit over the Ensham area are similar to those imposed on all exploration permit-holders. In addition, I have also advised the three joint venturers by letter that they are required to give a commitment to apply forthwith for a mining lease or mining leases and establish a mine capable of producing at least 1.6 million tonnes of coal a year by September 1991, and that the granting of any such mining lease or mining leases may not be recommended to the Governor in Council until such time as the requirements of the Foreign Investment Review Board in relation to Australian equity have been met. Such conditions were not imposed at the time of offer of the original authority to prospect.

(3) The offer to grant an exploration permit was made on the condition that the granting of any mining lease or mining leases may not be recommended to the Governor in Council unless the holders of the exploration permit accept the Government's requirements with respect to rail freights, port charges and State and local authority infrastructure.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE****Attack on Mr T. J. Smith by Minister for Racing**

**Mr COOPER:** I refer the Honourable the Premier to the rather cowardly attack yesterday in this House on leading trainer T. J. Smith by the Minister for Racing, including some scathing criticism of Mr Smith's financial history, and I ask: if a person's financial history is to be used as a gauge of his or her ability to make judgments on certain matters, does he agree that the same criteria should apply to members of his own Cabinet, in particular a Treasurer who has been listed in *White Mercantile* for his inability to pay a debt and a Primary Industries Minister who was involved in a business that went broke? In case the Premier has any doubts about that, I table a list of debts owed by Mr Casey as at 30 July 1970. This is an obvious case of double standards—

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** It does not matter what year it is. As I said, it is an obvious case of double standards, and I am asking the Premier: which standards should apply?

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

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I think that the comments and the implications made by the Leader of the Opposition are unworthy of him, even when one considers the fairly abysmal standard that he brings to bear to the office of the Leader of the Opposition. I was not in the Chamber yesterday, and I am not aware of the state of the financial affairs of Mr Smith.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I do not know why on earth I should be aware of the financial affairs of Mr Smith—

**Mr Borbidge:** Don't you read *Hansard* when you're not in Parliament?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Quite often, no. I have got a lot better things to do than to read his speeches from yesterday, because his speeches from yesterday, with respect, bear a remarkable similarity to his speeches from the day before and the day before that. I have heard it all before.

In relation to the particular point that he makes about the Treasurer, Mr De Lacy, the implication in the statement is in fact dishonest, and knowingly dishonest, on the part of the Leader of the Opposition. Today, he said something that specifically is untrue. He made a claim that there was an inability on the part of the Minister to pay his debts. The Minister has explained the position, and I am going to go through it again because it is something about which all members should be concerned. Recently, a similar type of criticism was made of another member on the other side of this House, and that is the recently elected member for Sherwood.

**Mr Borbidge:** But the Treasurer accused me of it yesterday.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The honourable member should settle down. He will be leader soon enough. He should just take it easy.

The position is that any member of this Parliament may at some time come into a dispute with a member of the public, whether it be about a disputed debt, contract or some other associated matter, and to have a situation in which, in this House or in the public arena, the fact that somebody is a member of Parliament is going to put them in a vulnerable position in relation to their commercial affairs or their dispute with another member of the public is one that I think no member of this Parliament should accept. It is only a matter of time before members of the National Party find themselves in a similar position, where they have what they regard as a legitimate dispute with some contractor or some member of the public and they want to exercise the rights that every citizen should have to defend that dispute and to litigate it and not be blackmailed by the sort of shoddy insinuation and statement made by the Leader of the Opposition today. Neither the Treasurer nor the member for Sherwood nor any other person should be placed in that position. The matter is before the court. Let the members of Parliament exercise their rights.

As for the racing industry—the current position is quite clear. A Green Paper is before the community that recommends a range of reforms that have the potential—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I have all day. Opposition members can go for their lives.

Those reforms have the potential to upset the current, cosy position that many people enjoy. Understandably, they are upset, and they are bringing their allies, wherever they can find them, into the field to lay criticisms against the Minister, and the Minister has responded. As far as all parties in that debate are concerned, I would hope that we will have a rational debate, that people will treat each other with respect and that there will be less of some of the unfortunate criticisms and comments that have been circulating because I think that the racing industry is not served by that approach.

#### **Government's Conflicting Attitudes on Employment Contracts**

**Mr COOPER:** I refer to the Premier's comments in this House on 9 May this year in relation to voluntary employment agreements, when he stated that his Government would not tolerate the secrecy of VEAs and that he wanted documents covering employment conditions "open and on the record". I also refer the Premier to the annual report of the Australian Journalists Association, Queensland branch, wherein it was reported by the secretary, Mr Barton Green, that he had been unable to get information

on the private contracts which exist between the new press secretaries and the Government, and I ask: how does the Premier justify his Government's conflicting attitudes which obviously stipulate one rule for industry and another rule for ministerial employees?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** In relation to the reference in the AJA report, or the statement by Mr Green, I am simply not aware of it. I am not aware of any problems that Mr Green is having with either the Government—

**Mr Borbidge:** You don't want to know about it, do you? You don't like it.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** He pouts on with equal effect. I am wounded yet again by a vigorous mauling from the "pretender from paradise", who is getting more desperate every day.

**Opposition members** interjected.

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

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** He is getting more desperate every day because he can see what is happening to the Gold Coast and Bob Sparkes will not have him as leader. That is his problem, and it shows. In relation to the particular problem that he has referred to—

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The honourable member should ask the member for Condamine. He will verify what I say.

In relation to the particular problem that Mr Barton Green has—I am not aware of it. However, if there is any concern on the part of any of the persons to whom he refers—I gather that is press secretaries who are members of the Australian Journalists Association—or if in fact there is any problem, he should take it up with the relevant Government officer or myself. I will certainly look into the matter and give him the best answer that I possibly can.

#### **Allegations of Cabinet Misleading of Rural Industry Leaders**

**Mr PREST:** Is the Premier aware of claims by the member for Warrego that State Cabinet on Monday misled the leaders of Queensland's rural industries with respect to proposed increases in Crown rents? Can he inform the House what was conveyed to the leaders of those rural industries on Monday and what was their response?

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I am going to, all right. I have got it here.

The member for Warrego is either sadly mistaken or engaging in deliberate misrepresentation, which is quite commonly the tactic of the Opposition these days. In relation to this particular issue, it was made clear in our conversations with the rural industry leaders—the United Graziers Association, Queensland Farmers Federation and the Queensland Graingrowers Association—

**Mr Harper:** The Cattlemen's Union?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** They were not there, but there was a good cross-section. I hope that the member for Auburn accepts that those people are representative of rural industry. If he is saying that they are not, then let him say so publicly. Nevertheless, they were there.

In the conversation, it was made plain that the reference to the deferral of rents was a reference to the Wolfe report. The decision in respect of the Carter report, which was commissioned by the National Party, has already been made, and that was conveyed quite clearly to the leaders of the rural industry, who were under no misapprehension whatsoever.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

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

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** To make it crystal clear, I point out that I handed to the rural industry leaders and all the press who were there, including the rural press, a copy of a statement which clearly stated in paragraph 2 on page 2 that it was a reference to the Wolfe report. It was spelt out in black and white. Even the honourable member would be able to understand it if he read it. I will table it——

**Mr HOBBS:** I rise to a point of order. The Premier is misleading the House. Last night in this Chamber, the Minister for Land Management said that the media got it wrong.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. I will not allow points of order to be taken to debate an issue.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Page 2 of the press statement, a copy of which I am happy to send to the member for Warrego and anybody else who wants to have a look at it, makes clear reference to the Wolfe report. It is crystal clear that the rural industry leaders understood it, too, even if the characters opposite do not, because the United Graziers Association press release, issued by Mr Bill Bonthrone, stated that the increase that was referred to by me was that contained in the Wolfe review and not the Carter review. That is what he said. That shows that members opposite are completely incompetent or that they are deliberately misrepresenting the situation to the rural community. The member for Warrego has done exactly what the Leader of the Opposition is doing. Because members opposite cannot provide opposition and cannot provide leadership, the Leader of the Opposition has been stomping up and down the State appealing to rural industry leaders to line up with the National Party. Understandably, rural industry leaders will not line up with the National Party, especially while the current leader remains leader, because he has about as much support in the rural community as he has on his side of the House.

**Mr PREST:** I thank the Premier. Well done! At least there is someone who knows something about the rural industry.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

#### **Land Valuations; Effect on Land Tax**

**Mr PREST:** I ask the Treasurer: is he aware of claims by the Leader of the Liberal Party that the State Government is fraudulently pushing up land valuations in a depressed market so that it can make a killing on land tax? Can he outline the facts about land tax?

**Mr De LACY:** I am aware of comments in Monday's *Courier-Mail*, in which the Leader of the Liberal Party said that the Labor Government is fraudulently pushing up land valuations. I will address that issue first. The Leader of the Liberal Party is implying that the State Government is giving to the valuers in the Department of Land Management directions to deny their professional integrity, to increase land rates at the behest of their political masters and forget all of their professional and expert training. I believe that is an insult to the valuers of the Department of Land Management. If the honourable member had any integrity, he would stand up and apologise to those people.

Secondly, the Leader of the Liberal Party went on to say that the Government was fraudulently pushing up land valuations in a depressed market so that it could make a killing on land tax. For the honourable member's benefit, I point out that the Government does not levy a land tax on domestic residences. The principal place of residence is exempt from land tax. So, if the Government pushed up the rate a million times——

**Mr Borbidge:** Not those under company title.

**Mr De LACY:** I will take the interjection. The whole statement refers to domestic properties in Brisbane. That is what the Government was referring to, and that is what the Leader of the Liberal Party was referring to.

**Mr Borbidge:** Yes, and if they are under trust, they pay land tax.

**Mr De LACY:** Is the honourable member saying that domestic residences in Brisbane are under trust?

**Mr Borbidge:** No. I'm saying "if they are".

**Mr De LACY:** The honourable member is doing the same thing as the Leader of the Liberal Party did, namely, deliberately misrepresenting the issue. The honourable member does himself no credit.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

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

**Mr De LACY:** The third point made by the Leader of the Liberal Party was that the Government was pushing up land valuations "so it can make a killing on land tax, which has doubled from \$100 million in this year's Budget". To be precise, I point out that it has not doubled from \$100m. The correct figure is \$139m. The honourable member made a mistake; it is 39 per cent. The amount has not doubled. It is estimated to increase to \$190m, which is a 39 per cent increase. That is different from what happened during the last three years of the National Party Government. During that time, land tax increased by an average of 62 per cent per annum.

#### **Investment Policy of Queensland Treasury Corporation**

**Mr BEANLAND:** I refer the Treasurer to the Labor Party's repeated public attacks on the major saving banks for moving funds of Queensland depositors interstate and to the ALP's policy for a State bank, which the honourable member's party claims will keep capital within State borders. In the light of those criticisms, I ask: how does he explain the policy of the Queensland Treasury Corporation, which has made property investments of more than \$600m in Sydney and Canberra, and tends to invest less than 25 per cent of its property portfolio funds in Brisbane?

**Mr De LACY:** I can explain that very easily. However, I am always amused when the Liberal Party, which is the so-called party of free enterprise, comes at me from the left instead of from the right. I will explain it to the honourable member. I think I have explained it before, but let me spell it out again. When the Labor Party came to power, it saw that the Queensland Treasury Corporation was charged with managing investor funds of \$5 billion to \$6 billion of the superannuants of Queensland. But the corporation had confused objectives. The objectives were, firstly, to receive a good return; secondly, to invest in Queensland; and, thirdly, to make Queensland into a financial centre.

The honourable member might not be aware that one cannot obtain proper accountability from any organisation in the world if there are confused objectives. It is my view that an organisation such as that which is charged with investing funds of superannuants should have single and unconfused objectives. Those objectives are to get the best possible return at acceptable levels of risk. Since the Labor Government came to power in Queensland, it has charged organisations with those goals and objectives. They will invest where they get the best returns at the best risk level. If that is in Queensland, so be it. If it is in New South Wales, well and good. That is the way it will be. There will be proper accountability and proper management of those funds in Queensland.

The honourable member claimed that this Government has made repeated attacks on savings banks. I do not know where he heard about those so-called repeated attacks.

They certainly have not been made by me. Prior to the last State election, some comments were made about that, and perhaps some have been made since then. However, there has been no such thing as repeated attacks.

### **Resource Securities Legislation**

**Mr BEANLAND:** I direct a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage. As he would be aware, last Friday in Mount Isa, the Premier gave backing to the resource securities legislation being proposed by the Prime Minister. I ask: can the Minister nominate what mining, forestry and other resource projects in environmentally sensitive areas could be given a green light in Queensland under such legislation?

**Mr COMBEN:** I cannot refer to specific projects. The Premier was talking about broad principles that have yet to be discussed with the Federal Government and within our Cabinet. We jointly support the Premier in terms of the principles of resource security.

### **Comments by Member for Peak Downs about Alleged Discrimination**

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I ask the Minister for Administrative Services: is he aware of comments made by the member for Peak Downs during the debate on the Estimates for his department? If so, will the Minister inform the House about the discrimination alleged by that member?

**Mr McLEAN:** The member for Peak Downs was trying to find something about which to criticise the Government. He shouted about how he will never forget the dark days of 1952, 1953 and 1954. The member went on to say that he remembered looking at the State school at Tara. He claimed that the then Government did not listen to the people of Tara about educational needs. He then had the gall to say—

" After the (1989) election, the facilities in Labor electorates were allowed to remain, but the facilities in National Party electorates were taken away. I say shame on the Labor Party for trying to deprive good Queenslanders of sound, basic education and public service facilities. It is a simple fact of life, and members of the Government cannot deny it."

In common with many claims made by the National Party, that is not the fact at all. Not only can this Government deny it but it can also prove that it is wrong. This Government is not taking away facilities, it is adding more and better educational facilities for people throughout Queensland. Today, my department is calling tenders for an important addition to education facilities at that very school at Tara. This Government believes that all children in Queensland are entitled to an equal share. I will ensure that that happens.

**Mr Lester** interjected.

**Mr McLEAN:** That certainly never happened under the former National Party Government.

### **Idalia and Thrushton National Parks**

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer to the declaration of the Idalia and Thrushton national parks in the mulga region of western Queensland, which was announced yesterday by the International President of the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Duke of Edinburgh. I ask: will the Minister detail to the House the significance of the declaration of those two national parks, firstly, to Queensland and, secondly, to the whole of Australia?

**Mr COMBEN:** The significance of the two declarations that were made yesterday by His Royal Highness Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, is that approximately 20 per cent of Australia is mulgaland. Until yesterday, Queensland, which has almost two-thirds of Australia's mulgaland, had no substantial mulgaland national parks. That

area is the first of the biogeographic regions that this Government has moved into to conduct surveys——

**Mr Lester** interjected.

**Mr COMBEN:** I ask Mr Lester to listen. This Government has increased the percentage of national parks in Queensland from the former National Party Government's 2 per cent to 2.2 per cent. During the next three years, that percentage will double. If the National Party believes that this Government is declaring too many national parks in Queensland, I will spread the word from Cairns to Coolangatta that the National Party opposes the national parks program.

The mulgalands are beginning to be protected. This Government has conducted surveys and acquired two major properties, namely, Thrushton and Idalia, which were declared yesterday. Another property is to be acquired. The willing vendor is hoping that his property will become part of the heritage of the national park estate of Queensland. This Government is continuing negotiations with that vendor.

The significance for Queensland and the rest of Australia is that the biodiversity and genetic pool of the mulgalands are being preserved. More specifically, yesterday on Idalia, I had great pleasure in taking His Royal Highness to the top of Mount Grey to look at yellow-footed rock wallabies—which were alive—and to show him a rare and endangered species that is now adequately protected in the reserves system in Queensland. It was a great day for conservation and a great day for Queensland that we had such support for our conservation policies.

#### **Rural Health Review Committee**

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I ask the Minister for Health: given the ALP's commitment to a rural health policy and advisory unit and given that the Prime Minister's country task force has warned that rural health services are in crisis, can the Minister inform the House when he intends to release the Rural Health Review Committee's report that was due in June this year and which, I understand, has been in his possession for at least two months?

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** The honourable member is well aware that a substantial amount of work has been done by a Rural Health team from the Health Department. I am very proud to say that that team has produced a very worthwhile and meaningful document outlining the difficulties that exist in providing an appropriate standard of health services in the rural areas of Queensland. The honourable member was also correct in saying that the Commonwealth has focused particularly on the delivery of rural health services, to the extent that the Commonwealth Minister has convened a meeting of Health Ministers in Broome next week to consider the matter. As the honourable member indicated, I have received the report of the review team; it is a substantial document. The honourable member would agree that little purpose is served by publishing a document that consists entirely of statistics and findings of the work of that review team. A meaningful policy document is required, from which the Government can indicate to people who live in rural areas of Queensland what it is able to do about those problems. That is the process that is going on now. I am considering the contents of that review and, when the policy document is in place, I will release that document.

#### **Queensland Home Medical Aid Scheme**

**Mrs McCAULEY:** In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer to an article in the *Sun* of 20 November 1990, concerning cut-backs in supplies from the Queensland home medical aid scheme, which will see financially disabled people hindered in their access to necessary medical equipment such as infant cot death monitors, asthma nebulisers and incontinence aids, and I ask: was the Minister aware of that situation before the article appeared; was it his decision to limit those supplies; and will the

Minister tell the 9-year-old boy who will have to revert to wearing nappies to school that, because of these cut-backs, he cannot lead the normal life of most other children?

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** It is unfortunate that the article to which the honourable member referred substantially exaggerates the position. However, it is true that the home aid scheme has some financial difficulties that are beyond the control of either this Government or any previous Government. The scheme is consumer driven and, unfortunately, the Government is unable to predict accurately the demands on the scheme. The demand has far exceeded any reasonable forecasts and, if expenditure continues at its present levels, the scheme will entirely run out of funds in about February next year. To try to preserve the viability of the scheme, it has been necessary to amend it slightly. Today, I have written to all honourable members outlining those changes. When members see the detail of that letter, I am sure that they will understand that, although changes have been made, the Government has nevertheless been able to retain the viability of the scheme to the extent that deserving cases will continue to receive assistance. For example, one of the changes is the transfer of some of the items from the central scheme to individual hospitals around the State so that people who need access to medical aids and equipment will still be able to do that at their local hospitals.

I repeat: the claims that have been made are exaggerated and I hope that, when honourable members receive the letter that I wrote to them, they will appreciate the reasons for the changes that have been made. I have stated in the letter, and I repeat: if the changes that have been made have caused some cases of genuine financial hardship, I ask members to contact me and the Government will consider those cases as special cases.

#### **Wolfe Report**

**Mr HOBBS:** In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to his statement in the House this morning on the increase in land rentals and comments made by the Minister for Land Management last night that the media got it wrong, and I ask: will the Premier apologise to the Opposition for his statement, or does he disagree with the Minister for Land Management?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I feel as if I have been impaled on a marshmallow spike. I have already referred to the media release that was given to each of the rural industry leaders and which specifies quite clearly that it refers to the Wolfe report. The press release from the head of the United Graziers Association makes it clear also that the Minister and I were referring to the Wolfe report. I saw a number of media reports that referred to the Wolfe report, and if some media reports did not make a distinction between the Wolfe report and the Carter report, that is perhaps understandable in the case of people who do not have a detailed knowledge of such a complex area. However, the situation is quite clear and, if any of the characters on the Opposition front bench claim to have an understanding of the rural industry and the land tenure situation, they would have known or should have known.

#### **Russian Knapweed**

**Mr HOBBS:** That was a pretty weak answer. In directing a question to the Minister for Land Management, I refer to the infestation of Russian knapweed—this is an easy question for the Minister—on a property situated 15 kilometres north-west of Oakey where the Minister's department and the Department of Primary Industries have conducted controlled trials over an extended period, and I ask: will the Minister move quickly to ensure the quarantining of that infested property to stop the spread of that devastating weed and, as the bank involved is about to sell that 400-acre property complete with an excellent house and machinery shed for approximately \$120,000, will the Minister consider purchasing the property or taking action to stop the spread of the noxious weed?

**Mr EATON:** I think that the honourable member is fully aware of the situation. The Rural Lands Protection Board has carried out a good deal of research work over a period and has now established that a chemical is available, at a cost of roughly \$70 an acre, which will eradicate the weed. Because this method is now available, we will not be purchasing the property or quarantining it. I have given this information to another honourable member, who made a request similar to this one.

#### **Illegal Logging, Wet Tropics Area**

**Mr PITT:** Has the attention of the Minister for Primary Industries been drawn to claims that illegal logging has occurred within the boundaries of the Queensland wet tropics World Heritage area. If so, what action has he directed be taken?

**Mr CASEY:** I am aware of reports that illegal logging is alleged to have been carried out on three blocks in the World Heritage wet tropics area east of Gordonvale in far-north Queensland. This matter is being investigated by my department. It has had discussions with the logging company. All honourable members would understand the great difficulty in establishing an exact survey line on the ground in that area, where logging is permitted on freehold properties. It is difficult to establish where the freehold property finishes and the wet tropics area begins. By agreement, the company has withdrawn from the area and is cutting nowhere near the boundary. We are employing modern technology and using satellite sensing equipment to establish the relevant boundary on the ground so that we know exactly where the boundary lies and whether an offence has been committed. If an offence has been committed by the logging company, the provisions of the Forestry Act will apply. I add that the Wet Tropics Management Authority has been kept fully informed of this matter by the Queensland Forest Service. We will ensure that that world heritage area is protected by all means available.

#### **Ship Pilotage, Great Barrier Reef Area**

**Mr PITT:** Will the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development explain to the House the introduction of a compulsory pilotage scheme for the environmental protection of the Great Barrier Reef?

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member for Mulgrave and his colleagues the honourable members for Barron River and Whitsunday have been strong in their support for conservation measures to protect the Great Barrier Reef. I would have thought that all honourable members, including the Leader of the Opposition, would recognise that the Great Barrier Reef is one of our wonderful, natural assets and certainly a major drawcard for the tourism industry.

That is why I have had pleasure in giving the support of the Queensland Government to the measures undertaken by the Commonwealth to further enhance protection of this important national asset. In 1987, agreement was reached for voluntary pilotage for shipping proceeding through the Great Barrier Reef area. I am pleased to inform the House that the Commonwealth is now proposing to act to amend the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act to ensure that compulsory pilotage applies to vessels that are more than 70 metres in length and vessels such as oil carriers, chemical carriers and liquefied gas carriers, irrespective of size. That is a significant enhancement of the protection afforded to the Great Barrier Reef. I would have thought that all honourable members would be pleased to support that initiative.

#### **Director, Independent Gaming Commission**

**Mr SANTORO:** I remind the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing that, on 17 October, he announced that Mr Hall had been appointed as director of the newly established Machine Gaming Division. Why then did the Minister, on the Rod Henshaw program on 8 November, announce that Mr Hall would be the full-time chairman of the independent gaming commission? How does he reconcile that with his statement in

this House on 8 November that Mr Hall's role will be to liaise with the independent gaming commission? Will the Minister detail the role that Mr Hall will play during the establishment of the poker machine industry? Will the Minister admit that, in the light of the above conflicting statements, he has misled the public of Queensland?

**Mr GIBBS:** I have made it very clear that the Government will proceed down the pathway of establishing an independent gaming commission or a commission which will specifically cover the introduction of poker machines in Queensland. That commission will comprise five people. It will stand aside as a separate entity from the Machine Gaming Division and will have its own chairman. We have announced that the Director of the Machine Gaming Division is Mr Noel Hall. That is a very appropriate appointment to have been made. As I pointed out in the radio interview and as I have made very clear in the House, it is envisaged that the independent gaming commission will be responsible for certain duties such as looking at licensees, the issuing of licences, the retraction of licences, and suitable equipment. It is envisaged at this stage that it would meet, for example, once a week and that Mr Hall would be in attendance, which I think is appropriate.

**Mr Santoro:** You said he would be the independent chairman.

**Mr GIBBS:** No, he will not be the chairman. I make the point that he will not be the chairman. Perhaps there was some confusion, but he will not be the chairman of the commission itself.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Mr Speaker, I have two questions that I wish to ask without notice. In view of the time, they are just about history today, so I might leave them and ask them tomorrow.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Does the honourable member intend to place them on notice?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** No, I will wait until tomorrow.

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

At 11 a.m.,

In accordance with the Sessional Order, the House went into Committee of Supply.

### SUPPLY

#### Estimates—Sixteenth and Seventeenth Allotted Days

Estimates-in-Chief, 1990-91

Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs

**Hon. A. M. WARNER** (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (11 a.m.): I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1990-91, a sum not exceeding \$235,759,000 for Social Welfare and Housing, Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (Consolidated Revenue)."

The amount contained in that motion is an increase of \$33.526m, or 16.6 per cent, on the Consolidated Revenue Fund appropriation for my department in 1989-90. It is an increase of \$32.051m, or 15.7 per cent, on expenditure in that year. The allocations for the trust funds of my department total \$64.671m, compared with appropriations and expenditure in 1989-90 of \$44.265m and \$38.109m respectively. The total allocation to my portfolio this financial year from Consolidated Revenue and Trust Funds is \$300.43m.

As honourable members are aware, my department provides a wide range of services through five programs. Allocations to these programs from consolidated revenue in 1990-91 are—

Aboriginal and Islander affairs	\$40.478m
Community services development	\$96.603m
Ethnic affairs	\$1.828m
Intellectual disability services	\$52.704m
Protective services and juvenile justice	\$44.146m

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

**Ms WARNER:** In excess of half this allocation will be expended on grants and subsidies and capital outlays. Allocations to the trust funds in 1990-91 are—

Aborigines' welfare fund	\$55.623m
Commonwealth assistance to Aborigines fund	\$8.746m
Associations disaster relief fund	\$302,000

Before going on to speak about these figures in detail, I must point out that the comparison of these figures with last year's figures would provide a slightly misleading picture. The figures are drawn from the Budget papers, which all honourable members must know have been prepared on a different basis from last year's Budget. In order to get a more accurate picture of the increase from the 1989-1990 Budget, we should exclude the effect of the transfer of pensioner subsidies and rebates from both sides of the equation. As well, this year's Budget includes, for the first time, funds for employers' superannuation contributions. My assessment of the real increase is based on a comparable 1989-1990 Budget of \$169m, which gives us an increase of \$25.5m, or 15.1 per cent. As trust funds are largely self-funding, it is not important to analyse them in the same way. However, when it is reduced to bald comparisons, this represents a significant increase in funding and, of course, a rejection of the bitter legacy of the National Party. While in Government, that party publicly ranted about the need to support the family unit but was unable to put in place basic policies to give tangible support to the real people in need in the community.

In this Budget—Labor's first in 32 years—a first instalment has been made to my department and to the people of Queensland. While many areas of government endeavour came out of the dark years of National Party administration in a state of disarray, my portfolio areas were very badly underfunded, undervalued and underutilised by those in need. This Budget delivers the first instalment for my department—the beginnings of a social justice strategy based on rational planning, community consultation and clear priorities. This Budget increase will be followed in years to come with further increases that will finally bring Queensland's per capita welfare expenditure into line with the rest of Australia. Honourable members would be aware that Queensland lags sadly behind because of the underfunding by the National Party over the last 32 years.

This increase in expenditure has been matched by the development of bold new policies that will substantially change the nature of welfare service delivery in this State. I have commenced the process of restructuring my department, so that it can support these changes and meet the challenges it will face in the years to come. I took over three separate areas—family services, community services and ethnic affairs. My challenge was to mould them into one cohesive department, with a structure both strong enough to support the wide-ranging tasks demanded, and flexible enough to meet the challenges of change. In short, it has become an arm of a modern and progressive administration and will go into this decade proudly, efficiently and effectively. The restructuring may not seem important in the eyes of some, but it lays a firm foundation upon which all the other changes can be built. The restructuring is particularly crucial because my department is a people department—its resources must be accessible to the community and to my officers. There will be many changes to areas for which I am responsible.

I have recently gained Cabinet approval for a radical change to the administration of juvenile justice in this State, from a welfare model to a justice model. The new system will fit the punishment to the crime, by giving courts a much greater range of sentencing options.

It will encourage young people to take responsibility for their behaviour, while recognising that social disadvantage can be a major contributor to crime by children. In addition, it will recognise that juvenile offending is different from adult offending, in that it is largely petty and transitory and that young offenders should therefore be treated differently. These changes will bring a new focus for my department's Division of Protective Services and Juvenile Justice. This new system will be accompanied by an innovative crime prevention scheme, located in the Division of Community Services Development. Experience in other jurisdictions shows that juvenile offences should be tackled from both ends of the spectrum and, in fact, this policy certainly fits this Government's broad framework of social justice. It has been a successful approach adopted in the child protection field in which my department is also involved—not only in dealing with individual care of children who have been abused but also in prevention of child abuse, through the Queensland Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse.

While discussing the activities of the Division of Protective Services and Juvenile Justice, I would like to announce several new initiatives which will be funded from this budget. An amount of almost \$400,000 has been allocated to establish pilot programs to deliver services to young people who are leaving detention centres, other institutions and foster placements. This new pilot program will assist young people who are facing independent living after their release from care, if they do not have adequate family or social supports.

**Mr Veivers:** What are you going to do about the closure of the Salvation Army down at Southport?

**Ms WARNER:** Why does not the honourable member just engage his mind rather than his mouth?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr Veivers:** What are you going to do about funding that?

**Ms WARNER:** I will take the honourable member's interjection if it is intelligent. What is it?

**Mr Veivers:** What are you going to do about the closure of the Salvation Army down at Southport? That is a horrendous thing. What can you do about funding that? It has been closed.

**Ms WARNER:** The Salvation Army throughout the whole of Southport is closed?

**Mr Veivers:** No, in Southport itself.

**Ms WARNER:** That is a matter for the Salvation Army. What specific service is the honourable member talking about?

**Mr Veivers:** Don't you help fund those things?

**Ms WARNER:** What specific service is the honourable member talking about?

**Mr Veivers:** Well, to help people on the street.

**Ms Power:** He does not know.

**Ms WARNER:** Yes. I think we should stick to the Estimates. Perhaps the honourable member will raise this matter with me in a more rational way at the conclusion of the debate, rather than now. He should listen, and he might learn something.

As I was saying, a new pilot program will assist children who are exiting care. Practical support and ongoing counselling will be provided. This pilot program will operate in eight centres throughout Queensland and will be evaluated. Payments to foster parents have been increased by five per cent.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The Minister is trying to make a speech. There are too many interjections from both sides of the Chamber.

**Ms WARNER:** Foster care payments in the 1990-91 financial year will cost approximately \$6,278,000. Currently, 1 760 children in the care of the department are placed in foster care. A Green Paper on child protection is to be released shortly. It will canvass the issues involved in this sensitive topic, and will propose a new system of child protection which seeks to balance the needs of children with the duties and responsibilities of parenting.

Following recent changes to legislation, the adoptions section of my department has received an additional allocation of \$200,000. During recent years, adoptions policy has changed dramatically, with the culmination being this year's amendments which will enable adult adopted people and birth parents to receive identifying information about each other. The changes enshrine in law people's absolute right to information about their birth parent or child, while protecting privacy by allowing people to lodge an objection to contact. The decision to establish the new system was not taken lightly. Research from other parts of Australia shows that this may be the best way of balancing the different rights of people involved in adoptions. In fact, New Zealand allowed people to place a veto on information being given out, and is now deciding to change to a system similar to Queensland's. The New Zealanders have discovered that the veto on information is unworkable and actually puts the objector at more risk of being contacted. To quote the opinion of one researcher—

"The research is quite clear, that adopted people and their birth parents do not wish to hurt each other, and are usually very concerned not to upset anyone."

A cost recovery fee of \$50 per inquiry is charged for all services, related to either information or contact. An information and publicity campaign aimed at ensuring all affected people are informed of the changes will continue to operate, especially in the months leading up to 1 March next year, when the information will become available.

My approach, which is guided by social justice principles, will have particular meaning for Aboriginal and Islander people in this State.

In Queensland, Aboriginal and Islander people have never been trusted by a State Government to manage their own affairs, to determine their own futures, and to make their own decisions about what services and support they require and how it should be delivered. With the election of the Labor Government, policy changed from brutal assimilation to self-determination, self-management and good government for Aboriginal and Islander people. Assimilation was a policy that denied the special status of Aboriginal and Islander people. It denied them their rights to freedom, community support and equal access to the benefits of this State. Most importantly, people must understand that assimilation policies deny people their own identity.

By implementing assimilation policies, Governments are really saying, "Don't be yourself, be like us." That denies people the basic right to be who they are, and that is why they are wrong. For many years, Aboriginal people have had access only to the Budget allocations made to my Department. From this financial year, they will be able to call upon the Health budget, the Education budget, the housing budget, and so on. With this policy, direct services to Aboriginal and Islander people from the Division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs have been reduced. As my colleague the Minister for Health has already explained, he has taken over the funding and administration of health services for Aboriginal and Islander communities, and has already significantly improved the quality of services offered. The Parliamentary Committee of Public Works is analysing housing programs offered by my department and will recommend changes needed to make the programs operate effectively and efficiently and to ensure that they are accessible to Aboriginal and Islander people.

Yesterday, I introduced a Bill to amend the community services Acts which will enhance the ability of Aboriginal and Islander councils to effectively manage local affairs,

maintain law and order and streamline financial administration. Once again, this is only the beginning of further major changes which will offer Aboriginal and Islander people self-determination, self-management and good government. These changes will be based on a consultative process. In fact, this is the first time a Queensland Government has taken time to consult properly with Aboriginal and Islander people to implement their recommendations. The amendments to the community services Acts are based on recommendations made by a committee of review established by Cabinet, and consisting of Aboriginal and Islander people. This represents more than just changes for Aboriginal and Islander people. It represents the beginning of a new era of self-respect, dignity and equal status with other members of the community. As well as strengthening Aboriginal and Islander councils to govern their own communities, this Government has made a commitment to improve and maintain the infrastructure provided in communities.

I was proud to announce the electrification of the Torres Strait islands communities. So many others tried to do this, but I delivered earlier this year. The Torres Strait communities will have a power supply which will be able to meet the demands made upon it and that can be extended by either solar or diesel capacity as necessary.

The largest number of direct service providers in my department work in the Division of Intellectual Disabilities Services. Over the last few years, this division has been providing a more flexible range of accommodation options so people with intellectual disabilities need not have their accommodation choices confined to large institutions. Community-based care for people with severe or profound intellectual disability brings with it some difficulties and, contrary to popular opinion, is more expensive than traditional institutional options. This Budget has provided a \$1.5 m increase to the base funding for intellectual disability services, which will improve the quality of lifestyle in residential services. As well, it will increase the capacity of the department to offer services outside Brisbane, and particularly in the northern part of the State. The challenge for the nineties will be to offer more flexible, more innovative and more accessible services to the community. People with intellectual disabilities are now finding a political voice through a variety of organisations, and are demanding a better service from government. This Government will listen to that voice. This Government is committed to providing more appropriate services, where possible under the control of service-users. Community services in general have been improved under this Government.

My department now has an Office of the Ageing, an Office of Child Care and an Office of Disability, which will provide funding and resources to community organisations working within these areas.

This Government will build a real partnership with the community services sector and local government. This will be a partnership based on mutual respect, on a mutual recognition of each other's role, responsibilities and limitations. It will be a partnership in which people in the community will have access to quality services, based on sound principles and financial accountability. This part of the role of my department has been substantially increased, so that community organisations can get the service they need from government to be able to offer the best possible services to the community.

Through the Division of Community Services Development, a total of \$42.3 m will be disbursed as grants to community organisations. These funds will go to more than 1 000 community based services and local authorities, under 26 funding programs. These programs range from child-care, to accommodation for the homeless, to family support programs, and will also assist the community sector in the provision of a wide range of child and family welfare services. The Office of Child Care will be a significant player in the child-care industry for many years to come. It will resource and support the child-care industry, by placing senior staff in regional offices to work with local child-care centres, and to give them assistance and advice in funding and meeting the requirements of legislation. It will be responsible for implementing and monitoring regulations on the quality of child-care, as we believe that Queensland parents have the reasonable expectation that their children will receive the best quality care possible.

The introduction of regulations, which has already started, will cause a certain amount of community debate. However, it is a reform that is long overdue, and has been proven effective in all other States of Australia. Our commitment to providing more quality child-care in Queensland must not stop at simply providing more. In fact, we have already provided more. The community is now better off by \$8.4 m which has been allocated to provide an additional 6 000 child-care places in a variety of programs. This allocation fulfils our election promise to dramatically increase the number of child-care places available for Queensland parents, the choice of styles of child-care, and the quality of child-care. These places are to be in family day care, long day care, occasional care and out-of-school hours care.

The Office of the Ageing will be a focus for all departments as they start to take our seniors into account in their policy formulation. Its first task is to implement the seniors card, which will provide concessions to an additional 120 000 seniors, recognising the contributions they have made to our society, as well as the fact that it can be difficult to make ends meet once full-time employment is no longer available. Once again, this is a delivery of a pre-election promise, and I am pleased to announce that I officially launched the card yesterday. These and other social justice strategies start to fulfil the promise of this Government to make things better for ordinary people, to repay the debt and to bring Queensland's services up to the standards enjoyed by other Australians.

Another of my important areas of responsibility is ethnic affairs. This is one more area in which the previous Government neglected its responsibilities to a shameful extent. Ethnic affairs was almost completely ignored by the former Government. Where it seemed safe and non-controversial to provide some basic language and accommodation services, these were reluctantly and parsimoniously provided. The broader issues of justice, multiculturalism, equal opportunities for all Queenslanders, and creation of harmony amongst diversity must have seemed too hard for the members opposite—that is when they understood them. This Government has accepted its responsibilities to Queensland's ethnic communities by establishing a Bureau of Ethnic Affairs as a separate entity within my department. The bureau has not been swallowed up in the larger department, as its director reports directly to the director-general. The bureau is being rejuvenated and restructured, and will now have the resources and capacity to fulfil its functions of developing programs and activities which address the special needs of immigrants, refugees and ethnic communities.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of officers in my department over the last year. While they dealt with policy changes, personnel changes and structural changes, the quality of their professional services has never faltered. It has not necessarily been easy, and the process has not delivered to everyone what they wanted. However, I know that their basic dedication to service has remained unshaken, and I thank and congratulate them for that. I wish that I could tell them that all the upheavals are now over, but I cannot. In the past, after many broken promises and failed undertakings by Governments, they have been very cynical. In these times of economic restraint, I cannot promise my department, or other interested groups, a bottomless pit of money. However, what is available will be spent rationally, according to established priorities, and will meet real needs.

Over the next few years, this Government will be improving the level of funding for welfare services—for social justice—to try to bring Queensland programs into line with the programs that are enjoyed in other States and, in some areas, to actually improve on those programs, not necessarily in terms of levels of funding but in terms of program design and delivery of welfare services. Queensland is a very decentralised State and, therefore, quite often the strategies that have to be employed here are different from those that are employed in other States.

In consultation with the non-Government sector, the Government has to encourage the development of non-Government sector services in various country towns. I know that a lot of pressure is being put on the Government to provide for neighbourhood centres. I welcome those pressures. I will be doing my best to try to find the funding to

be able to assist those centres in providing a local focus for an examination of the welfare needs of the community. I believe that that is the direction in which the Government should be moving. That commitment and that consultative process has already been reflected in the changes that have taken place in the department over the last year. I refer specifically to the improved and increased status that the area for community services development has achieved by becoming a complete division within the department, with the expenditure of \$42m on the non-Government sector on community grants. That is a new focus, a better focus and a more appropriate focus for welfare services to meet the challenges of the 1990s.

The Government needs to listen to the grassroots messages that are coming from local community groups. Even though in many instances they appear to conflict with one another, there is a way

in which the Government can bring those strands together and adopt a more rational approach to the development of ongoing welfare services through the non-Government sector into the 1990s.

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

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

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett) (11.26 a.m.): It is some time since the Budget was brought down in this Chamber. Consequently, some of the impact of this debate on the Estimates of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs has been lost. Obviously, not everyone can be first, and some order has to be arrived at. However, I point out that, when the National Party was in Government, it was often accused of not giving this portfolio a high enough priority. How often has it been said in this Chamber that the National Party talked about the importance of Family Services but that, when it came to appointing Ministers or making Budget allocations, this was an area that missed out. As usual, the Minister has used the rhetoric that so many members of this Parliament use in attacking the National Party in relation to its commitments during its term in office. However, by not placing this debate higher on the list of priorities, this Labor Government is treating Family Services in a way similar to that which the National Party was accused of by Labor when it was in Opposition.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** That is sick.

**Mr SLACK:** The member for Archerfield should listen.

I will place emphasis on the Family Services rather than the Aboriginal and Islander Affairs aspect of the Minister's portfolio. Some honourable members may infer from that that I am promoting the importance of the Family Services component of the Minister's portfolio over her responsibility in relation to Aboriginals and Islanders. That is not my intention. I believe that the Aboriginal and Islander people have some very real problems, which should not be overlooked or disregarded. The addressing of issues of concern in relation to Aboriginal and Islander people should be of major importance to the Government and should be approached in a bipartisan manner by all the political parties in this Parliament. However, I do want to place emphasis on the Family Services section of the Minister's portfolio because I believe that its primary role is the provision of support to the family as an integral part of our society. That support should not be conditional upon race, creed, social background or where one lives.

I was pleased to hear the Minister's concluding remarks in regard to her approach to problems throughout Queensland. There should not be discrimination in the services offered by the Family Services Department to city communities and to country communities, nor should there be discrimination between a basically white community and an Aboriginal and Islander community. It is in this context that the Family Services Department has the responsibility for providing the family support that is so needed in

the Aboriginal and Islander communities of this State. It is obvious that the support measures in country communities will be more costly than those in city communities because of numbers, distances, lack of services and general isolation. However, that is not a reason for providing fewer services. In many cases, because of the special problems that are associated with isolation, there is all the more reason to make services available. Make no mistake about it, there are some very real problems and pressures existing within Queensland's rural communities. Poverty and homelessness are widespread and increasing throughout all communities. It just does not apply to the metropolitan or the provincial city areas. At this time, employment opportunities are practically non-existent in many country areas, and this is particularly evident within the Aboriginal and Islander communities.

As honourable members would be aware, this places tremendous pressure on the family unit and, in turn, break-downs in interfamily relations begin to occur. One also sees severe depression, lack of self-esteem, a break-down in communications, domestic violence, an increase in the number of homeless children, violence and crime, and an increase in the number of marriage break-ups. There is no doubt that Governments have the responsibility to help those within society who are in need and to provide those support programs that come under the umbrella of the Department of Family Services.

The primary role of Government is to manage the affairs of the country in such a manner as to ensure that the least number of people as possible will require support. Unfortunately, I do not believe that to be the case within this country at the moment. In fact, Archbishop Hollingworth recently made some very pertinent observations on this subject. I do not doubt this Government's sincerity, or the Commonwealth's for that matter, in attempting to address the problems of the needy, but the real need is to adopt policies that promote growth and prosperity as incentives and rewards for people to succeed, which is essential for a healthy country.

The policies of the Federal Government have led to an increase in the number of people in financial trouble. In turn, that has led to increased poverty, placed additional strain on families, which has led directly to an increase in domestic violence and an increase in the number of homeless children, violence and crime. Consequently, there has been a need for increased family support from this department. It is not relevant to blame the previous State Government for a lack of spending in this area. As changes occur within society, the methods of dealing with those changes need to change. This Government is now in power and it needs to deal with those changed circumstances. While they may not be of its making, they are a result in the main of the Federal Labor Government's mismanagement of the economy. Obviously, that is an oversimplification, but it is a major contributing factor. While Labor may espouse high ideals and point to what it is doing in the area of social welfare, it cannot be denied that the need for social welfare has dramatically increased during its term of office. It is a condition that voters should always be mindful of when they cast their vote at election-time. A similar position is going to develop within this State now that Labor is in power. While, admittedly, many of the problems will be a flow-on from the actions of the Commonwealth, many of the decisions that are being made by other departments will impact directly on the family and ultimately will require the provision of extra resources and services from this department. That is why I firmly believe that when decisions are made by Government, one of the first assessments that should be made is the effect that they are going to have across the board. Will other costs be incurred for other departments? Are jobs going to be lost? Are other services going to be affected and, if a service goes or is not provided, are there other viable alternatives for the community?

I can name many decisions that are being made by this Government that are going to impact on other areas and, ultimately, will increase the demand for services provided by this department. The mad rush into regionalisation sounds fine in theory and should save money but, in fact, it will mean less direct community input, much of which was on a voluntary basis, a much less personalised service and, in the longer term, higher costs with a drop off in both services and efficiency of service. The Minister should be

well aware of the tremendous amount of work that is voluntarily provided by members of the community within those areas covered by the Department of Family Services. The cost of providing that work by Government agencies would be absolutely prohibitive. The people who provide this work are loving, caring, understanding, selfless people whose contribution is often underestimated.

**Ms Warner:** And they should continue to do it for nothing; is that your line?

**Mr SLACK:** I am saying that they are making a voluntary contribution, for which they receive reward in personal satisfaction. These people operate from within the churches and from within many other voluntary organisations. It is an outlet for many, and they are rewarded by a feeling of fulfilment and gain a certain amount of personal satisfaction in the knowledge that they have helped their fellow man. Many of them are elderly and have retired, and their voluntary work gives them a sense of being needed. Unfortunately, when Government starts to take over the role that those people play, it runs the risk of losing their services. They may not be qualified in academic terms, but they have a wealth of human experience. I am sure that if the organisations that these people were involved with were given the money, many of the services that are being undertaken by Government could be much more effectively and efficiently carried out by those organisations. In those circumstances where this principle could apply, I have no doubt that the dollar would go much further.

How often have honourable members seen the situation where once someone is paid to do something, the others say, "Well, he or she is being paid to do it. I will now leave it to them. Why should I bother?" or the feeling is expressed, "Someone else is doing it now. They don't need me any more." Those feelings are real, because I have had people from within welfare and support organisations express them directly to me. This can have a twofold effect. The services of the person are lost, and that can be devastating to the individual providing that service as it leaves that person feeling unwanted. I raise these issues because this is the portfolio that deals directly with human emotions, feelings and sensitivities. It is an area in which, going by reports to me, many of the staff of the Department of Family Services have been found wanting. Those reports have also indicated that the Minister has been found wanting in this regard.

**Ms Spence:** Oh, give it away.

**Mr SLACK:** Honourable members should listen to what is being said to me as the Opposition spokesperson.

**Ms Warner** interjected.

**Mr SLACK:** Fine, but the Minister would be foolish not to listen. The claim has been made that the Minister is not prepared to consult and listen but rather pursues her own ideas and responds only to a select band of people around her. It has been claimed that it is extremely difficult to see the Minister and that morale within her department is at an extremely low ebb. Those claims are coming from too many sources and are too consistent to be ignored. No doubt, there are people within the department who may have an axe to grind, but this goes much deeper than that.

The Minister's handling of the adoption issue is a case in point. I am well aware that the amendments to the Adoption of Children Act have been debated in this place and that a disallowance motion relative to a charge for objection to contact has been defeated by the Minister's Government in the Parliament. However, since that defeat, some serious allegations can be made relative to the Minister's handling of this very sensitive subject. In introducing the legislation, the Minister indicated that this State was only following in the footsteps of other States. I am sure that honourable members accepted the Minister's assurance in this regard and that that assurance was a significant factor in determining members' attitudes towards the legislation. But what have we since found out? There are very essential differences—and I stress that—between the Queensland legislation and that existing in other States. I have looked at the legislation in Victoria, Western Australia and South Australia. That legislation is not the same as the legislation

in this State. Essential differences occur between the legislation in this State and that in other States. At the time when the debate took place in this Chamber, the Minister stated—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! This is an Estimates debate. The honourable member should really not be talking about legislation. I believe that the honourable member would have listened to the statement indicating that the necessity for legislation and matters involving legislation cannot be discussed in the Committee of Supply. So I ask him to return to the Estimates.

