

NOTE: There could be differences between this document and the official printed *Hansard*, Vols. 317 and 318

THURSDAY, 14 MARCH 1991

Mr ACTING SPEAKER (Mr C. B. Campbell, Bundaberg) read prayers and took the chair at 10 a.m.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC WORKS

Resignation of Mr C. J. Berghofer

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that a vacancy exists in the membership of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works consequent upon the resignation of Mr Clive John Berghofer, MLA, from that committee.

Appointment of Mr V.P. Lester

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.02 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That Mr Lester be appointed to the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works"—

Opposition members: Hear, hear!

Mr MACKENROTH: And good luck to the committee—

"to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Berghofer."

Motion agreed to.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Cyclists' Helmets

From **Mr Palaszcuk** (746 signatories) praying for immediate action to introduce legislation to make the wearing of bicycle helmets compulsory.

Environmental Park, Mount Whitfield Range

From **Dr Clark** (715 signatories) praying that the undeveloped area of the Mount Whitfield Range be declared an environmental park and that funds be provided for research into cassowaries.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Order in Council under the Harbours Act 1955-1990

Regulations under—

Civil Aviation (Carriers' Liability) Act 1959

Food Act 1981-1990

Plan, section and book of reference for the proposed deviation of the North Coast Line at Rosedale, together with a report of the Commissioner for Railways

Plan, section and book of reference for the proposed deviation of the Cleveland Line between Doboy and Hemmant, together with a report of the Commissioner for Railways
Commissioner's reports ordered to be printed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Australian Agricultural Council Meeting in Nelson, New Zealand

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.05 a.m.), by leave: My first ministerial statement today relates to my visit to Nelson, New Zealand, from 13 to 17 February, to attend the Australian Agricultural Council meeting. The Australian Agricultural Council is a peak national policy agricultural body in Australasia and is made up of the Primary Industries Ministers of each Australian State and Territory, the Commonwealth and New Zealand. The council meets as required—usually each six months—and is supported by a standing committee of chief executives and a number of technical working groups. In accordance with my usual practice, I will table a copy of the council's resolutions when they have been confirmed by Ministers. Queensland is leading national discussions in two important areas. These are the establishment of a national registration system for agricultural and veterinary chemicals and the development of national feedlot guidelines. The present practice of each State registering agricultural and veterinary chemicals as a precondition of sale is administratively complex, costly and extremely time-consuming. With the States having previously agreed to the Commonwealth's providing preregistration clearance, it is a logical step now to transfer all responsibility for chemical registration to a national authority to be administered by the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy.

The States are prepared to continue to provide an input at the policy level through membership of the Australian Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals Council. I have further indicated a preparedness to consider the short-term secondment of specialist skilled staff to the Commonwealth to assist in the rapid establishment of a national registration mechanism. I am awaiting advice from the Commonwealth on the terms of its offer, which would be available to a selected staff for consideration. A national agricultural and veterinary chemicals registration system will avoid wasteful duplication of effort and will enable the States to more effectively use the resources available to them. Of particular note is the fact that the States will continue to monitor the proper use of agricultural and veterinary chemicals. This is of particular importance to Queensland because of the measures I am developing which will result in more responsible use of chemicals in primary production, consistent with the recognition of the important part they play in the economic production of food and fibre.

The production of beef in feedlots is vital to the economic viability of this State's cattle industry. While Queensland is leading the field in the development of a cattle feedlot industry, other States—particularly New South Wales—also recognise the importance of this practice. For more than two years, my department has been developing responsible guidelines for cattle husbandry in a feedlot situation and has received extensive support from livestock organisations and the New South Wales Department of Agriculture. However, recent events—both in Queensland and in New South Wales—have demonstrated that much more work needs to be done, both from the technical and animal welfare viewpoints. To this end, the Australian Agricultural Council endorsed a proposal to hold a national workshop on feedlot guidelines, and I will convene that conference on 22 and 23 April in Brisbane. The workshop will have the task of clarifying the definition of what constitutes a feedlot and of specifying the scope of national feedlot guidelines, including animal welfare considerations. The matter will be further considered by council Ministers in July.