**Mr SLACK:** I am referring to the Estimates in relation to the adoption issue. The Minister raised the issue of adoption and made comments about the legislation. So in the light of her comments, I feel that I am also entitled to mention adoption.

**Mr Nunn:** You were quoting from a letter from a bloke from Coorparoo, and he is a friend of yours.

**Mr SLACK:** The Chairman was referring to legislation. I point out to him and to other honourable members that the Minister made reference to that very legislation. In the same light, I would be entitled to make reference to that legislation. Because the legislation and the regulations that followed required the payment of a fee which was part of the receipts of the Minister's department, those receipts relate to the Estimates of the department.

There are essential differences between the legislation in this State and that in other States. I refer the Minister to a press report in the *Sun* that makes reference to—

"Department Adoption Services Manager, Mrs Mary Twomey, telling a 'heated' public meeting in Brisbane that the \$50 objection payment would be 'looked at closely'."

Obviously, the Opposition has been right with regard to the sensitivity of this issue, and the Minister, in her desire to further her own dogmatic beliefs, has been prepared to ride completely roughshod over the sensitivities of others who are directly affected by the legislation. I must say that it would be a relief to many—and the Opposition would welcome it—if the report in the *Sun* was an indication of the Minister's preparedness to reassess the whole issue. I ask the Minister whether she is able to confirm the validity of that report.

**Ms Warner:** I said at the time that it would be reviewed.

**Mr SLACK:** That is good. Can we accept that it will be reviewed?

**Ms Warner:** It will be reviewed.

**Mr SLACK:** When?

**Ms Warner:** You have been told that 10 times.

**Mr SLACK:** I ask the Minister whether she is able to give an indication as to when.

**Ms Warner:** It is simply a question of the renewal.

**Mr SLACK:** Is the Minister able to give an indication as to when? A senior officer of her department has made a statement.

**Ms Warner:** I reckon we will give it a year and see how we go.

**Mr SLACK:** If the Minister intends to give it a year, in the meantime the people who wish to object will have paid the \$50. So there is no point in giving it a year in that specific instance.

**A Government member:** You are wasting time.

**Mr SLACK:** No, it is not wasting time. It is a very personal issue to many people in the community. In common with me, the honourable member would have received countless letters relative to this issue. The Minister also would have received countless letters.

I turn now to the more specific provisions relating to Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs that have been outlined in the Budget. It cannot be denied that the Budget has provided for significant increases in the allocation of money to this department and, in a broad sense, that is welcome. However, the question must be raised as to whether that increase in allocation will be spent within the areas of greatest need. In association with that question, it can be legitimately asked: what amount is going into administration and the reorganisation of the department, and then just how much of the increase in the department's budget is actually going to get through to the people in need? The Minister has referred to the reorganisation, which no doubt involves a tremendous cost. I understand that there has been considerable reorganisation in both departments, running into a cost of many millions of dollars. It is very evident that the attitude of "out with the old and in with the new", which may have given the Minister some satisfaction, has done little to improve the efficiency or the effectiveness of the department. To the contrary. As I mentioned earlier, morale is at an all-time low. Only a few weeks ago, the claim was made to me that some inward correspondence dating back to May has not been answered. To me, that does not sound efficient. Actually, yesterday the claim was made that some correspondence with the Minister's office dating back to March has not been answered.

The claim has also been repeatedly made to me that many Aboriginals and Islanders, many of whom have displayed dedication and experience, are being overlooked in favour of those with a more radical outlook. Some of them have been able to be more prominent simply because they have not been doing the work within the Aboriginal communities but have chosen to be out gaining media attention. The other disturbing aspect is that it appears some are being overlooked as it is considered that——

**Ms Warner** interjected.

**Mr SLACK:** The Minister will get her turn when she replies. As I was saying, it appears some are being overlooked because, as they were not out publicly proclaiming the Aboriginal cause, they should then be identified as National Party supporters and should therefore not be considered.

**Ms Warner:** Come on, be precise.

**Mr SLACK:** The Minister can make denials later.

To me, that is abhorrent and completely unjust. I would hope that those claims would be without substance, but I very much fear that that is not the case. However, I am led to believe that the feeling of uncertainty that exists within the department is unreal and that the situation is bordering on being one of chaos. Other Opposition speakers in this debate will elaborate on those matters. I am outlining the broad issue. Mr Gilmore will speak on Aboriginals; Mr Katter will speak on Aboriginal and Islander affairs; and Mr FitzGerald, Mr Johnson and Mr Springborg will speak also. However, as Opposition spokesman, I am outlining the real concerns that have been brought to my notice. I am now bringing those concerns to the Minister's attention for her consideration. She can deny them as much as she likes. However, the concerns that have been expressed to me have some validity.

I turn now to the seniors card. The introduction of the seniors card is one of the few pre-election commitments that this Government has honoured. The card is welcomed by our senior citizens. However, there appears to be some confusion about it. It appears to be unclear as to who is eligible.

**Ms Spence:** Come on!

**Mr SLACK:** Okay. People make inquiries at my electorate office. They should not be dismissed lightly. Those people vote in Labor electorates, too. When the seniors card was first announced, I had difficulty finding out what it entailed and when it was to operate. That suggested to me that, at that time, the homework had not been done properly. Subsequently, more aspects have been clarified. However, the means test issue has not been clarified for people between 60 and 69 years of age. One of the requirements for eligibility is that a person must be in receipt of a full or part-rate age or veterans affairs pension. My understanding is that, to be eligible for a full or part-rate pension, one must come within an assets and income limit. Consequently, the intent of the clause "subject to means test" appears to need further explanation. In the case of males, the pension or part-pension is not paid until they reach the age of 65 years. It could well be claimed that the card has a discriminatory aspect. Because the Minister often talks about discrimination within our society, I ask her to address that issue in her reply.

On 19 July 1990 in the *Courier-Mail*, the Premier made the following misleading statement—

"The seniors card will be available to all Queensland residents over the age of 60, subject to a very generous and simple income test."

Regardless of that, there is no doubt that many people will benefit from the introduction of the seniors card. However, one cannot help being a little cynical about the Government's motivation for the introduction of the card when one considers that, during the next decade, the number of people who will become eligible will increase from approximately 8 per cent to 14 per cent of the population. Therefore, that will represent considerable voting strength within the electorate when people who—it can be argued—are more in need, do not represent anywhere near that percentage of the population. I understand that not all non-Government community service groups are happy with the proposed card. Statistics show that the majority of people living in poverty are invalids and families or single parents with young children.

Recently, the Health Department announced its decision on the Queensland home medical aids scheme, which the Opposition spokesman mentioned during question-time. Before the Minister interjects, I point out that I am well aware that I have just referred to the Health Department. However, this issue impacts directly upon families and family care. It should be of concern to the Minister and personnel from her department that the cost of family support services is increasing while those services are being scaled down. A memorandum that was circulated to officers within the department highlights how a much-needed service that offers very important and essential assistance to cancer patients in the home is being down-graded in favour of funding in other sectors.

I turn now to child-care, to which considerable additional funds have been allocated in the Budget. It should not go without recognition that child-care and many other community-assistance measures have been made possible only through the good house-keeping of the previous National Party Government. It cannot be denied that, in comparison with all other States and the Commonwealth, the Queensland economy was in an extremely strong position when this Government took over. As a result, many assistance measures that have been referred to have been increased or additional services introduced. That is in contrast to all other Labor States which, because of financial mismanagement, have found it necessary to cut back in many essential sectors. The Minister claims that Queensland's services are being brought up to the level of those of the other States. However, every other State in which a Labor Government has been in office is broke. They are finding it necessary to cut back. Those are the parameters within which this Government operates. There is no way in the world that this Government could have introduced such a Budget containing these increases without the contribution made by the former National Party Government towards the management of the economy of this State.

Members would be aware that, because of the additional pressures placed on families through financial mismanagement by Labor Governments, the need for assistance has never been greater. If the Queensland economy is mismanaged, the same situation will

exist. This Government must be ever mindful of that lesson. As it cuts back on services or increases charges to the productive sector, limits are placed on the capacity to provide the type of support that is so essential for families in the long term. There is no doubt that an ever-increasing demand exists for affordable, quality child-care within the community, particularly as increasing numbers of mothers are forced into the work force through economic pressures. In our modern society, in many cases the family support of relatives no longer exists. The need for additional child-care centres in many areas is unquestioned, as is the need for fee relief.

The question arises as to who should be responsible for the provision and control of those centres. The Minister has advised that legislation on this subject will be introduced into the House. I do not propose to mention child-care in great detail except to say that the private sector provides an excellent child-care service. I do not believe that it would be in the best interests of taxpayers of this State for the Government to enter into competition with the private sector. Many centres that are run by the community and basically controlled by local authorities operate effectively and well. If those centres were taken over and administered by the Family Services Department, there is no doubt that the cost to that department would increase dramatically.

It is significant that, of the \$8.4m provided in the Budget for child-care, \$5.4m is to go towards capital works and \$3m, or 36 per cent, is to go towards on-costs. In its last Budget, the Commonwealth introduced generous income-tested fee relief to eligible families. That will bring child-care within the reach of many more families and, consequently, increase the demand for centres. That demand should be able to be met mainly by the private sector on a commercial basis.

Before introducing legislation, the Minister should genuinely consult with all sectors in relation to child-care. There should be no duplication between the State and the Commonwealth. There must be uniformity of child-care matters throughout the Commonwealth. If child-care is to be enthusiastically embraced, it should be as readily available in country areas as it is in the city. Child-care should be as readily available to one group of people as it is to another, particularly within income groups. When I refer to income, I ask the Minister to take my comments on board and to press the Commonwealth to make the fees tax deductible. Although the case for fee relief is accepted, many working people on higher incomes for whom child-care is a necessity are being discriminated against. They are unable to claim child-care as a tax deduction. Because those people already contribute a greater share through their tax payments to those who are given fee relief, they are being penalised. In many cases, I suspect that, after their tax is deducted, they would not have any more money in their pay-packets than those who are eligible for fee relief. That is unjust and wrong.

In relation to intellectual disability services—I am sure that all honourable members recognise the need for support for the mentally and physically disabled to ensure that they and their families can enjoy quality of life. As is the case within other sections of the Department of Family Services, considerable uncertainty exists in relation to staffing and appointments. It has taken 11 months for regional managers to be appointed, and many staff under those regional managers are still employed on a temporary basis, which could hardly be described as satisfactory.

I wish to query a couple of areas contained within Budget Paper No. 3 *Program Statements*. On page 229, the Budget for 1989-90 allowed for an expenditure of \$48,362,000. Although that money should have been spent on some definite areas of need, nearly \$1m less than the budgeted amount was actually spent. On page 237, the Budget allows for \$37,611,000 for salaries, wages and related payments to fund 1 291 employees, compared with the 1989-90 figure of \$35,836,000 to fund 1 200 employees. Although the wages for each employee should have risen, the 1990-91 figure represents a lesser allocation per employee than the 1989-90 figure. Consequently, I ask the Minister whether the provision for 1 291 staff represents permanent hands-on staff or contains a significant component of part-time staff. On page 237, the Budget provides \$2,134,000 for future

liabilities. Under that heading, no figure is shown for the previous year. Consequently, would the Minister indicate what that provision is for?

In relation to disability services, can the Minister give honourable members an assurance that there is no plan to close either Challinor and/or Basil Stafford centres. I would like to touch on many issues, such as youth homelessness, domestic violence, alternative sentencing options for young offenders and the need for support for programs to assist members of ethnic communities. Those issues deserve much more attention than a brief mention. However, because of the limitations of time, they will be addressed on another occasion.

In relation to Aboriginal and Islander people—I have made the point that the provision of support for families comes within the area of family services and should be approached within that context. I referred also to special problems faced by Aboriginals and Islanders that need to be addressed. Above all, the wider community must understand that Aboriginals and Islanders have special problems. Special initiatives are needed to help those people to cope with twentieth-century living and to integrate into the broader community. Much is said about alcohol, and the question is often posed as to whether alcohol is the source of their problems or whether it is the result of a broader problem. Although there is no doubt that alcohol is a problem in many cases, it can be said with as much authority that it is the result of a much broader problem. The successful overcoming of those problems will require a lot of patience and a commonsense approach based on an acceptance of the problem and a preparedness on the part of many to divorce idealism from reality. Only then will Aboriginal and Islander people be able to gain confidence and self-esteem. Many of the problems that confront today's Aboriginals and Islanders are not the fault of the Aboriginal and Islander people, but are a result of white people's idealism and ineptitude.

Time expired.

**Ms SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt) (11.57 a.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the Estimates for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. The department administers one of the most important responsibilities of Government—caring for families, particularly children, Aborigines and Islanders, and for the particular needs of ethnic communities. This Government strives for social justice, and the department, which has the responsibility for looking after the welfare of those in need of assistance and guidance, must play an important role in helping to achieve social justice. In recognition of the importance of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, it has been given budgetary priority after years of financial neglect. I was pleased to hear the member for Burnett recognise that his Government neglected the department both financially and otherwise and that this Government is making up for that. Unlike members of the Opposition, who paid lip-service to the needs of families and the needy, the Government is prepared to match its rhetoric with financial backing. It has allocated over \$300m, which has increased substantially the budget for this department.

I will confine my discussion of the Estimates to the division of protective services and juvenile justice within the department. Major areas of the responsibility of the division that looks after families and youth are the protection of children from abuse and neglect and the supervision and detention of young offenders. In 1990-91, the allocation to the division from consolidated revenue is \$44.146m. The goal of the protective services section is to protect children when specific harms have occurred or are likely to occur and when the child's parents are unable or unwilling to protect the child and to secure stable, safe homes for those children. In the protective services section, the service-delivery work of the division includes investigating child-protection notifications, intervening with families and children where abuse or neglect has occurred, taking care and protection applications to court, providing alternative care to children who are in the care of the director-general, providing support and training to care-providers and providing services to adoption applicants, thus relinquishing parents and children who are subject to adoption consents.

In my electorate of Mount Gravatt, the office of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs provides a very good service in each of those spheres. I was especially pleased to see that one of the first initiatives of the Minister when the Labor Party came to Government was to relocate that office from the appalling conditions under which the staff were forced to work by the previous Government. They now work in spacious and very nice office accommodation. I congratulate the Minister on that.

The services provided in the juvenile justice subprogram include attending court with young people who have committed offences, providing intervention to youths who are subject to departmental orders and their families, and providing care to youths who have been committed to institutions as a result of offending. The goal of the juvenile justice subprogram is to ensure that young people in conflict with the law are dealt with justly, humanely and in a manner which will divert them from further conflict with the law. Recently, I had the privilege of accompanying the Minister on a visit to the Children's Court. I am sure that we and the others who accompanied us were impressed with the work of the Family Services Department in that area.

The primary clients of the division are children and young people. The approach of the division is child-centred but family-focused. Divisional staff seek to strengthen the abilities of families and parents to provide appropriate care for dependent members. Workload demands have continued to rise. It is ridiculous for the honourable member for Burnett to suggest that the demands will continue to rise simply because there is a Labor Government. Obviously, society is changing. The rate of child protection notifications has increased steadily in recent years. In 1983-84, there were 2 574 notifications. In 1989-90, there were 6 926 notifications involving 1 190 children. The 1989-90 figures represent an increase of 9 per cent on the number of cases in 1988-89. The division will also be seeking this financial year to enhance its response to juvenile offenders.

Most of the services provided by the division are designed to address the needs of children under orders. At 30 June 1990, more than 4 000 children were subject to at least one order. Staff of the division work with some of the most disadvantaged and disempowered families and individuals in the community. Consequently, it is important that clients are offered a high-quality service which has been denied them in the past but which is now presented by this Government. It is a service which is sensitive to social justice considerations. Accountability considerations are thus of prime importance. In pursuit of these goals and the goals of efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness, the division is currently being restructured. Major outcomes of the restructuring process will include: enabling staff of the division to focus on statutory duties; a more effective policy development process which better integrates practice requirements, regional needs and policy developments; and greater consistency of practice on a Statewide basis. The 1990-91 financial year is consequently one of consolidation of new structural and program management arrangements. Alongside the restructuring process, work is continuing in all components of the divisional subprograms to enhance the quality of service provision.

One example of the work done by this section is the sexual abuse intervention project, or SAIP. Child sexual abuse is an emotive issue which has been the subject of considerable public discussion in recent times in Queensland, interstate and overseas. During the last 18 months, debate has focused not only on the phenomenon but also on the official response of cases of sexual abuse. Criticism of child protection authorities varies from complaints of inaction to allegations of overreaction. In order to provide a sound basis for departmental intervention, the SAIP was established. It was an initiative of this department and is managed by the child protection support services section of the division. It has involved a process of Statewide consultation with departmental officers and SCAN team members and an examination of literature and intervention models. The purpose of the SAIP is to identify and implement strategies to improve the division's response to sexually abused children and their families by minimising trauma to the child and maximising the family's opportunity to resolve their problems. The final report will be completed by December this year. The project will also result in the issuing of comprehensive guidelines for the management of cases of child sexual abuse.

Another section of this division is juvenile justice. The diversion of offending youth from criminal lifestyles is a most important objective of this division. Young offenders are most effectively rehabilitated in the community. I think that the Opposition agrees with us here. However, there are certain circumstances in which a period of detention may be appropriate. I personally believe that that is very unfortunate and will remain so until other processes are in place. At present, the four secure custodial facilities are the John Oxley Youth Centre at Wacol, the Westbrook Youth Centre, the Cleveland Youth Centre in Townsville and the Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre in Brisbane. A major problem for the department is the overrepresentation of indigenous youth in these detention centres. The managers are currently gathering information about the problems faced by young Aboriginal and Islander people in detention and are formulating responses to address their special needs. Additionally, the division will develop specific strategies to reduce the number of indigenous young people in detention centres. Experience has shown that a number of young offenders in the custody of the division have suffered sexual abuse at some stage in their life. A small number of juvenile sex offenders are also held in detention centres. In an effort to interrupt the cycle of violence and abuse, a working party is currently meeting to develop enhanced programmatic responses to these children, including training for selected staff and the preparation of resource materials.

The report of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission into homeless children recommended—

"That State and Territory Governments ensure that relevant departments and institutions give youth in their care timely and continuing assistance in planning post-institutional living arrangements and supportive after-care services."

An amount of \$421,000 has been earmarked for a pilot program which will deliver such services from locations throughout Queensland. The program is aimed at young people who are facing independent living after their release from care without resort to adequate family or social supports. It will give priority to those who lack essential living skills or those who suffer significant difficulties, such as alcohol or drug abuse or self-destructive behaviour, or who lack basic accommodation and income support.

Another initiative of this division is the adoptions section. An additional allocation of \$200,000 has been made to enhance the work of the adoptions section. Adoption has been a topic of some debate in this Chamber this morning. I am surprised that the member for Burnett criticised the adoption legislation which he and his party supported when it was debated in this Parliament this year. I foreshadow that the member for Landsborough, who will speak after me, will also criticise the adoption legislation. Before she does so, I remind her that she and her party also supported the legislation when it was passed through this Parliament this year.

**Mr Slack:** The Parliament was misled.

**Ms SPENCE:** The honourable member had the chance to look at that legislation before it was debated, as did the members of the Liberal Party, and both parties supported it. Now they are criticising it in the press and today in this Chamber. They did not criticise it at the time.

**A Government member:** They are incompetent.

**Ms SPENCE:** Yes, they are incompetent. I will not say too much more about the adoption issue, although I am sure that the member for Landsborough will have a lot to say about it.

**Ms Warner:** I think she's moving on to child-care.

**Ms SPENCE:** Yes, she will criticise child-care next; the guardian of the New Right. She has absolutely no credibility in this Chamber. In conclusion, I wish to say how much I support the Minister in her Estimates and the work she has done within the department. I was horrified that the member for Burnett spent half his speech criticising

the Minister. It was absolute rubbish and shows his lack of understanding of this portfolio. He referred to innuendo, rumours and letters being unanswered. My experience of the Department of Family Services is not the same. Every time I send a letter to the department, I receive a very prompt reply. I have arranged meetings with the Minister for people in my community.

**Mr Johnson:** That's you, though.

**Ms SPENCE:** Perhaps the honourable member should go through the proper channels. I have always found the Minister's door wide open to those people who wish to meet her. Today, I am happy to speak in support of these Estimates, the Minister and the Department of Family Services.

**Mrs SHELDON (Landsborough) (12.10 p.m.):** I wish to reply to the comments made by the previous speaker about credibility in this Chamber. I assure her that the credibility of members on this side of the Chamber is not being questioned; what is being questioned is the performance of the members of the Government, its Ministers and backbenchers. I am sorry to have to inform Ms Spence that I shall not debate in great detail the adoption legislation, its regulations or the injustices that have occurred under that Act. I referred to the matter this morning when I gave notice of a motion. Today, I rise to speak on the Estimates for the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. My able colleague Mr Santo Santoro will further debate these Estimates later.

**Mr Hollis:** That shows your lack of judgment.

**Mrs SHELDON:** The honourable member's debating ability is very inferior when compared with that of Mr Santoro.

From a perusal of capital works in the State Budget documents for 1990-91, it seems that the allocation for social welfare and housing is a massive \$833.8m, and a considerable amount of those funds are allocated to housing. Aboriginal and Islander welfare has been dealt with only superficially in the Budget. There is a general lack of understanding of the special needs of these people in general and on the Sunshine Coast in particular. The Kabi Kabi tribe were the original inhabitants of the Sunshine Coast area. In a census carried out in 1986, only 125 Aborigines were recorded as living in the area. The general feeling of most welfare agencies is that there are considerably more. The 125 Aborigines comprised 57 males and 68 females, 60 of whom—or 53 per cent—were aged 19 years and under and 12 of whom were aged between 19 and 25 years. In 1986, these Aborigines constituted 2 per cent to 4 per cent of Queensland's population of Aborigines and Islanders. There is no specialised welfare for these people and they are largely forgotten. Aborigines and Islanders are discriminated against in relation to housing, even by the Queensland Housing Commission. The Sunshine Coast needs to have a manned office that serves as an information base—a place where they can go for help and guidance. Generally, Aborigines in this State feel that they have been neglected in the Budget.

The plight of Aboriginal women in general and their health care in particular is of considerable concern to me. The structure of the Aboriginal culture appears to be changing. Historically, the male was dominant. He was the hunter and provider. Now, largely through drink, he is not the family mainstay or provider. Aboriginal women are trying to stem their race's headlong flight to destruction by endeavouring to assume authority. In certain regions they have asked that their settlements be declared dry and are forming the basis of several of their councils. They know that, without direction, their families and children will continue to live on welfare, and will be alcoholic, directionless and non-achieving adults. These women must be supported in a practical way. In order to succeed, they must, amongst other things, be healthy. Currently, that is not the position. Support can be achieved through our understanding the basis of these people's culture. They need to be encouraged to seek early attention for and prevention of conditions such as cervical and breast cancer, to understand general adequate diet and nutritional needs for themselves and their children and have ready

access to education about eye diseases that proliferate. There is a high incidence of rickets among Aboriginal children. In other words, there should be less talk and more action, better use of the funds provided and genuine concern and backing given especially by women more privileged than they. A survey needs to be carried out on the coast to evaluate what the actual Aboriginal population is, what their specific needs are and how those needs can be met in a practical way.

Aborigines are not the only people who are discriminated against. There is a great lack of disability accommodation in general in Queensland, particularly on the coast. The only current accommodation is provided by the Federal Government under the HACC scheme. Again, the Queensland Department of Housing and Local Government does not appear to look after the needs of these people who have a wide range of disabilities and need specialised housing and transport. No particular provision appears to have been made in the Budget to rectify that matter.

For some years, women's services appear to have been on the forgotten agenda in any Budget. This year's Budget is no different. Women have special emotional, social and health-related needs. On the coast, and particularly in my electorate, there is a complete lack of women's services. The only staffed centre is the women's crisis centre at Maroochydore. This centre endeavours to provide counselling and practical help to women suffering crises of all kinds. It needs better facilities and more funding. The staff there—who are mostly voluntary workers—do a wonderful job. They are dedicated; they work long hours; and they often go out voluntarily late at night to help women and children in trouble. Centres of this type are needed in Caloundra, in the railway corridor towns and, generally, in places further up the coast. A high priority should be the provision of funding for women's refuges. Although some may query the cost of providing these services, the social cost to the community of not doing so is considerably greater. The railway towns in and around my electorate have, as I have said, no women's centres, no meeting place and no neighbourhood centres. No funds have been provided for staff to go to these towns, find out the needs of people who live there, and organise them.

Many young families are moving to those areas. Because of a lack of transport and because of the lack of any supportive social infrastructure, they are isolated. A survey carried out by the Department of Family Services and presented in 1989 identified that the particular area comprising Landsborough, Mooloolah and Maleny had the highest incidence of notification of child protection needs in the whole of the State. The previous Government supplied funds to buy houses that could be used as neighbourhood centres in some areas of Queensland. However, no funding was given to run them. They had to be self-sufficient. The group using them had to run them on a voluntary basis. These centres are places where the community and groups can meet. They are a referral base, and offer programs on parenting, adolescent skills development, and assistance for the disadvantaged and for those on lower incomes.

**Mr Hollis:** Don't you believe that the communities should be involved?

**Mrs SHELDON:** I certainly do believe that the community is involved. The honourable member should understand from what I am saying that I am interested in community services and concerned about the lack of understanding that has been shown by the Budget. With unemployment rife in the current economic climate, these houses are being used more and more. With no Government funding to keep, run and maintain these centres, it is difficult for them to remain viable. Prior to the last election, the Government promised to help fund these centres by making allocations in the current Budget. This has not happened. It has been recognised that these centres need coordinators. Anne Warner recognised that there was a difference between a welfare worker and a neighbourhood centre coordinator and that one person could not adequately do both. She also said that funding would be made available and many welfare workers thought that, finally, they had a Minister who really understood what they were trying to do. However, the situation now has not changed from the one that applied under the previous Government. No funding is available. Similarly, facilities for homeless youth aged from 16 years to 20 years—and especially for young single men—are very limited.

Also, many are under the age of 16 years and are not eligible for State Government funding. On the Sunshine Coast there is no crisis accommodation for young people aged between 12 and 20 years. Where are young people who are leaving a violent home situation or abuse to go?

**Mr Davies** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I take it the honourable member is not interested in young people who have suffered any type of violence or abuse. The lack of Government funding is a big problem. There is only a certain number of paid workers. MAYS—the Maroochy Area Youth Service—has the only house in the region that is used for crisis accommodation. Because of the lack of funding, it is deteriorating. Welfare workers have taken young people away from the centre to their own homes. The fact is that many people in the community are endeavouring to handle crises themselves. It is very hard to get Family Services to help because the department is open only during business hours on week days, whereas it is a known fact that most crises occur at night or during the weekend.

Youth Focus is a medium to long-term supportive agency, but there is only one between Brisbane and Rockhampton. A very real need exists for support and accommodation—such as hostels—not only for males but also for a group comprising 14-year-old females. The most critical aspect of the Budget is the inadequate allocation made for the protective services and juvenile justice program. The amount allocated is approximately \$44m, representing only 0.5 per cent of the total State Budget. This allocation is purported to serve the needs of marginalised people who have little or no access to mainstream services, or to an adequate standard of living. This group also includes society's most disadvantaged and damaged subgroup—abused and neglected children. The level of service that could be made available for these people from such limited funds is woefully inadequate. Within the general program area of protective services and juvenile justice, the licensed residential care program provides residential care to children and adolescents who are not able to live with their families. These children often have a history of abuse, neglect and family conflict to the extent that, for their own protection, they are removed from their families. Less than \$6m will be made available to a number of organisations with religious affiliations that provide this care. It is accepted that children who have been placed in residential care are among the most difficult and damaged children to care for. The range of behavioral problems exhibited by these children demands appropriately qualified and experienced staff. Funds made available to the organisations are not sufficient to conduct quality programs without a considerable injection of funds being provided by the churches.

Subsidies provided by the Department of Family Services amount to approximately 50 per cent of the total Budget. In contrast to that, the Victorian Department of Community Services subsidises similar organisations in that State to up to 95 per cent of their costs. The papers refer to \$421,000, which has been allocated to address the needs of young people being discharged from care. While this is in itself commendable, openness must be a feature of the way in which the funds will be used and details should be provided in relation to which agencies receive funds and how those funds are allocated. In summary, welfare agencies that provide care for children are disappointed in the low allocation given to marginalised and disadvantaged children and youth. Much more needs to be provided for them, and this can be achieved only by considerable additional funds being made available.

Recently, I had the good fortune to visit the Shaftsbury campus run by that incredible man, Reverend Alan Male. Shaftsbury is the product of the vision and dedication of this man. His main interest is the rehabilitation of youth so that those who are underprivileged and who may have fallen by the wayside will be taught by hard work, sharing and caring for others to lead a full and productive life. Considerable community and business support has been provided in the form of funds and services. Many Government departments have contributed in different ways. However, this centre comes under the umbrella of Family Services. At the moment, there is a critical need

to connect the sewerage system to the residences that are being built. I urge the Minister to cooperate fully to ensure that this occurs in the immediate future so that this most important and worthy project can progress.

Of considerable concern to many parents, working mothers and child-care operators in general is the attitude of the Minister towards the issue of child-care. The State Budget announced on 5 September provided for \$3m to be expended on child-care in Queensland. In 1990-91, the total amount provided by Federal and State Governments for the provision of child-care facilities in this State will be \$8.4m. No-one would deny that all children placed in child-care should be adequately cared for, but the new, somewhat draconian proposed legislation and regulations surely show the Labor Government's preoccupation with registration and regulations. The Labor Party's election policy on child-care presented four major policy initiatives: access, quality, choice and affordability. There is no guarantee that these four goals will be met by the Minister's current proposals.

Traditionally, child-care workers have not been highly paid members of the work force. However, by unionising that work force under the Federated Miscellaneous Workers Union, their total wage structure will be such that the profitability of private child-care centres will be non-existent. Along with the unionisation of the industry, all child-care workers in Queensland will have to have upgraded qualifications such as early childhood teaching degrees and diplomas. The stage is now set for child-care fees to rise by approximately \$60 to \$70 a week in Queensland by the end of 1991. Those fee increases, which will hit parents' hip pockets, will also negate the Federal Government's child-care subsidies granted in the last Federal Budget. In an article in the *Financial Review* of Thursday, 25 September 1990, the journalist Sue Neales commented—

"For some women this will mean a forced exit from the workforce, exacerbating the latest employment trends which shows that the first employees being laid off in times of recession are part-time women workers."

Further on in the article, Dr Mark Lyons, a specialist in child-care costs and head of the department of administrative studies at Sydney's University of Technology was quoted as saying—

"While there is little work in the area, it appears that child care is very price sensitive, especially for people on low incomes . . . with increases there will be a number of families on low incomes reviewing their current work and child care arrangements."

The Australian Federation of Childcare Associations and its Queensland chapter are concerned that fee increases will bring about a parallel move of children from Government-approved and registered child-care centres to so-called backyard care. Further, the basis to award restructuring wage increases is to tie into productivity increases. In child-care, as everything is governed by Government regulations such as ratio of children to staff, there is little scope for improved output per worker. Therefore, costs will not be absorbed by the industry; they will be added to the price of the end product—the cost to the parent. The State Government will fund its initiatives on child-care from money allocated in the Budget for this financial year. However, any further support structure that the Minister seeks to implement in the future will depend on budgetary requirements. She will need the support of an enhanced private sector. That seems unlikely, considering the restraints soon to be placed on that sector. The editorial in the *Courier-Mail* of Thursday, 16 August 1990 stated—

" . . . it is common sense to suggest that public funds should pay only for what cannot be found privately . . . Public funding no longer can be viewed as an unplumbable well. Money is a finite resource."

It is stated in the Budget papers that over 1990-92, 1 653 child-care places will be provided from direct funding under the Queensland Government's child-care strategy. Under proposed legislation and regulations, privately owned centres will have to employ qualified staff only.

Time expired.

**Mr BREDHAUER** (Cook) (12.25 p.m.): I will concentrate on the Budget resources which have been allocated to the Division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. At the outset, I state that a debate about Budget Estimates in regard to Queensland's Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders reflects only part of the significant change in this area of Government administration which has been brought about by the election of the Goss Labor Government. Undoubtedly, there are many areas, some of which I will go into further, in which Aborigines and Islanders are looking to this Government for resources to overcome major deficiencies in the provision of facilities and services. However, in some respects, it is the change in philosophy and policy direction, not merely the allocation of resources, which is significant for Queensland's Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

This Government is committed to fundamental changes which will give Aborigines and Islanders a direct and genuine influence over Government policy for the first time. This Government is committed to giving Aboriginal and Islander councils far greater control and capacity to manage their own affairs. Undeniably, the shift towards self-management brings greater responsibility, but our Government will not be merely cutting Aborigines and Islanders adrift; it will place significant emphasis on helping to enhance the performance of councils. Initiatives such as the training for council clerks, which will be offered through TAFE colleges, and the streamlining of council financial management will be important elements of that process. In the past, we have seen the occasional attempt made by previous Governments to engender greater self-management in Aboriginal and Islander communities, but it has not been backed up by assisting the members of those communities with training, with education and with the wherewithal to manage their own financial affairs. The size of the communities, the education levels and a number of other factors mean that they do not have the same pool of resources and expertise to call on to run council affairs as do other local authorities, and a range of other issues. Later, I will refer further to the responsibilities of councils. Previous Governments have virtually cut them adrift and not provided them with the resources, the education and the wherewithal to manage their affairs and they have been virtually self-fulfilling prophecies in that they have been unsuccessful experiments by previous Governments in self-government. We will involve Aborigines and Islanders in Queensland genuinely in the process so that they are part of it and they are part of the policy directions of this Government. As well, we will provide them with the wherewithal so that they can efficiently accept the responsibilities which we will hand to them through the self-management process.

I divert from my speech briefly to say that, when the member for Burnett initially made a call for bipartisan or tripartisan support for the issue of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland, I welcomed those sentiments. I firmly believe that, in common with a range of important issues in society—immigration being another one—the way in which Governments and members of Parliament respond to the needs of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland should be not a matter of political conjecture and toing and froing. We should be coming to a common consensus that there is an urgent need to do something in a range of areas to help Aborigines and Islanders.

I was disappointed when the shadow Minister could not offer anything in his 30-minute talk in response to the Estimates on the issue of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. I know that, later in the debate, luminaries such as the member for Tablelands and the member for Flinders will give us the benefit of their wisdom about that particular subject. However, apart from a small preamble and a little bit wrapping it up at the end—about two minutes of the speech—there was nothing from the shadow Minister which would offer some indication of what the National Party believes about Queensland's Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders.

**Mr Slack:** Will you take the interjection that my time expired before I concluded my speech?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I will take the interjection that the honourable member's time expired before he could complete his speech, but he did say in his preamble that he believed basically that Aborigines and Islanders should be treated equally in terms of the Budget. The fact is that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland are not equal to people in other communities, and in order to bring them up to an equal standard in our society, the services and facilities provided and the efforts that the Government makes will have to be imbalanced in their favour. There will have to be some positive discrimination towards Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland in a range of areas so that——

**Dr Watson:** That is an illogical argument.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** It is not an illogical argument. This group in society is disadvantaged by the inequalities of Government practice in the past, and something positive must be done to discriminate in their favour.

I will deal with a couple of areas in which resources have been allocated to Aboriginal and Torres Strait island communities. I want to point out to members of the Opposition who live in luxury in electorates such as Moggill, Landsborough and Toowong a couple of Estimates in the Budget that will indicate the degree of inequality that exists in our society and, more importantly, what this Government is proposing to do to rectify that through this Budget. Some seven or eight months ago, in my maiden speech, I mentioned the provision of services to communities in the Cook electorate. I spoke about some very basic facilities and services that are not available in Aboriginal and Islander communities, and I want to say a bit more about that today. The Minister has already addressed some of these matters.

In many communities in my electorate people cannot turn on a tap and get water. Tremendous problems are experienced in regard to water supply that have not been addressed. There has been neglect for many years. I very much welcome the commitment by this Government—not through this Minister's department but through the Department of Primary Industries—to build a water supply for Horn Island and Thursday Island. I welcome the commitment by this Minister's department to contribute jointly with the Federal Government to the \$1.5m cost of upgrading the water supply in Doomadgee. I also welcome the commitment by the Minister's department to the expenditure of \$145,000 to enable the upgrading of the water supply in the northern peninsula area because, apart from being a basic service, water is very important to the health of communities. A number of years ago, at some considerable cost, a sewerage system was installed on Mornington Island, but there is not sufficient water to run that system. Of course, serious health problems arise when toilets cannot be flushed, and so on. It is not just a matter of providing drinking water; the provision of water is obviously very important to people's health.

This Government is also getting on with the provision of electricity in the Torres Strait. When the member for Moggill gets home at night, he flicks the light switch and, lo and behold, the light comes on. I can tell him that 14 island communities in the Torres Strait do not have the luxury of electricity. It has been a commitment of this Government, once again in conjunction with the Federal Government, to provide a decent electricity supply to the 14 outer islands in the Torres Strait. I commend both this Minister and her colleague the Minister for Resource Industries, who have seen to it that within the space of about the next 15 months those resources will be provided to the people of the Torres Strait. I mention also the electricity supplies in mainland Aboriginal communities and the negotiations that this department is engaged in to have the Far North Queensland Electricity Board, or the regional electricity authority, if you like, take over the responsibility for running those power stations.

**Ms Warner:** What is the betting that Mr Katter is going to talk about the electricity supply?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I would not be surprised. Mr Katter has a fixation with the ubiquitous Coconut Island electricity supply. I would not be a bit surprised if he raised that matter today.

I have mentioned the responsibilities of councils in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I want to draw to the attention of some honourable members that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Dr Clark): Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and their councils have responsibilities far in excess of those that are demanded of local government authorities in other areas that have far more resources, far more expertise and many more trained people at their disposal. The running of power stations is a classic example of that. I suggest that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait island councils are the only local authorities in Queensland that have the responsibility for providing their own electricity supplies—

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The honourable member for Port Curtis will not conduct a conversation across the Chamber.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** In the past, the Department of Family Services—the former Department of Community Services—has played a very important role in maintaining electricity supplies to those islands. However, the provision of electricity supplies is a big headache for the people who live in the communities and for the councils, even though it is a departmental responsibility, and the move to shift responsibility for that to the regional electricity authority will be welcomed.

The department also has responsibility for running stores in a number of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Lockhart River and Pormpuraaw are two communities that come to mind. I recognise the fact that many of the Aboriginal and Islander communities would like to have the responsibility for those stores handed over to them. I am sure that the Minister is giving that appropriate consideration. I mention once again the importance of running these stores in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities because, in many instances, they are the only source of food and provisions for the people who live in those communities. I have been into stores in the Torres Strait, and I have seen people paying \$9 for a cabbage and \$8 for a pineapple. People just cannot buy fresh fruit and vegetables on a regular basis because the supplies come in on a fortnightly ferry. It is not just a simple matter of having a range of options regarding the food that is put on the table at night. The member for Landsborough alluded to this very important health issue. In many instances, these people have inadequate diets because of the lack of supplies of fresh food.

The department's role is extremely important. Approximately \$520,000 will be contributed by the department towards the cost of the upgrading of the Kowanyama airstrip. Most of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in my electorate are located in very remote areas. For long periods, they are inaccessible by road. In fact, if it is a decent wet, communities such as Kowanyama and Pormpuraaw can be inaccessible by road for up to seven months. For those people, particularly at Kowanyama which does not have a regular barge service, the only way that they can obtain their provisions is through the airstrip. Not only is the cost of freight very high, but also this year when it rained the Kowanyama airstrip was inaccessible on three or four occasions. It also means that it cannot be used for emergency medical evacuations. That problem not only applies to Kowanyama but also to many other communities. The department is committing a sum of \$350,000 to provide a detention facility at Wujal Wujal. Once again, that is welcome. The existing watchhouse at Wujal Wujal was condemned by the inquiry into black deaths in custody as being probably one of the worst in the State, and I welcome the move to provide a better facility. The Tamwoy township on Thursday Island is to be provided with an effluent and drainage system at a cost of \$1.13m, and that is a very important initiative.

I am conscious that one does not talk about legislation in this debate. Last night, the Minister introduced legislation. I do not want to debate it, but I do want to talk about that process because, as I have said previously, that legislation embodies a process

whereby Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders have been involved in determining the policy directions of this Government. The legislation is the culmination of that process. Obviously that is going to take a resource commitment on the part of this Government. If Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders are going to be legitimately given a role in determining their own futures, then that will cost money, and the money that has been allocated for that particular project is an indication of the goodwill of this Government to assist Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to meaningfully participate in negotiations with the Government.

I am just about out of time. I conclude by saying that I am disappointed at the efforts of the member for Burnett—

Time expired.

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (12.40 p.m.): Regardless of the recent bleatings from the member for Cook, he spent most of his time talking about the Estimates of other departments rather than the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I remind the Minister that she has been a failure in respect of the Aboriginal and Islander communities in this State. She continues to be a failure because she has forgotten that Aboriginal and Islander Affairs is part of her portfolio. The Minister obviously dislikes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. She shuns their company. She refuses to attend their functions, and has done so on numerous occasions.

**Ms Warner:** Name one?

**Mr GILMORE:** The opening of the Gwandalan Community Corrections Centre in Trinity Lane. How about the Morningside Aged Hostel? The Minister was not there.

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

**Mr GILMORE:** I did not say anything about you. Sit down and shut up!

**Mr McGRADY:** Do not tell me to sit down. I resent those remarks. Last week, the Minister travelled from Melbourne to Mount Isa simply to meet with some Aboriginal people and the member for Tablelands ought to apologise for the comments that he made.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Dr Clark): Order! There is only a point of order if the Minister were to stand and take one. A point of order cannot be taken on another member's behalf. The member for Tablelands will continue.

**Ms WARNER:** Madam Temporary Chairman, I have—

**Mr GILMORE:** Oh, she is awake!

**Ms WARNER:** I have been provoked into taking a point of order. I think that the member's comments are irrelevant and beside the point in respect of the matter that this Committee is supposed to be debating, which is the Estimates. It is further compounded by the fact that he is wrong in fact.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr GILMORE:** If the Chair does not mind, I will continue. I will certainly be talking about the Estimates of the department and particularly the structure of the department. All the ideology and idealism that the Minister pretends in this place that she is applying to her department simply will not work if there is not an adequate departmental structure to make it function. The Minister has destroyed the department's structure. She has destroyed the morale in the department. As evidence of what I said previously, the Minister spent two minutes of her speech on Aboriginal and Islander Affairs and left unused five minutes of the time available to her. That is an indication that the Minister simply is not particularly concerned about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in this State. The Minister is consistently unavailable to senior staff and to constituents alike. She refuses to answer her mail. A few minutes ago she

denied that, but it cannot be denied because allegations that she simply does not respond to her correspondence are being made to me all the time.

**Ms Warner:** Give me an example?

**Mr GILMORE:** No, I will not. The person will be persecuted for sure. I will refer quickly to some of the programs within the department that have been destroyed. I cite ranger services. The previous Government had an Aboriginal ranger service with rangers trained in particular areas of responsibility. Legislation has now moved that service to the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

**Ms Warner:** You sent it over under your department.

**Mr GILMORE:** But the Minister has left the ranger services totally gutted. They have got nothing to do. Specialist staff are sitting around with nothing to do. The National Parks and Wildlife Service is looking after sacred sites and Aboriginal paintings, whereas the ranger service has got nothing to do. That situation is entirely unacceptable.

Administration and executive officers have been withdrawn from Aboriginal communities around Queensland. They are now based in Cairns and Townsville, and would honourable members believe that they fly to the communities on a fortnightly basis? Apparently, this is a way of saving funds, but it has serious ramifications for the way in which communities are organised and the way in which their books are kept. For a number of years, the Auditor-General has been seriously concerned about the audits that he has carried out on those communities. He stated—

"It has been the experience of audit in endeavouring to arrive at conclusive opinions in relation to the financial affairs of these Councils that a disproportionate amount of total audit resources are required to be expended compared with audits of other organisations for which the Auditor-General has statutory obligations.

This occurs, largely because audit resources are used to complete, balance and reconstruct basic accounting records . . . "

That situation will not be improved by executive officers being taken away from the communities. It will not be assisted by ideology. The situation will be improved only if the people in those communities are given assistance in developing their skills and in understanding the very difficult technical task that is before them of looking after the accounts. It appears that the Minister is leaving the Chamber. I am not quite sure what she is doing. I point out to her that the accounts of these communities are as technical as the accounts of any local authority in Queensland. If the Minister were to take note of that, she would find that most shire clerks hold degrees from a university or other institution and have had lengthy experience in what they are doing. The assistance that has been given to the people who are responsible for doing those accounting jobs has been taken away. Therefore, they are simply not competent to do the job, not because of inability but through lack of understanding of what they need to do. The Minister is taking away the only prop that they have. She is setting them up to fail. When they fail, she will say, "Goodness gracious me! Isn't that sad!" I suggest that the Minister get away from ideology and, instead, adopt some practical applications.

Applications have been called to fill senior positions in the Minister's department. Senior officers in the department have an obvious feeling of lack of security. Regrettably, the Minister cannot understand that, in her department, there are many people who have been and remain loyal and professional public servants—people who have given a life-time of service to the department. Simply because the Minister believes that they are somehow tainted because they happened to work for a Minister of the National Party Government, she is trying to destroy them and their families. That is an absolutely unacceptable stance for the Minister to take. I am absolutely astounded by it. The Minister has employed on short-term contracts, as replacements for long-term professional officers, a number of consultants from outside the State or from outside the department—from the DAIA and the Northern Territory. That is a most peculiar thing for the Minister to do.

I refer now to Aboriginal and Islander housing. It is my understanding that, when the Minister came into her job, she had every intention of passing responsibility for Aboriginal housing over to Aboriginal and Islander cooperatives. For one reason or another, she has suddenly discovered that that is inappropriate. An inquiry is now being held to determine what will happen to that housing—whether it will be the responsibility of the Housing Commission or the Minister's department. In the meantime, there seems to be a lack of understanding of where the department is going. In relation to Aboriginal housing—things have slowed down so much that a house cannot even be maintained adequately. The Minister must address that matter very, very quickly and appropriately.

Some of the serious things that have not been addressed by the Minister are the practical needs of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders on their communities and on their councils. Those practical needs are not necessarily ideological; they relate to water supplies, food and industry—not the industry that the Minister deigned to introduce last night in the legislation which will allow people to run a shop selling alcoholic beverages. I suggest that the Minister should start to do something about real wealth-producing industry in those areas; that she do something about providing adequate work opportunities for the people in those communities; and that she do something about the provision of adequate education, not only at primary school level but also at secondary and tertiary levels, if necessary.

**Mr Bredhauer:** What would you suggest?

**Mr GILMORE:** I was recently at Wujal Wujal and I noticed the construction of a sports stadium. The member for Cook would be aware of that sports stadium, which I understand was funded by ATSIC. That construction is an extraordinary waste of money. Not for one minute do I suggest that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in those communities do not need recreational and sporting facilities. They need those facilities very much.

**Ms Warner:** What community are you talking about?

**Mr GILMORE:** Wujal Wujal. I would be surprised if the Minister could find it. The truth of the matter is that Wujal Wujal would be far better served if that money had been spent on providing a water supply system to that community. I acknowledge that, at present, the community has a water supply, but it is inadequate. Less than a kilometre up the stream is a magnificent waterfall with unlimited fresh water supplies originating from the Roaring Meg, which could be piped with considerable head into that community. That would increase to an extraordinary degree the quality of life for the people in that community. The provision of that water supply could have been facilitated by the use of the money that was floating around in the account. But somebody had a bright idea of providing a roof for a sports stadium and then had the temerity to tell the rest of the community that it had to budget for the floor and the walls because money had run out. That is an appalling indictment on the misuse of funds set aside for Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in this nation.

Similar comments could be made about Hope Vale, which is a good little community. People in that community have a lot to be commended for. They are determined to assist themselves. They are trying very hard indeed. However, unless the Minister's department is used as the catalyst to provide an adequate water supply for that community and, as a result of that, to lift the quality of life in that community, then the Minister has failed miserably to do her job. She should stop worrying about politics and trying to convince those people that she loves them. Instead, she should give them some water, some industry and some education and then they might be able to stand on their own feet. One thing that the Minister has to understand about Aboriginal and Torres Strait island people is that if they are going to get up and walk as a community, they have to get up and walk on their own feet. They can do that only if the Minister gives them the infrastructure, the understanding and the ability to do so. Sitting around, talking to small ideologically based groups of people—

**Ms Warner:** Who?

**Mr GILMORE:** The people from whom the Minister is getting her information.

**Ms Warner:** Who are they?

**Mr GILMORE:** There are many people. The Aborigines in my electorate cannot get a hearing at all. They are being ignored and misused. Until the Minister understands that, she will continue to fail in what she does. When the National Party returns to power in this State, it will face a horrendous problem in trying to assist the Aboriginal and Islander communities in this State.

**Mrs WOODGATE** (Pine Rivers) (12.53 p.m.): A perusal of the Budget papers, particularly Budget Paper No. 3, can give one an insight into the commitment of this Goss Labor Government to the provision of welfare services in this State. One finds there the details of funding for programs under the umbrella of the Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs Department. A high priority has been given to the expansion of child-care places. The sum of \$8.4m has been allocated to create 100 child-care places in remote Aboriginal and Islander communities. It is obvious that some members of the Opposition have not read that section, so I will arrange to have it photocopied and distributed throughout the Chamber. With pride, one reads in the Budget papers about the allocation of a \$1m package of initiatives targeted at homeless and disadvantaged young people. I refer to the development of new and innovative services to homeless youth, family work services for disadvantaged adolescents and pilot post-care services for institutionalised youth. The list goes on.

On 7 December last year, only five days after the Goss Labor Government swept into office, the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs was created. Following the creation of that department, priority was given to restructuring the newly amalgamated department. The restructuring sought to address the complexity of the various client groups comprising the new department by providing a streamlined structure comprising four divisions. The departments that were amalgamated into the new Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs had varying levels of involvement with the community sector and varying levels of commitment to the provision of services by that sector.

The new Government has chosen to give a high profile to service provision by the community sector. This is reflected in the creation within the department of a separate division, namely, the Division of Community Services Development. For the first time, that division will be responsible for its own regional services and the development of policy options. The creation of the Division of Community Services Development gives formal recognition to the significance of the department's work in funding and supporting the development and provision of human services at a local level, with such services being provided by local government and non-Government welfare organisations. It gives recognition to the need for special skills and policy expertise in the development of Statewide perspectives about issues such as youth homelessness, child poverty and community participation. It also recognises the importance of separating the needs of community services from the department's statutory responsibilities. The division is also responsible for major new Government policy initiatives in relation to ageing and child-care. I will discuss that later.

A total of \$94.4m has been allocated to the Division of Community Services Development for the 1990-91 financial year. As well, various community grants are administered by the division and capital works will be undertaken in relation to child-care. The goal of the Division of Community Services Development is to increase the capacity of the non-Government sector and local authorities to provide a range of human services and activities to meet local community needs. Through the community services development program, the department provides for the active support of community groups, local authorities and welfare organisations in the provision of human services, prevention strategies, etc. Honourable members would appreciate that the various client groups serviced by the community sector are not homogeneous. It is important to service the range of community organisations in the best way possible. Five separate offices or

workgroups have been established within the Division of Community Services Development. Those groups focus centrally on the various target groups serviced by the department's grants programs. This structure is also reflected at a regional level, with various specialist staff maintaining responsibility for particular target group areas. Target groups include the ageing, people with disabilities, people who are homeless, socially isolated, in crisis or affected by domestic violence, and families requiring quality child-care.

The process of community services development is one in which a Government organisation with Statewide responsibilities, within a context of conflicting and changing public priorities, engages with the community to address social problems, provide services for socially disadvantaged and marginalised people and, where possible and appropriate, to provide high-priority universal services. The activities of the division reflect the following principles—

the rights of service-users to quality services that enhance their self-esteem and their capacity to make decisions that affect their lives;

maximising the participation of community groups, individuals and local governments in planning and developmental processes and the formation of proposals for funded and unfunded activity;

a commitment to the coordination of Government activity across State and Commonwealth departments; and

the development of applications for funds within the context of defined regional and State planning priorities.

I turn now to the specific structure of the division. During this financial year, five regional offices will be established within the division. As I said earlier, such a commitment to service provision at a reasonable level has never occurred in that sector. The regional offices of the Division of Community Services Development will be the primary points of contact with non-Government and local government sectors. The offices, which emphasise accessibility and flexibility, are the focal points for the support and development of community services. Regional offices have responsibilities covering the activities of all offices and branches of the Division of Community Services Development. Those regional offices will be responsible for the support of application processes within regions both for the enhancement of existing services and the initiation of new services within the funding program. The primary responsibility of the central offices of the Division of Community Services Development will be the coordination, policy and program development and overall financial management of programs across the State.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mrs WOODGATE:** The Office of the Ageing is responsible for providing a climate that ensures a wide understanding of ageing and encourages respect, dignity and security for senior citizens in Queensland in their chosen life professions. The office will develop mechanisms for the effective coordination of existing services for the ageing and develop links with the Commonwealth Government to ensure the effective negotiation of joining agreements and policy directions on ageing. By far the biggest impact on the ageing will be the introduction of the seniors card, which will be introduced on 1 December 1990. My office may give some indication; yesterday was the busiest day that my electorate secretary has had since my office was opened following the election. All day, my office was inundated by seniors who wanted application forms. As honourable members would realise, yesterday was the first day that those forms could be given out. If that is any indication, the seniors card has been very well received by all senior citizens. I congratulate the Minister and the Government on that.

**Ms Spence:** It took a Labor Government to look after them.

**Mrs WOODGATE:** That is true. It took a Labor Government to look after them. The seniors card will be administered through the Office of the Ageing and will mean the extension of generous concessions to an extra 120 000 senior citizens, ensuring that

well over 300 000 seniors will enjoy significant rebates and reductions. Today, I read a report in the media that more concessions will be made by the private sector. Let us hope that that is the case. By introducing the seniors card, the Government has moved to eliminate confusion, inequity, uncertainty and concerns about concessions. The seniors card will be available to all Queensland residents over the age of 60 who are not in the full-time work force and who receive at least a part age or veterans affairs pension.

In line with the Government's pre-election commitments to expand child-care services in Queensland, an Office of Child Care has been created within the Division of Community Services Development, which will develop and implement policy options in relation to all aspects of child-care, review existing child-care legislation, initiate and implement appropriate new legislation and administer funding programs associated with child-care. The allocation will allow the Government to meet its commitment to the establishment of 6 000 new child-care places in its first term, another initiative on which I congratulate the Government very heartily. In addition, the allocation allows for the establishment of a ministerial advisory committee on child-care, which will include representatives of the child-care sector. The committee will provide advice on needs, priorities and appropriate service types. Later this financial year, the Office of Child Care will take responsibility also for the licensing of child-care centres. Currently, licensing is undertaken by local government authorities. That move will bring Queensland into line with all other States and Territories—a move that is long overdue. The significant expansion of the Government's role in providing child-care is evidence of its recognition that families need access to good quality, affordable child-care services. I commend the Minister for that move.

The Office of Disability Services has been established to ensure that organisations and groups in the community that respond to the needs of people with disabilities have access to information, support and resources. The office seeks also to effect changes in the community through which the equality of people with disabilities may be recognised and protected. The work of the Office of Disability Services is quite distinct from the service provision occurring through the Division of Intellectual Disability Services. The Office of Disability Services will develop and implement policy options in relation to people with disabilities and will facilitate processes within the Government and the community sector to develop complementary policies on service provision for people with disabilities. As one in every seven Queenslanders has a significant disability—whether that is physical, sensory or intellectual—the work of the Office of Disability Services will be crucial to the task of effecting needed social change.

The Community and Youth Branch is responsible for the administration of a range of funding programs covering areas such as domestic violence, child-abuse prevention, youth services, homelessness, family support and community development. A number of specialist workgroups within the Community and Youth Branch seek to promote strategies and develop human services at the local community level that address a range of social problems.

The Policy and Grants Coordination Branch has been established to coordinate the administration of grants and to ensure that consistent policies and guidelines are developed across the division. That branch does not administer its own funding programs; it seeks to ensure the effective delivery of services across all branches, offices and regions within the Division of Community Services Development.

To support the work of the division and to ensure that funding programs remain relevant to local needs, a range of strategies will be undertaken during the year within the division to ensure effective consultation and planning strategies. Ministerial advisory committees will be established in the areas of child-care, supported accommodation services and family support. Those committees, which include membership from the community sector, will enhance greatly the planning strategies of the department. The division will also complete a rationalisation of its funding programs by amalgamating and consolidating programs to ensure that they are relevant to local needs and consistent in all aspects of administration, planning and program management. It is hoped that

the new funding structure will be operational on 1 January 1991. Over the forthcoming year, the Division of Community Services Development will continue to examine training needs in the community sector so that training programs that are responsive to the needs of service-providers can be implemented early in the new year.

Although much has been achieved by the Government by the creation of the Division of Community Services Development and although increased financial resources have been provided for child-care, youth homelessness and supported accommodation, it must be acknowledged that much remains to be done. The Government does not walk away from that. In recent years, the community sector and local government have played an increased role in the provision of community services at a local level. Although the Government has supported the expansion of that role, demand for financial support by the community sector has far exceeded available funds. As honourable members would appreciate, there are no easy solutions to the dilemma. Only by careful planning and targeting in cooperation with the community sector will the Government be able to effect social change that will impact significantly on the need for services.

In conclusion, the creation of the Division of Community Services Development and the subsequent provision of funding were initiatives of the Government of which I am truly proud to be part. This year, the division will provide assistance in the form of funding and support to more than 1 000 community organisations throughout Queensland. Services assisted by the division are scattered far and wide throughout the State from the centre of the State's major cities to isolated rural and Aboriginal communities. The funds allocated for the work of the Division of Community Services Development will assist many thousands of Queenslanders who are facing hardship and crisis, will assist women who wish to return to the work force and will give the aged access to concessions never before seen in Queensland. I am pleased to support the Honourable Anne Warner in her departmental Estimates.

**Hon. R. C. KATTER** (Flinders) (2.37 p.m.): Mr Temporary Chairman—

**Government members:** Oh!

**Mr KATTER:** If we could operate without the verbals, we would be extremely disappointed!

The current legislation under which the field of community services operates is based upon two principles. They are self-management and distance, and I mean "distance" in every sense as it applies to people in the Torres Strait area and the northern part of Cape York Peninsula. I am referring to "distance" in the social sense as well as its usual meaning. Self-management is the only proper way in which, administratively, the people up there can cope adequately with their problems. If things were run from Brisbane, as they were for many years, no matter how good the quality of the administration, it could never be as good as the local administration. There must be local administration. The term "self-management" is used long and often. For the knowledge of the Minister and her officials, I point out that I said to the leaders in the Torres Strait, "Quite frankly, as far as I am concerned, if you wish to leave Queensland and Australia, I will not stand in your way. However, I think you would be quite crazy if you thought about leaving the defence umbrella and the social security umbrella." What was negotiated was that they could take all of the powers they wished to take. They did not want education and health, so they were left as State Government responsibilities. Many of the other powers were taken effectively. Under the legislation, their judicial and police powers are more extensive than those given to local government. That is why the term "self-management" was used. It was used to differentiate them from local government. The legislation allows them to tailor their laws and regulations to meet needs that are vastly different from those required by the mainland community in areas in the south-east corner of this State. In addition, they take some cognisance of cultural differences, which, in many cases, I do not think are quite as important as they are made out to be.

The second principle was private ownership. We did not come into this because we had any philosophical bias. I did not think it was our place to make that decision. We put these three models before the people: the then State Government model that was being pushed, that is, local community ownership of all land and buildings; private ownership, which is ownership by the family unit; and a land ownership package similar to that in the Northern Territory where there are land councils. With the exception of the meeting on Mer where three people voted against the proposal, the decision was unanimous that there be private ownership of housing and small holdings. I did not realise the necessity for private ownership but, when self-management began, I saw the need for it. It was the protection of individual rights. One or two of the councils that have not handed over the houses to private ownership have regrettably used the ownership of houses to enforce their power over and oppression—and I use the word "oppression" advisedly—of the local community. In one community, the situation was very serious. The two ministers of religion there told us that there were numerous bashings, that the police had been turned into almost a goon squad for the council and that people who were politically opposed to the council were thrown out of their houses. This was a most unhappy and unfortunate event, because of the close nature of these communities and the immense power wielded by the councils.

There is a very big weakness in the existing legislation which I would like the Minister to address, and that is the land-ownership question. Most of the land is still owned by the councils and they are wielding police and judicial powers, administrative powers and land-ownership powers. That is far too excessive for good civil liberties. The easiest and simplest way to overcome the problem is to remove the houses from corporate ownership and put them back into the family unit.

The other point that must be made strongly is that at present—I think the situation is the same as it was when I had ministerial responsibility for this—the people who do not pay their rent, particularly those who hit the grog regularly, smash up their homes and burn them down. All rent paid goes into a fund. Out of it comes the money to repair the houses. As the people who are destroying their houses are not paying rent, the workers and the responsible people are being bled white to continuously look after the people who will not shoulder their responsibilities. That is most unfair. Eventually, the people who are trying to do the right thing will drop their bundles and there will be nothing but the degradation that is unfortunately seen in many communities. If they owned their own homes, they could put time and energy into looking after them. It costs the Government a good deal of money to repair a set of stairs. Under the original design, which was never carried out and which, I hate to say, has been left as a task for this Government, the people were to do their own repairs. They were to be given the materials and lent the saws, hammers, nails, drills and what-have-you so that they could do their own house repairs. Many of these people are unemployed and have time on their hands. They could perform these tasks at one-hundredth of the cost to the Government. That was the basis of private ownership.

**Mr Hollis:** What has that to do with Family Services?

**Mr KATTER:** That is an interesting question and shows a remarkable ignorance of the matter that is currently before the Chamber. The community councils are in fact regulated and administered under the relevant Act and at the present moment the councils own almost all of the land mass. Whatever homework the honourable member has done, I suggest that he does it again so that he has a clear understanding of what he is talking about. Previously we may have only thought that the honourable member was lacking, but he consistently proves it by opening his mouth. If local councils are given corporate ownership the huge burden of administering hotels will be imposed upon them. Councils should never administer hotels. It is very unwise because hotels can be leased out and the councils would get the same income with none of the worries that they have at the present moment. The cattle industry at Aurukun is in a very sad state. Although the Minister may not have direct responsibility for Aurukun, as the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs she does have some responsibilities for it. Six years

ago Aurukun had 12 500 head of cattle valued at \$200 per head. Honourable members can work the total value out for themselves. I was last consulted about Aurukun when a man named Dennie Bowenda rang me and told me that he had only 300 head of cattle left out of 12 500 and that he would be getting rid of those 300. In the last four years of my involvement with the Aurukun operations not only was the corporate manager—who was put there by the ADC—of totally European descent, but also the cattle manager was of totally European descent and all of the cattle-mustering camps were run by people of totally European descent. In the last year of running the cattle-mustering camps all the ringers were also of European descent. I have been told on very good authority that that is the way Aurukun operated. It is a marvellous "success" story because Aurukun's herd has dropped from 12 500 head of cattle to none. I was pleased that the Minister asked Gladys Tybingoompa down, because on my last visit to Aurukun she followed me around holding on to my shirt. She said, "Mr Katter, they are killing our cattle." She was a mother and grandmother crying out because she knew her kids' futures were being shot away every day of the week because of the cattle program at Aurukun. Some people say that there was no other way of tackling the problem other than through the BTEC program.

The community next door at Edward River—or the Pormpuraaw community as it is now known—had 300 head of cattle at the time Aurukun had 12 500. As Minister, I issued four memos saying that if a single person from outside Edward River set foot in that community and had anything to do with the cattle, it would mean instantaneous dismissal because the local people were running the cattle property damned well. I did not want anyone going there and undermining their confidence. There are two blocks in the area under private ownership whose owners have worked very hard. I advise those honourable members who take more than a passing interest in cattle operations that every single post in the yards was made out of ironwood by Eddie Holroyd. The forestry department maintains that ironwood is by far and away the best timber in Australia. It required an immense amount of work and commitment for someone to search for and select ironwood for the posts. This is a clear statement to the world that, "This is my yard, the yards will be there forever and will do a marvellous job." It must have taken three or four people to lift each of the posts into place. The yards are a great tribute to Eddie Holroyd. A combination of private ownership and good local management has been responsible for the increase from 360 to 6 500 head of cattle.

For those honourable members who have not tuned to my speech, I repeat that under total ADC, Federal Government and European management, the number of cattle at Aurukun decreased from 12 500 to not one single beast. There is no economic future for the place whatsoever. Under a totally local self-management and a private ownership approach the Pormpuraaw community increased the number of cattle on the property. Holroyd is the head of a clan consisting of about 20 kids and grandchildren and they own the property. I do not think the traditional way of doing things has changed very much. The Holroyd family has done a brilliant job. No-one else succeeded in putting cattle on the property, but Holroyd has. Holroyd, Jackson Shortjoe, Carlo Edwards and the others have increased the number of cattle from 360 head to 6 500 head. That shows what can be achieved by taking those principles and implementing them. I emphasise that there are jobs in those regions that are unfinished. The issue of the private ownership of land has gone only one-hundredth of the way that it should have gone. If other land had been handed over to private ownership earlier, there would have been the same exciting success story as has occurred at the Pormpuraaw community. That is what local ownership is all about. The family owns and operates the farm itself, and the sooner that sort of social structure is delivered to those regions, the sooner the same exciting results will be achieved in other regions as have been achieved at Pormpuraaw. This is a great challenge for the Government of the day and will be easily achieved by it. The member for Cook should be ashamed to sit in this Chamber. His electorate comprises almost totally people of Aboriginal descent. His background was in Cairns and Brisbane, but he knew that he could easily grasp a seat for himself in this Chamber and pick up \$60,000 a year. If he had any decency or commitment to those people he would resign

in favour of a local person sitting in this Chamber to represent them. In any event, he will not need to resign after the next election.

**An honourable member:** Why didn't you do that?

**Mr KATTER:** We did do that. Every single candidate that the National Party has had for that electorate in the last 17 years has been black; a person of Aboriginal descent. We believe it is horses for courses and that the local people should have a say.

While I am on the subject of housing, I point out to the Committee that I distributed memos throughout the department that I do not think were effective even in the last six or eight months of my administration. I instructed the department that not one single house was to be built by outside contractors—and the ACC was in total agreement with me—and that they were to be built exclusively by people of Aboriginal descent. By doing that, 600 permanent jobs would have been created. However, people ignored me. No matter how many people in charge had to be sacked, those objectives could still not be achieved.

Time expired.

**Mr HOLLIS** (Redcliffe) (2.53 p.m.): It is a pleasure to speak to the Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs Estimates. As a member of the Minister's legislative committee, I place on record my appreciation of the Minister, her staff and the departmental staff for their assistance over the past year. The Government and the people of Queensland are fortunate to have such a dedicated, energetic and—most importantly—compassionate Minister as the Honourable Anne Warner, because her portfolio affects so many disadvantaged people in the community. The community aspect of Family Services is the area with which I will deal in this speech.

As mentioned by my colleague the member for Pine Rivers, the Division of Community Services Development will administer grants totalling \$42,271,100 and will incur capital expenditure of \$5,965,000 during the 1990-91 financial year. This allocation represents an increase of 17 per cent over the funds allocated in 1989-90, and will assist the community services sector in the provision of a diverse range of child and family welfare services. This expenditure will allow for the allocation of funds for more than 1 000 services provided by community-based organisations and local authorities, which will be able to respond more effectively to local community needs. The funds will be allocated under 26 funding programs and will provide services ranging from child-care to supported accommodation and community development. Some programs are jointly funded by the Commonwealth Government, some are State-funded, and some are Commonwealth-funded and State-administered. Funds may be allocated for capital purposes such as, for example, recurrent funding to assist with the payment of salaries and operating costs, or they may be provided on a one-off, non-recurrent, project-specific basis.

As my colleague the Honourable Anne Warner, Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, has indicated, this financial year the Queensland Government has taken the first step in honouring its pre-election commitment to provide an additional 6 000 child-care places in its first term by the allocation of \$8.4m for a range of child-care initiatives. The Government has also positively responded to the recent calls from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commissioner, Mr Brian Burdekin, for increased financial resources to be made available to respond to the very real needs of homeless children. In addition, the Government has met its commitment to matching available Commonwealth growth funds under the joint Commonwealth/State supported accommodation assistance program. In general terms, the Government has provided a 5 per cent CPI escalation for 22 funding programs. Several programs that I will detail later have also received new or growth funds in excess of indexation, which will allow for the upgrading of existing services and the funding of new services in high-need areas. To clearly articulate expenditure in various program areas, I will speak briefly about the initiatives being undertaken in key community grants or funding program areas.

In line with this Government's pre-election commitments, it has given a high priority to expanding and improving child-care services in Queensland. In 1990-91, the State will allocate in excess of \$8.4m to provide child-care services in Queensland. This represents a significant increase on the \$825,000 that was expended in the 1989-90 financial year. During the period 1990 to 1992, 6 000 additional child-care places will be provided in Queensland—4 369 under the national child-care strategy, and 1 653 from direct funding by the Queensland Government. In 1990-91, 1 673 of these places will be established under the national child-care strategy and 701 places will be created under the State child-care strategy. The increased funds allocated for child-care will allow for the creation of an office of child care, and for the department to undertake licensing responsibility for child care. The increased funds will also allow for a number of improvements, and will include the construction at a cost of \$1.889m of five long-day care centres to offer 233 places in areas of high need under the national child-care strategy.

At this time, it is anticipated that new long-day care centres will be constructed at Coolum, Smithfield near Cairns and Tewantin. The locations of the remaining two services are still to be finalised. There will also be the provision of capital funding to establish 90 occasional-care places in specific purpose centres and neighbourhood centres throughout the State at a cost of \$1.125m under the national child-care strategy. It is proposed that occasional-care services will be established—also under the national child-care strategy—and will be provided through purpose-built centres and smaller neighbourhood services. Purpose-built centres will be located only in areas where the pool of potential users is large enough to ensure viability. Smaller, more localised services will be attached to existing community facilities, such as neighbourhood centres and kindergartens. Capital funding will enable alterations to buildings to be carried out to facilitate the accommodation of child-care services within these centres.

In addition, the construction of a school-based child-care centre will provide 51 new places under the State's child-care strategy. Recurrent funding will be provided when the centre is completed. It is proposed that the centre that will be built at Salisbury State High School will have the dual role of providing both child-care and teaching functions. An amount of \$600,000 has been set aside for construction of this centre. There will also be the establishment of a work-based child-care centre in the inner city for State Government public servants. An amount of \$500,000 will be provided in 1990-91, with a further \$500,000 to be provided in 1991-92 for the purchase and construction of a child-care centre for use by Queensland public servants. By this initiative, the Government hopes to set an example in the area of work-based care to encourage general industry to provide child-care services.

The Government will be upgrading existing child-care centres that had been either purchased or constructed under the Children's Services program. An amount of \$390,000 has been allocated in 1990-91 to assist with the renovation and upgrading of 41 existing child-care centres. The upgrading will include improvements, such as the increase in the number of toilets provided and the upgrading of general work areas.

I turn to the supplementation of furniture and equipment grants provided under the national child-care strategy. Long day care places will be increased by \$500, while occasional child-care places will be increased by \$1,000 per place. This will augment the funding provided by the Commonwealth Government in order to equip services with an appropriate range of furniture and equipment. I turn to the provision of recurrent funding to new child-care centres located at TAFE colleges throughout the State. The Bureau of Employment, Vocational and Further Education and Training child-care advisory committee is currently formulating a five-year strategic plan for establishing child-care facilities in Queensland colleges of TAFE. Recurrent funding has been allocated by the State Government for 1990-91. I turn to the employment of five additional supplementary child-care workers to facilitate use of services by families from non-English speaking backgrounds, families with disabled children and Aboriginal and Islander families. Currently, the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs is considering options for the provision of services by supplementary child-care

workers. Following that appraisal, recommendations will be made regarding the allocation of \$100,000 for 1990-91, with a full year effect of \$200,000.

I turn to the provision of additional vacation care services throughout Queensland through the allocation of an additional \$100,000 in 1990-91. The vacation care program is presently funded by the Commonwealth, with the exception of \$141,750 in State funds provided as part of Queensland's commitment under the national child-care strategy. The additional \$100,000 provided under the State child-care strategy will increase Queensland's commitment to the vacation care program to \$241,750 per annum and allow the funding of a number of new programs throughout Queensland. I turn to the provision of child-care services for Aboriginal and Islander communities in the remote, far-north areas of the State. There is currently little formalised Government-funded child-care operating in those communities. An amount of \$100,000, with a \$200,000 full year effect, has been made available under the State child-care strategy to assist with the development of a range of child-care services in these northern communities. Queensland will meet its commitment to the provision of recurrent funding for long day care centres, occasional care centres, outside school hours care services and vacation care programs under the national child-care strategy. The new initiatives will increase both the number and range of child-care options available to parents in Queensland, and highlights the Government's recognition that families need access to good quality, affordable child-care services.

In 1990-91, Queensland has allocated a further \$778,000 in new funds under the supported accommodation assistance program—SAAP. That is a joint Commonwealth/State-funded program which provides funds to non-Government organisations and local authorities for the purposes of providing accommodation and/or support services to people who are homeless, and women who are escaping domestic violence. The primary objective of the program is to ensure that homeless people in crisis have access to adequate and appropriate transitional supported accommodation and related support services. Although accommodation is a component of many SAAP services, the emphasis of the program is on the provision of support services in conjunction with the accommodation provided. Organisations offering accommodation only are not eligible under the program. The new funds have been matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the Commonwealth and will allow the upgrading of existing services and the funding of new services in areas of great need. The new funds, totalling \$1.556m, are in addition to the \$1.021m Commonwealth and State funds provided for indexation of 1989-90 funding levels. At this time, 154 organisations receive funding under SAAP. Up to 2 000 people per night are estimated to use SAAP services in Queensland. The additional funds will allow both better-quality care and an increase in the availability of accommodation and support services. In 1990-91, total funds available under SAAP will be \$20.608m.

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission inquiry into homeless children—the Burdekin report—highlighted the involvement of young people in juvenile crime and drug-usage, and reported serious health and social problems within the young homeless population. In response to the release of the report, the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments established a youth initiatives program—YIP—in 1989-90 designed to target areas of great need through the funding of innovative accommodation and support services for homeless youth. An interdepartmental working party comprising representatives of the relevant State and Commonwealth departments was established to coordinate various funding initiatives and facilitate cooperation in responding to the needs of homeless young people. That working party, now known as the youth strategy coordination committee, facilitated a coordinated approach to supported accommodation, health, mediation, education and training at a local level, and particularly within targeted areas. In 1989-90, a total of \$691,000 was allocated to fund innovative services in Mount Isa, Cairns, south Brisbane and Logan/north Albert. In 1990-91, the Queensland Government has allocated a further \$396,000 to fund innovative services for homeless youth in areas of great need. That allocation has been matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis by the Commonwealth Government, making a total of \$792,000 in new funds

available for allocation in 1990-91. Total expenditure under the program in 1990-91 will be \$1,490,000. It is envisaged that the new funds will be targeted for the funding of new services at the Gold Coast and in central Queensland—Rockhampton—as well as to fund innovative proposals for other areas of great need.

A number of the department's programs address the needs of families and individuals in crisis. Most of those programs are funded by the State Government and involve the provision and development of services through the activities of approved non-Government and local government organisations. Those programs include the family support program, the family welfare community development worker program, the emergency relief program and the budget counselling program. In all, there are in excess of 200 organisations providing services under these programs, with a total budget in the 1990-91 financial year of approximately \$4.02m. Those services are located throughout Queensland and play a vital role in ensuring the well-being of Queenslanders.

The new office of disability services will administer a range of funding programs for people with a disability. Eligible services include those providing respite care, accommodation for people with an intellectual disability, transport assistance to allow trainees to attend sheltered workshops, and general operational costs for approved services. In 1990-91, in excess of \$2.8m will be allocated to services specifically assisting people with a disability. The Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs will provide funds totalling \$6,158,200 to 80 approved non-Government organisations under the licensed residential care program. The program provides financial assistance to eligible organisations to assist them to conduct a range of residential and related services for children in care of the director-general, and their families.

Domestic violence is the most common form of assault in Australia. The Government, through the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, has taken up the challenge of dealing with the issue of domestic violence through a range of strategies, including legislative changes, community education and treatment programs. To date, in excess of half a million dollars has been distributed to approved organisations to fund initiatives designed to reduce the incidence of domestic violence in Queensland. This has been addressed mainly in two ways, that is, by raising community awareness about the problem of domestic violence and by providing a service to affected families. This year, \$539,000 has been made available to fund community initiatives in the campaign to stop domestic violence and to provide assistance to those affected by it. This year, the Government has made considerable progress—

Time expired.

**Mr SANTORO** (Merthyr) (3.08 p.m.): I wish to concentrate on three areas of the Minister's broad responsibilities, that is, her administration and recent changes to the Queensland adoption laws, her overseeing of the ethnic/migrant affairs of the State and, briefly, some issues relating to the Aboriginal Affairs aspect of her portfolio.

Since being elected to Parliament last year, I have received many representations from groups and individuals within the community about a variety of issues. No doubt all honourable members have had the same experience. However, during my time as a member of this Parliament, no other issue has attracted as many representations to my office as the issue of adoption laws, with the possible exception of the suggested changes to the abortion laws, which I am pleased to note that the Government has wisely put onto the backburner and, hopefully, is destined to remain there for a long time to come. I have received dozens of letters and telephone calls about the issue of adoption laws, and I note that a similar intensity of expression can be observed within the print and electronic media. Clearly, many people feel very aggrieved about the Government's handling of this issue. I just wish to express in a general way the concerns felt by many of my constituents and others who have made representations to me and, I am sure, to many other honourable members.

When one examines the statistics in relation to this issue, one finds that the level of response from the general public should come as no surprise to the Government or,

indeed, to anyone else. The department's own statistics show that since May 1987, of the 50 000 relinquishing mothers in Queensland, only 2 000 have put their names on the contact register. Some 48 000 women have chosen not to put their names on the register. I understand that those figures come from the Minister's department. If I am in error, I ask that she provide the correct information. I have also been told that 75 per cent of all adoptees are over 18 years of age and that 51 per cent, or slightly more than that, are over 25 years of age. Of these adults, only 2 000 have placed their names on the contact register. Those 32 000 adult adoptees who have not placed their names on the register do not seem to have experienced an anxiety for information. If she is able, I would like the Minister to explain how she was able to say in this Chamber in May this year—as recorded in *Hansard*—that most adopted persons become anxious for information about their birth and adoption.

I have to admit that I have no direct personal experience of adoption, nor have my relatives. However, I am told by constituents of mine who have had such experience that the previous adoption policy had a 90 per cent success rate in that this number of people was very happy with a policy that was sensitive to the need and desire for privacy from the majority of all parties involved in the adoption triangle. Several of my constituents have written to the Minister and have informed her that the retrospective effect of the revised laws will emotionally distress adopting parents who may not have disclosed the fact of adoption to their adopted child; adoptees who do not wish to be contacted by their birth parents; adopting parents who do not wish their names to be disclosed to unknown birth parents; and birth parents who may not have disclosed an earlier birth to current family members.

My constituents and others complain about the lack of consultation with the various people who are directly affected by the changes to the legislation. I have heard the Minister's views on this issue, and I am prepared to accept the sincerity of her beliefs in relation to it. However, surely the intensity of the reaction to the new laws must be such as to convince her that perhaps there is still a great need for more consultation and explanations, particularly from the people who are already in the system. I do appreciate the demands on the Minister's time. However, I urge her to make herself available to listen to the very specific details of the effects that the amended laws will have on the happiness of people who have been in the adoption system for a long time and who assumed, at the time when they entered into those arrangements, that the rules would not be changed retrospectively, as they have been. People have spoken to me, in confidence, about family disruptions and very likely family break-downs, which surely is not one of the objectives of this Minister and her Government.

Adoptive parents feel that their right to privacy and their civil liberties are being infringed by the retrospective nature of the legislation, and they genuinely fear the catastrophic effects that this infringement will have on their family cohesion and happiness. They request that at least the Minister listen extensively to their specific complaints, for they genuinely believe that once this occurs, she will agree to a more sensitive amendment of the legislation. The concerned people who have contacted me believe that the continuation or renovation of the old contact register is the best means of effecting wanted reconciliations. Instead of having people object to contact, it seems eminently more sensible and appropriate that people make application to meet their birth parents, adopted children, or whatever the case may be, where both parties want this to happen. I do not in any way wish to be nasty or to put the Minister on the spot, but they particularly want access to the Minister herself. I know that the Minister is busy with her portfolio and that she has other electorate responsibilities——

**Mr FitzGerald:** What's he want?

**Mr SANTORO:** I will take that interjection. I do not want anything. For the benefit of the honourable member for Lockyer, I will reiterate what I said at the outset, that is, that I have not had as many people come into my office and I have not received as many telephone calls and letters in relation to any matter as I have on this issue. What I am seeking to do is to responsibly draw to the attention of the Minister and the

Committee the intensity of their concern. I could have added a few bits of information about unions because that information was also supplied to me, but I will leave that for another day. Today, I plead with the Minister to accommodate the reasonable requests of those reasonable people. I will not go into other specific details because I think they would be beyond the scope of this debate, and some have already been covered by other speakers.

**Ms Warner:** Before you leave this issue, can you be specific about the reasonable requests that you are making? What precise change do you suggest?

**Mr SANTORO:** The reasonable request that my constituents are making is that they do not wish the details regarding their adoption process, their identity and their adopted identity, released; that they be given the opportunity to stop those details being made available, as was originally agreed to. Those people have detailed their cases to me. I think the Minister would appreciate that there are many variations of problems, which they have brought to her attention in a general and specific sense. I can supply the names of at least two people who want to meet the Minister and who have not yet been able to do so. I would be very happy to do that this afternoon. I will give the Minister a copy of a letter that has already been forwarded to her, to which I have made extensive reference. That person would very much like to meet the Minister. He has seen her ministerial colleague, Mr Braddy, and other Ministers, but he would like to see the Minister. Other people are in exactly that category. As I said, I do not wish to be nasty or to put the Minister on the spot. I am just letting her know that that is what those people want from her. If I have achieved that in this debate, they will be pleased with me but, more importantly, they will be very happy with the Minister if they can use that process of consultation and discussion on Government policy.

I now wish to turn to the second area of the Minister's responsibility, that being ethnic and migrant affairs. The story here is a mixed bag and, in trying to illustrate this point, I wish to compare some promises made prior to the 1989 State election with what in fact has been achieved. In doing so, I say that the Liberal Party is committed to ethnic affairs and supports the role of the State Government with the initial settlement needs of migrant and refugee families, as mentioned by the Minister in her opening comments, as well as the promotion of a cohesive society for Queensland, irrespective of racial, linguistic or cultural backgrounds. I thus encourage the Minister and the Government to give to the ethnic communities of Queensland the attention which they richly deserve for they have, as is recognised by all in this place, made a magnificent, positive contribution to the economic and social well-being of this State.

Recently, in an official capacity, I obtained and reviewed some departmental feedback in relation to a list of ALP election promises that were published in the November 1989 issue of *Ethnic Brisbane*. According to that paper, those promises were given under the name of the now Premier, the Honourable Wayne Goss. Under the subtitle of "Health", a promise was made about the introduction of specific initiatives to take account of the needs of people from different ethnic backgrounds using the public hospital system. In addition, special measures were promised to ensure public education and preventive health promotion campaigns reaching the members of the various ethnic communities in Queensland. To the best of my knowledge, as yet no steps have been taken to introduce a broad publicity campaign in the various communities. If this has occurred, I would be happy for the Minister to so inform me.

Under the subtitle of "Education", the abolition of the present tertiary entrance system and the deletion of ASAT was promised. Again, to the best of my knowledge, while the TE score system has been reviewed, the ASAT test has been renamed QSAT. I am told that only a name change has taken place, not a change in the test itself. I am again acting on advice from people within the department, unofficially tendered, and I would be pleased to hear the Minister's comments about that.

Under the subtitle of "English in the workplace", the State Government promised an allocation of \$1m to improve adult literacy in Queensland. As part of that commitment, Mr Goss promised that the Government would encourage private industry to develop

workplace-based literacy courses for their employees. In relation to that particular promise, I am pleased to say that that program development and implementation has commenced. I take this opportunity to acknowledge it and sincerely congratulate the Government.

However, under the title of "Ethnic Affairs Commission", the Labor Party promised the establishment of an ethnic affairs commission to coordinate policy initiatives and programs involving ethnic communities in Queensland. I take this opportunity to remind the Committee that it was Terry White, as Minister, who established within the department a section dealing solely with ethnic affairs. Under this Government, that section has been degraded to a bureau under the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I appreciate the explanation that the Minister made about the direct line of responsibility straight to the director-general. However, the title "Ethnic Affairs" does not even appear in the department's name. This last retrograde step is the one which is of most concern to those community leaders who have spoken to me about the lack of priority which the Government seems to afford to this vital area of public policy.

I speak to many of those people; I attend meetings of the ethnic councils and functions. I see the honourable member for Archerfield nodding.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** It may be that he is not invited to as many ethnic functions as I am. The point I make is that those people look at things that are very symbolic, and certainly they see very little symbolism in that neglect.

In passing, but in a most serious manner, I strongly support those representations that I know have been made to you and to the Minister for Education about the omission of Italian as a target language to be taught in Queensland schools. There is a lot of feeling in the Italian community and the general community about this omission, particularly in view of the strong cultural and economic links which exist between Italy and Australia, and the great contribution which the Italian community has made to the well-being of this State. I urge the Minister, in the interests of looking after the welfare of the largest ethnic community in Queensland, to lobby the relevant State and Federal authorities who tender the advice which affects the funding provisions enabling the teaching of foreign languages within State schools.

Finally, I wish to refer briefly to another controversial area of the Minister's responsibility, that being Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I know that the Minister has been made aware that within my electorate I have been experiencing considerable problems in relation to the activities of certain members of the Aboriginal and Islander communities, and I know that those experiences are common to other members. This has been the case since last year, and I wish to record in this place my appreciation of the efforts to date of the Minister's department and its senior officers.

I will not go into great detail about occurrences associated with the Aboriginal community which have led to the threatening of life and property, the destruction of private property, invasion of privacy, indecent behaviour and the disturbance of public peace. I will not do so because, in one last and desperate attempt to arrive at a solution to a problem which I readily acknowledge is complex, difficult and very inflammatory, I am in the process of consulting with local community leaders, the local police, affected citizens and officers in the Minister's department. In the near future, when appropriate Bills are brought before the House for debate, I will avail myself of the opportunities to talk in a more informed and in a more prepared way. Many of the people in my electorate —

Time expired.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK** (Albert) (3.23 p.m.): I am pleased to participate in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Firstly, I thank the Minister and her department for all the help they have given me. I thank especially the members of her personal staff—Alison Hallahan, Norma Jones

and Graham Staerk. In my speech, I wish to concentrate on the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs, which is the responsibility of the Minister's department. The Bureau of Ethnic Affairs has now the structure to better meet its program goal to increase the initiatives for the development of a cohesive multicultural society in Queensland. This goal is a direct reflection of the Government's social justice, equity and fairness principles. The new director of the bureau, Mr Uri Themal, was appointed early this year. I have already met Uri and spoken with him. He has worked in a number of directions to establish the new structure for the bureau. This new structure also reflects the special place of the bureau within the Minister's portfolio. The bureau is currently filling three new positions below the position of director. Two of these will be policy coordinators, the other will be a coordinator of services and administration. They in turn will appoint three new policy project officers to ensure that, from an ethnic affairs point of view, the bureau has expertise in its major areas of importance. Those areas are welfare, health, education, migrant women, anti-discrimination, immigration and multiculturalism.

The bureau does not provide many services directly. One of its aims is to encourage the introduction of access and equity programs across the Government sector to ensure that people of non-English-speaking backgrounds suffer no disadvantage or no discrimination from the providers of Government programs or services. The bureau has some exciting and creative plans for Yungaba, where it intends to create an integrated multicultural centre. Before I speak on what the future holds for Yungaba, I would like to reflect on its history and on some of the history that immigration has played in Queensland's progress. Since 1861, when Henry Jordan was appointed to London as Emigration Agent, the Queensland Government has been active in selected immigration. Whilst in London from 1861 to early 1864, Jordan was responsible for the recruitment, selection and passage arrangements of hundreds of new settlers to Queensland. In 1864, Jordan returned to Queensland and was instrumental in the formulation of the Immigration Act of 12 September 1864. In the Act, mention is made of the Queensland Government's eight pounds assistance scheme and other benefits which, to say the least, were innovative. The 1864 Act was amended and replaced in 1882 by another Act, which still remains on the statute book.

During the years leading up to 1885, thought was given by the Queensland Government to providing first-class amenities to assist immigrants during their initial period of settlement. Finally, a contract was let for the building of an immigration depot to cater for up to 500 migrants. The site for the depot was Kangaroo Point, with the construction being started in 1885 and completed two years later at a cost of 14,285 pounds.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You will be reading the shipping list out soon.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** I will, too. In late 1887, the depot received its first immigrants when 299 immigrants arrived from England on board the Duke of Buccleigh after a voyage of 62 days.

Over the years, Yungaba, as it is known, has had many uses. During World War I and World War II it was used as a hospital and demobilisation centre. During the Depression, it was used as a dispersal centre for food and clothing and to house the construction crew who built the Story Bridge. In 1946, at the end of World War II, the centre reopened its doors to migration. Yungaba is the Aboriginal word for place of sunshine. The function of welcoming new immigrants and refugees and providing them with temporary accommodation will, of course, remain. However, beyond that function, Yungaba can and should be better utilised. There are plans to utilise the existing building for the development of a training and seminar centre, with special emphasis on multiculturalism and cross-cultural awareness training on a user-pays basis for Government and business organisations, with suitable exemptions for community groups. To achieve this, the existing library will be expanded to provide audio-visual and printed resource material. The centre will also continue to provide meeting and function facilities for ethnic community group activities. The current plans include the idea of expanding this access to everyone by being allowed to expand the current grounds to an adjoining block

of land. With some landscaping, this could provide access to the riverbank. Picnic and barbecue facilities could be provided. It is planned to set up a stage for performances by ethnic community groups. If this were a permanent feature, people would attend regularly, especially on weekends, and be entertained by the rich folkloric culture of our different communities—an enjoyable way of learning about multiculturalism. Negotiations about that block of land are currently under way.

It is planned to provide desk-top publishing facilities either at Yungaba or Radio 4EB, which is situated on adjacent premises, to be used by community groups for information provision and publication of their newsletters. That would enhance the communications facilities of communities by integrating radio and printed matter. Of course, in order to be realised, those plans depend upon a number of factors, not the least of which is financial resources.

The Bureau of Ethnic Affairs provides grants to ethnic community groups and organisations. Officers from the department have told me that this year's level of grants is a reflection of grants provided by former National Party Governments. They believe that the Minister should consider raising the grants to a realistic level. Former National Party Governments provided no guidelines for those grants. People came in off the street and asked for money. Some asked for \$500 to publish a newsletter and were given it. Other groups asked for \$500 for a typewriter and were knocked back. The grants process is being reviewed to eventually centralise all grants within one section of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Until that process is completed this year, the bureau will issue to community organisations small amounts up to \$3,000. The total sum allocated for those grants is \$38,000.

The purpose of the community assistance grants is to provide small, non-recurrent grants to ethnic communities or community-based organisations with a focus on migrant issues and to assist with initiatives that encourage self-sufficiency; promote contact, education and awareness within and among community groups; generate activities within ethnic communities that encourage an active participation in community and political processes; create opportunities for ethnic communities to retain and express their cultural identity; provide fair and equitable opportunities; reduce prejudice; encourage harmony and promote multiculturalism. Meanwhile, the bureau will attempt to identify the real needs of ethnic groups and formulate strategies to meet them. To achieve that, the bureau is currently developing a community consultation strategy. As a first stage, the bureau is consulting with workers and leaders of ethnic community groups that provide services to members of ethnic communities. Following that will be a series of consultations and the development of strategies to meet them. The main purpose of the consultations will be to ensure equitable access to programs and services by members of ethnic communities without prejudice or discrimination.

**Mr Barber:** Is it true that you want Russian taught in schools?

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** I cannot even speak Russian.

Proposals will be made to formulate specific policies and programs to meet special needs of particular groups, for example, isolated women of non-English-speaking background. Another purpose of the consultations will be to facilitate a greater degree of participation by ethnic communities in all aspects of life in Queensland and to achieve cohesion and harmony in the community.

I turn now to the part that migration has played in Australia's continuing history, particularly postwar. I make particular mention of those who were persecuted in their homeland and left to create a better life for themselves and their children. One of those people is the Speaker of the Parliament, Mr Fouras. At a young age, he was sent away from his family because they felt he would live a better life in another country. On that note, I refer to a letter that I received last year from one of my relatives who describes the feudal conditions that exist in Russia. It states—

"Our town Kalush is not far from Lviv . . . It is 150 kilometres to Lviv from Kalush. Kalush is an industrial town. There are many chemical plants and factories

in Kalush. Our family lives in a nine-storeyed block of flats. We have a small flat on the seventh floor. It consists of one bedroom"—

Two adults and one teenager share that bedroom. The letter continues—

"We have no car or expensive furniture and carpets and . . . we shall never have. Though my husband and I have higher education, our earnings are very low and we live very modestly. People live modestly in our country, because the earnings are low and prices are high and besides our shops are half-empty. We have no choice in our shops. We lack of many goods and food."

Members of the National Party whinge and carry on about our great State and country. I would like to take them to Russia where they could live in squalid conditions. I commend the Minister for her Estimates.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (3.36 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in the debate on the Estimates of the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I do not intend to refer to the previous speaker's comments about members of the National Party and how they should go to Russia. I fail to see the relevance of that. I pay tribute to those migrants who have come to Australia over the years. By the colour of their skin, it appears that members of this Chamber, their parents or grandparents have come from across the seas. The member for Albert carried on with so much twaddle. That is the only way to describe it.

I do not judge the success of this Labor Government by how much it spends on family and welfare programs. I judge it on the standard of living of all Queenslanders. If the economic programs of a Government raise the standard of living for more people and reduce the number of people on welfare programs, the Government has been successful. The success of the Government cannot be judged by the amount of money that it pays out because more people need welfare services. However, I have always recognised that some people in the community will always be unable to look after themselves and require Government assistance. That is what the programs of the department are all about. Recently, when Archbishop Hollingsworth spoke about child poverty, he commented upon the need for more prosperity in the community. There is a story about giving a person a fish and the person is fed for one day, but if that person is taught how to fish, he is fed for life; he can improve his lot. That should be the aim of the Government's program.

We do see some sorry sights in life. As she goes about her duties, the Minister would be well aware of them. It can be very depressing to see so many people in helpless, hopeless situations who have no light at the end of the tunnel and who do not appear to be able to improve their lot in life. They are victims of domestic violence, children who are sexually molested or physically abused in their own homes and runaway children who, for various reasons, opt to leave home. I know the trauma that some parents go through when their children leave home; other parents are relieved. Some young couples who are not married to each other produce children whom neither person wants. When I cast my mind back to the days of my youth and my parents' youth, I recall that, if a young girl became pregnant, it was an accepted practice for either the father of the child or the family of the father to take some responsibility. If the father or his family could assist with the upbringing of that child or with looking after the girl who had become pregnant, it was a joint responsibility. It is always a joint responsibility.