Twenty-five other issues were considered by Ministers, details of which will be available shortly when I table council resolutions. I was accompanied to the Australian Agricultural Council's meeting in Nelson by my wife, Laurie, my private secretary, Mr

John Tanzer, and my personal secretary, Ms Debra Cathcart. Following the meeting, my wife and I visited the property of the Honourable John Falloon, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, New Zealand, and further discussions were held in regard to issues raised at the Australian Agricultural Council meeting.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Port Curtis Dairy Cooperative

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: On Wednesday, 20 February this year, the Mackay factory of the Port Curtis Dairy Cooperative, or PCD, was closed by order of the Queensland Dairy Industry Authority under the auspices of the Dairy Industry Act 1989. The closure was ordered following presumptive positive and since confirmed tests indicating the presence of the potentially fatal bacteria *listeria monocytogenes* in two-litre homogenised and pasteurised milk containers produced at the factory. It was the first recording of the bacteria in market milk produced in Queensland. Naturally, as the Minister for Primary Industries and member for the seat of Mackay, I was disturbed to learn of this event and acted swiftly to alert the people of Mackay to the problem. However, as more details emerged, I was distressed to learn that confirmation of the presence of the bacteria in the Mackay plant was established by the Queensland Health Department on 20 September 1990—five months before the closure. In other words, a potentially serious threat to public health had been allowed to persist for a period of five months, during which time I might add, a PCD employee went on sick leave following a positive test indicating the possible presence of *listeria monocytogenes* in his bloodstream.

In response to these events, on 25 February 1991, I established a three-member committee to inquire into and report on the events and circumstances which occurred in the period between the first detection of *listeria* on 20 September 1990 and the closure of the plant on 20 February 1991. This coincided with my ordering of spot hygiene tests at all processing plants of dairy products in Queensland. The committee was chaired by barrister-at-law, Mr Mark Plunkett, and made up of Dr Harley Juffs, an executive director of my Department of Primary Industries, and Mr Gregory Mitchell, the manager of Analytical Services and principal analyst for the International Food Institute of Queensland, which is part of my department. Their report, which was compiled with the co-operation of all parties involved, was presented to me yesterday and has been the subject of discussions with the outgoing chairman of the QDIA and his chief executive officer.

On 1 July 1989, the Queensland Dairy Industry Authority was established with responsibility, among other matters, for the administration of quality assurance for dairy products, including milk. Prior to 1 July 1989, this role was performed by the Department of Primary Industries. The committee has concluded that the QDIA failed to discharge its obligations under the Dairy Industry Act with the due diligence that is required in relation to the health hazards of *listeria* generally and in the particular circumstances of this case. To quote from the committee's findings—

"QDIA did not require dairy processors to include bacteriological testing for *Listeria* and *Salmonella* in the quality monitoring programs. If the Health Department had not detected the *Listeria monocytogenes* in a milk product sample taken in late September 1990, the *Listeria* contamination at the Mackay factory of PCD could possibly have gone on unabated."

This is a matter of serious concern for the Queensland Government, consumers and the dairy industry, particularly as the sweep of all Queensland dairy product processors has revealed further problems. These include the confirmed presence of *salmonella* in milk powder at one factory. This product was intercepted and quarantined before entering the market. The quality assurance system handed over by the previous Government to the QDIA has been shown not to work in its present form. This episode must bring into serious debate the ability of an industry-based authority such as the QDIA to pay

appropriate attention to matters of public health when its agenda is dominated by financial concerns.

Following my discussions yesterday with the chairman of the authority and his chief executive officer, and a meeting they held with the authority, I have this morning received a written assurance from Mr Doumany that the QDIA will "urgently review its procedures and expand its quality assurance staff to meet any deficiencies in current practices taking into account the matters raised in the Report". In the meantime, the intensive testing program I initiated is continuing, and I can reassure the people of Queensland of the quality of dairy products produced in this State. The report of the investigatory team is therefore a very timely document which will also be placed in the hands of the Cabinet Special Purpose Committee currently reviewing the dairy industry in Queensland. In accordance with the Goss Government's commitment to open and accountable government, I therefore table the committee's report, which now makes it available as a public document.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Public Sector Management Commission Review of Attorney-General's Department

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—Attorney-General) (10.13 a.m.), by leave: It is my pleasure to present to the House details of the Public Sector Management Commission's review into the Department of the Attorney-General. I thank the PSMC for its thorough and detailed report. The review by the PSMC of the Attorney-General's Department has confirmed my view of the necessary and worthwhile role the PSMC is playing in the long-overdue reform of the public sector.

The Department of the Attorney-General has, along with much of the public sector, been the victim of years of mismanagement by consecutive conservative Governments. Since this Government has come to office, some of the problems have been addressed. What we now have from the PSMC is a blueprint which will consolidate the department's central focus, and develop a corporate strategy which will take it forward into the twenty-first century. As the PSMC report found, "Justice has been a debased currency for far too long in Queensland, and it is time agencies involved in the delivery of justice ceased being the public sector's poor relations". The report recommends additional funding for the Attorney-General's Department, which, it points out, will yield greater savings in the medium term. In implementing the report's recommendations, we will reduce the cost of legal services to the community and to the Government by providing a more efficient and effective use of departmental resources.