**Ms Warner:** It wasn't like that at all.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** In the country areas where I come from, it was expected of any decent person. The curs and the cads did not face up to their responsibilities, and they inflicted on the community the costs of their dalliance. In any reasonably decent community, we must advise our young people that such responsibility is expected of them in society. That is all there is to it. I know that some children have decided to leave home because of the conditions at home, such as an unhappy marriage from which they want to escape. However, other children have the urge to move away because they want their independence and their freedom. Some of those children come from loving

homes. Other members of the family have adjusted and get on well with their parents, but one child might decide suddenly that he wants his independence and freedom. When they are in that position, those children, particularly the younger children, must be cared for.

I thank the Minister for her visit last Monday to Fatima Home in Toowoomba when she handed over a cheque to keep that home running. In Toowoomba, it is well recognised that Fatima Home looks after approximately 22 children at any time and is licensed to look after 30 children. It is a home for children who are in trouble and it keeps those children in care and protection. Unfortunately, because of the changes in circumstances, that home has found itself in grave financial difficulties. I have sympathy for the Minister because, when I look through the program and see the number of organisations that require financial assistance, I do not know how on earth she can allocate her budget, because she does not know what their circumstances will be. Some of those organisations submitted a budget to the Minister. Fatima Home did that, and it has proved that, if it does not receive extra assistance, it will have to close its doors. The Minister gave Fatima Home a cheque for \$25,500 for the next six months and has promised another \$25,000, which will take the home through until June next year. That is greatly appreciated.

The organisation itself will have to make up the deficit. Because of the high costs involved, it was going to have a deficit of \$120,000 over 12 months. Fatima Home used to employ house parents who moved into houses at Fatima Home to look after a group of young people. That was fairly demanding on those house parents, and they were paid a minimum wage. It was usually a married couple, and the mother took on the role of house parent while the husband worked. Usually, that couple had children of their own, and they looked after the young people on a full-time basis. Some of those young tigers, if I can call them that, are difficult to look after. They might be picked up from a court or from somewhere in the middle of the night. The house parents who look after those children may only have them for a couple of weeks before the children are handed back to their parents or sent to another place. That can be extremely disruptive. Nearly all of those children need a lot of attention, care and love. However, it is often very difficult to make some of those young characters respond to the love and the care that is given to them. Fatima Home found that, although the program had been excellent, it was extremely demanding on the house parents. Fatima Home found it difficult to get couples who were willing to become house parents. Full-time staff now work shift work to look after the children, and the cost is astronomical.

I do not know what the community will do if places such as Fatima Home in Toowoomba close down. If those children were to be suddenly handed over to the department because the home had to shut its doors, we would have a major, horrific problem on our hands. I can sympathise with the Minister and the department, because it will be an extremely costly program. As economic times get tougher and as social changes occur, the Government will have to meet more of these shortfalls in tender, loving care, if I may use that term, in looking after our children. I would have appreciated being advised of the funding. I had written to the Minister and had received a reply regarding Fatima Home, but I was not advised that this funding was to be handed over and what arrangements were to be made.

**Ms Warner:** I had it checked out with them, because they weren't given the full amount they had asked for, before making a public declaration.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I realise that. We do not always do these things for publication or as political grandstanding. It is part of the service that is provided. I certainly was not looking for anything like that. If the Minister reads the press, she will see that I have gained very little publicity from going to Fatima Home.

Years ago, people would put a badge on their lapel, go to the homes in their area and raise a certain amount of money for charity. Over the years the amount collected has been dropping and, because of inflation, the buying power of the money is less. Of course, the costs of maintaining the home has increased. It comes down to competition

for the community dollar. If somebody knocks on our door for National Heart Week, Cancer Week, Spina Bifida Week or whatever it is, we are moved to think that somebody has gone to the trouble to try to raise funds, so we dig into our pockets and give what we can. In this case, Fatima Home is not receiving increased community support. Exactly the same applies to Lifeline and the other organisations that are operating in my area. They are finding more difficulty in raising the charity dollar. That is also a major problem for the Government.

I read in the program for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs that the department undertakes to actively promote Aboriginal and Islander culture. I ask the Minister to check with her department whether some of the rumours I have heard are true. I have a great interest in the Aboriginal culture and I believe that there is an opportunity for these people to achieve a great sense of pride in their background because of world interest in their culture. I went through the dreaming trail at Mossman Gorge and I know that tourists are interested in it, so the people there can make money out of it. Also, it is an uplifting experience for them. During Expo, a young man named Noel Doyle established a firm named Kalka Print. He suffered a good deal of trauma because some of his people said he was doing it merely to make money and others said that he was selling out their culture to the white man. I understand that he made quite a success of it. I have met him on a couple of occasions. Since then he has gone into full production of shirts. I understand that he has been chastised by some departmental officers for making money out of prints that he had no right to sell. I ask the Minister to check that out. If that is true, I would be rather disturbed because I think that anyone of Aboriginal descent has a right, provided there is no copyright on the material, to market traditional designs. Actually they are traditional designs that have been modernised. I think that the Aboriginal community should be very proud of him.

The Government is planning a diversionary unit at Mount Isa. This is a matter on which I have spoken in the Assembly on a number of occasions. Townsville, Cairns and Mount Isa would have had diversionary centres had Gerald Hand, the Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, cooperated with the Queensland Government and honoured a commitment that the Federal and Queensland Governments had made to provide diversionary facilities in Queensland. The funding was available but the Federal officers were not happy with the Townsville facility. I am referring to the old Mater hospital site. When I was Minister, I put a program up to Mr Hand but the Federal fellows said that Cairns and Mount Isa were much more important. I did not want to discuss which was more important because there was enough funding to establish the three of them. I sent an officer to Mount Isa to look at the options. A determination was made by the previous Government to establish a diversionary facility in each of the major areas. I know a proposition went forward for one at Cherbourg. The Federal Government had some concern about it. I acknowledge its concern, because the facility was on another property further away and not on Cherbourg.

**Mr Davies:** Did you oppose the land swap in Cabinet?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I am talking about the diversionary facility in the old Mater hospital in Townsville. The other area that the honourable member is talking about could have been used by the local Aboriginal community for their own purposes. That happened before my time. When I became Minister, Gerald Hand and the Federal officers stopped that facility being established in Townsville. It will be on the honourable member's head if he does not want a diversionary facility in Townsville to overcome the problems faced by the people in that area.

Time expired.

**Ms POWER (Mansfield) (3.52 p.m.):** It is a great pleasure to speak in support of the Estimates for Family Services, Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. In particular, I should like to support the services for the intellectually disabled. Some of the most rewarding moments of this year have been spent in my electorate at Eight Mile Plains and Mount Gravatt Special Schools. Every visit to these schools reinforces their specialness. I am

really grateful for the experience gained at these schools and my life is certainly richer for it. These schools care for two types of disabled. Mount Gravatt Special School is for the mildly intellectually disabled and Eight Mile Plains Special School is for the severely and multidisabled.

In May this year, I spoke in this Chamber about the professionalism of the staff at the Eight Mile Plains Special School and I now re-endorse that sentiment about the staff at both those schools. Visits to the schools are testament to the ideals of partners in education; parents, teachers ancillary staff and students are all actively involved in the school. I visited the Mount Gravatt Special School only last week to present the student of the year awards. The principal, Joan Callinan, has created a warm, welcoming atmosphere for all who pass through this special school. Student of the year has a special meaning at Mount Gravatt because qualities such as being well mannered, kind, thoughtful, sensible, loyal and confident are truly valued. On receiving their awards, Kylie Sharpley and Gavin Ward both acknowledged the support of the school and their parents. I found these young people to be proud of their achievements and ready to take their place in society as independent people.

Since my election I have tried to understand the many problems faced by those who are closely associated with the intellectually disabled, as well as make myself available to listen to their concerns. Their concerns are far-ranging and include such topics as access to TAFE courses, home medical aids, finances and taxes, public transport—taxis in particular—and the home comforts of the Basil Stafford Centre. In May this year, I identified the intellectually disabled as the target of discrimination. Because the issue of intellectual disability must take account of legal, moral and ethical points of view, it is one of the most complex matters to administer. Like previous speakers from the Government side of the Chamber, I, too, congratulate the Minister, her personal staff and her department on their commitment and performance and the plans for a brighter outlook in the future. The Division of Intellectual Disability Services provides direct provisional services and care to some 2 500 Queenslanders of all ages who have a significant intellectual disability. This includes persons whose disability is compounded by challenging behaviours. Services are provided on a regional basis from Cairns to the Gold Coast in 11 major locations as well as in the western areas of the State through remote area services. The services available to people living with their own or substitute families include assessment, counselling, therapy, organisation of respite care and family support. Residential services provide accommodation and other supports in centre complexes, community villa clusters or community-based houses. The division also operates adult day centres for certain people and a range of respite care services in purpose-built houses, centres and villas or through home help and the linking of client families with other families to enable short-term care of their son or daughter. Over 1 300 staff members are employed by the division, most of whom are involved in the direct care of people in residential services. The intellectual disability service is the major and, in some cases, the sole service-provider for people whose disability and/or behaviour represents a significant handicap to their integration and acceptance in society.

The services provided by the Queensland Government to intellectually disabled people have come a long way. In the past, the choices were limited to a secluded existence in the home, often resulting in much stress and anxiety for families, or an even more secluded life in a custodial institution. These days, people with an intellectual disability and their families are supported by a variety of service-providers, both Government and non-Government. Similarly, there is more understanding and acceptance by the ordinary community which makes it easier for people to participate like other citizens in the activities of everyday life. Today, families are acutely aware of the need for specific and timely services that will enable people with an intellectual disability to develop as well as possible, enjoy life and take their place in the community in a confident way. Families want to have a say about the quality of services they receive now, how they are provided and what should be provided in the future. The Queensland Government welcomes the involvement of the consumers of this service.

One special feature of Queensland is the extent of decentralisation of the population throughout the State. This exacerbates the problems experienced by families who are caring for a child or adult with an intellectual disability. It also makes it difficult to recruit and deploy appropriate professional staff to provide the sorts of services that are required. This means that special strategies have to be developed to meet the needs of families in western Queensland, the far north and the tableland areas. The past few years have seen the beginnings of a remote area service in western Queensland which has attempted a different way of providing for families through local coordinators who know their own area thoroughly and can tap into local resources. In the northern suburbs of Brisbane, a group of families have been assisted by professional staff in sharing their homes and their skills with other families who have a child with a significant intellectual disability. This has enabled their families to have a break from the strain of continual caring without the need for them to move into residential care. This program will be extended this year as more share families become involved. In the southern suburbs of Brisbane, particular families have been assisted by special home help services that have been tailored to their individual needs. This may vary from sitter services to assistance on outings or help with a prescribed program. However, some users of this service and their families have the desperate problem of dealing with challenging behaviours, and that occurs throughout the State. A special effort is being made in the training of staff to have the confidence and competence to deal with these often frightening situations and to support the person, their families and the residential carers through these times. These are the sorts of practical, down-to-earth services that families need. The key to them all is an individualised approach which does not attempt to lump people together as the intellectually disabled, but regards them as unique individuals with both strengths and problems of their own that require assistance. This Government is committed to this sort of personalised approach to people.

At the same time, it must be recognised that a large number of people are living in residential facilities. These facilities have been substantially upgraded, but still represent a life-style which is different from that enjoyed by most of us. The provision of additional funds of \$1.5m in the 1990-91 Budget is enabling some of the problems of human resources and quality of environment in the larger centres to be addressed, in place of the stringent economy that was practised over the last few years which diminished the life-style of the residents. The filling of some staff vacancies will make outings and shopping trips a feature of residents' lives. However, the challenge is to review the personal accommodation needs of each of these people and to consider what is necessary to enhance their lives now and the accommodation alternatives that might be provided in the future.

Members of the general public—including honourable members—often fail to recognise that people with an intellectual debility can be found in all age groups in the community. These include hopeful youngsters who need stimulation and therapy to reach their potential, and elderly people who have lived through an era of ignorance and neglect in relation to their needs and rights. In between, there are many adults who are now making their needs known, but who may lack the communication skills to do so as effectively as other citizens. There is a strong social imperative to consider the rightful place of people in our community who have an intellectual disability.

Despite advances and enhancement of the provision of services that have taken place over the past two decades, a number of issues and needs still have to be addressed. These include the provision of a more flexible range of supported accommodation options, which considers deinstitutionalisation on the basis of personal accommodation needs rather than on emptying buildings. At the same time, the future use of buildings and resources attached to those buildings is a practical issue to be considered. Other needs include comprehensive services being provided to people with challenging behaviour because these people require very specialised and intensive services in order to ensure their safety and the safety of others. The development of services for those who are outside the immediate restricted target group and who are seriously in need of services is a priority. This includes young people who have recently left special schools and who

are at risk of developing challenging behaviour patterns. There is an increasing demand from families for effective early intervention programs, including specialised therapy. It is recognised that the division has considerable expertise in this area and that it is essential to minimise additional disability and facilitate optional development in young children.

For some time, the need for services in north Queensland has been recognised, and new initiatives will be undertaken to make some inroads into this large area of need. The needs of people who live in the western and more remote areas of the State have been only partially addressed, and it would be desirable to extend the effective remote area services program into new locations. Attention has been drawn by families to perceived deficiencies in the provision of residential care, including the ratio of staff to clients, the filling of vacancies, and the impact of these problems on enjoyment of living, safety and outings. Several new initiatives are planned for this financial year. Following the participation of parents in Townsville in the development of a proposed residential facility, the staff of this division has been working with the Department of Administrative Services and the Queensland Housing Commission to ensure that some long-term accommodation is provided in Townsville. Currently, two houses are being purchased by the Department of Administrative Services, and they should provide accommodation for some 10 people who have an intellectual disability. An additional two houses are being purchased by the Housing Commission, which will provide accommodation for another group of 10 people. Staffing for these houses will be provided through the reallocation of staff from the Challinor Centre and through new positions that have been created by the provision of additional funds in this year's Budget.

For several years in the Brisbane area, a successful project has been undertaken to provide in-home respite care services to families of people who have an intellectual disability. The service involves the provision of staff who will work with families in the family home, and includes services such as minding, assistance with household tasks and accompanying of the disabled person on visits to the doctor or on trips to other appointments. It is planned to implement a program to expand this service that operates in Brisbane and to extend the service to the Ipswich area. It is proposed to implement a pilot program to place in private boarding arrangements with particular individuals those who have an intellectual disability and who are currently living in residential facilities operated by the division. This will involve families who live in the Brisbane and Ipswich areas. Support will be provided to the individuals who have been placed in those boarding arrangements and to the families who provide support for those individuals.

Through the employment of additional staff and the making of environmental improvements, the focus of the increased allocation made to the division will be on improvements in quality of life-style and in residential services. The other major focus will be on north Queensland services. Restructuring in accordance with the approved plan will be carried out in as economical a manner as possible, with emphasis being placed on those aspects that will enhance care and support as well as improve the administrative structure. Moreover, the flexibility engendered by additional funding will enable some more innovative solutions—such as family share and individual care—to be initiated. These are regarded as being ultimately cost-effective and self-financing because of savings that will be made when they are introduced. It is also pleasing to note that, in an endeavour to take a coordinated approach, negotiations are being undertaken with other departments in respect of clients in hospitals, early intervention needs and post-school options.

The intellectually disabled have the same rights as other ordinary people to reach their potential and enjoy life. The Division of the Intellectually Disabled offers services to ensure that these aims are fulfilled. The funding in this budget will provide some assistance to these people. I commend the Estimates to the Committee.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory) (4.05 p.m.): Mr Temporary Chairman——

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr JOHNSON:** I thank Government members.

**Mr Hayward:** It is your turn today. The bloke who is taking your seat spoke last night.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Who was that?

**Mr Hayward:** The member for Warrego.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I do not think the member for Caboolture has any worries about the member for Warrego, who is a very sound member of this Parliament and who will look after the electorate of Warrego in the future as well as he has during the past four years. However, time is limited. My purpose in rising to speak to the Estimates of the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs is to endorse the remarks made by my colleague the member for Lockyer, who spoke very well. I also give credit where it is due and commend the member for Mansfield for her speech, because I was very pleased she mentioned the assistance given to families confronted with disadvantages brought about by looking after physically handicapped or intellectually disabled children. The respite program to which she referred is great. I know that in the region in which my electorate is situated there are people who are looking after disabled children 24 hours a day, which is a terrific burden on those families. The great feature of this program is that some relief can be provided for people who live under very difficult circumstances.

However, I must get on with the job and concentrate on the main topic of my speech, which relates to the Aboriginal people who live in the electorate of Gregory. The electorate forms part of the traditional Aboriginal lands, and Aborigines are a very important group in my electorate. One problem in particular that I wish to address relates to Aboriginal housing. A problem exists in the region from Urandangie, down through Dajarra and Boulia to Birdsville. On 27 August this year, I wrote to the Minister about the shortage of Aboriginal housing in Birdsville. To date, I have not received a reply to my letter. I do not know whether my letter has been put in the too-hard basket; however, I hope to receive a reply shortly. Urandangie also has a housing problem. At present, it has a population of Aboriginal people who float backwards and forwards across the border from Lake Nash in the Northern Territory. Because the children keep coming and going, Urandangie has no school. Recently, I spoke to 20 children at Urandangie who had never seen inside a class room. That problem should be addressed. While I am the member for that region, I will ensure that it is addressed.

**Mr Bredhauer:** The Education Department assessed the need for a school there a couple of times and it was knocked on the head by your Government.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I will not buy into the proposition put forward by the honourable member for Cook. I know that the problem has existed for some time. However, I am representing those people and I will try to address the problem.

The Minister intends to introduce legislation to overhaul child-care in this State. She claims that it is important that those associated with child-care have appropriate qualifications. However, qualifications are not always the most important consideration. The Minister said that she will introduce legislation to set minimum standards for child-care workers. I point out that 39 per cent of Australian child-care staff have academic qualifications. By comparison, 53 per cent of Queensland child-care staff have academic qualifications. Queensland has more child-care staff with qualifications than any other State has. Although Queensland's child-care workers are well qualified, those without qualifications should not be excluded.

I ask the Minister to give me an assurance that child-care facilities in western Queensland will not be affected by any decision to make qualifications compulsory. Will she assure me that those workers will not be downgraded in any way? Because of the long, hot, harsh summers, it is hard to obtain qualified people to work in western areas of the State. If qualifications were compulsory, we may not obtain anyone and the people

of western Queensland would be disadvantaged. I know many unqualified people who uphold those duties very capably.

The Minister cited the Ultra child-care group as an example of the support she had received. She spoke about quality in child-care. In a ministerial statement directed at my colleague the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Surfers Paradise—

**Mr Beattie:** He doesn't know anything about child-care.

**Mr JOHNSON:** He knows a lot more about many things than the member for Brisbane Central knows. He will be a thorn in the side of the Government for a long time. Government members should take notice of what he says.

The member for Surfers Paradise went out of his way to point out to the Minister how to improve the quality of child-care. The Minister said that she received support from the Ultra child-care group. It never occurred to the Minister that the group that she was using as support had a couple of months previously appeared in the *White Mercantile Gazette* with the announcement of the appointment of a receiver and manager. If that is an example of the type of people whom the Minister wants involved in child-care, it does not say much for the department's policy. I hope that the Minister corrects that position. I seek leave to table the document to which I have referred.

Leave granted.

**Mr JOHNSON:** On a number of occasions in the media, the Minister has stated that it is all right for people to care for as many children as they like, as long as they do not receive financial reward. However, is her major concern about quality or is it an ideological hang-up about financial return? This afternoon, we should be addressing the matter of caring for people, whether it is carried out by qualified or unqualified people, and providing the best care possible, whether they be intellectually handicapped, the family unit or whatever. Those people deserve the best. After all, we are in this place to care about and look after people. As the Budget papers announced recently, this year \$8.4m has been allocated for child-care in this State. However, I remind honourable members that almost half of that money has been funded by the Federal Government. I hope that some of that money will be directed towards people throughout the State.

I return to the problems of intellectually handicapped people in rural areas. Some rural centres have special schools for intellectually handicapped people; however, after the children leave school they have nowhere to go. A program has been proposed to commence a sheltered workshop in Longreach. That would provide a place for those people to carry out a style of life that would have been previously unavailable to them. I hope that the Government addresses that problem in that region this year. We are worried not only about the people with disabilities in the Longreach district but also about people around Winton and Barcaldine. A sheltered workshop in a central location such as Longreach would address that problem. A short time ago, a sheltered workshop was established in Emerald. It is functioning very well and is providing a great service for the people in that region.

In conclusion, I ask the Minister to pay particular attention to the Aboriginal housing problem in the west, which is critical at present.

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

**Hon. A. M. WARNER** (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (4.15 p.m.), in reply: I will do my best, in the short time available to me, to sum up this quite complex and sometimes confusing debate. It is with pleasure that I respond to the debate on the Estimates of important expenditures within my department. At the outset, I stress my delight at the fact that the honourable member for Burnett and the honourable member for Landsborough stated their support for this Government's increased spending on welfare services in its first Budget.

The honourable member for Burnett went to considerable lengths to illustrate his case that my department has neglected the provision of services to the rural and remote areas of the State. However, excluding Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Rockhampton, Townsville and Cairns, which are provincial towns and cities, my department funds 370 services, which is not a bad allocation of expenditure. So the inference that the honourable member draws that my department neglects the needs of people in remote and rural areas is factually wrong and can be demonstrated to be such. However, I do agree that there is a need for improvement in services throughout the State. The Government must ensure that that happens. The honourable member for Burnett went on to make some obscure points about child protection and domestic violence which bore no relevance to those particular social problems. Perhaps the honourable member might like to do some more reading on that subject. He also raised the matter of volunteers. That is no surprise because, as honourable members may recall, the former National Party Government believed that the provision of welfare services should be made, in the main, by volunteers. But, frankly, volunteers simply cannot cope with the complexity of problems that need to be faced. What is needed is the support of a professional social welfare infrastructure, which is properly funded, in the non-Government sector. That is not relying on volunteers but using community-based services to ensure that that infrastructure is there on the ground, properly supported by Government funding. That is the direction in which this Government intends to go.

The honourable member for Burnett and his colleague the honourable member for Tablelands launched into claims about my lack of accessibility to staff in the department and an apparent failure to consult with my staff. Regrettably, neither honourable member was able to substantiate these outrageous claims and, as a result, one can only assume that they are unfounded and merely some kind of vilification for its own sake. In fact, the honourable member for Tablelands spent most of his allocated time on personal vilification, which I suspect was used to mask the fact that he knows absolutely nothing about the activities of the department or, indeed, any kind of proper analysis of the Budget papers. He went further and claimed that I am the captive of a small ideological group, which he also refused to name. I can only suppose that the honourable member invented that group and that he knows neither my friends nor my enemies and, in fact, that he knows nothing.

The issue of adoption arose again in this debate. The honourable member for Burnett again raised the matter of the disallowance motion regarding the adoption regulations. As honourable members may recall, it was a fairly pathetic affair. It was only out of the goodness of my heart that that motion was even debated in this Chamber, because it is a matter of record in *Hansard* that the honourable member got it wrong. It is not the only thing that he has got wrong. It was only because of my commitment to open and honest government that that disallowance motion was debated and I did not complain about the fact that the honourable member got it wrong. The other matter that the honourable member consistently gets wrong—probably because he cannot read—is the eligibility criteria for the seniors card. I refer the honourable member to the application form itself, which sets out quite clearly those people who are eligible and those people who are not. Fortunately, of course, the seniors of Queensland who, in their tens of thousands, have been applying for the seniors card, know the eligibility criteria and are not reliant upon the honourable member for information.

**Mr Slack:** What does the means test mean?

**Ms WARNER:** The honourable member is asking me to explain what it is? The card is available to all those between the ages of 60 and 69 who are on a part or full-rate age or veterans pension. It cannot be simpler than that. Everybody over the age of 70 is entitled to a card, without undergoing any kind of means test at all. The means test means that anybody over the age of 60 years and under the age of 69 years who is in receipt of an age or veterans pension, or any part thereof, is entitled to a card. That is the end of the story.

**Mr Slack:** The means test is irrelevant.

**Ms WARNER:** That is the means test.

**Mr Slack:** It's confusing.

**Ms WARNER:** It is not confusing. That is the means test. I urge the honourable member to go and have his head examined.

I want to move on to the issues that the honourable member raised in relation to the figures contained on page 237 of the Budget Paper No. 3. Perhaps in the future he could ask someone who knows what they are talking about to explain things to him so that he will not be led into error and confusion. However, for the benefit of the honourable member, I will explain the position. The discrepancy in the figures that he has noticed is because the last Government expended more money on overtime. That occurred because specific funds were not allocated up front for the delivery of the services. The addition of \$1.5m to the base figure for the department allows staff to be employed so that there is not a blow-out in overtime. That is what has happened. What this Government is doing is much more cost-effective, and much more work is done for less money, because it avoids that overtime blow-out which was the result of the failure by the previous Government to allocate sufficient funds up front. The honourable member also referred to the allocation of \$2m to future liabilities. That is an allocation for the department's contribution to superannuation benefits. This department and all other departments make a similar contribution. That accounts for the other moneys that the honourable member queried.

I now refer to the shadow of the shadow, the honourable member for Landsborough, who considers herself to be a shadow Minister. She approached the Estimates debate not from an overall perspective, but rather from a purely parochial point of view and with a concern about Landsborough. I share her concern about Aboriginal women's health, but I suggest to her that the comments she made would have been more appropriate to the Health Estimates debate. Although she attempted to speak with some authority about the parochial matters affecting the electorate of Landsborough, she got them wrong, too, and displayed her ignorance of the services that are currently——

**Mrs Sheldon:** I don't think so.

**Ms WARNER:** The honourable member may not think so, but she should go and have another look at what is happening on the Sunshine Coast, because the position is not what she says it is.

**Mrs Sheldon:** I suggest you come up and have a look.

**Ms WARNER:** I have been to the Sunshine Coast several times and have a much better understanding of the position than the honourable member has. One of the points that she raised was that there was only one women's service on the Sunshine Coast. What a lot of rot! There are in fact four women's services on the Sunshine Coast, including two women's refuges. She should get her facts right. It should also be noted that there are three homeless youth services on the Sunshine Coast.

**Mrs Sheldon:** What are they and where are they?

**Ms WARNER:** The honourable member should go and check her facts. The other thing that she claimed, wishing to attract some notoriety to her area——

**Mrs Sheldon:** Not at all. I am concerned.

**Ms WARNER:** I imagine that the honourable member is trying to attract this notoriety because she thinks that if she does that she will get more funds. To make claims such as the Sunshine Coast has the highest level of child abuse in the State may bring her notoriety, but it is in fact not true.

**Mrs Sheldon:** They are figures that came from someone from your department.

**Ms WARNER:** Well, it is a wrong statistic and the honourable member should have checked it out with me.

**Mrs Sheldon:** I can get you the document. It came from your Family Services Department.

**Ms WARNER:** Well, it is wrong. I will explain to the honourable member why that practice is so damaging. It is damaging for her to try to stigmatise her own electorate in an attempt to obtain a short-term gain. That is what she is doing. She is trying to say that her electorate has a high level of child abuse.

The honourable member had her story wrong on the subject of child-care. I suggest that if she re-reads the Budget papers, she will work out that private child-care centres will not be taken over by my department. There is no intention to take over private child-care centres and there is no way in which the Government will be putting them out of business. The fact of life is that there is an enormous need for child-care within Queensland and the child-care strategies that the Government has introduced are designed to meet that need. I suggest that the honourable member do her homework and next time do it properly.

Time expired.

At 4.25 p.m.,

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

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

\$235,759,000—Social Welfare and Housing, Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (Consolidated Revenue).

\$64,671,000—Social Welfare and Housing, Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs (Trust and Special Funds).

Business, Industry and Regional Development

**Hon. G. N. SMITH** (Townsville East—Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development) (4.26 p.m.): I move—

"That there be granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year 1990-91, a sum not exceeding \$43,848,000 for Economic Services, Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development (Consolidated Revenue)."

On 5 September 1990, my colleague the Honourable Keith De Lacy, Treasurer of Queensland, brought down the Goss Government's first Budget. That Budget provides as major objectives for the introduction of fiscal responsibility, the establishment of a supportive business environment and the encouragement of economic development and, hence, employment opportunities within this State. I am pleased to have played a part in the development of those objectives and I am pleased, particularly, to be able to advise the Committee of the details of the 21.5% increase in the 1990-91 Budget allocation for my portfolio.

The importance of this Budget for business and industry in Queensland cannot be underestimated. Whilst the Queensland economy performed relatively well in the first half of 1989-90 against the background of a downturn in national economic activity, there has been a significant slowing in economic activity since the beginning of the calendar year. If the Queensland economy is not to continue to be subject to wild fluctuations in commodity markets, it must become diversified and have a higher proportion of its production and preferably exports in the high value-added category. This, of course, can go hand in glove with Queensland's traditional areas of expertise in the mining and primary industries. For instance, last year, \$80 billion worth of value

was added to Australia's bulk food commodities overseas. Queensland exported \$2.3 billion worth of food, with more than 90 per cent in raw sugar, boned beef and unprocessed seafood. If those products had value added locally, Queensland could have reaped an extra \$20 billion.

From those firms which are not heavily dependent on the agricultural and construction industries for primary demand, there have been some very encouraging signs this year. A number of Queensland firms have been awarded multi-million dollar defence contracts. They include Buchanan Aircraft Corporation Ltd of Toowoomba and the Brisbane firm Hamil Haven Pty Ltd. Furthermore, several significant new operations which are about to commence or have commenced production include the Fisher and Paykel whitegoods factory at Cleveland, the Colgate Palmolive detergent and soap powders complex at the Gold Coast, and the ICI and Minproc resources chemical plants at Gladstone.

#### Regional development

On 12 November 1990, responsibility for Regional Development was transferred from the Treasurer's portfolio to my portfolio. The integration of Regional Development with Business and Industry will eliminate the potential for confusion between the responsibilities of the two portfolios. It will allow for coordinated regional economic development and better service provision to industries throughout Queensland. My new department will be actively involved with local government, regional organisations and the private sector in promoting regional economic development in line with the Government's policy. There is a firm commitment to assisting regions to develop and implement regional economic development strategies. The new department's regional office network, which will be more extensive than that of its predecessors, will play a key role in assisting and encouraging local regional economic initiatives and in providing more focused assistance to expand and diversify the manufacturing and trade-services base of each region. The overall goal of the regional development program is to enhance regional economic capabilities by providing economic research, policy advice, strategic planning and economic development skills. Coupled with these functions, the new department will apply a regional dimension to business and industry development.

#### Role of department

My department has the charter to encourage the economic development of Queensland through the promotion of firms in the manufacturing and tradeable services sectors which are export-oriented, internationally competitive and able to readily apply appropriate technologies. The department will particularly move to strengthen support of industry and business in regional Queensland. Honourable members will be aware of the recent reforms to the administrative arrangements concerning my department. The changes followed the review by the Public Sector Management Commission into the then Department of Manufacturing and Commerce. These sweeping changes are, of course, changes for the better and were necessitated by the years of neglect of the industry and business sectors by previous Governments.

The review said bluntly that the department should—and I emphasise the word "should"—be the lead agency for the development of policies and programs to assist manufacturing and traded services. But the review found that the department had not been adequately fulfilling that role. The review's findings included that there was a lack of clear objectives for the department; there was inadequate targeting in relation to service delivery; there was excessive emphasis on land as a means of assistance to industry, as carried out through the industrial estates program; there was an inadequate regional presence and a failure to deliver a number of programs in regional areas; and that a number of programs required stimulus and/or better focusing. That is the situation we inherited from our predecessors. This Government has acted to turn this situation around. Indeed, it would have sorely neglected its duty to the people of Queensland if it had not so acted. The Goss Government is refocusing and retargeting programs. It will ensure that industry gets the support it needs and wants. The Government is determined that

regional Queensland business and industry get a fair go. My senior departmental officers and I are now finalising the functional structure reflecting the changed roles of the new Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development. In future, there will be greater delegation of authority, providing managers with greater autonomy and responsibility. This will ensure that the department is more responsive and effective in being both pro-active and reactive to industry and business needs. Queensland will have a new and efficient approach to industry and business. It will have policies that are designed to offer support, particularly in the industry area. This is a marked change from the former Government, which had only one significant policy program for industry support. Honourable members know that was the Crown industrial estates program. Of course, honourable members also know that the former Government could not even get that right.

#### Industrial estates program

When we came into Government on 2 December last year, we were able to act to confirm our longstanding concerns about the industrial estates program. We instituted a review by the consulting firm Coopers and Lybrand. That firm's findings and the subsequent work undertaken by the Public Sector Management Commission outline a good idea gone badly wrong. Not only did the former Government rely upon it as its only significant industry support program but, worse, it administered the scheme badly. The consultants found —

"In summary, the program does not meet its stated objectives nor is it cost effective. There is little evidence that industry development has been facilitated. The program has been used as a de facto financial assistance mechanism . . . the assistance is not targeted. Many of the estates are largely empty."

It is now estimated that the approximate annual subsidy to current tenants is some \$20m. As indicated in the Budget, this Government will not be relying totally on the industrial estates program to be its only industry support program. The Government realises that industrial estates have a role to play—not to be the only arm of policy, but part of an integrated and coordinated program which is now being implemented.

#### QGRAD

A major initiative in this Budget is the provision of \$2.5m for a Queensland Grants for Research and Development Program. QGRAD will increase the level of research and development as a basis for internationally competitive manufacturing industries and will encourage the development of a cooperative private/public sector research capability. This initiative is long overdue. Years of neglect by previous administrations have meant that Queensland has one of the OECD's lowest industrial R and D expenditures. The record of the previous Government in this area is a very sorry and disappointing one. This Government intends to set the record straight. At a time of tight budgetary restraint, this Government's decision to allocate \$2.5m to the new QGRAD scheme is evidence of its commitment to a major increase in the industrial research and development sector in this State.

#### Sectoral plans

The sum of \$317,000 has been allocated to a program of sectoral plans. The purpose of the plans is to assist in identifying and assessing the sources of competitive weakness and to increase the degree of exposure to the international market for Queensland's mature and potential industry sectors. Earlier this year, the Government commissioned Coopers and Lybrand to undertake a comprehensive study into the State's information technology industry sector. The fact that the very first of the Government's sectoral studies is devoted to information technology demonstrates our very deep commitment to the industry and its future success. The development of a sectoral plan for information technology industry is absolutely essential if the Government is to be in a position to plan strategically and contribute to the future growth of this vital industry. As further evidence of my department's commitment to this sector, the department has pursued a

number of initiatives including the technology quadrangle, which aims to develop collaborative links initially between the four universities in south-east Queensland, the Government and the business sector. Also, the department has already played a key role in the establishment of Questnet—a high-speed computer network based on optical fibres, which provides rapid access to high-performance computing facilities within the technology quadrangle.

#### National Procurement Development Program (NPDP)

The sum of \$525, 000 has been provided in the Budget to facilitate the Government's recent decision to participate in the National Procurement Development Program. The program will encourage Queensland manufacturers to form project partnerships with Government agencies to assist in the development and trialing of new, unproven products and to overcome the risk aversion of potential purchasers of those products. For the past two and a half years, the NPDP has been conducted entirely at a Commonwealth level. On 26 October, I had the pleasure of signing the NPDP Agreement with the Commonwealth at an Australian Industry and Technology Council meeting held in Canberra. That agreement will assist Queensland industry in an area of traditional weakness, that is, industrial research and development. The National Procurement Development Program will allow firms to establish a track record, which is necessary for marketing their products overseas.

#### Quality Assessment Unit

As of 1 July this year, this Government put into effect a purchasing policy whereby it will only purchase goods from companies with an adequate quality-assurance system in place. The purpose of this policy is to take advantage of the purchasing power of the Government to encourage Queensland industry to address the benefits of internationally-proven, quality management techniques. The success of the quality assurance requirements will be of foremost importance in creating an industry base in Queensland that can successfully take on the challenges of international competition. Earlier this year, a Quality Assessment Unit was created by this Government to assist Government agencies in the carrying out of this policy. An allocation of \$325,000 has been provided to the unit.

#### Centre for Manufacturing Skills Development

An operational allocation of \$247,000 was given to the Government's recently established Centre for Manufacturing Skills Development, which acts as the focus for extension services to manufacturers through the jointly-funded Commonwealth/State National Industry Extension Service, or NIES. The centre acts as a source of expertise and a referral point for the private sector in the areas of strategic and business planning, the upgrading of skills in management, product development and design, marketing and the application of advanced manufacturing technologies.

#### Queensland Industry Information Service—QINDIS

The sum of \$180,000 has been provided in the Budget for the development of the Queensland Industry Information Service, a database that will serve to promote the products and capacities of the State's industry to end users. QINDIS is a new project being developed as a more comprehensive, up-to-date and flexible service. The database will be used to promote business opportunities and to match the capabilities of Queensland companies with defence or aerospace opportunities or to overseas suppliers seeking offsets business partners. It will also assist the department in developing sectoral plans and delivering its service to manufacturers.

#### Commerce function

Following the Government's decision to encourage businesses in the commercial sector that directly support or enhance value-added activity in Queensland and those that provide internationally tradeable services, \$300,000 was allocated for the establishment

of a commerce function within the department. This year, the department has undertaken a full review of the Small Business Development Corporation and commissioned the Australian International Business Centre to undertake a study of possible commerce activities the department could implement. It is currently reviewing the Queensland Government's State purchasing policy.

#### Queensland Small Business Corporation

The QSBC, which replaces the Small Business Development Corporation, has been provided with total funding for the year of \$4.232m. As members would be aware, earlier this year this Government conducted the first-ever review of the Small Business Development Corporation. As a result of that review, legislation was recently passed through the Parliament to establish the Queensland Small Business Corporation. The new corporation will be focusing on delivering core programs of initial business advice and facilitation of training and education. With its new structure and focus, the corporation will now be able to service a far greater number of small businesses in the State.

#### Business Regulation Review Unit

As further indication of this Government's commitment to business development in this State, funding of \$1.518m has been provided for the establishment of a Business Regulation Review Unit. I remind members that, when I was an Opposition member, I mentioned that such a unit was vital. It is significant that, in the more than 30 years of National Party Government, nothing was ever done to address the problem of the mounting burden of regulations on Queensland business. The success of regulation reform is dependent upon an unequivocal commitment by the Government. The previous Government did not have that commitment. This Government does.

#### Queensland Business Licence Information Centre (QBLIC)

With regard to business regulations, this Government has already achieved a major success with the establishment in April of the Queensland Business Licence Information Centre. QBLIC was established by the Government to act as a one-stop shop for new and existing businesses that seek information on licences and permits. The objective was to reduce the cost to the public in obtaining licence information, to improve compliance rates with licence requirements and to allow people to concentrate on the important task of establishing their business rather than being sent on a paper chase through Government bureaucracies. In the Budget, \$670,000 has been provided to QBLIC to enable it to continue to offer a high-quality service to business and business intenders and to enhance the centre's functions to cover operational licences.

#### Retail shop lease registry

The Retail Shop Leases Act and the registry of the retail shop lease mediation panel and tribunal will continue to play an important role in the retail industry in this State. That legislation was the first of its type in Australia. It is designed to regulate the intent and content of retail shop leases and to provide for low-cost resolution of disputes under those leases. Although the Act establishes the basic ground rules concerning contractual arrangements between landlords and tenants, it does not intrude into the workings of the free-enterprise system.

#### Regional projects investment program

The new regional projects investment program has been allocated \$2.61m and forms an important part of the Government's commitment to encourage and accelerate the development of high value-added, export-oriented manufacturing and tradeable services enterprises throughout Queensland. The program will encourage regional agencies to investigate and to market opportunities to targeted Australian and overseas investors. In other words, a bottom-up approach is being taken to industry development by which local groups are able to decide their own agenda on industrial development issues rather than

the Government imposing decisions upon them from on high. The program includes also a range of incentives for potential investors to encourage them to set up new projects throughout the State.

#### Women in manufacturing

In line with the Goss Government's commitment to a fair go for Queensland women, funds have been provided for the appointment of a departmental officer to develop fully a three-year plan in consultation with industry, unions and other Government bodies and experts to identify and develop cost-effective strategies to realise fully the economic potential associated with the greater employment of women in all areas of industry. The Goss Government will work to ensure that women are able to take their rightful place in the work force, whatever their chosen profession. This State can only benefit from the realisation of the economic potential of women working in the industrial sector. Sweeping changes have been made to the approach of this State to business, industry and regional development matters. No longer will business have to deal with an outmoded and neglected administrative area. The staff of my department will be able to focus on goals and work in an environment in which they are given responsibility and greater autonomy. New and updated programs have been and are being introduced. Given those changes, the department will be able to focus on giving effective and efficient service to business and industry. Taxpayers of Queensland will know that they are finally getting service and efficiency from the business and industry portfolio area.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr J. N. Goss): Order! I inform the Committee that, on the Vote, I propose to allow a full discussion on the whole of the ramifications of a department (Consolidated Revenue, and Trust and Special Funds).

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

**Mr BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.50 p.m.): In no other area of Government activity has the failure of the Goss Government been more apparent than the Estimates for Manufacturing, Commerce and Small Business or, as it is now known, Business, Industry and Regional Development—or whatever Dr Coaldrake wishes to call it. As Queensland approaches the first anniversary of Labor rule, it is important to note that the Government and the Minister have been unable to attract one major industrial development project to this State. They have not attracted one investment dollar or one job to Queensland in a year that has been a complete waste of time for the manufacturing sector. At the same time, they have presided over a graveyard full of lost opportunities. Now, all of a sudden, by decree of the Public Sector Management Commission, the department has a new name and a new image. It is now the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development. Whatever happened to the announcement after the election that the name of the department was being changed from Industry Development to Manufacturing and Commerce in an attempt to give it more focus? Twelve months later, it is back where it started. What about the statement by the Premier following the review of the Small Business Development Corporation that a small-business Ministry was being re-established to give a focus to small business? A crucial recommendation of that review was thrown out by Dr Coaldrake. One minute, Queensland does not have a Minister for Small Business; then it does, and now it does not. This year, the Minister has had to resign and be reappointed three times.

Honourable members may ask who sets the Government's agenda in respect of economic development. Is it the Premier? Is it Dr Coaldrake? Is it the minders in the Premier's office? It is surely not the Minister. Unfortunately, the Estimates relate to a department that no longer exists, that does not have a director-general and in which morale is at rock bottom. It is a department that used to be pivotal to attracting industry to this State. It has been reduced to a pile of ashes swept into a wastepaper bin in the corner of the Cabinet room. That is the same bin that already holds some of the projects

that the department should have been actively involved in. Projects such as the multifunction polis, the Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone, the Comalco Boyne Island smelter expansion and the China Steel proposal have been lost because this State no longer has a focus for industrial development. It has a department that is a plaything of Dr Coaldrake.

The Estimates debate today allows me to put the record of this Minister and this Government on the table. Soon after the election of the Goss Government, the self-proclaimed economic gurus at the Public Service Management Commission decided that a number of changes had to be made to the charter of the Department of Industry. First of all, the name had to change. They had to rid themselves of the vestiges of the past, even down to removing plaques from walls. Then they had to get rid of the trade and investment function and the Queensland-China Council. They had to get rid of regional development. They had to get rid of the Government computer centre. They had to get rid of part of the technology function that went over to that enormous technological boffin, the Minister for Administrative Services. That left the Minister for Manufacturing and Commerce with the SBDC and the industrial estates program, both of which were immediately placed under review. So we must question just what the Minister has been doing for the past year. When one starts to run through the projects, it becomes clear. Nothing! Where was the Minister when the Government was locked in negotiations over the sale of the Gladstone Power Station, which would facilitate the Comalco smelter expansion? The Premier could not trust his Minister with these negotiations and decided to pass them over to public servants within the Premier's Department.

**Mr Littleproud:** And Mr Ian McLean.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** And Mr Ian McLean, as the honourable member for Condamine suggests.

This project was one that quite clearly fell within the ambit of manufacturing and commerce. It is listed at No. 38 in the Minister's major projects and development book, yet the Minister has had no involvement in the negotiations. He was not standing up to the Premier and telling him that the project was worth over \$2 billion in investment and would involve up to 1 000 new jobs. He sat back and he watched. As a result, Comalco is actively pursuing expansion in Chile and has commissioned feasibility studies for extensions of smelters at Bell's Bay in Tasmania. While the Queensland Government dithers, yet another major project is lost. This State cannot afford to pass up the opportunity of expanding our production of aluminium. The export potential of the aluminium industry is highlighted by the fact that, in the medium term, demand is exceeding supply. It is interesting that the only major smelters that are coming on line and which would have addressed this shortfall are in Kuwait and Iraq. There exists a very real opportunity for Queensland to take the lead. Honourable members do not have to believe me. For their information, I will table an article which sets out these points and which, by the way, was written by Mr Andrew Stewart, a member of the Minister's Small Business Corporation Board. The window of opportunity can only be grasped if this Government can swallow its collective pride and acknowledge that the long-term benefits will exceed the perceived short-term costs.

I now turn to China Steel. That project involved \$8 billion in investment and a potential of some 10 000 new jobs. It had the potential to transform the economy of Gladstone. It had the potential to significantly enhance Australia's export stocks, notwithstanding the effect it would have on the Queensland economy.

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I take the point made by the honourable member for Cunningham. The honourable member for Port Curtis has been deafening by his silence.

When I left the Ministry in September last year, negotiations with China Steel were progressing soundly. Soon after the election, the Minister was presented with a document containing a confidential bid on behalf of the Government of Queensland. That document

clearly set out what we could offer China Steel. The Minister had no understanding of the concept, let alone the figures, so he passed it over to the apparatchiks in the Premier's Department for their advice. Subsequent advice from the Premier's office was that the document should be forwarded to headquarters in Canberra to be vetted by John Button. While all of this was going on, the Prime Minister was actively supporting Newcastle's bid to locate the China Steel project in that city. So, courtesy of the Government, Queensland's bid becomes the property of Canberra. Yet the Minister stood up in this place and in Gladstone and told everyone that Queensland never had a chance to secure China Steel. "We were never in the race", he said. Then why, in the department's annual report, in the section that deals with overseas travel, does No. 3 in the department have three trips to Taiwan credited against his name, the purpose for which is listed as China Steel negotiations? Queensland was well and truly in the race for China Steel and it is quite proper to lay some of the blame at the feet of this Government for the fact that it is now not coming to this State. The National Party Government would have shown absolute commitment in its efforts to secure that project.

The pathetic circumstances surrounding the decision to close down the Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone highlighted, above all else, that this Government has no understanding of industry. The zone was established—

**Mr Elliott:** In his own electorate.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In his own electorate, as the honourable member said.

The Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone was established to give north Queensland an identity in the board rooms of the world. It gave the north a focus and a distinctive marketing edge. For the first time, the business community of northern Queensland had a competitive advantage in the various incentives offered, which were far more than Crown industrial estates, and a marketing advantage which resulted from the activities of the Enterprise Zone Corporation. There was no doubt that the Minister supported it. In an article in the *Courier-Mail* titled "Bigger business zone supported" Minister Smith clearly acknowledged the wide level of support for the zone. He indicated his personal support and even foreshadowed the expansion of its boundaries.

**Mr Elliott:** A lack of confidence.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** A sad lack of confidence, as the honourable member says. It came as a surprise to the Opposition when the Government moved to close down the zone and establish a new regional development program. It must have come as an even greater surprise to the Minister, who just happens to represent the electorate of Townsville East. He had to return to his electorate and sell this foolish, inane, short-sighted Government decision. It was little wonder that the *Townsville Bulletin* immediately called for his resignation and stated—

"If this is the best he can do for his region, even with the benefit of a portfolio, then he may as well fulfil the rumours and resign."

The story becomes more interesting when one considers that the enterprise zone board was, according to the Labor Mayor of Townsville, close to finalising up to \$100m in projects. Suddenly and without warning, and contrary to all the Minister's statements, the companies involved in these negotiations were negotiating with a board that no longer existed. The companies were trying to secure incentives but had no idea whether or not they were still available. It is appropriate on the occasion of this Estimates debate that the Minister outline to the Chamber the status of the lost enterprise zone projects—projects such as a 3 000-job aircraft maintenance facility, a gold refinery, a methanol and ethanol plant and a major new sugar refinery. The Minister should tell this Chamber how negotiations are going in respect of these lost projects. In an industrial sense, the axing of the zone was extremely short-sighted. The Regional Projects and Investment Bureau, which replaces the zone and is now under this Minister's control, will simply be unable to achieve the same results for north Queensland. The Opposition does not argue against the need for regional development, but, quite apart from the rest of the

State, the Government must acknowledge the potential growth in north Queensland. That must be part and parcel of a specific Government incentive program. I look forward to the day when, on behalf of the conservative Government, I return to north Queensland and announce a bigger and better enterprise zone than the one that previously existed.

**Mr Beattie:** You will be 125 years of age. You won't live that long.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The honourable member does not know how much on the nose this Minister is in north Queensland. The announcement that the National Party will make will receive favourable support from the people who have been scathing in their condemnation of the Minister.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I can understand the sensitivity of the do-nothings opposite. I turn now to consider the multifunction polis. Although this project came under the auspices of the Premier's Department, the former Department of Industry Development was significantly involved in the development of this concept. It was always my feeling that, if the Department of Industry Development had been allowed to run the MFP from day one, the likelihood of the project staying in Queensland would have been enhanced. The MFP has now gone and the events surrounding the loss of that project have been well canvassed in this place. I point out that, whichever way one looks at the arguments for and against the MFP, there is no doubt that Queensland and the Gold Coast have lost something special. We have lost an opportunity to interact and participate with the Pacific rim countries and to develop Queensland's value-added industries. More importantly, we lost the opportunity to become more relevant in the world in which we live. I urge the Government, through the Minister and what is left of his department, to pursue every avenue towards creating a mini-MFP to incorporate the favourable aspects of what was proposed on that Gold Coast site.

Members of the Opposition have seen little evidence of any real commitment thus far. There has been lots of empty rhetoric from the Premier and, as is so often the case, the difference between the rhetoric and the performance is a gap a mile wide. Another special opportunity exists on Cape York in the form of the spaceport. That project is the single most important industrial development in the history of Australia. We will get only one chance and we must get it right. The spaceport project is about more than simply launching rockets. The project has the potential to attract major new aerospace and associated industries to Queensland. It concerns me that the closing down of the enterprise zone will impair the ability of Queensland to attract allied aerospace industries. I point out to the Minister that a similar and increasingly successful enterprise zone under new management in Darwin may be in a position to attract industries that would otherwise have come to Queensland if this State's enterprise zone had continued in existence. It is about time the Minister showed a little interest in the spaceport project, because there has been a deathly silence. Where has the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development been whilst the Minister for Environment and the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs have been setting their own agenda up at the cape?

**Mr Littleproud:** Lost, like Leichhardt.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** As the member for Condamine suggests, lost like Leichhardt. I note with interest that last year the Minister said in this Chamber that in his opinion the spaceport had only a 30 per cent chance of getting off the ground. I believe that under his stewardship and because of the lack of commitment he has shown, the project has an even lower probability of success.

I turn now to the Gladstone Special Steel project which, despite the Premier's recent interest, was proposed by the National Party Government. Suddenly the Premier and the Minister seem publicly interested in the Gladstone Special Steel project. However, let us have a look at the negotiations behind the scenes and how the Minister is messing up another project. I ask: what about the assurances given by the Premier to the Gladstone Special Steel mill consortium in respect of the second feasibility study for the

project? Those assurances have not been honoured. I ask: has the money for the second feasibility study that was promised by the Premier been delivered by the QIDC? The answer is, "No it has not." Look at what happened when the top executives of a large international company that had a major development proposal before the Government attempted to visit the Treasurer—they got only as far as one of his advisers—an ALP apparatchik. I understand that the first question asked by the self-appointed industrial expert and Labor Party hack was, "Can you assure us that your company will not go broke?" Needless to say, the executives concerned left rather quickly, questioning the Government's commitment to the project.

What about the Minister's recent claims that the industrial estates program will be wound down? Gladstone Special Steel was supposed to be going to the Crown industrial estate at Yarwun. Given the Minister's recent announcement, is this still the case? That information is straight out of the Minister's project handbook. If the Minister does not know the handbook that he tabled in the Parliament, that is not my fault. I would not expect the Minister to know much about that project or the negotiations entered into by the Premier while he was overseas because the Minister for Industry was not invited to join the delegation. At a time when the Premier was in the board rooms of the world negotiating in respect of major developments, the Minister for Industry was declared to be excess baggage.

To get the pitiful record of this Minister into perspective, let us consider for a moment the projects that were secured by the previous Government and opened this year by Mr Goss and Mr Smith. They include the ICI Company, which is a group of chemical manufacturers. This project represented a \$80m investment in Gladstone, but the company was frightened and chased out of Queensland by the member for Lytton—the man who is now the Deputy Premier. Minproc was another project negotiated by the previous Government. It was sought out by the National Party administration and represented an investment of \$70m in Gladstone. Digital Computers on the Gold Coast was a project worth \$100m. Two years ago it was announced by me in Boston, but was recently opened by the Premier who now, not surprisingly, wants to take the credit for it. Colgate-Palmolive has also been referred to by the Minister. The project involved a \$65m facility on the Gold Coast Crown industrial estate. Fisher and Paykel, New Zealand's largest whitegoods manufacturer, invested \$25m in Stage 1 of a new plant at Cleveland. That was also referred to by the Minister, but it had been announced and secured by the previous Government. The sod-turning took place just before the election—just as work started on the Digital project before the election and on the ICI project. The Wallumbilla-Gladstone natural gas pipeline represented an investment of \$110m which was suddenly and hypocritically embraced by the man who is now Premier and who, when Leader of the Opposition, opposed it. The QBLIC initiative was announced this year by the Minister, but had been provided out of money allocated in the 1989-90 Ahern Budget. The opening of the small business office in Mackay was also made possible by the provision that was made in the previous National Party Budget.

This Government's great failure in industry development is its forlorn, almost pathetic strategy of sitting back and waiting for major companies to come to it. It is simply not pro-active. The only reason that the previous Government attracted the companies I have mentioned and was able to facilitate massive expansion by Arnotts in Brisbane and NQEA in Cairns was that members of the National Party were out there winning projects for Queensland. This Government seeks to attract investment through the medium of the party apparatchik—a new species of political animal introduced into Queensland from the ALP Government zoos interstate. These minders haunt every ministerial office and report directly to the Premier's principal policy adviser—the Minister without portfolio. They render the Cabinet and the Westminster Government almost irrelevant. They are the true power-brokers in doing business in Queensland, and Ministers are rarely left to their own devices.

Mr Temporary Chairman, I cannot let this opportunity pass without defending some of the dedicated and experienced public servants in the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development who have been confronted by the PSMC review

and the acceptance of that report by this so-called Minister. I am not prepared to name the officers concerned because I know what will happen. I know how the knife has been wielded and I know how the previous director-general was stabbed in the back by the Minister he trusted. What a disgraceful insight into Coaldrake and his commission! It was so adequately leaked by a Government Minister that the department contained 280 employees and no-one knew what any of them did. No mention was made of the fact that, by PSMC direction, the department was culled to two-thirds of its staff establishment. Moreover, there was the revelation that Industry Development under Borbidge had failed to pick up defence contracts. This was supposed to be a scandal. Contrary to the Coaldrake assessment embraced by this pitiful Minister, annual purchasing information provided by the Department of Defence shows that the value of contracts placed on Queensland companies by the defence contracting office increased from \$28.616m in 1987-88 to \$67.863m in 1989-90.

**Mr Smith:** Wrong again.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The Minister has turned himself into the greatest joker. These are Federal Defence Department figures. If the Minister does not want to believe them, he should talk to the Federal Minister for Defence. The greatest joke of all was the assertion by the Minister that Industry Development under Borbidge had secured only \$1.6m in offsets. The Minister did not know what offsets were. They have nothing to do with defence contracts. He could not answer a question asked in the House. He should know that they are accumulated only when Governments procure from overseas. I make no apology for a low offsets figure because, unlike this Government, I am prepared to support local industry. I wait patiently for the Minister to come to grips with the concept of offsets.

The next Coaldrake assumption that was embraced by this Minister was in respect of the Crown industrial estates program. It was alleged that the program had produced little more than spear grass and a skating rink. Again, no mention was made of ICI and there was no mention of Colgate-Palmolive, Power Brewing, NQEA and Fisher and Paykel. Of course, there was also no mention of Gladstone Special Steel because the Premier has been in Europe promising what he is now going to abolish. These statements do nothing for what is left of morale in the department. The public servants in the department have had enough of this Minister and his knife-wielding. The department has had its name changed three times in a year, and the last change returned the title to the first name. The department has lost its status. The departmental officers are leaderless. They have no director-general, and the Minister is likely to soon be replaced. I place on record my support for those public servants and the very fine job that they did for me when I was Minister.

In the short time that is left, I wish to address small business. Many of the pitiful performances of the Minister in respect of small business were outlined recently when the Queensland Small Business Corporation Bill was debated. I reiterate my support for the Queensland Small Business Corporation and hope that it achieves the same results as the corporation that it replaced in name only. The small-business community of this State know that they have been conned. They, along with the Opposition and the Federal Small Business Minister, David Beddall, successfully argued for the reinstatement of the title "Minister for Small Business". I refer to a press release from the Premier, which stated—

"Mr Smith's title"—

this is the second time it was changed—

"had been changed to Minister for Manufacturing, Commerce and Small Business."

The press release stated further—

"This highlighted the importance the State Government placed on small business and the significance of it to the future of Queensland."

The Premier went on to say—

"It is important that Geoff Smith's title reflects the new direction of the SBDC and the Government's commitment to working with small business throughout the State."

So what have we got now? We have the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development. There is no mention whatsoever of small business. Gone! Honourable members should be aware that the Opposition views the small-business community far more seriously.

**Mr Smith:** That's pathetic.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Is the Minister saying that the Premier is pathetic? I am quoting the words of the Premier and the Minister is saying that what I am saying is pathetic. He is saying that the Premier is pathetic. I want to tell the Minister in his remaining days in office that the Opposition views the small-business community far more seriously than he does. It will be maintaining small business in the relative shadow ministerial title. I will also continue to criticise this Government and its colleagues in Canberra for decisions which adversely affect the small-business community of this State.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Labor Party members have been saying that for 10 year, and I am still here. I intend to be around for a while yet. The Government should remember that small business employs large numbers of Queenslanders and that it contributes so much to the revenue side of the State Budget. When I was Small Business Minister, I was proud, as part of the Cabinet, to have been able to deliver significant rebates to small-business people in the growth areas of this State who had received extravagant increases in land tax. In this State, we have a situation in which land tax receipts are up \$99m from the Budget estimate last year to \$190m this year, with \$60m of it coming from the Gold Coast. What has the Minister for Small Business done to negotiate some sort of land tax reform with his cohort the Treasurer? Absolutely nothing. There is no commitment. He has betrayed the small-business community, just as he betrayed his department, just as he stabbed his department in the back, and just as he assassinated the director-general who trusted him. Neither I nor the Opposition stand to gain from criticising the performance of the Government in respect of industrial development. If it was doing something constructive, something intelligent and something that was in the best interests of the people of Queensland, we would be prepared to support it. What has the Minister told us today? He has told us about all the projects that the previous National Party Government initiated, negotiated, and turned the sod on. Twelve months into his tenure as Industry Minister, the Minister has not been able to produce one major industrial development project for this State. He has destroyed the morale of his department. He has assassinated some of his senior public servants. He has not been prepared to stand up to the Nazi Gestapo tactics of the Premier's minders and Dr Peter Coaldrake. Today, the Minister's record can be seen for what it is.

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

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave) (5.19 p.m.): The former Department of Manufacturing and Commerce, which is now the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development, plays a significant role in the economic development of this State. I wish firstly to refer to an initiative developed by the previous Government which has been carried through by the present Minister. On 19 April last year, the House was advised of the proposed establishment of the Queensland Business Licensing Centre. Because of its obvious advantages, that initiative was taken up by the present Minister, the Honourable Geoff Smith, and developed enthusiastically. Anyone who has been involved in any way in the establishment or expansion of a business enterprise would have experienced the sense of frustration which comes from the need to obtain information about approvals, permits and the necessary licences. In the past, most of that information

had required the seeker to approach numerous organisations and departments. That, of course, was inefficient and a deterrent to the interested parties.

When the concept was introduced to the House, the following benefits were listed—  
cost savings to business by reducing to a few minutes the time taken to find out which Government licences, permits and approvals were necessary;  
reduction in the cost of administering the Government licensing system;  
helping to establish more businesses in Queensland by simplifying procedures;  
attracting more interstate and overseas business to Queensland;  
demonstrating the Government's commitment to business and industry; and  
reducing the uncertainty many people intending to enter business experienced when they needed to know Government regulations that affect their business.

The reasons given then are just as valid today.

The approved budget for QBLIC for the 1990-91 financial year is \$670,000, made up as follows—  
Client services and packages \$215,000  
Operational business licences development \$72,000  
Salaries and related costs \$302,000  
Branch overheads \$81,000

Besides the benefits that I have already outlined, broader goals for the program are threefold. Firstly, QBLIC will reduce the cost to the public in terms of time, money and frustration in obtaining State Government licence information. Secondly, it should improve the compliance rates with State Government licence requirements. Thirdly, it will permit the establishment and maintenance of a database covering all State Government regulatory controls over business activity in Queensland. The program was launched in April this year, and the department used the previous 12-month period to accomplish several fundamental preparatory tasks. Information was collected on over 880 State Government licences, permits and approvals, with details being verified by the relevant departments and entered onto the database. Before being put on line, the QBLIC system was comprehensively tested for suitability and operational efficiency. Of course, there was also the need to physically set up the central QBLIC office.

In the period from April to the end of September, QBLIC has handled some 3 879 inquiries and has sent out to clients 3 773 packages covering details relating to 15 528 licences. That is a good start indeed. In the process, the centre has collected valuable statistical data relating to the types of business generating inquiries, identifying the regions from which these types of inquiries originate and the ages of persons intending to establish a business.

To enhance the quality and the scope of the service provided by QBLIC, action is in hand to include on the database State Government operational business licences. I am informed by the Minister that this project is due for completion by 30 June 1991, and early indications point to an additional 250 licences being included in this category. Total costs estimated at \$72,000 would include the hiring of temporary staff to undertake the processes of collection, collation, verification and data input. In addition, further costs will be incurred by the use of computer consultancies, the hiring of computer hardware and, in some cases, the purchase of computer hardware to facilitate expansion of the database storage. In the area of wages and salaries, departmental records indicate an establishment of key positions, comprising one manager, an assistant manager, three information officers and one administrative assistant.

The long-term vision for QBLIC is for it to become a one-stop information shop for all business regulatory requirements from the three levels of government. For this to become a reality, considerable sums of money will need to be expended. A planned approach is an absolute must if this vision is to be achieved. Such an approach would necessitate the inclusion of State Government operational licences on the database—which is now being undertaken—the inclusion of Federal Government regulatory

requirements on the database itself and, furthermore, an investigation into the practicability of including similar requirements in the local government sphere. The local government information would obviously have to be dealt with on a cost-benefit basis. Local authorities—and there are 134 of them—are each in their own right a one-stop shop. Perhaps investigation will reveal that there is no pressing need to include this area on the database.

I turn to the business regulation review unit. The Goss Government is committed to the establishment of an effective mechanism for the review and reform of business regulation in Queensland. Priority has been given to approving the establishment of a business regulation review unit during the forthcoming financial year. The 1990-91 Budget provides for \$1,518,000 to be expended on the establishment and running costs of this review unit. \$385,000 has been set aside for the actual establishment of the unit, with a further \$650,000 going towards salaries and other related costs. Major projects are expected to require outlays in the vicinity of \$483,000. The business regulation review unit will play a key role in the investigation of complaints about business regulations. It will also involve itself in the promotion of processes leading to the elimination of overlaps, duplications and conflicts which sometimes arise between Commonwealth and State jurisdictions.

The carrying out of these objectives will require the systematic review of business legislation and regulation. The unit will need to focus its attention on those requirements that either inhibit industry establishment or on operations in this State that negatively impact on efficiency and competitiveness in both the domestic and export markets. It is accepted that certain regulations are vital and necessary to protect consumers, to safeguard the environment and to protect individual rights. However, I am sure that all honourable members will agree that some regulations are not only unnecessary but also have an adverse effect on business operations and efficiency. It must be pointed out that the business regulation review unit is exactly that; it is a review body, not a reforming body. Only Government can pursue the process of reform.

Unit establishment will comprise 11 approved positions. These include two senior executives, five project officers and four administration officers. Preliminary work has begun on the development of a forward work program for the unit. Accommodation has been secured on Level 6, 80 Albert Street, Brisbane, and will be available for occupancy by the end of this month. Networking has already commenced with senior representatives from Government agencies, industry and the trade unions in order to better identify business regulations that the review unit should treat as priority cases. On present indications, this important Government initiative will be fully operational by the beginning of 1991.

In moving on to the industrial estates program, I refer honourable members to an article in the *Courier-Mail* of 6 November 1990 which refers to a report that was compiled by the Public Sector Management Commission and claims that the report heavily criticises existing arrangements for Government industrial estates, which have cost in the order of \$165m to develop. The article states—

"Industries were not attracted to the estates because of outdated legislation which did not allow food or drink canteens or even accountants on the land."

The industrial estates program is one of the high-profile programs of the department, with an annual budget approaching \$40m. It covers 68 industrial estates, including a research park and two technological parks. The stated objective of the program is to promote overall industrial development within the State by providing serviced industrial land on estates that are appropriately zoned. In addition, factory buildings may be provided for industries that have been identified as bringing significant benefits to the State.

In the light of criticisms such as the one that appeared in the *Courier-Mail* and the obvious need for any department or program to reassess its operations and effectiveness, a review is long overdue. An Executive Council minute of 7 June this year approved the commissioning of the firm Coopers and Lybrand to undertake the review of the

industrial estates program. The minute also approved the expenditure of a sum not exceeding \$130,000 to meet the cost of completing the study, along with associated travel, accommodation and other contingencies. It is important that the department itself has in place a mechanism to monitor the progress of the consultancy firm. To facilitate this, a study advisory committee was established and was chaired by a departmental representative. That committee included representatives of the following agencies: the Public Sector Management Commission; the Department of the Premier, Economic and Trade Development; the Department of Housing and Local Government; the Treasury Department; the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development; and, of course, the Department of Lands.

The committee met at key stages during the study to assess progress being made and to guide the direction of the overall review. It also assisted in the assessment of the consultant's final report and will have had input into the formulation of recommendations for the future operations of the industrial estates program. The last day of this month has been set down as the date scheduled for the report to be submitted to the Minister. After discussions with Treasury and the Public Sector Management Commission, the consultants were requested to carry out a task additional to their original commission, that is, to undertake a detailed financial analysis of the industrial estates program and to formulate a financial model. That model is expected to assist the department in determining rental streams and return on investment. Obviously, the increase in the scope of works undertaken by the consultants will add an extra cost factor. This cost overrun amounts to \$6,000 and funds have been allocated from within the strategic development regions 1990-91 budget.

In these tight economic times, Governments are less likely to increase departmental funding and it is not uncommon to see cut-backs being made. An increase of \$150,000 on last financial year brings this year's budget for the department up to the figure of \$4,232,000. This indicates the importance that the Government places on the continued growth of small business in this State. Recently, when speaking in the House on the Queensland Small Business Corporation Bill, I provided figures that clearly emphasised the importance of small business to the national and State economies. During the last decade, Queensland has led the nation in growth in the number of small-business operators. The first five years of the eighties saw the Australian average growth figure at 15.39 per cent, with Queensland doing much better on the higher figure of 17.16 per cent. This strong position continued through the second half of the decade with this State's growth remaining strong at 15.1 per cent. Statistics provided by the department indicate that a little over 50 per cent of the total Queensland labour force is in the small-business sector. This figure represents more than a quarter of a million wage and salary earners whose livelihood depends on the continued success of 200 000-plus small-business enterprises.

The last financial year has been a busy one for the department. The number of consultations has increased by 11 per cent on the figures for the previous year, rising to 6 720. In the valuable area of supplying basic information, 12 176 kits were provided, which in itself is a 26.2 per cent increase. Of significance was the opening of regional offices in Mackay and on the Sunshine Coast. This decentralisation of the department's service rests well with the Government, given its stated policy of regionalisation. The passage of the Queensland Small Business Corporation Act will reaffirm the Goss Government's commitment to this State's business sector. The corporation's newly defined role places greater emphasis on the availability of a wider range of advisory and information services. There is a general understanding that Government should not duplicate services adequately provided by the private sector. The Queensland Small Business Corporation will complement training, advisory and information-providing initiatives available through the private sector itself. Contrary to repeated claims by Opposition members, the Goss Government, especially the Minister responsible for this important portfolio, is determined to see small business in this State given sufficient Government assistance to realise its potential. I support the Estimates.

**Mr CONNOR** (Nerang) (5.33 p.m.): It was very interesting to see the past Minister for Small Business speaking to the new Minister for Small Business about land tax. It was a bit like the pot calling the kettle black. This evening, I wish to speak, where possible, from a bipartisan point of view. It is extremely important that the Government develops the right strategy for small business in Queensland, so rather than be critical, I will offer some suggestions and comment, and I hope that the Minister will consider them in future decision-making.

I am aware that the Minister is looking very closely at the Retail Shop Leases Act and I commend him for his actions, consultation and investigations. There are obviously many problems in that area and I look forward to the Minister's presenting legislation to the Chamber.

I do not know whether the Minister is considering the proposal for a standard commercial lease for shops and the like. A standard lease obviously would be quite a comprehensive document that would have to cover many specific areas, but I do not believe that its drawing up would be an insurmountable project. Many large organisations have leases that perhaps could be used as a model and, as I have previously pointed out, the problem is that many of the current leases that are in operation are not in accord with the retail shop leases legislation. I believe that much of the problem relates to ignorance, especially on the part of the shop-keeper who signs the lease. Unfortunately, because tenants have signed unlawful leases, many landlords still believe that they should live up to those leases. There would probably need to be many available options, deletions and, towards the end, a schedule to deal with the specific concerns of a particular tenant. A standard lease does work; for instance, the Real Estate Institute of Queensland's tenancy agreement for private homes. There is no reason why there cannot be a standard lease for shops and factories.

The benefits to the shopkeeper and the landlord would be great. Firstly, they would know that their lease would stand up in court and that it was a responsible and legal document. Secondly, being a standard document, it would be dramatically cheaper than the present situation where a tenant must go to a solicitor and draw up a lease each time at his own expense. It is not unusual for just the framing of the lease to cost thousands of dollars. That cost does not include stamp duty or other costs. Many solicitors are not fully aware of the exact requirements of the Retail Shop Leases Act and so quite often they miss facets of the lease that are not necessarily in the best interests of the tenant and quite often are unlawful. Not only would the rights of the tenant be enhanced by a standard lease, but also his costs would be reduced dramatically. I am not suggesting that such a lease should be compulsory. I am suggesting that it should be available and promoted and, where possible, Government agencies such as the newly named Small Business Development Corporation should actively promote it. That proposal has many merits and I think the Minister is probably aware of them. I understand that he has had approaches from organisations about a standard lease and I hope that he will look upon them favourably.

I will now move on to the issue of itinerant vendors. The Minister is no doubt aware that a Green paper on this subject has been published. At no stage would I like the Minister to think that I am against itinerant vendors, but it is important to consider what the original philosophy was behind itinerant vendors. In a vastly decentralised State such as Queensland, many areas are not fully serviced by shops, especially food outlets and the like. There is a place, and indeed in many cases a necessity, for itinerant vendors selling pies, pasties, sausage rolls, ice creams and the like, and no-one would like to see them become a thing of the past. However, in certain areas, itinerant vendors are certainly not appropriate.

An itinerant vendor competes directly with retail outlets that have to pay staff wages, rent, land tax and stamp duty and the considerable cost of leases to landlords who in turn have constructed buildings and created jobs, who have put in place quite a deal of capital goods and who are very much a part of the community through the payment of a considerable amount by way of rates. Established shop-keepers should not be disadvantaged by someone who has a \$5,000 van with a little oven in the back and who pays virtually no State charges, has very few overheads, generally employs no-one

and is competing directly with those shops. Now, I know that the vendors were never meant to compete directly with shops; the idea was that they would not be able to trade near existing shops. However, it has reached the stage at which small sandwich shops and the like are going broke.

I will now relate to the Minister some aspects of the Gold Coast Small Business Association's submission relating to mobile vendors. That association is concerned with two aspects. The first relates to small businesses which pay rates, maintenance, water charges, rent, etc. They are facing competition from vendors who are not subject to the same costs. It has now reached the stage at which this competition is coming from outside the City of the Gold Coast and therefore making no contribution to the Gold Coast City Council. The second aspect relates to hygiene, which is of the utmost importance in food preparation. The Gold Coast City Council admits that it does not have the power to inspect these vans as they quite often operate from private property.

The third submission was that established businesses make considerable contributions to public infrastructure through rates, etc. Mobile and standing vans take advantage of Government-funded roads. Vendors using public roads and infrastructure are partly funded through the rates and land tax paid by established businesses. Food vans move into new construction areas at a time when established businesses can make a healthy profit. The submission states that, because of roadside vendors, losses of between 25 per cent and 50 per cent are being recorded by businesses.

The Gold Coast Small Business Association is opposed to some of the proposals in the Green Paper. In its submission, the association set out its case in relation to proposed local authority powers of enforcement and control, and stated—

"The legislation should give Local Authorities sufficient power to enforce the new laws and give total control over vendors . . . Local Authorities be empowered to issue notices similar to the 'stop work notices' issued against illegal building sites or construction. This would then place the illegal vendor in breach of the court order if he does not cease the illegal activity."

On the subject of compensation, the submission stated—

" . . . the Small Business Association is very concerned about the proposal to allow compensation to existing vendors who do not receive a licence under the new legislation. It seems the Council feels that its hands are tied and it cannot act as strongly as it wishes.

Many existing vendors have licences but are not abiding by them.

This proposal is particularly unfair as Councils have not in the past issued the licences. It is unfair to have Local Authorities in fear of being taken to court, or having to pay out large sums of money for licences that they did not issue.

The Association is opposed to compensation and wants a fresh start under the new legislation."

The submission then dealt with operations on private property and stated—

"Councils should be given powers under the new legislation to fully control vendors everywhere, even on private property."

Submission No. 8 related to "Additional proposals by Australian Small Business Association" and stated—

"The Association wants only those vans which are linked to local businesses to receive vending licences. These vans would only be able to operate within 2.5 kilometres from that business . . . Many standing vans currently set up on the 'busiest' roads. This creates enormous traffic problems. Vehicles pulling out and off busy roads is not a desirable situation."

In fact, it is quite dangerous. Very careful consideration should be given to the licensing of and the restrictions placed upon these vendors. I do not begrudge any private enterprise having a go, but if shops have to pay their fair share in the overall scheme of things, I think they have some rights of protection.

I turn now to labour on-costs. As honourable members would know, labour on-costs are the costs of employing someone over and above his gross wage. In general, labour on-costs are things such as the 17.5 per cent leave loading, annual leave, public holidays, workers' compensation, payroll tax, superannuation, long-service leave and sick leave. Generally speaking, across Australia, labour on-costs amount to an additional 34 per cent of the employee's wage—in other words, about one-third. That means that it costs an employer an additional \$200 per week to employ the average worker on \$600 a week. I ask the Minister to give consideration to those labour on-costs because, with the current economic climate, the current growth in unemployment and the predictions that unemployment levels will be in double-digit figures by March next year, we need to look very closely at the cost of employing people. I am not suggesting at all that the actual gross wage should be used in this debate. I am looking only at the additional costs of employing people over and above their gross wage. Any way in which the Minister can reduce those on-costs will mean more jobs and more efficiency, and I believe that that will do a great service to Queensland.

I turn now to another matter relating to small business which I believe the Minister should consider, even though it, too, falls into the area of industrial relations. As honourable members know, at present, awards require that casuals be employed for a minimum of four hours. I can understand that, from an employee's point of view, when the cost of getting to and from work is taken into consideration, it is hardly worth while going to work for less than four hours. I understand that, and I can see justification in it. However, there are many instances in many industries in which employment for a minimum of four hours is totally unsuitable. Many of those instances will occur in the service areas, where people are just not required for any longer than two hours. I ask the Minister to look very closely at some mechanism that will allow people to be employed for a minimum of two hours, especially in relation to small business, restaurants, catering and the like. It may mean that quite a substantial loading has to be applied to that two-hour minimum. We really need to look at the gaps in the system—the casual jobs in the community—that can be filled.

Consideration needs to be given to the possibility of employing people wherever possible. I do not believe that, because of the inflexibility of the system, people should be on the dole when they do not necessarily need to be. I hope the Minister can see the potential for creating a number of new casual jobs. Employers cannot really justify employing someone for four hours when there is only two hours' work to be done. Perhaps employers themselves are working those extra hours. If an employer had the opportunity to employ a casual worker for two hours, he probably would. I believe that, with proper safeguards, the Minister can get around the problem of not diminishing the position of people who are presently employed on a four-hourly basis, thus creating more jobs.

**Mr Schwarten:** How is this Minister going to change that?

**Mr CONNOR:** He can relate small-business issues to the Minister for Industrial Relations. I hope that he has the backbone to stand up for small business in Queensland. I believe that he should do that.

I turn now to grants, research and development. Honourable members are talking about picking winners, which is a very dangerous and difficult process. The Labor Government has a very bad record for picking winners. I cite the case of WA Inc. The Minister should try to put small business and business in general on a fair and even playing field. The Queensland business community wants to get the Government out of its hair, out of its way and out of its back pocket.

When the Minister considers the business regulation review unit, I ask him to consider the inclusion of time blocks on all business forms. At present, bureaucrats take note of how long it takes to fill out a form. That time is then marked on the form. If they are given a target to reduce the aggregate times for filling out forms, in the long term that dramatically reduces the time that bureaucrats and business take to fill out

forms. That system, which is in practice in the United States, is working very effectively. I ask the Minister to consider that.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West) (5.47 p.m.): I am very pleased to join in this Estimates debate. I draw to the attention of the Committee some of the important activities that are being funded in the current Budget to assist manufacturing, commerce and small business in Queensland. Those initiatives are aimed at further stimulating economic activity in Queensland and providing increased job opportunities for all the people whom honourable members represent.

The Centre for Manufacturing Skills Development (CMSD) is the focus within the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development for National Industry Extension Services programs, which are commonly known as NIES. Those programs are a joint Commonwealth/State initiative aimed at enterprise improvement in the manufacturing and internationally-traded services sectors. Central to NIES programs is the need to improve the national balance of payments by promoting exports and import replacement. A key criterion for eligibility for NIES assistance is whether the company is exporting, has export potential or is subject to competition.

**Mr Dunworth:** Are you miming this?

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I enjoy it when the crowd in the telephone box at the back of the Chamber start interjecting. They sit squirming in their seats. The CMSD in Brisbane has 11 permanent and contract staff, with an additional four contract staff soon to be appointed. In Queensland, NIES has already been successful, with some 780 companies having started or completed consultancy projects at a cost of more than \$3.5m. A key feature of the delivery of NIES programs in Queensland has been the development of an extensive network of all kinds of industry assistance agencies in both the public and private sectors. NIES programs have been central to assisting companies as part of the quality-assurance aspect of the Queensland State purchasing policy. A central point for NIES programs is that, following a diagnosis of needs by departmental officers, all detailed advice to companies is provided by private-sector consultants who are engaged by the companies involved, not the department. NIES programs are a key part of the range of programs needed to meet the Government's announced aims of promoting exports and greater value-adding to Queensland's raw materials. It is firm departmental policy to provide a choice of consultants to manufacturers. The final choice of consultant rests with the manufacturer. It must be stressed that NIES is designed to assist enterprises with committed management and some resources to grow and export. It is not designed or suitable for companies in difficulty. The budget for all NIES programs for 1990-91 is \$4.4m, which is made up of a State contribution of \$1.1m, Commonwealth funding of almost \$2m and trust fund reserves of more than \$1.2m. The CMSD program in particular gets \$3.7m of the total \$4.4m.

I turn now to quality assessment, which this Government recently reviewed. The quality system requirements of the State purchasing policy came into force on 1 July this year. That involved the establishment of a centralised quality assessment unit which provides a service to Government agencies by carrying out assessment of the quality systems of suppliers to those agencies and other organisations that are subject to compliance with the quality assurance provisions of the State purchasing policy. The result is that the Government obtains the best-quality goods available for taxpayers' funds. The unit also provides advice to industry on Government buying practices. The unit employs eight people and has a budget allocation for the current financial year of \$367,000.

I refer to the Queensland Industry Information Service, which is known as QINDIS. For some time, the Department of Manufacturing and Commerce has produced a publication called the *Queensland Manufacturers' Directory*. Through that service, clients were able to obtain information about industry categories in specific volumes. However, the Government will replace that book with an up-to-date, more flexible service. QINDIS involves surveying a mailing list of 10 000 organisations and putting that information

onto a database, which will be used to promote business opportunities and to match the capabilities of Queensland companies with defence or aerospace opportunities or with overseas suppliers seeking offsets business partners. The database will also assist the department to develop plans to deliver better services to manufacturers. QINDIS will form a joint database with the Queensland industrial supplies office.

I turn now to the National Procurement Development Program, or NPDP, which provides important assistance for business in Queensland. That grant-funding scheme encourages market-led research and development for the commercialisation of products that have reached the prototype stage. Commercialisation is intended through the trialing and demonstration of those new products under the auspices of a partnership with a Government department or agency. For two and a half years—until the middle of this year—the NPDP was conducted entirely at Federal level. Thanks to the vision of the Goss Labor Government, on 1 July Queensland will join other States and Territories and the Commonwealth Government to provide a truly national scheme. Project funding under the NPDP is provided under an agreement with an applicant company. That agreement has operated for up to three years, with grant payments being made on a progress basis. This financial year, the Government has allocated \$525,000 for that scheme.

I turn to the Queensland State purchasing policy, which details the preferred procedures for the purchase by the State Government of manufactured goods and services. Those purchasing requirements are observed by Queensland Government departments, instrumentalities and agencies. On 1 July, the policy was amended to take account of the release of the public finance standards by Treasury and to incorporate other recent Government decisions that impacted on the policy, particularly the decision that confirmed the requirement for firms supplying goods to the Government to have a quality-management system in place, to which I have referred. The amended policy is referred to as the interim State purchasing policy and became necessary because of further policy changes, already foreshadowed at the time and especially concerning State Stores, which were bound to impact on the method by which Government purchasing is carried out. At the time of approving the interim policy and with the objective of having a revised State purchasing policy, the Government directed that a detailed review of State Government purchasing and procurement procedures and practices be undertaken. The objective of the Government is to ensure that Queensland taxpayers receive the best value possible for their dollar—something that the National Party made no attempt to do.

I turn to the issue of offsets as they relate to partnerships for development. Offsets in Government contracting have been operating in Australia since 1970 when they were introduced by the Defence Department. However, Queensland's involvement with offsets began only in 1986 with the manufactured goods offset policy in the State purchasing policy. The Department of Manufacturing and Commerce has a dual role with respect to offsets: firstly, as the State offset authority under the Australian Civil Offsets Agreement and, secondly, as the administering authority for Queensland's manufactured goods offset policy. In March 1988, the Australian Civil Offsets Agreement, or ACOA, came into effect. That agreement binds the Commonwealth and the States in a common purpose of seeking offsets from suppliers of imported goods and services. The ACOA pooled all Commonwealth civil and information-technology purchases, and the States included all of their purchases of information-technology equipment in the IT pool.

The objective of the Australian and Queensland offsets programs is to use Government purchasing power as a lever to develop and broaden Australia's manufacturing and technology base. Offsets in the information-technology field have, in the main, been replaced by the partnership for development program. Now, 21 transnationals have signed the partnership program. Under that arrangement, partnership companies undertake to invest 5 per cent of their Australian turn-over in research and development in Australia and to develop exports to the value of 50 per cent of hardware imports and 20 per cent of software imports over a seven-year program. Since its inception in 1988, investment in Queensland resulting from the partnership for development program is \$3.6m in

research and development and \$1.9m in exports. Four State contracts are being negotiated that are expected to result in offset liabilities in excess of \$4.5m. Offsets have had notable success in several sectors, including aviation, communications and information technology. The use of public expenditure as a mechanism for stimulating industrial growth, provided that it supports the concept of internationalising Queensland industry, is highly desirable. The Government intends to continue that activity and to extend it into targeted industry sectors. I recommend the Estimates to the Committee.

Sitting suspended from 5.59 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Condamine) (7.30 p.m.): In rising to speak on the Estimates of Business, Industry and Regional Development, I first of all touch on an issue I referred to during the recent debate on the Queensland Small Business Corporation Bill. I dealt with parochial matters in the electorate of Condamine. I appealed to the Minister, as the Minister in charge of regional development, to take note of the great benefit that came to the town of Dalby when the previous Government provided money for the re-establishment there from Sunshine in Melbourne of Connor Shea Napier. That made it the sole manufacturer of many types of agricultural equipment and has given diversity and greater breadth to the local economy. It was money well spent because it will yield quite a good dividend.

Since then, a new opportunity has arisen. I pay a tribute to the Minister because yesterday, when this new opportunity became known to me and I related it to him, he immediately showed interest and recognised its importance. He drew a comparison between it and what had been done for Connor Shea Napier. I am speaking about an oilseed crushing plant, which is presently located in Bourke. It has shown a willingness to relocate in Dalby for a couple of reasons, but mainly because of the raw product it uses. Basically, it has been crushing cottonseed and, by relocating in Dalby, it will have access to the sunflower seed which can be grown readily on the Darling Downs. I am told by the people who advised the agricultural extension that there is an opportunity for growing a new crop called rape. I am sure that members of the Cabinet, following the meeting in Toowoomba, are aware that the rural sector is looking for alternatives. This initiative could help on two counts. It could use the new crop, rape, which is showing signs of more profitability per acre than the traditional coarse grains and wheat. The second initiative is that it addresses the ideal of adding value to a local product. That part of Queensland is blessed with fertile soil and a skilled work force that knows how to get the best out of the soil. Introducing a new crop will add to the value of our natural resources. We can do a great deal with a small injection of money and the result will be something for the local people and the economy of Queensland. I appeal to the Minister and ask him to look favourably at providing some relocation costs. The firm has already identified an industrial building that it can use. The building has fallen into disuse because of the way the dairying industry has contracted. It would seem ideal if the company could relocate and start production in Dalby. I acknowledge that the Minister has shown interest. I will wait to get reports from him as to whether he can help these people. I do not expect the Government to go overboard, but I hope that it can recognise the potential. If the Government made a small input, we could reap a handsome dividend.

When I was speaking to the Minister privately and also in the Chamber he recognised that, if regional development is confined to Toowoomba, very little of the real growth will benefit the Darling Downs area. However, if money is injected into the provincial towns on the Darling Downs, those centres will benefit and so will Toowoomba, because everybody on the Darling Downs seems to gravitate to Toowoomba for such things as education, health and business.

**Mr Beattie:** What other centres are you talking about?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I am talking about places such as Warwick, Pittsworth, Dalby and Chinchilla. They have natural resources for farming and if we can establish value-added industries, that is the way to go. We are not talking about \$25m or \$70m projects;

we are talking about ones that are suitable in size to be viable and, very often, ones that are associated with a locally developed product.

I now divert my attention to small business and industry—the productive sector of Queensland. It could be called the engine room of Queensland. It is the economic viability of this sector that is vital. The viability of small business and industry in general depends on a mix of things, some of which are cost of input, world markets, local markets and Government financial policies. Within Government financial policies I could list interest rates, taxes and charges. All of those things are within the control of Governments in general, not simply the State Government, so it is important that all three levels of government get the mix right. I was interested yesterday in listening to the debate in the Chamber. The honourable member for Caboolture spoke about the balance of certain factors which have an effect on the viability of the economy of the State. He spoke about a balance in such things as taxation on the productive sector and, flowing on from that and very closely allied to it, the amount of funding directed from State resources into the welfare services area. It is vital that we have the use of some funds to promote further productivity. If the aspirations of those people who have been making speeches in this Chamber since the election are to be realised, there is a great danger that this Labor Government will follow the trend set by Whitlam, Hawke, Wran and Cain. My fear that this will happen was reinforced as I listened tonight to two speeches from the other side of the House. It seemed to me that they were pretty strong on the macro planning—the reviews, the committees and the planning. However, when it came to making those things work—getting productivity out of the planning—it seemed that the Whitlam years were the years when the macro plans foundered and put Australia into a state of indebtedness from which it has never recovered.

**Ms Power** interjected.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I will take that interjection, because, as I understand it, when Gough Whitlam took office Australia had a lot of overseas reserves. Gough Whitlam had his master plan to change the face of Australia and said, "It's time", but in fact in only three years the position had changed to the point at which Australia had a huge overseas debt. Malcolm Fraser then took office, tried to put things back on the right track and make Australia viable again. Bob Hawke had the audacity to say that he had inherited the mess in the form of a \$7.5 billion national debt. Today, the debt is approximately \$150 billion and this fellow Paul Keating maintains that this is a beautiful set of figures!

It is my fear that the Queensland Labor Government has a tendency to go down the same track. It seems to have an obsession with the redistribution of wealth that it puts under the banner of social justice. I have heard Government members talk about economic matters and I acknowledge that the honourable member for Caboolture probably has a better understanding of economics and accounting than I do. I merely try to understand general trends. However, I understand that a fine balance must be kept between Government expenditure and receipts. The Government must ensure that expenditure does not overstuff the productive sector and that productivity does not fall. The cost of social services, which Government members are so keen to be associated with, becomes a further burden on the State economy. The end result is a smaller level of productivity to service a larger pool of welfare services. It is important that the Government look closely at the balance that must be struck between allowing the productive sector to remain viable whilst at the same time not putting too much money into social welfare services. The more productivity there is in the State and the more profitability there is in the private sector, the better the ability of the Government to meet its very worthwhile social service aims. These aims are not exclusive to Labor Party Governments. All Governments of Australia of all political complexions have strong feelings about social justice and looking after the people who cannot look after themselves. However, there is a danger if it all gets out of balance.

I have looked closely at this State Budget and the first signs are there. The Labor Party Government has taken a lot of credit for the initiatives contained in this Budget.

The Government said that there would be no new taxes. There is a furphy going round that the charges have not risen, but there have been about 200 or 300 breaches of that promise. Nevertheless, this Budget represents a responsible use of this State's resources. The signs are that the trend is to put more money into social welfare services, and this is dangerous because it is being done at the expense of the assistance schemes that should be available to the productive sector.

**Mr Hamill:** I thought you were being statesmanlike for a while.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I do not pretend to be anyone other than myself. I turn now to the State Cabinet meeting in Toowoomba and the decision to approve the rural assistance scheme. I read in the paper today that this is a nine-point package, and it seems to me that some of these points are good.

**Mr Hamill:** Which ones don't you like?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I would like the honourable member to allow me to continue. Some of these points will enhance productivity and others are purely rescue measures.

**Mr Hamill:** What's wrong with that?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I ask the honourable member to allow me to finish. If in fact the Government's overall strategy is correct, it will not need so many rescue programs. There will always be some sectors of the economy that will get into trouble and there should be some rescue programs. However, if the Government gets it right in the first place and enhancement projects are in place, then the private sector will be able to exist and prosper on its own. In the last seven years the private-enterprise sector in Australia has been squeezed too tightly. It has been acknowledged by members on the other side of the Chamber that State Governments can only compensate slightly for what happens to the national economy. Over the last six or seven years, the Federal Government has adopted the process of squeezing the private-enterprise sector too tightly through high interest rates, increased Government charges and high taxes. Also the depreciation concessions made available to the private sector have been whittled away so that these people have no fat left to fall back on. As soon as they hit a lean period, instead of being able to fall back, salvage their business and exist for a while, they are so short of cash that they have to go to the Government for assistance.

It is important that more profit be left in the hands of the productive sector. These people need to be able to retool and upgrade their skills to remain competitive and, because of Australia's expanding population, they have to be able to expand their level of production. If the private sector is allowed to retain to become more productivity, obviously that will create more profitability. That profitability will filter down through the whole economy by means of taxation. One of the biggest problems is that very often State Governments do not tax profits. They tend to tax before the profits are made. It is the nature of State Governments to levy charges, but these charges mitigate against productivity. I hope that the members of the Government are able to talk to their friends in Canberra and ask for enough money in State grants so that the people involved in industry and small business can create profitability. They will then pay charges on their profits and will be of great service to private industry.

**Mr Beattie:** Where do you draw the line between that and hand-outs? Where do you draw the line?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** If one looks at what has happened to Australia in recent times, one finds that this nation has been duded and conned into becoming a free-trading nation. If one looks at other economies in the world that are doing well, one finds that these economies are managed. There is talk about floating the Australian dollar. Even though Australians seem to embrace that as an initiative, I have listened to people who say that a much broader initiative should be taken. Australia must recognise what its advantages and priorities are in terms of using the skills of its people and its natural resources. It may be necessary for the Federal Government to give some

assistance to allow the natural resources to expand and, if it is industry specific, that is all well and good. The difficulty with small business is that each business is unique and the Government has a problem identifying a common strand through which it can introduce incentives. That is the reason why I believe that concessions in terms of depreciation allowances and other concessions are important.

When Fraser first came into power the national economy was so wound down that that Government introduced the investment allowance. This was an aberration because, even though it gave one hell of a kick-start to the Australian economy, it heated up the economy and caused problems further down the track. I want matters to be more closely managed, but that cannot be done by engaging in free trade. This nation should gear up so that Government assistance is given in the form of enhancement, with a small proportion of funds being allocated for rescue projects. The projects that were announced by Cabinet in Toowoomba consisted of five that could be described as enhancement programs and four rescue programs. If a better balance could be struck in the amount of money being taken from the productive sector to fulfil the Government's commitment to looking after social values, I believe a great service would be done to Queensland.

Time expired.

**Mr DAVIES** (Townsville) (7.45 p.m.): In rising to speak in support of the Business, Industry and Regional Development Estimates, I will concentrate particularly on the Regional Development aspect or, more specifically, regional economic development aspects of the Estimates. Queensland is a State of great opportunity, located in a region of great opportunity. It is a State rich in natural and human resources. This Government is committed to the growth and development of the Queensland economy, and the management of its resources for the benefit of all its citizens. We recognise as principal objectives full employment, higher living standards and genuine equality of opportunity, but we also recognise that they cannot be achieved without strong economic growth. We also recognise the primary role of the private sector in the generation of economic activity and employment. We accept that for the private sector, profitability is the bottom line and, in the absence of profits, employment cannot be generated and wages cannot be paid. The Labor Party believes, however, that Queensland's private sector deserves a better deal from the State Government.

Although Queensland is well endowed with natural resources, the economy remains too narrowly based and excessively dependent on primary production. One could say that that was the case during the last Parliament. As a consequence, the Queensland economy has been performing relatively poorly for most of this decade, and has been slipping behind the other States across a range of major economic indicators. Under the National Party, income levels, for example, are among the lowest in Australia while unemployment levels rank among the highest.

**Mr Connor** interjected.

**Mr DAVIES:** We are talking about various economic indicators. Private fixed capital investment has been extremely sluggish. The provision of fundamental services such as education, training and skills development—vital to the future of any economy—continues to attract the lowest level of per capital funding in Australia. To the Goss Government, these structural deficiencies in the Queensland economy represent a fundamental policy challenge. Queensland is Australia's most decentralised State. Each of its regions has a diverse range of resources, providing distinct economic opportunities. It is vital that none of these opportunities is ignored. During the term of this Goss Government and later, the Labor Party will take the necessary steps to develop Queensland for all Queenslanders by identifying and capitalising on the strengths and opportunities of each region. The National Party's record on regional development is abysmal. After 32 years of successive National Party administrations, the fact that there was no single agency within the State bureaucracy responsible for coordinating regional policy is, in itself, an indictment of its neglect of this vital area. There has been a rethinking of the role and importance of regional policy in Australia and elsewhere in recent years.

Regional policy is now seen as a major policy instrument for addressing the issue of national economic development in the context of structural change.

**Mr Heath:** Could it be considered that the Nationals pork-barrelled development around the State into their electorates?

**Mr DAVIES:** I think that is obvious from comments made by Minister McLean in the Parliament in recent times.

As I mentioned yesterday, Dr Don Stamar, who is the noted chief economist for Bain and Co, recently stated—

"Overseas investors are tending to take a regional focus when investing in Australia."

In response to sustained international economic pressures, the Australian and Queensland economies are seeing dramatic and long-term restructuring. The Commonwealth Government has made a large number of macroeconomic policy decisions which have focused on stimulating aggregate income growth and promoting structural adjustment. The consequences of these measures and the fundamental restructuring which has been taking place have impacted unevenly in different regions and on different social groupings. Therefore, there is a compelling need for regional economic policy to both complement the national economic strategy and to minimise the social impact such strategies have on different regional economies. The Goss Government recognises that; the National Party Government did not.

There are three basic types of communities in Australia responding to changing economic conditions. They are the growing areas, where the challenge is to manage population and development growth and plan economic alternatives; the restructuring areas, where the challenge is to diversify the existing economic and employment base; and the declining areas, where the challenge is to manage existing public resources to retain remaining local businesses and to search for alternative economic activities, consistent with the Government's capacity and community employment requirements.

Although the changes now taking place represent enormous challenges for the Australian economy and its regions, they are also the source of many opportunities for growth and development. It is becoming increasingly obvious that location alone—that is, proximity to markets, natural resources and transportation—are not as important in present economic circumstances as the availability of specialised skills in the work force and technology-orientated infrastructure. The latter include research facilities, higher education, high quality up-to-date telecommunications and highly developed financial services. It is the quality of support services in a locality, together with appropriate work force skills, that determine the potential for new economic activity.

Technological change is altering the economics of production, thereby eroding the historical cost advantage of urban size. The nature of production itself is changing and is moving away from mass production to production of differentiated goods and services that are tailored to meet the needs of more closely identified markets. Also, because of changing lifestyles and environmental preferences, in a number of areas the population trend is away from large urban centres towards country areas. Those changing circumstances represent new challenges and opportunities for regional Australia.

I turn now to the objectives of regional economic development. In today's economic environment, the basic objectives of regional development policy should be—

promoting economic development in line with national and State objectives;

capitalising on new opportunities; and

minimising the uneven impact of adjustment and decline.

It is important that regional development policies provide a better balance between equity and efficiency considerations than generally occurred in the past.

I turn to the role of the State Government in regional development. Regional development policy is essentially a State responsibility. The Commonwealth has no

mechanism, beyond broad sectoral policy, to deal with the regional implications of economic restructuring and decline. The Commonwealth should, therefore, set the macro-economic picture, with State Governments participating fully in the implementation of micro-economic reform, particularly at the regional level. The State Government established the Queensland Bureau of Regional Development to boost economic activity, attract new industries and create new jobs in regional and rural areas. In 1990-91, \$3.9m has been allocated to allow the bureau's operations to be expanded from the previous five regions to 12 regions. New regional offices are planned for Maryborough, Mount Isa, Charleville, Toowoomba, Ipswich, Nambour and the Gold Coast. Rural and regional Queensland will also benefit from the implementation of the \$2.6m regional projects investment program, which aims at fostering development of new industry in the regions.

Mr Borbidge commented on the phasing-out of the Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone. If he had read the *Townsville Bulletin* and the then Goss Opposition's regional economic development policy launched in Townsville on 21 March last year, he would have discovered that the Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone was to be phased out and replaced by a regional projects program. There was no secret that it was to be phased out.

The Queensland Bureau of Regional Development was established in January 1990. Subsequently, offices have been opened in northern Queensland and regional development activities have commenced. The centre for the development of regional opportunities is representing the bureau in central Queensland. Major projects have included work on principles of regionalisation for Government activities, a review of community-based regional economic development programs provided by the State Government and community-based economic and social development investigations in the lower Burdekin and Wide Bay/Burnett regions. The bureau will enhance the provision of regional policy advice to government, conduct major regional investigations and expand the provision of regional services, local development facilitation activities and its support for organisations pursuing regional development initiatives throughout Queensland. I ask Mr Borbidge: if the aircraft maintenance facility were to proceed in Townsville, where would the planes land? The airport needs a \$20m upgrade to allow that to happen. On 12 November 1990, responsibility for regional development was transferred from the Treasurer's portfolio to what was the Manufacturing, Commerce and Small Business portfolio. The integration of Regional Development with Business and Industry will do away with any confusion between the two portfolios and allow coordinated regional economic development and better service provision to industries throughout Queensland.

The new Business, Industry and Regional Development Department will be actively involved with local government, regional organisations and the private sector in promoting regional economic development in line with the Government's policy. There is a firm commitment to assisting regions to develop and implement regional economic development strategies. This will be an important part of the new department's proposed industry policy. In effect, those strategies are a statement of a region's economic comparative advantage. They will assist greatly the targeting of industry and business and assistance services and programs. The new department's regional office network, which will be more extensive than that of its predecessors—it will cover the whole State—will play a key role in assisting and encouraging local regional economic initiatives and in providing more focused assistance to expand and diversify the manufacturing and traded services base of each region. The overall goal of the regional development program is to enhance regional economic capabilities by providing research, policy advice, strategic planning and economic development skills, not merely a bucket of money. Coupled with those functions, the new department will apply a regional dimension to business and industry development.

The department has the charter to encourage the economic development of Queensland through the promotion of firms in the manufacturing and tradeable services sectors which are export-oriented, internationally competitive and able to readily apply appropriate technologies. The department will particularly move to support industry and business in regional Queensland.

I will provide a quick background on the regional projects investment program since its implementation. The program was approved on 30 July 1990. It provides a mechanism for encouraging and accelerating the development of high value-added, export-oriented manufacturing and commercial—tradeable services—enterprises in all parts of Queensland. The regional projects investment program is a community-based program in which major project coordination committees are established in each of the 10 regions and whose membership comprises various regional development agencies. The MPCCs—not the bureaucrats—are responsible for the overall management of the program. Funds are provided for employment of major project development staff who will assist MPCCs in identifying and managing opportunities for major projects. Funds are also provided to undertake prefeasibility studies and targeted marketing of prefeasibility study opportunities.

In regard to the Regional Projects Investment Program—in far-north Queensland the briefings are complete and the MPCC is in the process of formation. In north Queensland the briefings are complete, and the MPCC is in the final process of formation. In south-west Queensland, the briefings are again complete, and the MPCC is again in the process of formation—

Time expired.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Carnarvon) (8 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I join in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development. I believe that now, more than at any time in the past, this department is extremely important to the economic viability and well-being of this State. I am on record as saying in this place in the past that I believe that primary produce and mining have stood this State in great stead for many, many years. However, unfortunately, because of the current economic climate in Australia and around the world and the glut of agricultural produce, there is a need to move into manufacturing. I believe that some of the initiatives contained in the State Budget may be of assistance in that regard.

Many grandiose statements are made by members of the Government and much is heard about goodwill and initiative. However, it is one thing to hear those words and it is another thing to put them into practice. That is what must be remembered. Too often in this place far too many words are spoken and not enough action is taken. A former Premier of this State, the Honourable Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen, was a man of very few words but a great deal of action. Members on the Government side would do well to take a leaf out of the Honourable Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen's book. I hope that after they have heard my history lesson tonight members of the Government will be prepared to open their other eye and take on board a bit of what I am going to say.

I want to talk about a few of the initiatives that could come from my electorate. I commend the Minister for the regional projects investment program. It seems to be off and running in my part of the world. Once again, the input and the commitment that is being made at this preliminary stage by the people out there who are interested in looking at new projects and possibly investing in them has been very good. However, as I say, there is a difference between talking about doing things and actually getting out there and doing them. I hope that this Government is now engendered with the recognition that it cannot go the way of its socialist colleagues in Canberra, Victoria and other States and stifle investment. If the members of the Government examine the economic indicators, they will understand exactly what I am talking about.

This Government has been bequeathed the State with the most outstanding economic performance of any State in this nation. I want to refer to some of the economic indicators. The Government would do well to take on board that, in relation to 11 of the 13 key economic indicators, this State's performance is average, or above average. The good, positive economic policies of the past have set this State on a very good course for the future. I believe that the Government should give credit where it is due and acknowledge that Queensland has a good economic base thanks to the efforts of the National Party when it was in Government. But, of course, members of the Government will not open their other eye.

Recently, a workshop was held in Stanthorpe involving representatives from the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development in Toowoomba and a representative from the new International Food Institute. As I say, credit should be given where it is due. It was an extremely constructive evening. The Government has the opportunity to really make a difference to the future of this State. Regional development in this State must be encouraged. Centralisation is not the answer. The mood of decentralisation that I witnessed the other night in Stanthorpe is good to see. This State has the primary produce, whether it be wheat, meat or fruit and vegetables. It is up to the Government to encourage people to enhance the value of that produce. Many suggestions were made at that workshop. Some of them were a little bit out of this world—I put up a few of them myself. However, it was only in an endeavour to get people to think about becoming more entrepreneurial, which is necessary if we are to develop value-added industry and expand our economic base.

Queensland has a pretty good economic base. I concede that it has deficiencies. However, what this State is good at is primary production and mining. At that workshop the possibility of exporting snake meat was raised. There is definitely a market for it in South East Asia. A consultant from Brisbane who got the show on the road at that workshop said that South East Asia is exporting a huge number of apple pies to the United States. The Asians have to go to school for two or three years to enable them to acquire the knowledge to do that. Those are the sorts of things that could be done in this State. Perhaps we could export rice cakes to the Chinese or ice to the Eskimos. These ideas should not be written off. Other countries have proven that they can get into traditional markets—

**Mr Beattie:** There is not a big market with the Eskimos. There are not a lot of them.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I think the member for Brisbane Central understands the point that I am trying to make.

I want to raise another matter that is quite an emotional issue. I regularly drive between Stanthorpe and Inglewood, and I see quite a number of eucalypt trees knocked down on the side of the road. They have fallen on the side of the road. The woodchipping industry generates a lot of emotional debate. One entrepreneurial person suggested a mobile woodchipping plant. Instead of cutting down the native forests, those timbers that have been cut down to increase the area of cultivation and grazing could be chipped on the spot. If Queenslanders are to help this State get ahead they must be prepared to embrace ideas of that sort. I am fortunate to represent an electorate that produces a great diversity of primary produce—cotton, wool, wheat, sorghum, barley, goat meat, deer—

**Mr Palaszczuk:** And snake meat.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** There are a lot of snakes. One only has to see the old grannies running around with the .410s in the summer-time. The Granite Belt produces a great deal of fruit and vegetables and it is dismaying that the region has not been able to sustain a cannery. As I have mentioned in this Chamber before, major industry has a great fixation about not wanting to move west of the Great Dividing Range. It believes that nothing really exists out there, that there is no water, power or rail and no roads. My electorate has two major highways, with access to reliable water resources, road transport, railways and electricity. If this State is to be decentralised, then incentives need to be provided, whether they be in the form of land tax incentives, incentives for industrial estates, payroll tax or whatever the case may be. There are many new ideas that people should be prepared to embrace. Many people in my electorate are quite entrepreneurial. They have a little bit of money that they may wish to invest in a small entrepreneurial. They have a little bit of money that they may wish to invest in a small factory or small processing works, but they are waiting for the right indication from Government.

**Mr Hayward:** You can't get a bank to lend that sort of money west of the Great Divide, either.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It is not necessarily banks that have to lend this sort of money. That statement shows the lack of intellectual capacity of the members opposite. Many people in the State have money that they may be willing to invest, for example, in a small plastics factory. One does not need a very big shed or establishment, or even a lot of money to commence a plastics factory. The other day in Wallangarra, a gentleman approached me and said that recently he had been to Bowen and he had seen a small plastics factory. Investors do not necessarily need to be lent money; they only need the right incentives and they will come to the party.

**Mr Hayward:** What do you think a cannery costs?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** No doubt a cannery costs a considerable amount of money. The point I am making is that times are different from what they were. In the past, the Granite Belt farming was confined to fruit. Today, those same farmers are producing small crops. The other night at the workshop I mentioned, it was suggested that during one part of the year the fruit could be canned or juiced.

**Mr Hayward:** How are they going to finance it?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Easily. It can be done by the Government offering the right incentives. I am prepared to give a little bit of credit because I believe that the Government is moving in that direction. Unfortunately, while honourable members hear such prattle from the troglodytes opposite, they will not see such developments in the future.

One other potential development that I would like to speak about tonight is the possibility of a small-scale ethanol plant in Goondiwindi. That suggestion arose from the Goondiwindi promotions group, which has a delegate on the regional projects development program. Ethanol could in fact be produced from cotton trash. In the future, many such entrepreneurial ideas could be implemented.

**Dr Flynn:** Is that more or less efficient than making it from sugarcane?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It may very well be less efficient, but if someone is not prepared to have a go, then we will probably all sit around like the honourable member for Toowoomba North and get nowhere. This Government could be looking at many such initiatives. I believe that it is taking the right step by introducing initiatives. As I said before, much of what it has done is based wholly and solely on the good foundation of the past 32 years of National Party and National/Liberal Party Governments. The Government is taking a step in the right direction by the establishment of the International Food Institute and the regional projects investment program.

I have no doubt that the Minister has made many mistakes and will continue to make mistakes, but that is part of being in Government. It is human nature. It is something that happens as one goes along in life. When the National Party was in Government, it made mistakes and it was prepared to recognise those mistakes. I believe that the Minister should be prepared to open his other eye and realise that he is going to make many mistakes. Unfortunately, Queensland has a Government that is based wholly and solely on the philosophy of social justice and not necessarily looking after those people who are going to produce the wealth of this nation and fund those social justice programs in the future. I wish the Minister all the best in battling with his colleagues in Canberra, because what he will give with one hand, they may take away with the other hand in an area such as interest rates. I wish him well because many people in regional centres want to get in and have a go at those programs that are under way. I genuinely hope that in the future these initiatives will come to fruition, because they are in the best interests of all members in this Chamber, our children and our grandchildren. If the Government cannot recognise those areas in which it is deficient, then Queensland will not go forward.

**Mr PALASZCZUK** (Archerfield) (8.14 p.m.): Earlier in this debate, we heard the member for Surfers Paradise make his same old speech.

**Mr Beattie:** Six times he has made it.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Yes, it was the sixth time this year and it was the same old speech. The honourable member's minders probably are not capable of writing a new speech for him, or else they hope that if he keeps saying it over and over again it might sound convincing. It was an empty speech. It was the usual attack on Peter Coaldrake; the usual attack on the Premier's staff—or minders, as he calls them.

**Mr Borbidge:** Apparatchiks.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Or apparatchiks. The trouble is that, when the member for Surfers Paradise was in Government, he had no minders at all. That is why he is sitting on the opposite side of the Chamber, and that is why two of his colleagues are in gaol. All we heard from the honourable member was a vitriol trying to hide his frustration—the frustration which comes from a broken career. All he can do is look at this Government and wish like mad that he could have thought up these policies; wish that he could preside over all these wonderful changes. All he can do is look back at those wasted years as a Minister knowing that all he will be remembered for is the painting of a jet to a city where it never landed.

**Mr Hayward:** Townsville.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Townsville. It takes a special kind of incompetence to do that, and the member for Surfers Paradise managed it all by himself.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister on taking on a department which had suffered under the stewardship of the member for Surfers Paradise. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition debilitated the department. He left it with no direction and with no clear vision for the future.

**Mr Beattie:** "Bobby Glitter".

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I will take that interjection. I should refer to "Bobby Glitter's" book. He presided over a manufacturing policy which left this State with one of the lowest manufacturing bases in Australia. I predict he will do the same thing for the National Party—that is, if he becomes leader—he will leave his members with no direction and with one of the lowest votes in 30 years. Make no mistake. All that nervous energy—the yelling at question-time and the personal abuse of Ministers—is caused by his high state of anxiety. He keeps saying that he is going to hold onto his seat. He cannot hold onto his seat for the Nationals, and he is trying desperately to attract the attention of the Liberals opposite.

**Mr Beattie:** Do you think he will join the Liberals?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** It is a matter of course, I would say. Just as he is undermining the leader of his own party, he will undermine the Nationals on the way to the Liberals. Tonight, the Minister was attacked by a man with no substance. He is just a straw man.

**Mr Beattie:** A hollow man.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** A hollow man. He came into this Chamber claiming that his heroes were Bjelke-Petersen and Hinze, both of whom, I understand, are now facing the courts. That was the honourable member's commitment then, and that is his commitment to the Minister's department. At no time tonight did we hear from the member a program for the future. At no time did we hear an alternative policy. We heard nothing about the Liberal Party and National Party zero tariff policy by the year 2000. If the honourable member is going to join the Liberal Party, the least he can do is hone up on its policies. Does the member for Surfers Paradise support the Liberal Leader, who advocated a return to a State purchase preference agreement? Does the honourable member support that? There is deafening silence. All members are aware of his offsets failure for Queensland. He is a deputy who is seeking out the Liberals, but a deputy with nothing to support.

It is my belief that a strong manufacturing industry is an important part of this State's overall tourism industry. That is why this evening I intend to spend my time in

this debate concentrating on talking about the souvenir industry, or the arts and craft industry, or the arts industry.

**Mr Borbidge:** You have given this speech before. This is your souvenir speech.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Mr Borbidge would certainly go well as a good souvenir. We could certainly find a way of designing a souvenir to fit around him. What is offered by the majority of Queenslanders and Australians in the souvenir industry is plain, straight-out rubbish, manufactured mainly in the labour sweatshops of South East Asia. I will take the honourable member's interjection. Of course I have brought up this topic in this Chamber many a time, and over the years I have always cited examples of toys stuffed with used bandages and dressings, and tea-towels with Australian motifs made overseas. Even during the 1988 Expo, the prize catch for any tourist was the Expo Oz souvenir, which was manufactured overseas. Yet Rod Hurley, a manufacturer of quality Australian and Queensland souvenirs, could not even get his foot into the front door. That is the legacy of the souvenir people from persons such as Mr Borbidge.

**Mr Borbidge:** Do you believe in tendering?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Yes. It has always been my contention that Queensland needs an industry based on precious and semiprecious gemstones using gold, silver, quality woodwork, leather and glass goods and clothing made from Australian cotton and wool. We need to tap into Australian ingenuity and imagination to be able to achieve the success required.

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** As the member for Barambah has said, after our trip overseas, it means that we need to export some of our young talented artists and designers to pick up the latest skills and technology so that they can bring them back to Queensland and then utilise those new-found skills and help to provide this State with one of the best souvenir industries anywhere. The former Government did little to promote the quality of Queensland-manufactured souvenirs. All honourable members would know that when one goes overseas or interstate, one always wants to pick up some sort of memento of the trip. In this case, the memento would be a souvenir. It becomes a conversation piece, an ornament or a gift. As all honourable members would know, the greatest influx of tourists into Queensland comes from Japan. In Japan and South East Asian countries, the exchange of gifts is of the greatest importance.

**Mr Connor:** That's not true. What about New South Wales?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** That is the port of entry for overseas tourists. The honourable member should wake up. Our industry must ready itself to meet the needs of people whose cultural backgrounds are different from ours. Most Japanese tourists come to Australia on package tours that last around one week and cost approximately \$10,000 per couple. Many of those couples are on their honeymoons. As a matter of fact, 75 per cent of all Japanese honeymoon couples go overseas for their honeymoons. I shall detail how that \$10,000 tour package is spent. The sum of \$5,000 is spent on airfares and accommodation; \$1,000 on food and drinks; another \$4,000 on themselves—a \$2,000 opal ring or whatever—and \$2,000 on mementoes or gifts that are taken home to relatives or friends. All honourable members would be aware—especially Mr Coomber, because he represents a Gold Coast electorate—that traditionally when a Japanese couple gets married the wedding guests do not give gifts, they give money. When the Japanese honeymoon couple returns, they bring back souvenirs for the guests. Unfortunately, Australia has no quality souvenirs for overseas visitors to take home with them. As a result, the money that Japanese tourists do not spend in Australia is spent in duty-free shops upon their return to Japan.

In April this year, the Minister issued a press release titled "Turning craft into profit", which stated—

" . . . cottage craft afforded huge potential in the production of souvenirs for the tourist trade and a host of appealing products for the domestic market."

The Minister commissioned two teams of craft coordinators to consult craftspeople simultaneously in northern and southern regions of the State. The press release also stated—

"To successfully manufacture, supply and sell the assortment of arts and crafts requires business knowhow as well as professional skills."

I believe that there is a way in which we can boost employment opportunities, specifically in country towns, and encourage the development of tourist-related industries.

**Mr Dunworth** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I ask "Yappy" to be quiet and go back to sleep.

**Mr Santoro:** What has he done?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The honourable member should listen and learn. A marketing strategy could be employed with individuals or community organisations representing local craft industries. I refer to the arts and crafts industry, not specifically the souvenir industry, because I believe that the Government, through the department, has discovered that the souvenir industry is too narrow.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** The National Party has been talking about this since 1988, but has done nothing about it. It is all coming together now. The Government's role should be as a catalyst to help identify and research markets, provide product opportunities and enforce quality control. Networking can be used to link producers and products to markets. However, to achieve that aim one must address some problems that will be encountered initially. Some of the problems that have been identified are that the majority of art and craft producers have little knowledge of the market that they are supplying and the majority of producers have limited business and merchandising skills. It is possible that there is a bank of skilled people in the community who could be used to develop the industry. Because of the isolation and geographical size of Queensland, producers do not have access to sufficient networks outside their own regions. Producers lack the resources of finance and manpower to form networks and research requirements within their markets.

Research in north Queensland has revealed that the main arts and crafts practices in Queensland are pottery, 18 per cent; painting, 13 per cent; and fabric crafts, 12 per cent. To the amazement of all, it was discovered that 69.3 per cent of the artists were women and only 30.7 per cent were men. The research also revealed that 87.5 per cent of visual art and craft producers work from home; 10.8 per cent employ staff and 43.5 per cent of producers have a second job. That so many work from home explains why the products are difficult to find. A large range of arts and crafts is produced in the region. Natural materials found in the area are used by 35.5 per cent of the craftspeople. Those factors make the products suitable for export and the tourist retail trade. Unfortunately, those markets have not been tapped. Once they are tapped and harnessed, I believe that our arts and crafts industry will prosper because overseas tourists will actually have something on which to spend their money and to take back as a memento of this State. As a result, the slogan "We make it great in the Sunshine State" will certainly have some meaning.

**Mr DUNWORTH** (Sherwood) (8.28 p.m.): Mr Temporary Chairman—

**Mr Johnson:** Put a bit of credibility into it.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** I certainly will. I join in the debate on the Estimates of the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development—

**Mr Beattie:** You are in the wrong seat.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** I have now moved to my correct seat. Firstly, I mention the payment of labour on-costs such as payroll tax, workers' compensation and superannuation which, very conservatively, add at least 10 per cent to the cost of employing labour. That does not include sick leave, recreation leave, long service leave, study leave, maternity leave and—believe it or not—paternity leave. The Confederation of Australian Industry has estimated that, including all fringe benefits, total on-costs amount to approximately 30 per cent of labour costs. As a percentage of cash earnings, labour on-costs varied between industries, with mining at the top end of the scale and recreation at the lower end. In the 1980s, labour costs in Australia rose almost twice as fast as those in other major industrialised countries. At the same time as unit labour costs in Australia rose massively by 67.2 per cent, those of the other members of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development showed a rise of 31.1 per cent. It is no wonder employers in Queensland, particularly those in small business, call on workers to bail out the boss and save their own livelihoods by reducing job perks. This month, the Queensland Confederation of Industry warned that, if workers wanted their jobs after Christmas, they should consider cutting rostered days off, increasing working hours and reducing the holiday leave loading.

I am not trying to be an ogre by beating the average worker; I am suggesting seriously that, if Australia wishes to become the smart country, to be more productive and to be more than the traditional quarry, farm, holiday destination, etc., Australians must change their work ethic. When I was a part-time student, I was employed in the Commonwealth public service and know the debilitating effects of a job that provides no stimulation. At that time, most of my fellow employees were more concerned with overtime, recreation leave and superannuation—no thought was given to productivity. Twenty years ago, I moved into the property industry where reward was related entirely to productivity. If I did not earn my way by results, I would not be paid. The difference in attitude was incredible. People worked as many hours as they desired because their financial rewards were directly related to their productivity. The attitude to work was stimulating, enjoyable and remunerative. No on-costs were associated with my employment, yet all those who lasted were positive and eager about their employment and satisfied with the remuneration that they earned.

Can Australia afford four weeks of annual leave with a 17.5 per cent loading attached? Can Australia afford eight days worth of sick pay a year under most awards? Can Australia afford the public holidays that we enjoy each year, which we take irrespective of whether they fall on a week day? Can Australia afford the ever-increasing compensation pay-outs, particularly in light of the fact that Queensland has the most efficient workers' compensation scheme in Australia, one which is about to be tampered with by the Government? Recently, its director-general was assassinated by the Government. Can Australia afford ever-decreasing working hours, nine-day fortnights and so on? Maybe it could if it were still the lucky country, but Labor Governments have ensured a change of luck. For the sake of commerce generally—and particularly small business—the 17.5 per cent holiday loading should be dropped, public holidays should be taken only when they occur on a week day and extra days off should not be granted when public holidays occur on weekends.

I turn to the effect of the new Industrial Relations Act on manufacturing and commerce in Queensland. This is the picture: business is being visited with increasing frequency by union officials who encourage the proprietors to force their workers to join the relevant unions in order to avoid problems. Small business is being threatened by the prospect of 200 new industrial inspectors who will interfere with and inconvenience them in the running of their businesses. At a time when business was becoming used to operating in an environment that was relatively free of union thuggery, the first State Labor Budget made provision for the employment of those inspectors. Does the Government not realise that business can thrive and provide jobs only when it operates in a climate of certainty? By compelling workers to join a union by abolishing voluntary employment agreements; abolishing the essential services legislation, favouring big players to the exclusion of small players; abolishing the Industrial (Commercial Practices) Act,

thereby restructuring the right of injured parties to sue unions; and rewarding the strikers who held up the flow of electricity, does the Government believe that it has created a climate of certainty where enterprise prospers and prosperity increases? Of course it does not. How could it, when the Labor Party is made up of bitter union drones, disillusioned teachers, itinerant vendors, closeted academics, civil libertarians, social justice and social equity lawyers, social workers, failed businessmen, the occasional professional and inconsequential political time-servers?

Can the Government be forgiven because it does not know what it is doing? No. The Government fiddles at the edges while business burns. Let us consider the record on a for-and-against basis. These are the major incentives: the establishment of a Queensland business licence information centre; the establishment of a quality assessment unit to assess supplies--really heavy stuff—revision of State purchasing policy; the establishment of an investment opportunity branch—

**Mr Connor:** Were any of those making money?

**Mr DUNWORTH:** We might find one. A centre for manufacturing skills development was established. That is what has been achieved. Let us consider what has been lost. I cite the example of the multifunction polis. With all of Queensland's climatic, geographic, industrial and economic advantages, it lost the multifunction polis to a toxic swamp in Adelaide. The Ensham coal mine is gone. CRA is doing nothing. The Gladstone smelter is not going ahead; there will be no upgrading at Boyne Island. China Steel is gone. The Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone was abolished. The Cape York spaceport is floundering—billions of dollars gone. I ask the Minister: is it a coincidence that, with the equation loaded enormously by the Government in favour of inaction, reviews, trivia, lack of vision, lack of leadership—

**Mr Santoro:** Press releases.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Press releases. Is it a coincidence that the Queensland economy is into decline with unemployment estimated to reach 10 per cent by the middle of next year? No, it is no coincidence.

**Mr Coomber:** The State is in a state of paralysis by analysis.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Paralysis by analysis. No, it is no coincidence; it is the result of timidity, lack of get up and go, unwillingness to get out and do things, and no "think big". Business longs for the days of stable, strong, positive government and, with the stultifying inaction of this Government, it will not be long coming. There will be no more compulsory unionism, no more compulsory payroll deductions, and no more financial base for the honourable member for Brisbane Central; there will be the reintroduction of the essential services legislation and the reintroduction of VEAs. As the welfare of this State depends upon it, the Minister must encourage business, set the parameters within which business can operate, and give stability and leadership.

**Mr FENLON (Greenslopes) (8.38 p.m.):** It will not be very difficult to make a sensible speech after listening to such a disgusting display of utter, bitter bigotry. It is very sad to see a human being wandering through life with such misconstrued prejudice.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr FENLON:** My friend interjects and says that I should tell who got the furniture at Queen Alexandra Home. It was the National Party, and the Liberals supported the National Party in that.

One of the most pertinent factors is that one-sixth of our balance of payments problems is caused by the import of computers. I am sure that our colleagues in the corner—in the phone box—do not really care about this because their biggest concern is bigotry. Small minds portray these things. Our computer exports comprise just one-thousandth of our computer imports. Another pertinent factor that comes into this debate, because we are talking about furthering our commercial production, particularly

in the frontier of commercial production in the computer area, is that 60 per cent of all computer products are bought by the Government. So it is very clear that the Government itself has a very great deal to do and an important role to play in leading in this area of information technology and dealing with computer and information development. That aspect of research and development has been the theme running through the debate tonight.

It is informative to look at the different time-frames involved in research and development. I am told that the first and prime area of pure research is person motivated and extends to more than five years. This revolves into a focused research phase of three years and, from there, to the development of pilots and prototypes, which can extend from 12 to 14 months and finally to product development, which is market driven, and extends from six to 18 months.

I now move into the application of the Budget into a number of areas. The first is the technology quadrangle or Techquad. This initiative has been developed as a cooperative, collaborative arrangement between the four Queensland universities, industry and Government. This is one of the most exciting developments covered by this portfolio, because it really does revolve around these great places of learning. The universities involved are the University of Queensland, the Queensland University of Technology and Griffith University in Brisbane and Bond University on the Gold Coast. James Cook University of North Queensland is involved through Techquad.

Techquad maximises the utilisation of resources through shared use of equipment, development of critical masses in areas of strategic significance and attraction of research and development funding. The focus of Techquad activity is on commercial outcomes for research and development, and on working partnerships with industry to develop opportunities.

The main elements of the program are the formalisation of linkages between Techquad, industry and Government; the facilitation of a legal entity to operate the business of Techquad; the investigation of mechanisms for the funding of research and development; and the enhancement of research activity and establishment of linkage mechanisms in strategic technology areas, for example, information technology; biotechnology; environmental science technology and management; space science, technology and commercialisation; and mineral science, technology and value-added processing.

The objectives of the Techquad program are to increase the opportunities available for commercialisation of research and development; to maximise cooperation and collaboration in science and technology between organisations in the tertiary education sector and between education, industry and Government; to increase the level of funding available for research and development in Queensland, particularly involving international organisations; and to focus research efforts in generic technology areas of strategic significance to the Queensland economy.

The current situation is that the university vice-chancellors, under the auspices of the Conference of Queensland Vice-Chancellors—CQVC—have signed the Techquad protocol. CQVC and the department are investigating the establishment of formal linkages and options for an operation entity for Techquad. Indeed, this development is really showing the strength in this approach by developing linkages and cooperation between various bodies. Hopefully, by leaving behind the era in which everyone went along and did things for his own benefit, we can maximise our joint opportunities for the advantage of all Queenslanders. The 1990-91 Budget allocation to those areas is \$215,000.

Information technology and the development of a sectoral plan are another significant areas. The department is undertaking the preparation of a program of sectoral plans. The plan concerns information technology and will assist in identifying and assessing the sources of competitive weakness and to increase local information industries' exposure to the international marketplace. The information industries have been identified as a new industry sector and have already received substantial attention from the Federal Government primarily through its information industries strategy. The main thrust of the strategy is the Partnership for Development Program—PDP—which is administered

by the Federal Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce and each State Government. The Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development discharges the State's responsibilities under this program. The information industries sectoral plan will establish a consultative framework within which Government and industry will address major strategic issues facing the industry. This will require regular and close consultation with companies, industry associations, Government and trade unions. In addition, consultation with other interested groups will be encouraged.

At the present time the acquisition and analysis of relevant information will be a significant task. Already the department has released a major study titled *A Study into Queensland's Information Industries*. A number of recommendations in the report address the issue of maintaining a suitable classification system to store relevant information about the industry on a database. The department is presently recruiting officers to three newly created positions that will address information industries in Queensland. The development of a sectoral plan will be a major responsibility of these officers. This area is dealt with in this budget.

Another exciting area concerns fibreoptics and QUESTnet development. Access to supercomputing and fibreoptic networks is essential if Queensland's technology quadrangle is to compete globally for major research projects that are vital for private sector development. Early in 1989 CITEC commissioned the Centre for Information Technology Research to undertake a study of network development within Queensland's technology quadrangle. The study proposed that the State Government should purchase and install a very high-speed fibreoptic network between the TECHQUAD universities. The resulting report was forwarded to the then Department of Industry Development for action. On this basis, and in view of a related study into supercomputing, the department conducted a feasibility study of fibreoptic network development in Queensland. It was considered that CITER's proposal was prohibitively expensive both in terms of initial and recurrent costs. The feasibility study showed that all public tertiary institutions in Queensland were already connected by a slow-speed communications network, and that this existing network could be readily and inexpensively enhanced in logical steps with standard Telecom fibreoptic services.

A strategic plan was developed for the establishment of the Queensland Education, Science and Technology Network—QUESTnet—by enhancing the original tertiary institution's network in 1989-90 and extending it to researchers throughout Queensland in the financial years 1990-91 and 1992-93. In March 1990, a Cabinet submission was prepared and funding of \$170,000 for Stage 1 of QUESTnet was made available in May and June 1990. The Honourable the Minister opened Stage 1 of QUESTnet on 1 May 1990. QUESTnet is part of the advanced science and technology infrastructure project. QUESTnet provides essential infrastructure for new R and D activities and supercomputing. This infrastructure is a necessary precursor to regional economic development.

The main objectives of this program are: to materialise the TECHQUAD concept; promote the sharing of expensive resources such as supercomputers and the development of collaborative research and teaching programs which require high-speed networking; and consolidate an information technology industry in Queensland via the provision of advanced infrastructure. At the present time, Stage 1 of QUESTnet has been installed and evaluated in the light of the concurrent installation of the federally-funded national backbone network AARNet, which links all State capitals. Two minisupercomputers in Brisbane are accessible via QUESTnet. Stage 2 of QUESTnet has commenced with a review of Stage 1. A plan of action for Stage 2 is now in preparation. This involves extensive consultation with academic and research institutions and the private sector itself. Further collaboration with Telecom is also envisaged. The Budget allocation for this area in 1989-90 was \$168,000 and in 1990-91 it was \$200,000.

Supercomputing has been extended by this Government. Early in 1989, the then Department of Industry Development began to assess the feasibility of establishing a supercomputer centre in Brisbane. Two pre-feasibility studies were commissioned and, as a result, the option of establishing a centre solely with State Government funds was

not considered viable due to high capital and recurrent costs and the low level of industry demand for high-performance computing at that stage. However, research into the uses of supercomputers in industrialised countries demonstrated that there were strong benefits for all sectors of trade and commerce. Supercomputers are regarded as essential infrastructure for the nineties. Therefore, the department instituted a full-scale feasibility study to determine the options available to facilitate the establishment of a supercomputer centre in Brisbane by encouraging private-sector investment and by facilitating access to existing facilities elsewhere in Australia. Supercomputers are a segment of the advanced science and technology infrastructure project, which has the goals of enhancing technological infrastructure development in Queensland and aiding State economic development. Queensland is keeping pace with the rest of the world and, because international businesses can be attracted to this State on the basis of the advances that this technology offers, this will prove to be a great advantage. The rate of information transfer and the quality of the information transferred will be key factors in the nineties.

Time expired.

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (8.53 p.m.): In joining in this debate on the Business, Industry and Regional Development Estimates, I comment on the fact that, over a period, the Minister seems to have had a few subtractions from the title of his portfolio as well as a few additions. I hope that the Minister is finished with those alterations and that he retains the present title for a significant period. I say that because he does not appear to be sure of the responsibilities that he is overseeing. Under those circumstances, it must be difficult for him to get his feet under the table and be confident about what he is doing.

During my speech, I will concentrate on Regional Development. At present, this part of the Minister's portfolio is a bit of a dog's breakfast. I say that with all sincerity because the Minister does not have any real boundaries that would facilitate effective coordination between Police Service regions, Fire Service regions, and so on. These major services seem to have their own little regions and there seems to be no pattern of specific centres in which these services are located. I would have thought that as far as administration is concerned, it would have been far more efficient for the Minister to have divided the State into, for example, six regions and distributed various services, such as police, fire-fighting and ambulance on that basis. The present arrangement must be very difficult to administer, especially as coordination of four separate portfolios is involved and no defined boundaries exist. I would like to think that, for the benefit of Queensland as a whole, Regional Development will settle down. After all, one only has to listen to news broadcasts to realise that these services are major governmental responsibilities and that there are major administrative problems involved. Proper administration is not facilitated by the location of police services and fire services in different regions. The effect of present policies on regional development is to take away responsibility from various areas without establishing centres for these services outside the Brisbane area. I cite the example of fire services.

**Mr Dollin:** We have got them up in Maryborough.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Yes, but that does not help the people who live in Gympie, and it does not help them when they have to go to Noosa to get somebody to make a decision.

**Mr Beattie:** Have you got the wrong Estimates?

**Mr STEPHAN:** No, I am talking about regions.

**Mr Beattie:** That's Mackenroth's area.

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is why I say it is a dog's breakfast. These services are not coordinated at all. As far as I can see, the Government is not working to a set plan. As the honourable member lives in Brisbane, I can appreciate that he would not understand that services should be located in various regional centres throughout this State.

**Mr Dollin:** They are filling in those big holes for you up there.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Yes, the holes left by mining in my electorate are being filled in, but I would not have thought that that would require action on the part of a Minister for Regional Development. It is clear that Queensland needs a coordinated effort, but that is not being provided by this Government at present.

Another important ingredient in efficient administration that seems to be lacking in this State is confidence on the part of big business and the small-business sector. When one takes into account the prevailing high rates of interest and the high levels of taxation that are being imposed, it is no wonder that business confidence is being eroded, because those policies offer no encouragement to the business sector. I note that this Government claims that it will not increase State taxation above the rate of inflation, but the Minister knows as well as I do that that is not correct. For example, in excess of 400 individual items have already been increased at a rate above the present inflation rate. The Government has slyly imposed increases in taxes in the hope that the Opposition will not realise what it is doing. However, these taxes exist and their effects are being felt by a great number of businesses in the community at the moment.

I acknowledge that, in Toowoomba, the Government took a step in the right direction by recognising that some of the businesses in the rural community are in the state of crisis. Perhaps Mr Campbell would not agree with what I am saying because he has gone out of his way to prove that the farming community is not facing a crisis at all. However, because of low returns on farm produce, high interest rates and the erosion of business confidence, the rural sector is in dire financial circumstances. Some of the increased charges imposed by the Government apply across the board, but small business in particular is suffering. For example, the fee charged to register a business name has been increased by 10 per cent. Fees associated with a search and inspection have also been increased by 11 per cent. Searches to establish whether a business name can be adopted for registration have also been increased by 10 per cent. Probably the most significant piece of equipment in a business is a motor vehicle, and charges associated with inspection of a motor vehicle have been increased by 12.4 per cent. Moreover, some very significant increases in charges have occurred in relation to real property. A number of items have been increased by 20 per cent. Items such as microfilm copy and photocopy have been increased by up to 50 per cent. I question why those increases are necessary.

In the past 12 months, the Government has had nothing to hang its hat on. It has not attracted any large business enterprises to Queensland. It has been going backwards and forcing business out of the State rather than encouraging it here from other States. The Government should show leadership and gain the confidence of business, which is not what it has been doing.

Certain principles and guidelines apply to regional development. The major issue of regional development relates not so much to the identification of specific economic development opportunities—they will come and go from time to time—but more to making certain that opportunities that arise are not lost. I emphasise that producers should tailor products to supply the market rather than produce them and then attempt to sell them. Market demands change from time to time, to such an extent that even the size of the article that is produced affects its marketing potential. If the customer demands an article in a 500 kilogram package and the producer supplies an article twice that size, it will not be accepted in the marketplace. That occurs in Australia, but it is more the case in some of the Asian markets. Australian producers should target the Asian markets and develop their products to suit those markets. Japanese housewives buy enough to last only one day. That is why products for the Japanese market must be small and cater for that type of use.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** That's right.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I thank the honourable member for Archerfield. I am pleased that he is agreeing with me. It is important that we develop the article to suit the market.

As well, an emphasis in regional development should focus on facilitating the process of development. Development needs to be driven largely by the local community. To be successful, the business must be one that the local community will support.

For development to occur in any region, a range of basic economic and market factors must be present. The region must produce products and services that are in demand in local, interstate and international markets. The region should be able to efficiently provide and manufacture the required goods or service. It should have the resources—labour, land, materials, finance and technology—available to produce products or services at a competitive cost and which also allow other service requirements to be met. Macadamia nuts are grown in the Gympie district. The macadamia factory packages those nuts in various ways. Because it is providing the right product for the market, the factory is operating successfully. That will ensure that that industry will continue to be viable. Of course, it must also receive the support and encouragement of the local people and the marketplace.

Coffee is also produced in the Gympie district. If things go as planned, 500 tonnes of Andronicus coffee will be produced each year. The Nestle factory is set to take on board the total production of Australia's roast and ground Andronicus coffee. The factory already produces 2 700 tonnes of instant coffee. The operations of that company were transferred to Gympie because it had the capacity to handle the additional labour and the space to set up extra equipment. The factory was producing powdered milk. However, the market for the product dropped, and so did the supply, to the extent that it was not viable to manufacture powdered milk from that factory. That is why the Nestle factory moved the coffee operations to the Gympie district. That is a good example of what can be achieved if a company has the right idea and the incentive to put it into place.

For some time, the Cooloola region has promoted its attractions as a tourist destination. Because it is a great attraction, it is easy to encourage tourists to visit. The south coast region has similar potential to encourage tourists. Mr Palaszczuk indicated that we should supply products that are convenient to transport. We must supply products that can be carried safely. Some of the craft items to which the honourable member referred may not last until the purchaser gets them home.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Creative packaging.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Yes, it must be packaged creatively and carefully, and it must be carried carefully.

The report of the Department of Manufacturing and Commerce suggested that small businesses require assistance and advice. I note that the Small Business Development Corporation is now called the Queensland Small Business Corporation. I cannot help thinking that the removal of the word "Development" from that title was done quite purposely. I certainly hope that that is not the case.

Industries are being developed in Queensland; it is a developing State. The Government has to ensure that businesses and institutions receive assistance where and when required. Encouragement can be provided in many ways. The Government can assist people by ensuring that the cost of establishing a business is not too high, and by providing advice and assistance to those who find themselves in a bit of trouble and instilling in them sound business practices. Many people who go into business fail within the first six months. They have the enthusiasm but lack the experience. Many young people go into business, hoping that it will succeed, without the experience to back them up. Businesses that are under threat need to be assisted to develop programs to enable them to achieve an effective and competitive response to the problems that they face—

Time expired.

**Mrs EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha) (9.08 p.m.): I am pleased to join this Estimates debate on a more positive note than members of the Opposition and to answer some of the criticisms that have been made such as, "How dare the Government review and analyse the establishments that the National Party Government set up over a long

period?" I point out that one of those review systems, the Information Technology Review Committee, has identified half a billion dollars in capital development costs alone that it can save this Government with belt-tightening and departmental uniformity by using interconnecting and uniform systems. Information management has been pinpointed as a core problem with the previous Government and its expenditure. Honourable members heard about multimillion-dollar computers in the Police Department and other departments sitting around idle because nobody seemed to know how to use them.

**Mr Davies:** Did you say half a billion dollars?

**Mrs EDMOND:** Yes, half a billion dollars.

In 1987, the then Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland, headed the World Commission on Environment and Development. As such, she delivered a report called *Our Common Future*, which is now regarded as a benchmark. That report identified the need for "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This is the principle that has led to the important catchcry of the 1990s—sustainable development—a concept that I believe, or hope, is now recognised across the political spectrum. It is no longer acceptable to sell off all our assets today and to leave a ruined earth and no assets for our heirs. This does not necessarily mean less development, but it does mean better development. It means that development does not happen just for development's sake but because it is needed for broader social goals. New developments should emphasise quality, not quantity. This concept means that, rather than rely on mining for our wealth, as has been the tradition, we must direct our attention to new avenues and seek increases in manufacturing areas. It is this realisation that has led the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development to initiate a number of programs designed to assist research and development in manufacturing industries. In the past, Queensland State Governments have invested heavily in research into primary industries and mining, with some 80 per cent of the research and development budget going to the DPI. There has been a dearth of funding from either the Government or private sector into research and development in the areas of manufacturing and industry where it was needed. This deficiency needs to be addressed urgently if Queensland is to achieve economic growth through the development of its manufacturing sector.

The first State Government scheme that specifically addresses research and development in this area is the QGRAD scheme—the Queensland Grants for Research and Development scheme. This scheme is designed to encourage private sector investment into three major areas, that is, where there is seen to be export potential, import replacement possibilities and processing local products to add value. Pure research is generally regarded as an integral part of the university structure and funded accordingly, although recently there has been more industry interest in this area. But it is in the next stages of research and development—the focused research stage and early prototype stage—that funding has been very difficult to find in the past. It is also apparent that Queensland has been scoring poorly at a national level for available funding in these areas. This has not been due solely to parochialism but rather to a lack of knowledge of the availability of grants under the GIRD scheme, the NPDP scheme or other Federal Government research and development initiatives. The role of QGRAD is not to supplant these schemes but rather to complement them in Queensland, to in fact tap into and maximise those Commonwealth funds for our industries. It will make industries and researchers alike aware of the different grants and schemes available to assist research and development in commercial areas. QGRAD will assist with topping-up grants when insufficient funds are available at the Commonwealth level, or where a project meets State criteria but does not meet national strategic priorities. QGRAD will supply funding for joint ventures to provide the necessary strategic infrastructure necessary to design and develop products, such as special equipment or buildings.

I recognise that industrial research and development is not an end in itself but is a significant and integral part of the development of new products and new processes.

Long-term commitment by a firm is needed before commercial returns are gained. Consequently, the QGRAD scheme must be assessed with a long-term perspective. The goal is to accelerate the growth of a self-sustaining industrial research and development base in the private sector. The aim is to increase industrial research and development in this State to the average OECD level of funding over the next five years to establish a basis for internationally competitive manufacturing industries. As I have said, QGRAD will also provide an interface with other Federal Government and State Government programs and incentives for industrial research and development in support of manufacturing development. Such programs include the national procurement development program and the cooperative research centres program.

The cooperative research centres program was introduced by the Commonwealth Government in 1990 to strengthen the basic infrastructure of both research and development and higher education. It will be built up to a total of 50 centres across Australia with program funding of \$100m over the next five years.

At present, there are 16 proposals that have been submitted by Queensland groups for consideration. The Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development will be working to support those submissions where they meet the established merit criteria which reflect State economic development objectives.

In addition, the State will make a financial contribution of up to \$175,000 to individual Queensland groups that are successful in obtaining Commonwealth endorsement and funding. Further assistance may be provided through the Queensland grants for research and development scheme as they are assessed by an independent advisory committee. The Government is also prepared to consider applications for infrastructure support here, too, in the form of buildings and equipment. It is important, though, that these groups bidding for CRC funding have private-sector backing and are closely involved with industry, including an industry funding contribution. This is a prerequisite for the Commonwealth CRC program, too.

In keeping with these programs to encourage research and development, the department is lending its support to the construction of a research centre on the Mount Gravatt Research Park for leasing to Griffith University. The 1990-91 capital works program has committed \$850,000, with the total cost of the building expected to be \$2m. This project was first proposed in late 1988 when the university approached the previous department seeking a building on the research park to accommodate contract research activities. The university considered that it had the potential to take a leading role in certain fields of research, namely, pharmaceuticals, new materials and toxic materials management. The research would be mission-oriented and carried out on a commercial basis under contract from industries.

Throughout this period, Griffith University has been pursuing research contracts. The university management remains convinced that a research centre is necessary and will be successful. Griffith University is currently developing a business plan for the centre, which will demonstrate financial viability, markets, risks, etc., and departmental and university officers are establishing the detailed criteria for the centre. When the business plan is accepted and the requirements identified, the project will go ahead with the selection of an architect for the detailed design.

**Mr Borbidge:** On one of those dreadful industrial estates?

**Mrs EDMOND:** No, a research park. The honourable member did not hear the first part. I congratulate the Minister on these long overdue initiatives that I believe will strengthen Queensland's manufacturing industry for the benefit of all Queenslanders.

Another worthy initiative has been the appointment of Ms Jenny McDonald to lead the women in manufacturing project. This project is being developed by the department over 1990-91 to a strategy plan. It will seek, in cooperation with industry, employers and unions, to identify and develop cost-effective strategies and initiatives that can be taken up by employers, unions and the Government to fully realise the economic potential associated with the greater employment of women in industry. It is

hoped that the project will lead to improved access by women to the full range of work available in industry, particularly skilled, technical and management positions, and a better understanding by key players, especially the employers and the unions, of the issues affecting women's employment in industry and the need to take positive steps to act on them.

The report by the Australian Manufacturing Council released in February this year found that, at present, women were seriously disadvantaged in manufacturing industries. Those findings showed that women are working in industries, but they are confined to a few industry sectors. Over 60 per cent are working in the food, textiles, clothing and footwear, printing and other machinery and equipment industries. A high proportion of women are employed in clerical positions or in basic processing jobs with extremely limited access to skilled managerial positions.

Issues found to affect women's employment opportunities included lack of access to skilled training, firmly held views and attitudes about appropriate roles for men and women, and the failure to take account of women's specific needs arising from their family responsibilities. Significantly, the report further found that action to improve the position of women would lead both to greater opportunities for women and higher productivity for manufacturing.

The first stage is the identification of the priorities and the establishment of a team drawn from Government, industry and the unions, that will consult and advise over the life of the project. The project recognises that in Queensland women are and continue to be underutilised throughout industry and that without positive action this will seriously hamper the ability of Queensland industries over the long term to recruit and to retain a skilled work force.

On that positive note, I commend the Minister for his Estimates.

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (9.22 p.m.): I must say that that speech gives me the perfect springboard to commence my comments. I am disappointed that the Premier is about to leave the Chamber. I hope that Mr Milliner, the Minister for Justice, will stay because in a moment he is going to get an honourable mention.

The honourable member for Mount Coot-tha talked about the perfect note on which to end her speech. I can say that all of the contributions by Government members have been based on theory, theory, theory. They were all airy-fairy. What Queensland needs, particularly north Queensland, for the benefit of both State and regional development and for the continuity of job creation, which is now faltering, is action, action, action—not the theory, theory, theory that honourable members have heard about all through this debate. Queensland needs support for job-creating projects and for entrepreneurs, who are increasingly held out to be people who will damage the environment by projects that, from time to time, win emotive praise in the press. In fact, the jobs of many thousands of young Queenslanders and Australians will be wiped out. The member for Maryborough would be well aware of what I am talking about.

Support needs to be given to entrepreneurs who have supported this nation and brought it to the position of pre-eminence that it used to enjoy but which, in recent years, has been destroyed. Support needs to be given to far-sighted investors and to people who wish to invest in the Minister's own area of Townsville. Every year, the potential of that magnificent island off Townsville is not being realised because support is not forthcoming from the Townsville City Council and Government members in the area. They are driving investors and entrepreneurs away. As a result, Townsville has become a dead city. It is a city that could become a jewel not only in Queensland but also in this nation, and I feel confident that most people recognise that. But when the far-sighted investors find the dead attitude that prevails in Townsville—an attitude that is epitomised by the Minister and by the speeches that have been made by Government members who talk only about theory, theory, theory—they are turned away. What is needed is action, action, action. The potential of that region is being overlooked. A

recent editorial in the *Townsville Bulletin* was headed "Get going, Goss". In addition to that, it should have said, "Get out, Smith, and keep going."

**Mr Borbidge:** They said that earlier in the year.

**Mr STONEMAN:** That is marvellous.

I turn now to the rural task force that was set up only recently. The Government has effectively wiped out the enterprise zone. Part of the Labor Party's election promise was that it would wipe out that zone but, after coming to office, it discovered that the enterprise zone was pretty well thought out and was doing a lot of good work. The Minister who is in charge of these Estimates then decided to beef it up. But what does "beef it up" mean? It means to wipe it out. That is the way in which the Minister beefed it up.

**Mr Borbidge:** The north Queensland MFP proposal was based on the enterprise zone that they axed.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Exactly. There is no doubt about that. People such as Mr Mick Curtain and Mr Monty Omedai, who are entrepreneurs in the true sense—people who are living and working in north Queensland and who are trying to support the region and Queensland—were not being given any assistance by the Government. But what did this Government do? It created the northern and rural task force. The editorial to which I have referred stated—

"This is a cynical reaction, but there is cause for cynicism. In 12 days, the Goss Labor Government will have been one year in power—a power which it gained with a strong vote of support in the North. It sought that vote in the election campaign with a manifesto, which it called Labor's Regional Economic Development Plan, full of fine words, rolling phrases and lofty sentiments."

I will not refer to the editorial chapter and verse, but it asks the question, "Who is writing Mr Goss's scripts—Sir Humphrey Appleby?" It then continues—

"All these things, all the activities the Premier says the members of the 'task force' will attend to, are already things which are part and parcel of any Member of Parliament's job. What on earth is he in Parliament for"—

this is referring to Mr Davies, who I notice has left the Chamber—

"if it is not to investigate problems, listen to views, report on issues and so on?"

The Member for Townsville, Mr Ken Davies—a member of the 'task force', of course—said in yesterday's story that it would have direct access to the Premier. Should he need to be reminded that he already has direct access to the Premier—in the Parliament to which he was elected?"

**Mr Borbidge:** He should have.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I agree with the honourable member. The editorial continues—

"Has he not been making use of that access? If he hasn't, why hasn't he?"

While Mr Milliner is in the Chamber, I will quote from one of the humble newspapers in my electorate, the *Home Hill Observer*. It published a photograph of the Minister when he was in the area. I am sorry that I was not aware that the Minister was visiting the area. If I had known, I would have been genuinely happy to welcome him. That newspaper published a photograph of the Minister in front of the courthouse in Home Hill, with the Minister saying, "Don't worry. This courthouse will remain." Let me refer to what the article in that newspaper said.

**Mr Milliner:** Hang on. You have got it all wrong.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Let me tell the Minister that one month after he was photographed in the main street of Home Hill in north Queensland—

**Mr Milliner:** In Ayr.

**Mr STONEMAN:** It was Home Hill. The Minister was referring to the Home Hill Court House.

**Mr Milliner:** No, I was not.

**Mr STONEMAN:** The Minister is trying to back out.

**Mr Milliner:** You are wrong, you are wrong, you are wrong!

**Mr STONEMAN:** The Minister is saying that the editor of this newspaper—the man who writes fairly and squarely about north Queensland—has it wrong. The editor wrote—

"The Minister concerned certainly did not help matters by first suggesting that the Court House would not close—and then only a month later announcing that it was to go. Unfortunately the decision has been made without any reference to or advice from local people as to its need in the town and, in fact, it was pointed out by the Chamber President that they could not even get replies from the Ministers concerned—a complaint that has come regularly from several quarters as to the accessibility of senior Government Ministers."

**Mr Milliner:** You have got it all wrong.

**Mr STONEMAN:** If I have got it wrong, the Minister should write a letter to the editor and tell the people up there. The Minister accuses me of having it wrong. Over the years, National Party members have been told that they have had many things wrong. But let me assure him that people are now starting to make up their own minds and they will vote against the Government in their thousands.

I table the editorial of the *Townsville Bulletin* of 20 November, headlined "Get going, Goss". In fact, one of the paragraphs at the end of that editorial is worth noting. It states—

"Instead of giving out this gobbledegook, Mr Goss would be better occupied studying Labor's Regional Economic Plan and carrying out some of the promises made to win office. On June 2, six months after Mr Goss's win, The Bulletin asked Mr Goss a series of questions designed to find out what progress was being made with the plan. We received no firm answers, just Sir Humphrey-type mumbo-jumbo and jargon.

We will be trying again on December 2, after one year of Goss the Boss. There had better be some better answers this time than the setting up of a task force which already exists."

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

**Mr STONEMAN:** I am the greatest supporter of north Queensland who has ever set foot in this State. I suppose that many people could say that. However, I honestly believe it. I also believe that, over the years, members from both sides of the Chamber have made that statement. I have said consistently that Townsville is the flagship of north Queensland. Cairns and other areas should be riding on the back of that city. Over the years, the support given to Cairns by entrepreneurs and other people in the surrounding area has been unbelievably different from that given to Townsville. Last week, on the same day as the editorial that I tabled, the Mayor of Townsville wrote a letter to a newspaper editor to the effect that he had wandered around Cairns and had seen all sorts of dreadful things. The people of Cairns are confident in the future of their town and are investing in it. Cairns has an international airport and is known throughout the world as part of Australia. Unfortunately, because of the inactivity of this Government—I say this with all sincerity—and the philosophy that pervades it and the Townsville City Council, Townsville is unknown. It could well be the jewel in the crown of Queensland. It has a most beautiful esplanade which, I concede, was developed by the Townsville City Council. It has arguably the best city centre of any tropical city in Australia. The inner-city area, which was developed during the administration of Mayor Mike Reynolds, was carried through to Tony Mooney's administration and probably

started with Perc Tucker. I do not mind acknowledging that. However, what is the point in putting a coat of paint on a house if it does not have firm foundations?

Townsville is the jewel in the crown of Queensland. Located near that jewel is Magnetic Island. However, every time that somebody tries to create job opportunities, make something better or create an attraction for interstate and international business on Magnetic Island, the idea is knocked on the head. People who travel along the Queensland coast must go through Townsville. Unfortunately, they regard it as a place where they will have to call in for fuel. The fact of the matter is that, by creating a vacuum with the removal of the enterprise zone and knocking on the head an investment centre based on Townsville, the Government has sent out a signal to the investment community and, indeed, to the world, that it does not really support north Queensland. That is just not on. We cannot cop that. Within 100 kilometres of Townsville are some of the best tourist attractions anywhere in the world. One of the most marvellous facets of that area is that it does not rain there very often. It has always been regarded as a dry city. Other famous tourist attractions around the world, such as Las Vegas and the islands of Hawaii, are assumed to be wet areas, whereas they are dry. Although Townsville has all the necessary tourist facilities, it has not been able to break through and convince the administration that adopts this Government's philosophies to accept that fact. The people of north Queensland have been let down. I do not say that in a party philosophical sense, I say it in all sincerity. I do not walk away from the fact that, in recent years, the National Party Government became so frustrated that it asked, "Why bother?" However, it did bother. It created the Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone. The creation of the Cape York spaceport would have made Townsville the focus of north Queensland. However, this Government removed those job opportunities for our young people. It said, "We do not care." This Government has given way to a few land-rights claims and a few greenies. I acknowledge that all issues must be balanced. However, this Government has sent out a signal to the community to the effect, "We do not care. The people who vote for us are in the south-east corner. We are going to throw Geoff Smith, Ken Davies, Mr Eaton and old Uncle Tom Cobbley on the scrap heap because they do not count." The people of north Queensland do not deserve that sort of treatment. They do not need theory, they need action and support. They need a signal from this Government that, if they formulate some free-enterprise options, the Government will wear it.

**Mr Borbidge:** A bit of incentive.

**Mr STONEMAN:** They want incentive. That is all that they require. If they formulate an idea that can be balanced with environmental and local concerns and a positive, progressive philosophy, this Government will support them all the way. But what did they get? They got the soft option on the Cape York space base. The Cape York-North Queensland Enterprise Zone was wiped out. Tony Mooney and his cohorts are wandering around saying, "Have we not done a great job? We have stopped job opportunities in north Queensland. We have made Townsville the dead centre of north Queensland." On behalf of those people, I say that that is not good enough. It will not work. They are saying, "We have had enough. We will not cop that any more."

Time expired.

**Mr PREST** (Port Curtis) (9.36 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to speak to the Minister's Estimates and to correct one or two misunderstandings of Opposition members. I refer to the China Steel project which, because of the incompetence of the then Minister, Mr Borbidge, closely followed by Mr Fraser, never came to Gladstone. That company played those two fellows off a break. Eventually, the company went away laughing because it got what it wanted in another country.

The other matter to which I refer is the Gladstone Power Station, which Mr Ahern offered to Comalco for \$500m because he was stuck for something to say when he visited Gladstone. So he plucked that figure out of the air. He thought that he could do what Mr Tenni did some years ago with the fire services. Because Mr Tenni let Comalco out

of a precept on the fire services in his electorate, Comalco gave an amount of money each year to Mr Tenni, which the National Party used as a slush fund. The \$500m was a starting point, and negotiations were to be held behind closed doors whereby a negotiator was to try to obtain money for a slush fund to be used by the National Party for its election campaigns. Therefore, the electricity-consumers of Queensland were to be the losers. But when the negotiations fell through, and with the election coming on, the Government could not close a deal with Comalco. Following the election on 2 December and the change of Government, independent assessors made evaluations of the value of the power station at between \$800m and \$1.1 billion. At that time, every idiot was running around and saying that the Government should either sell or give the power station to Comalco. That was never a possibility. Meaningful negotiations were taking place between the Government and Comalco. However, the idiot who is now the Leader of the Opposition and Dr Watson, who is supposed to be an economist, were buying in—

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. I do not think that it is in accordance with the conventions of this Parliament for members to be referred to as idiots, as the honourable member is doing. There is a place for some decorum. I know that the hour is late, but I think that the honourable member should observe—

**Mr PREST:** It is not. Sit down. The honourable member has to wear it. The Government knows what is happening. It knows that the former Government tried to give away the power station, and it knows the reason for that. In June this year, I said in the *Gladstone Observer* that the public comment was only adding fuel to the fire and was doing no good at all. I said that ill-informed people should stay out of the matter, because they knew little of the negotiations between the Government and Comalco. In July, in a newspaper article, Mr Karl Stewart said—

"Both parties appeared locked in a stalemate over the proposed sale with the company's \$500 million offer falling a long way short of the government's estimate."

However, he did say that the lines of communication were still open. He remained optimistic that a decision could be reached before the end of 1990. The article continued—

"An official timetable for the planned Boyne Smelters' expansion would be drawn up following an outcome on power supply negotiations and completion of a full scale economic feasibility study."

So things are still moving. Once again, though, the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce—another mob of two-bob businesspeople—wanted to buy into the argument. The Chamber of Commerce wanted all the papers to be put on its table so that it could consider the negotiations from the point of view of both the Government and Comalco. I do not know what the Government said, but I know what Comalco said, because it made its comments public. A newspaper article stated—

"Comalco Limited has effectively pulled the carpet from under the feet of the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce and its determined campaign to keep a proposed \$900 Boyne Smelters' expansion afloat."

Comalco told the Gladstone Chamber of Commerce to keep its nose out of the matter, that it did not know what it was doing and that negotiations between the Government and Comalco were continuing in a satisfactory manner.

On 15 November, Dr Watson, the so-called economist and Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, said that the Gladstone Power Station should be given to Comalco. He has just returned from a trip to Japan and, as an economist, he would understand that the Japanese economy is flat and falling. A Japanese company is one of the major share-holders in Boyne Smelters. However, the Japanese are not interested in any major expansion of the Gladstone smelter, because they do not have the sort of money that is required. When Mike Ahern made the announcement in mid-1989, he took the Japanese completely by surprise. They still have not recovered from that surprise. No meaningful decisions will be made on the purchase of the Gladstone Power Station by Comalco until the economy in Japan picks up.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr PREST:** That is as much as the honourable member thinks he knows. For the period that the honourable member has been in this place, he has been the little boy lost. He has not improved one bit and he has proved that he is a numbskull. If the honourable member thinks that he will be the next Leader of the National Party Opposition, he has another think coming. Neil Turner will be the next Leader of the Opposition. Everyone knows that negotiations are under way to overthrow Cooper and to install Mr Neil Turner as the Leader of the Opposition. That could not be anything but an improvement.

I would have liked to refer to the study that has been made by Minproc in relation to the titanium plant that it will build in Gladstone. I will make a submission on the lack of content in relation to housing in that study. Honourable members can be assured that I will say that the Government, in its negotiations with Minproc, must ensure that Minproc provides adequate housing for the workers who will be employed at the plant.

Time expired.

**Hon. G. N. SMITH** (Townsville East—Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development) (10.45 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions in the debate on the Estimates of my portfolio of Business, Industry and Regional Development. I certainly express my appreciation for the contributions of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber. They displayed a depth of knowledge on the issues that they chose to debate and I thank them for their interest in the policies and programs of this important portfolio. I was impressed by the way they avoided repetition. They developed the matters that I had raised in my speech and anyone who reads the debate by Government members will have a very good overview of what the department has been doing.

The honourable member for Mulgrave, Warren Pitt, spoke of QBLIC and its success. He discussed the Business Regulation Review Unit, the increase in the budget and other matters. The honourable member for Ipswich West, Don Livingstone, displayed his depth of knowledge of the NIES programs, the Centre for Manufacturing Skills Development, the QINDIS database and the purchasing policy. The honourable member for Townsville, Ken Davies, spoke at length on the ALP regional policy and certainly demonstrated his detailed knowledge of it and its application to regional Queensland. The honourable member for Archerfield, Henry Palaszczuk, spoke about the important cottage craft industries and their importance as a tourist attraction. The honourable member for Greenslopes, Gary Fenlon, made an excellent contribution on information technology. He discussed TECHQUAD, QUESTnet, the importance of fibre optics and the installation, we hope, of the Boeing supercomputer. The honourable member for Mount Coot-tha, Wendy Edmond, spoke about research and development and displayed a great depth of knowledge, particularly about QGRAD and women in the manufacturing section. The honourable member for Port Curtis, Bill Prest, as usual called it as he saw it. He certainly is on the ball with respect to what is going on in Gladstone. I am assured by the Minproc organisation that, at this stage, it has not addressed the impact study but it certainly will give consideration to it as the project develops.

**Mr Borbidge:** Is the Government going to make Minproc pull out?

**Mr SMITH:** I will come back to that.

I now want to depart from the normal procedure and, for the moment, bypass the speech of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. First, I will refer to other non-Government members, because it will take less time to do so. The honourable member for Condamine, Mr Littleproud, and the honourable member for Carnarvon, Mr Springborg, made honest contributions, and I have taken on board what they said. The honourable member for Gympie, Mr Stephan, made an honest contribution but he was a little off the subject matter. I suggest that he re-orientate himself. The honourable member for Burdekin, Mr Stoneman, said some nice things about Townsville but his whole story was really that

well-worn rhetoric that I have heard before. That would be very apparent to anybody who has been around the place for any length of time.

I now refer to the National Party's spokesman. His contribution was mainly positive and I took on board some of the things that he said. He must realise that some of the matters he raised tonight are beyond the control of the Minister for this portfolio. Some of his concerns ranged across other areas. I happened to be in the car park the other day when somebody arrived in a Range Rover and did a wheelie. I wondered who on earth it was. It turned out to be Mr Dunworth. It occurred to me that he may have been something of an urban cowboy, and his contribution tonight certainly convinced me of it.

The forces of darkness are certainly on the run and, for those who do not know, I inform the chamber that Mrs Thatcher resigned tonight, and that is a cause for great celebration.

The speech of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise was nothing but a rerun of everything that he has said before. Firstly, I would like to reply to what he said about the famous enterprise zone. The truth about it—let me put this on the record once and for all—is that, when he went to Cabinet, he opposed the enterprise zone. He came back from Cabinet and said, "I was done. Joh is making me do it." That is the story of the enterprise zone. That indicates how much support he had for the enterprise zone.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The remarks that the Minister has made are untrue, and I ask that he withdraw them. I was never in Joh's Cabinet.

**Mr SMITH:** If he is offended, I will retract those words. There was no firm commitment from any investor who was willing to invest in that project. Consistently since the abandonment of that program, the department has continued to develop those projects and has actively sought investment.

**Mr Borbidge:** Give us the status report on those projects.

**Mr SMITH:** I will decide what I will talk about. The MFP concluded that Queensland will still get whatever we would have got from the proposal. It is still on line and we do not have the sorts of problems that we would have had if we had gone along with the demands that were being made on the Government. The honourable member made some derogatory comments about the spaceport project. The Government has indicated its support for the proposal, subject to the environmental and other issues being resolved. But it has clearly indicated that it is a matter for the private sector, and we have never budged from that position. This Government has been pro-active in its business and industry policies and, most importantly, the Budget provided the economic and financial setting for the development of industry and business. I dare the honourable member to deny that.

The honourable member said that there were no new projects. I have here a list of 12 projects, all of which have been implemented in the last 12 months. They have involved either in excess of 20 employees or have been worth in excess of \$1m of investment. I am told that that adds up to a net gain of 350 employees. The honourable member cannot say that nothing has been done in that regard. One project in particular was the ammonium nitrate plant in Gladstone that was also to be built by the same company, ICI. This was a brand new project. The honourable member clearly does not know about the Gladstone steel project. He referred to it as being on the industrial estate, but in fact it is in the Yarwun area, not on the Yarwun industrial estate. The honourable member does not know his geography. He has been out of the job for 12 months and he is out of touch. The China Steel project has been canvassed and refuted over and over again. The honourable member referred to the question of civil offsets. Clearly he has not got that right. He still has not got the difference between defence contracts and civil offsets clear in his mind. I will give the honourable member some figures. In terms of defence contracts, in 1987-88 they amounted to \$29m and in 1988-89, \$40m, not \$68m as stated by the honourable member. If one looks at the Queensland

figure for the year 1988-89 in comparison to other States, Queensland had \$40m worth of defence contracts, the ACT had \$812m, New South Wales \$426m, Victoria \$166m and South Australia \$111m, which is a total of \$1,555m.

I have to wind up my reply now. Again I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. In particular, I wish to pay tribute to the staff of my department. They have responded well and positively to the changes that are proposed. Morale is high and expectations of the future of the department are very positive. I am proud to lead a department that is going into the future in such a positive way.

At 9.55 p.m.,

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mrs Woodgate): Order! Under the provisions of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 3 October, I shall now put the questions for the Vote under consideration and the balance remaining unvoted for Business, Industry and Regional Development.

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

\$43,848,000—Economic Services, Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development (Consolidated Revenue).

\$31,378,000—Economic Services, Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development (Trust and Special Funds).

Progress reported.

### **LAND ACT AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL**

#### **Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 21 November (see p. ).

**Mr QUINN** (South Coast) (9.56 p.m.): The issue of rentals charged for Crown grazing and pastoral leases has always been vexing for any Government, so much so that over a number of years several inquiries in this State have attempted to identify the elements that constitute fair and reasonable leases over Crown land. The latest report in which this matter was addressed was laid on the table of this House earlier this week. I refer to the *Report of a Review of Land Policy and Administration in Queensland*. An earlier 1989 report by a Mr Carter followed a specific inquiry into Crown land rentals. It was in this report that the Bill now before the House had its beginnings. The report identified maxims for rental assessments laid down 30 years ago by the late Sir William Labatt Payne. Both reports agree that those maxims are still relevant today. I will read two of them because they are most relevant to the argument. The first states—

"Rents must be within the capacity of the industry to pay."

The second maxim is—

"Rents must be such as will permit Crown tenants to face, without undue apprehension, the fluctuations and variations of prices and seasons which might reasonably be encountered during the assessment period."

Obviously, floods, droughts and commodity prices were acknowledged as key factors in the process of rental assessment. At that time the increase in rents was thought by the majority of rural producers to be fair and reasonable in the prevailing economic circumstances. Based on this fact, rental increases were to be phased in over a 10-year period. This Bill seeks to change this process to a common commencement date, namely 1 January 1991. Under good economic circumstances this proposal would seem fair and equitable, but, unfortunately for Australia, Queensland and rural producers, commodity prices for wool and grain have fallen quite noticeably since the Carter report was handed down. To increase land rentals now is in direct conflict with the two maxims that were endorsed by both land inquiries. In the current economy, these increases are beyond the ability of lessees to pay. If they cannot pay the current lease payment, how will they

make a lease payment that has increased by possibly 200 per cent? It could lead to lease-holders walking off the land and leaving it unproductive. Clearly, this Bill goes against the recommendations in both reports by failing to take the well-documented rural down-turn into account.

A further ground on which this Bill should be opposed is identified on page 125 of the Government's latest report, that is, the Wolfe report. The relevant section states—

". . . the Crown leasehold rental system should operate without political knee-jerk response, and the rental mechanism should be designed to operate automatically. Ad hoc political decisions, eg. granting rent concessions, have wide ranging consequences . . . "

I add that these rent concessions will initiate rent increases. Clearly, the move by the Government to increase payments at this time is a political knee-jerk reaction and an ad hoc decision that is being presented as just and fair. It is not the result of a rental mechanism but, rather, an arbitrary decision. This Bill is just a revenue-raiser that is being thrust upon an industry that can ill-afford to pay at present. As such, this legislation will be opposed by the Liberal Party.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK** (Albert) (10 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the Bill, which will instigate reform in the land rental system—a system which for many years has been sadly lacking. These reforms will affect some 4 800 pastoral and grazing homestead perpetual leases. At present, all pastoral and grazing homestead leases are assessed every 10 years from the date of commencement of the lease. This means that most leases have different assessment dates, and that, because of the variations in seasons and production, it is difficult to establish relative rent levels. As the honourable member for South Coast said, the common date for these leases is now 1 January 1991.

Any lessee who pays increased rent during the 12-month period up to 1 January 1991 will receive credit towards rent increases that will be imposed in 1991. By standardising leases to begin on the same date, the system will be fairer and administration will be simpler. I point out that these increases are not Labor Party initiatives but are recommendations contained in the report of the Carter inquiry, which was established by the previous Government. The report was presented in 1988, and I wish to mention some of the people who were involved in its compilation. Mr B. J. Cameron, the chief executive officer of the United Graziers Association of Queensland provided assistance, together with Mr R. D. Grover, financial services manager of the Queensland Graingrowers Association, and Mr A. C. Usher of the Cattlemen's Union. These people are not supporters of the Labor Party; they supposedly support the National Party.

**Mr Hobbs:** They did not want the increases that Carter recommended.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Well, I will read out the terms of reference for the Carter inquiry. The second term of reference states—

"The most appropriate notional physical state and condition of the arable lands comprised in the types of holdings under reference, and the date or dates at which such notional state or condition is to be assumed, for rental purposes."

The relevant recommendation contained in the Carter report stated—

"The most appropriate notional physical state and condition of arable lands comprised in Grazing Homestead Perpetual Leases and Pastoral Holdings for valuation for rental purposes is its unimproved natural state, and the date as at which its natural state is to be assumed and valued is the common date for each pending rent reassessment—the first of which is proposed by the Crown to be 1st January, 1990."

I reiterate that these recommendations were not made by supporters of the Labor Party; these people followed the National Party. I also wish to refer to the mission statement contained in the annual report of the Department of Lands for 1989-90, which reads—

"The Department of Lands will:

Advise the Government on the best use of the State's total land resources for the benefit of all of the people of Queensland."

I emphasise the words "all of the people of Queensland". The statement continues—

"Implement the Government's policies for the management of the State's land and information resources efficiently and effectively.

Contribute to the wider objectives of the Government, including the development of the State's economy and trade."

They are three goals stated in the annual report of the Department of Lands. It should be remembered that the Wolfe inquiry was established in pursuit of those goals, and was designed to produce recommendations on land administration and policy with a view to generating a fair return on the State's land assets, ensuring consistency and fairness within land policy and administration, and enhancing suitable economic growth. All that the Minister is trying to do is set up a fair system in which all people can participate.

In real money terms, rental charges have not kept pace with CPI. The figures show that, in real money terms, presently lessees pay less than the rentals that applied in 1957. In 1970, following two inquiries that were set up by the Land Court as a temporary measure because of the adverse conditions prevailing at the time, rents were set for sheep properties and, in 1976, rents were set for cattle properties. The Carter recommendations suggested that increases of 100 per cent should be imposed for sheep properties, and 200 per cent for cattle properties. I emphasise that the Carter report was commissioned by the National Party. The inquiry was carried out by supporters of the National Party, not supporters of the Labor Party. They were not our people. The National Party appointed them to that inquiry. Under the recommendations of the Carter report, 282 lessees will continue to pay the minimum rent of \$100; 110 will have their rents reduced; and 304 will not have their rents increased. Imagine a minimum rent of \$100! I wish I had to pay rent of only \$100 on my property. Income from pastoral leases and grazing homestead perpetual leases will increase by \$3.7m, from \$2.5m to \$6.2m, which is based on 1 per cent of the unimproved value of the land. This Bill sets in train some administrative processes that are designed to set a common date for the beginning of the leases and save the department some money. The department would certainly want to ensure that it is getting the best return for its assets. I support the Bill.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory) (10.07 p.m.): I am usually pleased to speak in the Chamber. However, tonight, I am not happy about the implementation of the Carter report through the legislation that is before the House. Where are the Government's bona fides to support its claim of support for rural industries, which it made in Toowoomba 72 hours ago? The Minister is a member of Cabinet. Just 72 hours ago, the Premier, the Honourable Wayne Goss, agreed to a nine-point plan to assist rural people who are at present in a deep dilemma. This legislation makes a mockery of Cabinet's offer on Monday in Toowoomba to adopt schemes whereby Government departments can help Queensland's rural industries ride out their worst economic crisis in 30 years. Government members believe that the man on the land is the enemy of the Labor Party. They are wrong.

**Mr McGrady:** That's not true.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The honourable member should bear with me for a moment. He can squawk all he likes, but I will yell a little louder than he does. I am pleased that the member for Mount Isa is in the Chamber. He is the chairman of the task force that the Premier has established. I would like input into that task force. Yesterday, I mentioned to the honourable member that I would be only too happy to address the task force. I can advise him that rural people are facing many problems. Rent increases will hurt not only the man on the land but also businesspeople, shearers, earth-moving contractors, fencing contractors and transport operators, because they all depend on that bloke in the bush—the man on the land.

**Mr McGrady:** Women of the west.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The women work hand in hand with the men. I would never forget them. They are a very important part of rural life.

**Mr Dollin:** You had to be reminded.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I did not have to be reminded. Government members will be sorry. We will have the last laugh. I hasten to add that this is not a laughing matter. You should wake up to yourselves. You have no compassion whatsoever.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the honourable member address his comments through the Chair.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I am sorry, Mr Speaker. In the full glare of the media, including the television cameras, the Premier announced his assistance package to help besieged rural producers.

**Mr McGrady:** I was well received, too, by the rural community.

**Mr JOHNSON:** If the honourable member listens, I will tell him a little more. Just 72 hours ago, the Premier told representatives of rural organisations and the public that his package included a two-year moratorium on rent and lease fee increases. One of those people was the Chairman of the United Graziers Association, Mr Bill Bonthron, a very respectable citizen who has the industry's problems at heart. Mr Bonthron believed that the Premier was announcing that the Carter report would be put aside for two years; but, as it turned out, the Premier was referring to the Wolfe report. It was an exercise in hypocrisy.

**Mr Nunn:** No he didn't.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The member for Isis did not realise that, either. He would not have a clue. He would not even be aware that he is sitting in this Chamber. Apparently, the Premier was referring to recommendations contained in the Patsy Wolfe review of land policy and administration in Queensland. However, I am sure that Bill Bonthron and the other industry leaders believed that there would be a two-year moratorium on the Carter review. We have been conned again. The people in the bush are not completely stupid. Government members will see how good their memories are in two years' time. Little more than 72 hours after the Premier's promise, we have a Bill before the House to enable substantial rent increases to be imposed from 1 January 1991. The ink is hardly dry on Mr Goss' grand promise. Where is his credibility? It has gone down the chute. The Minister is merrily forging ahead with legislation to increase the land rentals across the board for sheep and cattle properties from 1 January 1991, as recommended by the Carter report. When Mr Carter brought down his report, wool was at an all-time premium—probably the highest price it had reached since 1950. Today, two or three years later, the price of wool has crashed. Three years ago, I obtained \$1,445 for a bale of wool; a year later, I obtained \$1,140 a bale; and, this year, I obtained \$660 a bale.

**Mr Prest:** Rubbish!

**Mr JOHNSON:** It is not rubbish.

**Mr Prest:** It is.

**Mr JOHNSON:** It is not rubbish at all, and the honourable member damned well knows it. He should wake up to himself.

**Mr Prest:** People pay \$32,800 for a bale of wool.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The honourable member is talking about superfine wool in Tasmania. That is how incompetent the member for Port Curtis is. I feel sorry for the people of Port Curtis whom he represents. Where is his responsibility and credibility? He has not got any.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Opposition spokesman went to great lengths to point out that, because of the low price of wool and other problems, the rural sector was

facing great difficulties. Although that matter is relevant, I ask the honourable member to discuss the rent payable on pastoral leases and on grazing homestead perpetual leases. He can talk about the problems in the rural sector, but I will not allow repetition about wool prices, interest rates, and so on. The honourable member can mention those matters, but I will not allow debate on them.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Mr Speaker, I am just trying to point out the problems confronting people in the bush today. I refer not only to the man on the land but also to the businesspeople in the towns and, as I have said, to all the other people who are directly involved.

Under the circumstances, surely these increases need to be deferred. I beg the Minister to defer them. When the sheep industry gets back on its feet—as everyone hopes that it will—the introduction of the increases that are recommended in the Wolfe report could be considered, but not increases of the size that have been rumoured in this place in the last couple of days. If this Bill is passed, the Crown land rents on sheep and cattle properties will automatically rise. In a little over a month, the rents on sheep properties will rise by 100 per cent, and those on cattle properties will rise by some 200 per cent. That will be a grand Christmas present for the people in the bush! It is very sad and lonely out there at present. People are wondering how they can pay the tucker bill every month, let alone what they are going to give their families for Christmas.

**Mr McGrady:** Who set up this inquiry?

**Mr JOHNSON:** I will take that interjection. The National Party Government instituted that inquiry.

**Mr McGrady:** They implemented it—set it up.

**Mr JOHNSON:** That is right. However, it was to be phased in over 10 years, yet this Government is going to introduce it in January 1991. No matter what political persuasion one might be, one must accept that such a rise must have a severe impact on wool-producers, in particular, quite a number of whom are almost certainly facing their last Christmas on the land, thanks to what I believe is irresponsible management by the Government. There is no way in the world that the Opposition can prevent this Bill from being passed tonight. It is an unfortunate fact that it will be passed. However, I trust that, when the Minister goes back to Cabinet, he will try to persuade his colleagues to show a little bit of compassion for the people in the bush, who are facing a real dilemma. Tonight honourable members are witnessing the old three-card trick. On the one hand, the Government is promising to give a two-year rent deferment and, on the other hand, it is going to increase the rent immediately. How callous can the Government be!

**Mr Nunn** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** That would be right. The honourable member would know.

I have been kicked in the guts before, as have a lot of people in the bush, and I can tell this House that in two years' time the Nationals will be up and running again. This is a blatant example of doublecrossing by Labor. It is saying one thing and doing another. The Premier and the Cabinet have just paid lip-service to the rural crisis. I mention in particular the ISC report and the strangulation of the Railways by this Government. Queensland has a Minister who does not understand transport in this State. The Government is engaging in little more than a cruel public relations exercise.

I can assure the Government that the people in the west and people throughout Queensland who are facing the worst financial crisis that has been faced in this State for some 30 years will not be impressed if this legislation is passed. But does this Government really care? I wonder whether the Minister has any compassion at all. I beg him to show compassion and, as I have said, to take this back to Cabinet and stress the difficulties that are being faced out in the bush. I am sure that, when the Minister's task force reports to the Government, he will find that what I am saying is the truth.

**Mr Hayward:** He is a very compassionate Minister.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I am sure that he is.

For purely political purposes, this Government is closing the Longreach regional education office. That will cripple that region even more. It is already suffering from the impact of high fuel prices. This year, the tourist season in that area has been very poor. This Bill will be the last straw. It will be much more difficult for children in remote regions to receive an education. People just cannot afford to send their children away to boarding school. The problem is becoming worse every day. I will give the House an example. Yesterday I spoke to a lady who comes from the Barcaldine area. Her husband is away somewhere working. They have a couple of properties, and their children are away at boarding schools. She rang me about another matter, and before our conversation concluded, that woman was nearly an emotional wreck. These are the sorts of problems that the task force will be confronted with when it goes out into the bush to see what the real problems are.

Farm vehicle registration has been increased. I remember the night when the honourable member for Greenslopes, Mr Fenlon, said that the cockies in the bush had been getting it pretty good for a long time and that it was about time there were a few increases. In two years' time I will remind him of his comments, which are recorded in *Hansard*.

**Mr FENLON:** I rise to a point of order. I believe that the member for Gregory has misquoted my comments as recorded in *Hansard* on the matter to which I think he is referring. Until he can provide the House with the exact quotation from *Hansard*, I ask that he withdraw them.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! What is your point of order?

**Mr FENLON:** My point of order is that the honourable member's recollection of that segment of *Hansard* is incorrect.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Greenslopes seeks a withdrawal of the comments. I ask the honourable member for Gregory to withdraw them.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I will withdraw them. However, I repeat that, in a couple of years' time, I will remind the honourable member for Greenslopes of what he did say, which is recorded in *Hansard*.

**Mr Fenlon:** I will look forward to that, and I will stand by it.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I am sure that the honourable member will. He will have to, because it is in *Hansard* in black and white.

Does the Minister not think that the Premier or, for that matter, his Cabinet colleagues realise that every extra cost imposed on the grazing industry must flow through to the shearers, the ringers and the plant-operators in country towns? I will guarantee the Minister that by January, February or March 1991, the impact will be felt in Brisbane, if it has not already been felt before then. Do honourable members realise that ultimately the effects of a rural financial crisis, no matter how it is caused, will flow through into the urban regions, which are the power base of Government members? I ask honourable members to instil some sense of responsibility and urgency into the Government's policy on this issue. I doubt that their union friends will be too pleased when these increased land rents force a substantial rise in the already high city unemployment figures, and that effect will flow on very shortly.

There is no doubt that with higher land rents falling due on 1 January 1991, the further restriction of the credit lines of farmers and graziers will force an even tighter economic crisis on places such as Charleville, Longreach, Winton, Mount Isa, Cloncurry, Hughenden, Richmond, Roma and other rural centres, and that Queensland will suffer the consequences. I do not know how the people east of the Great Dividing Range will

continue to exist. I call on the Government to reconsider this Bill and to place a two-year moratorium on these across-the-board increases and if, as it is hoped, by then the rural economic outlook has vastly improved, to consider phasing in the increases recommended in the Wolfe report over a three to five year period. In that way, the Government would be giving genuine and immediate relief to Queensland's ailing rural economy and would be able to proceed with its Crown rental adjustments at an economically more appropriate time. All Queenslanders depend on the rural industry. All honourable members know that if it is viable, there is prosperity right across the country.

All honourable members have heard the old saying that one cannot get blood out of a stone. I will cite a similar phrase. One cannot expect to demand and get more money out of a sick rural economy without running the risk of killing the patient and suffering the political embarrassment of the crucifixion of rural Queensland. Irresponsible decisions by Government can result in the loss of dignity and those principles that rural people in this nation have honoured and upheld for generations. I urge the Minister on this occasion to show compassion. The state of rural industry is critical. I am able to advise this Chamber of the real facts. Come January 1991, there will be many sad and sorry people who will have to find that extra money to pay that additional rent. I do not believe that they will be able to find those extra funds. I ask the Minister to take a stand, show some compassion and stall this untimely and grossly unfair increase in rural rents. I ask the Minister to heed my words.

**Mr DOLLIN** (Maryborough) (10.25 p.m.): I rise to address the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Bill. This legislation is based on the Carter report that was commissioned in mid 1988 by the previous National Party Government under the control of the previous Minister for Lands, Bill Glasson. I understand that the honourable member for Warrego was a member of that committee, even though he is now very critical of the report that was tabled in March 1988.

The reason why those recommendations were not implemented then is that the election was too close. The members of the National Party were preoccupied at that time with infighting and were not interested in proceeding with the implementation of those findings. If the National Party had been returned to Government, those recommendations would have been applying in 1990 and landowners would already be paying those increased rents.

The terms of reference of that inquiry were

- "1. The fairest and most appropriate method of, or approach to, the assessment of rent of such arable lands.
2. The most appropriate notional physical state and condition of the arable lands comprised in the types of holdings under reference, and the date or dates at which such notional state or condition is to be assumed, for rental purposes.
3. Any legislative amendments which the Court may consider appropriate to allow implementation of any recommendation.
4. In respect of each Land Agent's District of the State, the maximum nett rate per beast or per sheep which (having regard to the present state of the grazing industries and the state of such industries during the term of this Inquiry) should reasonably be charged by way of rent for the best quality Crown lands held under the said tenures for the ten year rental period commencing 1st January, 1990."

The principles for the determination of rent were

"(1) In the determination of the rent of a pastoral lease or grazing homestead perpetual lease, regard shall be had to

- (a) the quality and fitness of the land for grazing purposes;
- (b) the number of stock which the land may reasonably be expected to carry in average seasons;
- (c) transport facilities available to the holding;

- (d) the natural supply of water, and the facilities for the raising or storage of water;
- (e) the amount which experienced persons would be willing to pay for land or similar quality in the same neighbourhood;
- (f) the quality and fitness of any part of the land comprised therein for agricultural or horticultural purposes; and
- (g) any other matters which affect the rental value of the land."

That seems a fair basis on which to investigate those rental charges.

The grazing and graingrowers, as well as the woolgrowers, were well represented on the inquiry which included: Mr R. P. Scott, senior legal officer, Land Administration Commission; Mr A. Boyd, Cannan and Peterson, solicitors of Brisbane, representing the United Graziers Association of Queensland, the Cattlemen's Union of Australia and the Queensland Graingrowers Association; Mr M. P. Guy, member of the Land Administration Commission; Mr R. G. Wright, director of field services, Land Administration Commission; Mr B. D. Roseby, development and research valuer, field services division, Land Administration Commission; Mr D. Brockman, senior planning officer, Land Administration Commission; Mr G. Caltabiano, senior planning officer, Land Administration Commission; Mr B. J. Cameron, chief executive officer, United Graziers Association of Queensland; Mr R. D. Grover, financial services manager, Queensland Graingrowers Association; Mr A. C. Usher, grazier, Cattlemen's Union of Australia; and Mr M. W. Coleman, deputy registrar of the Land Court and secretary to the inquiry.

One would expect a fair and reasonable finding from people of this calibre, especially being watched over by a National Party Government. But it now appears that, in Opposition, the Nationals do not want any part of it. There was a very good reason why this inquiry was commissioned. The rental on sheep properties had not been increased in 20 years, and the rental on cattle properties had not been increased since 1975. So, in anybody's language, it was well and truly overdue. I will bet that most workers would be more than delighted if their rents were pegged at less than 1970 rates for a period of 20 years. What we are debating tonight is really not the cost of rentals but a common date and a method for the payment of rents. The debate about costs should be left until the time when the Wolfe report is debated.

I will now refer to some notes of the explanation which I am sure will melt away the worries from the minds of Opposition members and return them to the happy, smiling lot they usually are. Rent for Queensland's 4 800 pastoral and grazing homestead perpetual leases will now all be assessed at a common date, which is an initial step to reforming the rental system. At present, all pastoral and GHPLs are assessed every 10 years from the date the leases started. This means that most leases have different assessment dates, making it difficult to have relative rent levels because of variations in seasons and productions. In addition to that, it is a costly method. The common date of these leases is now 1 January 1990. However, both the previous Government's Carter inquiry into rents and the recent land policy review have recommended that the 10-year period be reduced. To initiate the 1990 assessment date, the Government will forego \$379,000 in rent increases, as proposed by the Carter inquiry, to start on 1 January 1991. This will avoid backdating rent payments.

Any lessee who pays increased rents during the 12-month period prior to the common date of 1 January 1991 will receive credit towards rent increases in 1991. By standardising leases on the one date, it will mean that the system will be fairer and that administration will be simplified and a lot less costly. For example, present legislation provides for a phasing-in of the new Carter standard of rents. As an example, a pastoral lease assessed at a certain rent in 1985 would not attract the proposed increase until 1995, while other lessees would. That would not be very fair. To remedy this situation, the savings provision, which is section 68 of the Land Act Amendment Act, will be repealed and all 4 800 lessees will attract the increase from 1 January 1991. The present rental system is based on the agistment net rate approach whereby maximum sheep or beast rates were set in various land agent districts subsequent to Land Court decisions. Decisions took into account, amongst other things, hardship and seasonal conditions at

the time. As a result, relativity in rents from district to district has occurred. Also, properties in each district were compared to a hypothetical best with regard to development on each property.

In real money terms, rent levels have not kept pace with the CPI and show that lessees pay less today, in real money terms, than they did in 1957. Rents set in 1970 for sheep properties and in 1976 for cattle properties, as a result of two inquiries, were set as a temporary measure by the Land Court following adverse conditions at that time. These rates have never been increased since. The new Carter standard sets about a 100 per cent increase for sheep properties, and a 200 per cent increase for cattle properties. However, 282 lessees will continue to pay the minimum rent of \$100, 110 will have their rent reduced, while the rent of 304 will not be increased. Income from pastoral leases and GHPLs will increase by \$3.7m, from \$2.5m to \$6.2m, which is estimated at about 1 per cent of the unimproved capital value of the land leased. Agricultural Crown land is rented at 2.5 per cent of its unimproved capital value, compared to 3 per cent for most other tenures.

One of the reasons these rentals are so low is that in 1970 the wool industry was in a depression and the Government of the day cut the rentals. In 1976, the same thing happened in the cattle industry. The problem is that the rates were never readjusted. When the Government thought about adjusting the charges back to a reasonable rate, either the cattle, the wheat or the sheep industries would have been suffering from some sort of problem. So a decision would not be made and the matter would be put to one side. This meant that industries that were not having problems received a great windfall. As a good number of National Party Ministers would have been lessees, there was no great desire or initiative for them to go racing in and putting up the rents, which would have resulted in an increase in their own costs.

I am sure that the Opposition will be in full agreement with me that the fair and honest way to handle this problem of pastoral and other lease rent charges would be to charge all and sundry a reasonable rate, subsidise the people who are in difficulty, and let the people who are enjoying the good times pay their way. At the moment, as the cattle industry is not in a depression, it would not have any problem in handling the increase. Not all primary industries are in depression. I am quite prepared to admit that I know how rough things can get in primary industries. I believe that, when industries need help, the Government should help them.

**Mr Hobbs:** Starting now. We want help now.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I think the Government will give help now. But that help will not be forthcoming if people say, "We don't want to ever pay any more." If Opposition members were honest, they would have to admit that, if they were in Government, they would have to do something very similar to this.

**Mr Hobbs:** We weren't. We were going to phase it in. That's quite clear.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I have read it. I have it here. I know exactly what the National Party was going to do. It would have been introduced last year. It was not to be phased in. The rate was to be set for 10 years, and then it would be set for another 10 years. That is what the National Party said it intended to do. I have read it very thoroughly, and that is exactly what it says.

**Mr Hobbs:** You haven't read it thoroughly at all.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I will give it to the honourable member to read again. As I say, I think a fair and honest way to handle the problem of pastoral and other lease rent charges would be to charge all and sundry a reasonable rate and subsidise the people who have difficulties. I would say that, at the moment, they would be the wheat-growers and the wool-growers, but not the whole of the grazing and wool industries.

Opposition members should stop trying to score cheap political points. They should be reasonable and sensible. Many people within the industry are doing very well. They

should pay the increased land rents and subsidise those who cannot afford them. Those rents have not been increased for 20 years. Opposition members are now squealing like pigs looking at a pocket-knife. No other industry in Australia could expect charges to be pegged for 20 years. In 1970, land rents were reduced because the industry was experiencing problems. There was nothing wrong with the reduction, but the rents were never increased.

**Mr Hobbs:** At what level are the incomes now? You say 1970—at what level is the income now?

**Mr DOLLIN:** If I am renting a house and I lose my job, my rent stays the same. If I am renting a sawmill and the number of customer orders drops, I pay exactly the same rent. During my time in the timber industry, I was never subsidised two bob.

**Mr Perrett:** Did you like it?

**Mr DOLLIN:** I did not like it, but I was not used to being breast-fed. I put up with it. Members of the National Party would have to agree that the industry has had a good run for 20 years. The Government charges 19c per sheep per annum. That is cheap grass.

**Mr Springborg:** But they are not worth much.

**Mr DOLLIN:** It all depends. Sometimes a handful of wool is worth that much. The sum of \$1.90 provides grass for a sheep for 10 years.

**Mr Hobbs:** That is not the only cost there is.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I am talking about what the Government charges. I realise fences must be erected. I am talking solely about grass. How much is a bullock worth? Would it be \$700 or \$800? Over 10 years, the Government charges \$7.63 for one bullock.

**Mr Hobbs:** Where have you been lately?

**Mr DOLLIN:** The honourable member might not obtain that much for bullocks. He has to cart them. Perhaps he has little bullocks. I do not know. Over 20 years, the Government charges \$3.80 for one sheep. I could not run a chook on a property for that much, let alone a sheep.

**Mr Springborg:** I could buy 36 sheep at that price.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I am sure that \$100 per annum would run a lot of sheep.

**Mr Hobbs:** How much are sheep worth?

**Mr DOLLIN:** How much were sheep worth 12 months ago? I am talking about charges in 1970. Since then there have been cattle booms during which cattle were sold for more than \$1,000. There were four good years for sheep and many good years for wheat. I realise that the industry has got it rough now. However, people in the industry start screaming only when things get rough. They do not prepare for hard times.

**Mr Springborg:** We will start screaming when it is not good.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I am sure that people in the industry already do that. I have spent my life in country areas. I have never heard anyone in the industry say that it was any good. When the land rents are increased, people in the industry will pay \$7.60 for sheep. That will probably involve two sheep, because they are kept for only eight or nine years. To obtain assistance, people in the industry must be fair dinkum. I have had experience in the industry. I have been up and down many dry gullies. I realise that things get a bit rough. However, one gains nothing by screaming all the time. Although a child who yells and yells is eventually given lollies, that child usually receives a kick right where it does the most good. That is the direction in which the industry is heading. I commend the Minister for introducing this legislation.

Time expired.

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (10.41 p.m.): The honourable member for Maryborough claimed that he knows what it is like to experience hard times. However, because of some of his comments, I do not believe that he realises what hard times are like, otherwise he would have been more considerate and able to reconcile the costing and returns that are available at the moment. The members for Albert and Bowen appear to be seeking financial return and nothing else. They are lining themselves up with the member for Bundaberg and the Federal member for Hinkler, who claimed that there is no crisis in the rural industry. Their comments emphasised that. Other Government members mentioned the leases. However, they do not realise how much it costs to obtain a property in the first place. Regardless of the cost of equipment, it costs a great deal to obtain the right to occupy a lease.

**Mr Livingstone:** Have you been right out west? Have you been on the land yourself out west?

**Mr STEPHAN:** I do not own a property in the west. However, I know all about leasehold land. I am aware that people who occupy leasehold land pay exactly the same for the right to occupy that land as they would for freehold land. It must be realised that this is an additional charge over and above the charges that people in the industry have paid in the past. Government members should go out into those areas to witness what is happening.

The wool industry is experiencing difficulties similar to those experienced by communist countries, which are unable to feed and clothe their people and to pay for the wool that they receive. If ever there were an example of what is going wrong in this world, that is it. Communism has been shown to be not in the best interests of the people and those with whom they deal financially. It must be realised that more than one point of view must be considered.

**Mr Hayward:** You are not talking about sheep again, are you?

**Mr STEPHAN:** There are a few black sheep amongst Government members. Their heads bob up occasionally.

The Premier said that those charges and increases would be unfair during the rural downturn and would be a substantial blow to the rural industry. Yet, after the Government went out of its way to say that a moratorium would be placed on the charges, it brought in the increases. The Government has not been honest and straightforward. It has not given the correct indication at all. The press release that was handed out a couple of days ago does not refer to the Carter report; it does not point out that other changes to the rental will be made. The Government said that it intends to set leasehold rents at a percentage of the unimproved property value but that no increased charges would be levied for two years. However, that is not correct, and the Government knows it. Yet, Government members continue to make statements——

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That point has been well canvassed.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I realise that it has been well canvassed, but I realise also that, although people were told that they would not have to pay the charge, they must now pay it. The 3 per cent of valuation may not sound like a large amount, but it will be an enormous slug on people who are trying to make a living in the rural industry and who have to find the money to pay for overheads and other costs.

Another relevant aspect is the fertility of the land and its ability to be productive. Unless a farmer does his work properly and manages his land in the correct way, fertility of the land will decrease. That must be guarded against. Unless money is available for land care, the land will not be any better than it was before it was farmed. It is a very real concern that, if the person occupying the land does not have adequate financial backing, land care will deteriorate. No honourable member would disagree that as much

emphasis as possible should be placed on caring for the land to ensure that it is kept in a reasonable condition for future generations.

It is interesting to look through some of those reports and to read about the changes to land tenure. People wish to get away from leasehold tenures, and they cannot be blamed for that. In an area where many people hold miners' homestead perpetual leases, some people are finding it a disadvantage to occupy the MHPLs. A number of people want to freehold their land. I take the point that the Government is allowing and, hopefully, encouraging people to do that. It is in the long-term interests of the community that they are able to do that. In 1968-69, 55 000 leasehold tenures were held. In 1982-83, that figure decreased to 41 000. That represents a substantial increase in the freeholding of land and is an indication of what the general landholder desires to do. I cannot help wondering what the main emphasis is, apart from the Government receiving a greater return from the land-owner.

The Bill refers to conditions generally and to annual rent. In respect of a lease referred to in subparagraph (i) of clause 3 of the Bill, the same rent is payable as the rent determined for the rental period ending 31 December 1989. Clause 4, which relates to the nature of tenure and conditions of lease, again refers to annual rent. I cannot help thinking that the only aim of the Government is to increase the amount of revenue that it receives and to decrease the amount of money that will be available for the primary producers who are endeavouring to make a living. I ask the Government to be considerate and responsible. It is not the type of situation in which any of us want to find ourselves. However, that is not the last cost to the land-owners. If the Government does not realise that, or if it does not take my word for it, Government members should travel to the western areas of Queensland and talk to the people to find out the difficulty that they face.

**Mr Beattie:** When were you there last?

**Mr STEPHAN:** Approximately three or four months ago. When was the honourable member out there last, or when was he out there at all?

**Mr Beattie:** I'm more out in the country than you are. You're in a suburb of Brisbane.

**Mr STEPHAN:** If the honourable member travels past the last streetlight, he thinks that he is in the western areas of Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the member for Brisbane Central and the member for Gympie have this conversation later outside of the House. I would like to finish this session by Christmas, and I suggest that the honourable members think about that.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Speaker. There is a big difference in the attitude of the people who live in the cities and those who make a living in the far-flung areas of Queensland. It is not easy. The honourable member for Maryborough said that his constituents would not mind if they had to pay the same rent that they were paying 10 years ago. Would he also like them to be receiving the same income that they were receiving 10 years ago? That is what is happening and it should not be forgotten.

**Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (10.53 p.m.):** I rise to speak to the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Bill. There was a great deal of discontent on the Opposition side when the Weapons Bill was being discussed and, similarly, there have been many complaints about this very important rural Bill. I wish to point out that there are only six National Party members and one Liberal Party member in the Chamber. That indicates their interest in the rural sector of this State. I hope that the rural rump of Queensland notes the lack of interest that country members are showing in this issue.

The Bill is designed to promote equity among lease-holders. It is attempting to bring fairness to the leasehold system. The essential element of the Bill is to place all

lessees on a common basis with any rent increase being paid on a common date in January 1991. This will most certainly assist in the financial returns to the Government, and no-one in the Government denies that. The rents collected each year will rise from approximately \$2.5m to roughly \$6m. Nobody is denying that, but it is not a huge increase considering that there are approximately 4 800 lessees on pastoral and grazing homestead leases. It is interesting to note what others have said about the rents. The following appears on page 15 of the Carter report—

"Mr Guy feels no criticism can be levied at the Crown for assessing rent on arable land falling within the stipulated criteria, irrespective of its location within the state. He sees a rate of 0.5% of unimproved value as being far too low for rent assessment, and commented that farmers are paying much more than 2.5% of unimproved value for renting arable lands from land owners in the market place.

Mr Roseby endorses Mr Guy's aforesaid views, and even instanced examples of 4 sub-leases where farmers are paying rent equating a return of between the 6.1% and 9.45% on unimproved capital value for the use of arable land. He says he has never experienced anyone contending that a rent of 2.5% of unimproved value for arable land is excessive."

All the Bill is levying is 1 per cent. Surely there can be no complaint about that. On the same page of that report, Mr Caltabiano stated—

". . . illustrates the point by referring to an increase in the area utilised for cropping in the Belyando Shire from 41,000 hectares in 1980 to more than 106,000 hectares in 1984 and in the Balonne Shire (St. George area) from 54,000 hectares to 102,000 hectares. He believes that figures like that just cannot be ignored."

The Government is being very careful with this adjustment of rents. Page 3 of the report states—

- "(4) Rents must be such as will permit Crown tenants to face, without undue apprehension, the fluctuations and variations of prices and seasons which might reasonably be encountered during the assessment period;
- (5) Crown Rents should be such as will leave in the hands of Crown tenants appreciable 'Goodwill' or leasehold values when they dispose of their properties; that is, the lessees should be permitted on sale to obtain appreciably more than the value of their improvements;
- (6) Generally, Crown rents should be moderate, and such as any experienced grazier, knowing the costs of developing the natural attributes of the land, would very willingly pay for the right of occupying and using the country."

They are talking about 1 per cent, which is very small considering the value of land. In many cases, it is cheaper than the rent on a house in a city and there is no profit to be made out of renting houses.

*Hansard* of 8 November records the honourable member for Barambah, Mr Perrett, as saying—

"The family farm structure must be preserved. Given a fair go, I have no doubt that it will. The family farm has proven that it can absorb large fluctuations in income on a year-to-year basis. It can provide the variable labour needs that are required on the farm. That is a plus. In past years, the family farm has been a ready source of employment for young people as they left school."

I agree with that statement and I agree that family farmers are about the hardest workers on the land. They look after their children during their school years and from when they leave school until they get their own property, so they do a marvellous job. However, we forget that, in the city, family businesses are just as strapped for funds as is the rural sector. Before I became a member, I had a carrying business, in which I employed two sons, my daughter and her fiancée. We worked together for some seven years. During that time, we had our ups and downs, but nobody came along and said, "I will subsidise your rate." Nobody came along and said, "I will decrease your interest payments."

Nobody came along and said that he would do anything. We had to struggle on through the good times and the bad times.

**Mr Briskey:** Thick and thin.

**Mr HOLLIS:** Thick and thin, as the honourable member says. Running a business in the city is just the same as running a family farm. When the business was sold, four people were put out of work, just the same as would happen with the sale of the family farm. There is no difference between the family businessman and the family farmer.

Let me instance Stanbroke Holdings. We all know what a massive land-holder that company is. It has leases over 41 holdings for which it paid \$89,000 or just over \$2,000 a year for each holding. That amount will be increased to \$264,000. Opposition members support that sort of company and not the family farmer. The family farmer should be voting Labor, anyway, because Labor is the only party that will look after him. The only member of the Opposition who ever talks sense about small business is the honourable member for Carnarvon. Tonight, he pointed out the struggles of a small family business. The other day I told him he was an agrarian socialist, but he is more than that. He should be on this side of the House because he has more brains than to be sitting on the other side. At least some members of the National Party are using their heads before they come into this House.

**Mr Springborg:** Do you realise that you nearly got me out of this House?

**Mr HOLLIS:** The honourable member would be a sad loss. Tonight I wish to point out the similarities between small businesses in city and provincial areas and small businesses within the farming community.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the honourable member does not take too long over it.

**Mr HOLLIS:** I can hear the bells ringing for Christmas and I assure you, Mr Speaker, that I will be very brief.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I suggest extremely brief.

**Mr HOLLIS:** There is a great similarity between a family farm and a family business. We should be considering the future of these businesses, and not simply considering the people in the rural sector and giving them their slice in the form of subsidies and rental decreases. There should be some equitable basis in this country that caters for all small business, whether it be rural, city or provincial. I am assured that the average increase in rental for a family farm will be from \$1,500 to \$4,500 per year, which amounts to only \$90 per week. That is not a large amount of money to pay for a farm. The increase is not so great. When truck and warehouse leases increase and the cost of electricity increases, people pay the increases. If this was a huge increase or one that was way over the top, I would feel exactly the same as members opposite and would be worried about the struggling small farmer.

**Mr Elliott:** Would you be prepared to pay a 200 per cent increase in your electricity costs?

**Mr HOLLIS:** I am referring to the Land Act and Another Act Amendment Bill that concerns property leases.

**Mr Elliott:** 200 per cent?

**Mr HOLLIS:** It is not a large increase because these values have not risen for 20 or 30 years. Any fair-minded person would say that this is a very fair increase when it is compared with increases in city rentals due to land values and high prices and with lease payments which increase due to changes in interest rates. This Bill brings fairness and equality to all lease-holders.

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (11.03 p.m.): I join in this debate tonight with a certain amount of trepidation. This debate is based purely on rhetoric, as illustrated by the previous speaker. Earlier tonight I defended him as being a man who is basically conservative and realistic in his attitude. I will not denigrate the honourable member for Redcliffe, but something is missing from his rhetoric. I inform him that he is not comparing like with like. He is talking about small business. I agree with him that farmers and graziers are small businessmen and experience many of the same problems, but the locations in which they operate are not the same.

For instance, I know of no small businessman in this State who has to clear a pathway through miles and miles of scrubland for power lines to be put on his property. If the honourable member is able to give me an example, I would be delighted to take note of it and apologise to the House, but I know of none. In some cases, farmers have had to clear hundreds of miles of land to make a pathway for power lines and then give a guarantee. One example that I know of that is located in the Thargomindah area. It cost \$60,000 for the connection fee to that property. Can the honourable member give me an example of a small businessman—in the sense that he was referring to small businessmen—who has had to pay \$60,000, in addition to clearing charges, for a power connection? In addition, the property-owner had to guarantee to use a certain amount of power even if he did not have the capacity to use that much power. He had to give the guarantee so that he would have the convenience of a refrigerator for the first time for his wife and family. This happened in my case.

**Ms Power:** And in mine.

**Mrs Edmond:** And in mine.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I do not doubt it, but in my case we went years without power. We had 12-volt and then 32-volt power and had to pay for the privilege. I am not saying that is bad, but if the honourable member wishes to make a comparison, he should make it on a level playing field. There are other capital costs involved because miles and miles of power lines could be wiped out in a storm, which sometimes happens on the coast. Five hundred power poles were wiped out during a cyclone in my electorate and it took two weeks for the power to be restored. That is fine, but what happens out in the west when the gangs cannot get out to the area for weeks and weeks? I pay tribute to the gangs that operate in regions affected by cyclones. If the power cannot be restored, property-owners must have alternative power source. The honourable member referred to telephone rentals, but I will acquaint him of the facts. On a cloudy day the power goes down because all the properties rely on solar power. If that happens over an extended period, they have no telephones. I am pleased that Mr Foley is in the House because this will be an object lesson for him. These people have had to pay a minimum connection fee of \$1,400 for a digital radio concentrator—and I will tell honourable members more about that at another time—which may or may not work, yet the nearest technician is hundreds of miles away.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest to the honourable member that he could talk about life in the bush forever and a day. I suggest that he should be talking about the Land Act.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I defer to your ruling, Mr Speaker, but in doing so I make the point that this procedure is part and parcel of the setting of Crown rentals, and what I am saying illustrates the conditions under which people who hold leasehold tenure have to live.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I take the honourable member's point, but I still suggest that that topic cannot be debated forever.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I am delighted to leave that topic because, unfortunately, if I were to continue, it would show up what Mr Hollis has had to say. I thought he was a pretty practical guy.

I reiterate that the Crown rental structure in this State is determined by reference to the carrying capacity of the property. The Minister has momentarily left the Chamber, but I assure the House that rental is determined on an area-by-area basis, depending on whether sheep or cattle are grazing on the properties. The key factor is the carrying capacity of the property. Over the years, that has generally been determined on a very conservative basis. I pay tribute to the very genuine departmental officers who have helped to build up that structure and who have been held up to ridicule because their assessments have been seen to be too conservative. Those departmental officers know that there is a range of circumstances that can apply throughout the period of a lease and that those circumstances have to be taken into consideration. It is all very well for the member for Brisbane Central to suggest to the member for Gympie that it has been a long time since he has been out west. I can inform this House that I have spent a large part of my life in western districts—and I do not intend to denigrate anyone who has not spent any time in the west—which enables me to speak with experience about the conditions applying to Crown land and rental charges. Under those circumstances, I believe that I can make some comments on a reasonable basis of fact.

Originally, the leasehold structure of this State was based on a carrying capacity and was similarly based on a manpower cost structure. Let me inform honourable members that, without a shadow of doubt, except for improvements that have been made in terms of pasture improvement, timber-felling and the growth of various grasses, the most important component that enabled a pastoral holding or grazing property to carry stock was the extent of the manpower that the property-owner was able to employ. With adequate manpower, the property-owner was able to maintain improvements on the property. He was able to keep the dingoes out and the number of pigs down, and he was able to maintain adequate water resources, repair the fences and carry out other improvements. In addition, the property-owner had the capacity to check the stock and make sure that the sheep were not flyblown and that the cattle were branded. The carrying capacity of the property has been a major component in the structure of Crown rentals in this State. Historically, it has been possible to build up a property to such an extent that a work force was able to be maintained and the carrying capacity kept at full strength. Presently, that is not possible because property-owners are not able to get manpower. First of all, manpower resources are not available. Secondly, even if manpower were available, those who hold pastoral leases are not able to pay for it.

My colleague the honourable member for Warrego has pointed out that the differential between costs and income is now far less than it has been in the past. In fact, it is ridiculously low compared with what it was when rentals were last set. The peaks and troughs are taken into account when the income base is determined over the period of a lease, which could be 30 years.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I do not know what the honourable member is trying to say. Mr Speaker, who is interjecting? I cannot hear myself speak. Thank goodness, he is quiet now.

Over the usual 30-year lease period, one would expect three drought periods in a 10 or 11-year cycle. As my colleagues on this side of the House would know, that is a fairly reasonable assessment. In the good old days, a property-owner would expect a drought period of two or three years, a recovery period of two or three years, and a period of five or six years before the next drought struck on a 10 or 11-year cycle. Historically, that has been the pattern that has been taken into account in the rental structure of this State. The fact of the matter is that, in those days, manpower was available to assist property-owners to maintain the carrying capacity of the property and care for the stock, irrespective of whether it comprised sheep or cattle. There was also a pool of expertise constantly available, but that is no longer the case. That pool of expertise no longer exists.

**Mr Prest:** What rot!

**Mr STONEMAN:** The honourable member would not know. The honourable member interjects and says, "What rot!" Let me inform the House that, throughout the length and breadth of this State, there would not be a single place where property-owners are not crying out for ringers, overseers, station hands and managers who have been the backbone of the pastoral industry in this State—and that is happening, irrespective of whether the property-owners can pay or not. After all, this debate centres in broad terms on the pastoral industry of this State. This type of manpower is simply not available and one reason is that, in recent years, continuous work has not been available. That has been the case simply because of the low incomes that have been derived and the costs that have been imposed which have worked against the efficient operations of those properties. In recent years, work simply has not been available. People such as the member for the electorate up near Gladstone—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Port Curtis.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The honourable member for Port Curtis would not have a clue. I am pleased that the majority of Government members are at least taking in what I am saying. I can assure them that what I am saying is based on sound knowledge. In years gone by, the drought cycle extended for 10 years and totally encompassed grazing areas. The drought lasted for four or five years and the recovery period extended for four or five years before the grazier hit the next trough.

**Mr SPEAKER:** I suggest to the honourable member that he is labouring the point.

**Mr STONEMAN:** With respect, I must say that those conditions formed the basis of the tenure structure that has applied in this State. It was based on a 30-year leasehold tenure which has been superseded by the grazing homestead perpetual leases. That was the basis of the original component and it took into account three cycles of drought and good periods. Unfortunately, the timing between the peaks and the troughs is now too sharp. When Mr Carter's inquiry was held, prices for wool and cattle were high. Unfortunately, at present, when this legislation is being introduced, those prices have plummeted. The price of beef may not have plummeted, because it is a commodity price, but the costs to the producers have increased. Recently, the honourable member for Flinders stated that basically the whole of the peninsula is being denuded of stock. He stated that graziers were not carrying stock because they could not afford to transport them to market. That is a fact of life. I challenge any member to disagree with that.

Even if the people on the land did not owe any money, they would still be stuck with fixed prices for Crown rentals. Honourable members must remember that Crown rentals are based on the carrying capacity of the land. However, the carrying capacity of the land is zero until improvements have been made to it—until the bores are sunk, the dams are built, the fences are erected and the homesteads and ringers' quarters are constructed. The land has no value until those improvements are made. However, the stock have to be maintained and a profit must be made. At present, there is no profit in any of the pastoral industries of this State. I notice that the member for Port Curtis is laughing. I challenge him to instance a circumstance in which a person could purchase a property and show a return on the capital investment that would go within cooe of paying the interest.

**Mr Prest:** If they are not making a profit, it is just bad management.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Let that go to the four corners of this State. It epitomises the philosophy that underlies the Government's attitude to the structures incorporated in this legislation. Regardless of how good a property is, there is no property in this State that will show a return on investment that would be acceptable under any terms of business.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has convinced me that he believes that is so. I suggest that he move on. I want the Parliament to adjourn before Christmas.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I endorse your comments, Mr Speaker. In fact, I am quite happy to deal with matters quickly and forego the last week set down for Parliament. However, I am not labouring the point when I say that that is the very basis of the Bill that we are debating—the capacity of the industry to pay. Land-holders have the imposition of a 200 per cent rent increase being put upon them. People such as the member for Port Curtis are claiming that the land-holders are making money and that it is not hard for them. However, by any standard, given good seasons and good commodity prices, it would be a battle and would be questionable as to whether or not those increases could be countenanced. The fact is that we are seeing the wool industry—the industry on which this nation has ridden to prosperity and which has on so many occasions been the salvation of this nation—totally in disarray. At the same time, the Government is bringing into this House legislation which will increase rentals—a fixed charge. Land-holders already have the fixed charge imposed by shire rates. If they do not pay those rates within three years, they can be sold up. They already face record interest rates which would cripple them even if they were paying no Crown rental. I reiterate that the rental structure is based on the carrying capacity of the land, and the carrying capacity of the land is only as good as the improvements that are on it. The Minister knows that. He may not admit it in his summing-up of the debate, but he knows that the improvements that have been put there and have to be maintained under current conditions are the only reason that the Crown land can carry stock. Similarly, I emphasise the point that the manpower—again I pay tribute to the ringers, the stockmen and the drovers—is no longer available. Stock routes are being put at risk. Because of the philosophy of a Government which does not understand what it is about, the whole of the structure of Crown land in this State is at risk. The fixed costs are not just difficult to recover—in the present circumstances they are impossible to recover.

In the few moments that I have left, I wish to turn to the tenure structure encompassed within a permit to occupy. This is another area of Crown rentals that is incorporated in the basic philosophy of the determinations that we are talking about tonight. In spite of the traditions of previous Governments—both Labor and conservative—people in this State face the overturning of a previous Government's determination simply because this Minister is unable to understand the gravity of the position that has developed.

I refer in particular to a problem in my electorate. People who occupy Crown land were given an undertaking by the Minister for Land Management in the previous Government and officers of his department. In some instances, those people had occupied the land for a life-time and they believed that the previous arrangement still existed. Mr Eaton will recall Mr Roger McLennan, who has occupied leasehold land since 1937. Because of a beef protection procedure, his tenure was in jeopardy. However, following negotiations between the lessee, the department and the Minister, he was allowed to remain there under certain circumstances. He has now been told by the Government that he has to dismantle his improvements and leave the property. This is a problem that is undermining the leasehold structure in this State. I understand that when the Minister paid the area a visit the other day, he was somewhat surprised to find that the circumstances are a little bit different from what he might have originally thought they would be. I have written to the Minister and pleaded the case of these people. Except for perhaps one or two, these are not people who support me politically.

I think it would be reasonable to say that there is the potential for hundreds of people along the coast to be affected. This Government has caused them to be left in a state of uncertainty and trauma that is not only unreasonable but also unthinkable. That is a sad reflection on the capacity of the Government to keep in touch. The fact is that the Government is out of touch. Sadly, that is demonstrated by the Bill before the House. This amending legislation has the capacity to bring the great pastoral industry in this State to its knees, along with those small permittees in my electorate. This will affect not only the big graziers but also the small people of this State who believed that the Crown was there to support them in continuing to work their land.

Time expired.

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave) (11.23 p.m.): As honourable members are aware, this Bill is only an interim measure. Its introduction is considered necessary by the Government prior to the introduction of wide-ranging amendments to the principal Act at a later time. It should be noted that the proposals contained in the Bill can in no way be considered as an attempt to implement portions of the report of the review of land policy and administration. The proposals are quite independent of that report—the Wolfe report—which was tabled this week in this Parliament.

In framing this legislation, the Minister has taken due note of the recommendations made by Mr C. H. Carter of the Land Court. Mr Carter had recommended increases in the prevailing agistment rate standard of 200 per cent for cattle and about 100 per cent for sheep. The Carter report was handed down in 1988 after being initiated by the previous Government. I must point out that this legislation in no way conflicts with the findings of the review carried out by Mr Carter. In fact, it merely addresses a grossly anomalous situation that has been allowed to develop in this State over a number of years.

No-one should ever undervalue the vital role that the rural sector has played in the development of this State. It has contributed greatly to the decentralisation of Queensland. In addition, these valuable industries have, and will continue to have, a significant impact on the healthy economic growth that is so vital to the future of this State. Statistics show that only about \$2.4m in rental per year is obtained from the pastoral and grazing homestead perpetual leases. I know that members of the Opposition have pointed to hard times in the rural sector of late. This is generally recognised by the wider community. They claim that now is not an appropriate time to be increasing rents, and they forecast a collapse of the industry. Such an assertion is nonsense. Primary producers, like the general population, will never agree that any time is an appropriate time to raise rents or charges. If Governments—and I include the previous Government—were to cave in to that line of thinking, the State would go broke overnight. I assure members of the Opposition that this Government is about responsible financial administration; it is about a fair go for all.

I turn now to the issue of equity. An examination of what is actually being paid is appropriate before consideration is given to any increases. The majority of leases, that is, 70 per cent, attract a rental of less than \$500 per annum. The average is about \$480 per annum. This works out at about \$10 per week. I am sure that there are many Queenslanders who would wish to enjoy a similar rate on their own rentals. In fact, only about 20 to 30 leases attract a rent of more than \$5,000. A further 400 are in the \$1,000 to \$5,000 range, and just over 1 000 cost between \$500 and \$1,000. In truth, more than half of the pastoral and perpetual homestead leases in this State attract rentals ranging from \$100 to \$500. Clearly, this situation cannot continue. Inflation is quite often touted as having a serious impact on rural viability. I assure primary producers that they are not alone in this respect. Most people, however grudgingly, accept regular cost increases based on the movement in the CPI. If one indexes to CPI movements the rentals being paid in 1970, one finds that today the amounts paid on leases in 1976 have only one-fifth of that value.

I recognise that Queensland is one of the leading beef-producers in the world. It has achieved that position by utilising better husbandry, optimising marketing opportunities and improved farm-management techniques. In 1960, the average return on a slaughtered beast was \$71. By 1988, that had risen to approximately \$440. However, during the same period, little or no adjustment has been made to rentals. It could therefore be argued that this artificially low rental base has become institutionalised. It is this perception that has provoked the critics of this amending legislation. The Crown land being utilised by graziers and pastoralists across this State covers two-thirds of the Queensland land mass. The people of this State have a right to expect their Government to seek a fair return on one of their greatest assets, that is, Crown land. The Government cannot allow the situation to continue whereby, for nearly a generation, rentals have not covered the cost of administration. Individual lease-holders have had more than a fair go for long enough. It is about time that the rentals on leases were adjusted to bring

the situation back into a realistic perspective. It is obvious that the Queensland taxpayer has been subsidising lease-holders. Members of the Opposition speak of costs to the land-holder. What about costs to the people of Queensland? This year, \$3.5m is to be spent on land care. Much of this generous allocation will go to those who hold grazing, perpetual and pastoral leases, and this is as it should be.

I acknowledge the great work being done by some groups. Prior to my election to this Parliament, I had the opportunity to observe the work being done by the Dalrymple land-care committee. Its commitment to halting land degradation was commendable. I should point out that, at the time of my visit, the Dalrymple land-care committee was receiving no financial assistance whatsoever. As a matter of fact, the members of that committee indicated that they wished to handle their problems using their own financial resources. The point that I am making is that the pastoral industry and the grazing industry are prepared to face up to their land-management responsibilities. By all lease-holders paying fair and reasonable rental, the State will have the finances to better target its resources towards helping those on the land who most need it. I will quickly point out exactly what these increases will actually mean. On average, pastoral leases will rise to approximately \$2,600 per lease, that is, about \$50 per week, or \$7 per day. On the other hand, grazing homestead perpetual leases will move to an average of around \$900 per lease. That is \$17 per week, or again \$2 per day.

Historically low rents in this State have been a distortionary factor in rural economics. No-one in this Government, and most definitely not the Minister, is trying to give rural Queenslanders a hard time. The fact is that the Minister and the Government wish to standardise rental rates across the State. Under the previous provisions of the Land Act, the date at which any rent increase would apply depended on the date of the individual lease. There is no doubt that this system was unfair. Based on the 1990 Carter standard, some lessees would not have paid an increased rent until 1999; though some others would have had to pay the increase during 1990. It is obvious then that the fairest way to address this anomaly was by the implementation of a common date.

The Government has also shown its concern for the interests of rural Queenslanders who hold such leases by delaying the rental increases to 1 January 1991. In the process, it is expected that the State will forego some \$379,000 in revenue. Credit will also be given to those who have paid rent by this date.

Throughout last evening, I listened quite patiently to the bleatings of the member for Warrego, who did nothing other than attempt to defend the indefensible. His arguments were rambling, simplistic and based on emotion rather than fact. The Bill is appropriate, considering the findings of past reviews. It is fair not only to lease-holders but also to the people of Queensland. Therefore, I am quite pleased to support it.

**Hon. R. C. KATTER** (Flinders) (11.31 p.m.): I rise with some considerable feelings of violence towards this Bill, and I use that word with malice aforethought. The figures I will use are not those of the National Party. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics predicts that the average farm income this year will be \$10,000. The last speaker said glibly and with gay abandon that all it will be is \$2,600 a year. How would that honourable member like to lose one-quarter of his income in this forthcoming year? How would he like to give up some \$15,000 to \$20,000 of his income this year, which is what those people are facing.

All of the wool cheques that I have seen in my electorate amount to less than half of last year's amount, yet this is the time selected by the Government to take from those people one-tenth or one-quarter of their entire income. Those are the figures projected by the gentleman up the back, who is so enlightened upon land matters that he spoke about using this money for land-care purposes. That is an excellent idea. I wish that those people could consider land care, but that luxury does not belong to people who are fighting for survival.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member can laugh because he does not have to take his children out of school and deprive them of a secondary education. The boarding schools in this State have lost almost half of their enrolments. I have been told by officers of the Charters Towers schools that something like 10 per cent to 20 per cent of their accounts are simply unpaid because people cannot afford to pay them. A whole generation of children living in those areas will be deprived of an education, yet it is their parents who are generating the only money that is left to this country for the benefit of the current account deficit.

Government members do not seem to understand that there are not a few problems out in the country and that there are people who are hungry tonight, who do not have a job and who cannot afford to educate their children. Members opposite have the hide to come into this place and tell Opposition members that a loss of 10 per cent or 25 per cent of people's income does not matter and that they should be able to afford that and meet those extra costs. It does not matter to Government members that the price of the product has dropped by half or that they are getting the same price for their cattle as they were getting almost eight years ago.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Your salary has gone up.

**Mr KATTER:** The salaries of members of Parliament have gone up. The honourable member is 100 per cent correct, but the salaries of these people are 50 per cent of what they were 12 to 18 months ago. They are now getting half of what they were getting then. Believe me, they were not rich then.

How can Government members justify a 100 per cent to 200 per cent increase in rents? Surely some of those people who run the Lands Department have heard of computers. Staff of the Lands Department come to the counter with a stack of papers with a pink ribbon around them. I am in a position to judge on this matter because the provisions of the Mining Act apply in my electorate. When I first encountered the Lands Department administration, I was quite horrified. I said, "Why can't we simply process this application for a subdivision?" He said, "We can, but we will have to inspect the land." I said, "Why do you have to inspect it? It is a piece of land. It has got grass growing on it. It has got gullies in it. Why does it have to be inspected?" He said, "You could not possibly subdivide without inspecting." I said, "What rubbish! We have subdivided land in Charters Towers for 130 years." He said to me, "Well, look at Charters Towers! Look at the terrible state of things there." I said, "Quite frankly, I regret to say that it has one of the lowest incomes in Queensland. That is caused by the fact that, because of the freedom that is available in Charters Towers, everyone wants to live there."

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Can the honourable member suggest to me the relevance of that to the Land Act?

**Mr KATTER:** I could not be saying anything that is more relevant. I am talking about the administration of the Lands Department, which requires an officer to come out from Mackay to inspect a subdivision of a totally uninteresting piece of land in Collinsville.

**Mr SPEAKER:** How is that relevant?

**Mr KATTER:** The Mines Department operates on a basis of simply picking up a map and saying, "Yes, that piece of land is going to be divided that way. We cannot see any problems with that. We will allow it to proceed." If every single piece of land in Queensland has to be inspected, it will cost an absolute fortune. Apart from the fact that progress is being held up for years, in this day and age, the Government cannot afford to pay a person to travel hundreds of miles to inspect a piece of land. Collinsville has proposed subdivisions that were four years old by the time they were brought to my attention.

I am asking the Government to streamline its administration and enter the twentieth century. It should not impose upon those who have absolutely no hope of paying cost

structures that they simply cannot meet. This is a socialist Government. It is part of the ALP machine and it must bear the brunt of the criticism and take the responsibility for the collapse of this nation's economy. When Government members ask, "Why?", it will be necessary to look at the cost structures of farming in Australia.

Over the last five years, the steel industry, which was restructured under the Button plan and given a generous donation of some \$200m——

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** I am talking about cost structures and the ability of the farmer to pay the increase in costs which are being imposed upon him by this iniquitous increase in Government charges. The cost of steel has increased by 55 per cent. That has reduced the farmer's ability to pay and to meet the imposition of this iniquitous charge that is being imposed upon him. In the last five years, interest rates have increased by 60 per cent. The cost of petrol has increased by 89 per cent, and the cost of motor vehicles has increased by 85 per cent. All of that has happened before the increases which will be brought about as a result of this legislation.

The cost structures of the farmers have almost doubled. Over the last five years, there has been an average increase of nearly 80 per cent in their cost structures. That has been imposed on them by ALP Federal Governments. Now the State Government is imposing on them an increase of between 100 per cent and 200 per cent. In the past week, we have heard in this House that rail freights will be increased by 100 per cent to 200 per cent. That is even before the introduction of the NRFC and ISC proposals. Just how many cost increases does the Government think the people on the land can bear? Let me tell the Government that they are not bearing it; they are simply walking off the land. There are no cattle in the far gulf country and no cattle in the upper Cape York Peninsula area. Five meatworks have been closed.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** How many of the honourable member's supporters are at the Rockhampton meatworks, which will close very shortly because of the cost impositions placed upon that works? I will go and ask those meat-workers what they think about the stupidity that the Government is perpetrating on them.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Rockhampton North and the member for Gregory will cease talking to each other across the Chamber, otherwise they may have to go outside.

**Mr KATTER:** It is very, very relevant to this debate to say that five meatworks have been closed and that some 2 000 to 2 500 meat-workers in north Queensland have lost their jobs. That has happened because stations are no longer operating. There are very large runs where cattle are simply not being mustered. Under the ISC recommendations, rail freight increases and road freight increases will cost something like \$100 per beast. Cattle operations in this State will be reduced by another 5 per cent or 6 per cent, and another two or three meatworks will close their doors.

**Mr Livingstone:** It is your fault.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member says that it is our fault. I will be very specific and say that the cost structures that have been imposed upon the people affected have been imposed by the honourable member's Federal Government. The restructuring of the steel industry was a conscious decision——

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** Is the honourable member claiming that the restructuring of the steel industry was not part of the Button plan? Under that restructuring—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest to the member for Flinders that there is a relationship between cost structure and the ability to pay rent on perpetual homestead leases. That issue has been debated by members on the Opposition side time and time again. I suggest that the honourable member has made his point about the steel industry, the cattle industry or whatever, and I now suggest that he get back to debating the Bill.

**Mr KATTER:** Mr Speaker, I say once again—with all due deference to your position, of course—I most certainly will return to the Bill proper. However, I must say—and I do so with great vehemence and commitment—that we are talking about the cost structures to the man on the land. The choice is either to increase the cost structures and impose the increased cost structures by the Lands Department upon these people or to forgo it.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I recognise that the honourable member is making a very valid point. During the past 10 minutes I have heard it from him three or four times. I suggest that I do not have to hear it for ever and a day. I suggest that he go on and debate the Bill.

**Mr KATTER:** Mr Speaker, I am very pleased that you have heard, understood and digested my remarks. I only wish it were true of some of your colleagues on the far side of the House. But obviously it is not.

However, let me state, for the good of the House, that some of the Lands Department operations are enormously expensive. That department has a policy. I ask the Minister to look carefully at a policy that necessitates a visit by a Lands Department officer every time a person wants to clear 100 acres of land or every time a person wants to undertake a small subdivision. That is a cost that simply cannot be imposed upon people who are farming or upon people in urban areas. Even an urban subdivision in Charters Towers that requires a Lands Department officer to travel from Townsville becomes a very, very expensive operation. Instead of it being done that way, it could be done in the way in which the Mines Department operates. For people who say that it cannot be done, I point out that, every day of the week, under very simplistic procedures, leases worth hundreds of millions of dollars change hands in the Mines Department. I cannot see why such procedures cannot be incorporated into the Lands Department. As I have lived under the Mining Act all of my life, all I can say is that that Act is vastly superior to the Land Act. The Lands Department requested that it take over the operations of the mining administration. I would have thought that my colleague from Mount Isa would strongly back up what I am saying, because when that take-over occurred, one of the first things that was imposed was an increase in mining rents of about 200 per cent or 300 per cent.

At that time, the honourable member's predecessor, Mr Bertoni, in common with me, fought vehemently to oppose the take-over by the Lands Department. When he entered the meeting, Mr Bertoni quoted the same figure as I had quoted earlier at the meeting, namely, that every single dealing that we had with the Lands Department takes, on average, two years to process. When I said that, I think some of the Lands Department people thought I was exaggerating. An hour later, Mr Bertoni attended the meeting and used exactly the same figure as I had used. He said that dealings take two months for the Mines Department administration but two years for the Lands Department administration. I must say that I found that to be a truism. Where two departments have similar administrations, it is quite easy to make a comparison between them. Although it might be nice to send out a Lands Department officer to oversee every single piece of land that has to be transferred or changed, that cannot afford to be done. The cloth must be cut to suit the purse. That is what the Opposition is advocating in this particular instance. As I said, we are also advocating computerisation.

Let me consider some cost savings instead of cost impositions upon industries that are falling over. If we keep piling cost structure upon cost structure, more and more

industries will fall over. I refer particularly to the wool and cattle industries. I should not have to point out to any honourable member how many of our export industries are falling over at the moment. A very serious situation exists in the meat-processing industry in this State. Many workers have already lost their jobs and many more could lose theirs. I thought that that would have been a matter of importance to many Government members who represent electorates containing meatworks.

**Mr Harper:** They are still going out on strike.

**Mr KATTER:** That is true. The men at the meatworks in my electorate have never gone on strike. I speak with the highest possible regard for the meatworkers of Queensland. They are some of the hardest working people in this State. With very great sorrow, honourable members have witnessed the demise of many meatworks. However, if this Government believes that it has an bottomless bucket, more meatworks will close their doors.

The Australian Bureau of Agricultural Economics and officers of the Federal Government have said publicly that, during this year, farm incomes will be less than \$10,000. In a most cavalier manner, the last speaker said that the increase will mean a rental of only \$2,600 a year. That represents one-quarter of a farm's entire income. The honourable member said that farmers can easily cope with that sort of an increase.

This Government has increased rail freights between 100 per cent and 200 per cent. The implementation of the ISC recommendations will increase the cost of transporting cattle by perhaps 1 000 per cent.

**Mr Livingstone:** No wonder you are in Opposition.

**Mr KATTER:** All I can say is that, if the people of Australia are prepared to accept the continuation of the sort of pain that has been administered by the incompetent Government in Canberra and, in recent times, by this Government, which, I must admit, did not do many foolish things until the past two or three months——

**Mr Harper:** They didn't do anything.

**Mr KATTER:** That is true. This Government did nothing. That is a very good point. The Government is now starting to make a few decisions. On a regular basis, it increases costs by 100 per cent or 200 per cent. However, those increases are not imposed upon everybody across the board; they are imposed upon the farming sector. Recent newspaper articles stated that there was a happy meeting in Toowoomba. I extend an invitation to any of the worthy members of the Government to attend a meeting of producers in my electorate. I assure them that they will receive a very warm, enthusiastic welcome.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Carnarvon) (11.48 p.m.): With a great deal of remorse, I rise to participate in this debate. At the outset, I state that, in common with my other colleagues in this Chamber, I am fully cognisant of the fact that the inquiry commenced under a previous National Party Government. To deny that would be to bury one's head in the sand. During the past couple of days, members of the National Party have been trying to get across the message that real farm incomes have decreased further than those members of the Government who have their heads buried in the sand would realise. That is the problem that farmers face.

**Mr Dollin:** Well subsidised.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The industry is not well subsidised. If the honourable member wants to talk about subsidisation, he should consider this country's social security system.

**Mr Dollin** interjected.

**Mr Nunn** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The members for Maryborough and Isis will cease interjecting.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It pains me to travel around my electorate and see good, honest, young people and older people—

**Mr Szczerbanik:** When I went to your electorate, you weren't there.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** That is because I was out working in my electorate. If the honourable member was working in his own electorate, he would not be visiting mine and would not be chasing fictitious gold nuggets.

**Mr Szczerbanik** interjected.

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

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. After the next State election, the honourable member will be only touring electorates such as Carnarvon, because he will no longer be a member of this House.

**Mr Szczerbanik** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I have just asked the member for Albert to cease interjecting. I now warn him under Standing Order 123A, and I mean it.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for your rational protection. As I said, my colleagues and I are fully cognisant of the fact that the inquiry was a National Party initiative. However, we are also cognisant of the fact that farmers and graziers cannot afford to pay this increase at this time. During the past couple of days, honourable members have been told that, since 1957, the price of a beast has doubled or quadrupled. For the benefit of honourable members, I shall make a few relevant points. In 1956-57, the price of a kilogram of wool was 146.3c. In 1988-89, it was 647.3c, which represents an increase of 450 per cent. The base wage in 1957 was probably about 10 quid, which is now equivalent to \$20. Since then, the price of a kilogram of wool has risen to \$500—a 2 500 per cent increase. During that period, the price of wool increased by 450 per cent. In 1957, 36.82c bought a kilogram of beef. In 1990, a kilogram of beef costs 230c—an increase of 625 per cent.

**Mr Lingard** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Fassifern will cease trying to annoy the Speaker, or else he will be warned.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** If the price of beef had kept in line with the wages of people who take them for granted, a kilogram of beef would now cost 920.5c. If the price of wool had kept in line with wages, a kilogram of wool would cost 3,657.5c.

**Mr Nunn** interjected.

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

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I can see that I have Government members mortally wounded on this issue. Since 1957, the real net value of farm production has halved. Instead of talking about increases, we should be talking about decreases. The cost of production has increased, and the return for the person on the land has declined at a monumental rate. I appreciate that, because of the cost of paper, computers and wages, the cost of administration has gone through the roof. I can understand that the Government is in the invidious position of having to recover costs. However, I implore the Minister to realise that its actions affect the people on the land. The misconception on the Government side of the House is that those properties are just rented. Initially, however, they were bought, just as leasehold properties are bought and sold. They are bought at a value that is extremely close to the price of freehold land. The Government should attract young people to rural areas. The State must continue to be decentralised. But that will not happen if the Government seeks rent increases from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** That is the sort of comment that one would expect to hear from the honourable member for Port Curtis. The only piece of land that he has controlled in his life is an ant farm. The increase in rent will affect many people in rural areas. If one travels west of the highway between Brisbane and Rockhampton, one would recognise that fact. Unfortunately, some honourable members have to return to those areas and console those people about the increased charges. It is all right for the ordinary wage earner whose average wage has increased in value about 25 times since 1957. Unfortunately, it is a systematic economic policy that people's standard of living can be improved if the costs of farmers' produce are kept down.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I will not cry, but I have absolutely no doubt that, after the increases, people such as the honourable member for Port Curtis may very well be crying. In this day and age, circumstances are very different from when the report was commissioned. In 1984-85, wool was worth 380c a kilogram. Two years ago, wool was worth 1,000c, 1,100c and 1,200c. There is no doubt that the price of wool has decreased. It is a pity that Government members do not recognise this fact. They are as insensitive as a rock. I am afraid that they do not understand. Undoubtedly, as their period in Government continues, they will understand some of those facts. People who live in rural areas have to put up with those adversities every day of the week, every year of the decade and —

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Isis is putting off the member for Carnarvon. I suggest that the member for Isis should look at me.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I was about to make an extremely disparaging comment.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Yes, it gave rise to all sorts of connotations about bestiality or whatever the case may be.

The initiative of the Government will affect people. I am fully aware that the report was commissioned by the National Party when it was in Government. I am fully aware also that there was to be a 10-year phasing-in period. I suggest to the Minister that, after representations, the National Party Government would have been prepared to defer those increases or work out a far more equitable approach for the pastoralists, the graziers and the farmers of this State.

Debate, on motion of Mr Eaton, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 11.57 p.m.