The Attorney-General's Department is relatively new. It was formally established as a separate entity in September 1989 as a result of a major Fitzgerald recommendation. Thus, the department began to fulfil the traditional role expected of it in a Westminster system of parliamentary democracy. The PSMC's report has made a valuable contribution in further defining the department's role, and presenting a blueprint for high standards of legal service to the community and the Government of this State, unrivalled in equivalent jurisdictions anywhere in the world. The PSMC report recommends improved career structures, salaries, accommodation, professional training, promotion on merit and modern information technology systems which will result in a more satisfying work environment for staff, and a more efficient and effective service to the community and the Government. The major thrust of the recommendations are as follows—

an administrative law unit be set up to implement freedom of information, and judicial review of administrative decisions;

the Public Trust Office become the responsibility of the Minister for Justice, thus giving effect to the Fitzgerald philosophy that basically administrative functions should not be handled by the Attorney;

an integrated career structure with adequate training and retraining opportunities for all legal staff be developed;

the department and the Law Reform Commission maintain a watching brief over the statute book and draw to the attention of the administering department any instances where it believes an Act or Regulation should be modified or repealed;

additional staff be appointed to the Director of Prosecutions Office, and part-time work, including for prosecutors, to be introduced;

extra resources to be allocated to the Law Reform Commission, and commission reports to be tabled in Parliament within 14 days of them being presented to the Attorney-General; and

the Crown Solicitor's Office to be renamed the Legal Services Division.

Costs, with long-term savings to Government, will include—

additional resources for the Director of Prosecutions and other offices;

a greater degree of commercialisation in the Legal Services Division; and

computerised legislation database.

Savings to Government will also be made through—

reduced briefing out by the Attorney-General's Department;

savings in other departmental legal branches; and

amalgamation of library services.

It is a tribute to the loyalty and commitment of the staff in my department that the department has continued to deliver the standard of services which it has. Implementation of the report's recommendations will be given the highest priority through the establishment of the Implementation Task Force comprising staff from my department as well as the PSMC.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Visit by Minister for Justice to Canada and the United States

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (10.16 a.m.), by leave: From 4 to 15 February this year, I visited Canada and the United States to study recent developments in court processes, examine the implementation and effects of merger of the Canadian Superior Courts into one trial court, and make recommendations for change and improvement to court and other related processes within the judicial system. One of the main areas of interest was the introduction and effect of a comprehensive system of case flow management. Meetings were held with a range of people in Toronto, Detroit, Vancouver and Denver and a wide range of issues were canvassed and noted.

The aim of this report, and thus the recommendations, is to stimulate discussions. However, it is not my intention to allow those discussions to drag on ad finitum. I would hope that interested members could respond to the various issues in this report within the next 42 days. I will also be seeking replies within that time-frame from others in the community to whom I propose to forward a copy of this report. It outlines some steps that I have already taken to ensure that this process of reform is not unnecessarily delayed. I am confident that, with the goodwill that has already been exhibited by many sections of the court-related community, a collective solution can be found for the implementation of a far more effective system than that which currently exists. I hereby table a copy of the report and advise members that copies will be forwarded to them.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Transport Planning, South-east Queensland**

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (10.18 a.m.), by leave: On 2 August last year, I informed the House and the people of Queensland of my commitment to integrating community consultation into the transport planning process. A significant part of the consultation program to date has been the local area committees. Five have been selected and they are settling into an operating arrangement with the Department of Transport. The time and effort put in by the local residents who volunteer their services—whether it is to study safety issues at Bardon or discuss the level crossing at Cavendish Road, Coorparoo—is recognised and greatly appreciated. We are not limiting the consultation process to the local level. Today we are expanding its scope with the formation of the first strategic liaison committee.

I have much pleasure in announcing the appointment of Professor Arthur Brownlea as chairperson of the Brisbane Metropolitan and Environs Strategic Liaison Committee. Professor Brownlea is currently Professor in the Division of Health and Behavioural Sciences at Griffith University. Professor Brownlea has had many years of involvement in community participation from the point of view of an academic teacher, a researcher and as a citizen. He has chaired community meetings on transport and mobility issues and he has researched the importance of mobility. He has had articles published in international journals on the subject of community participation, particularly the myths and realities. He was a consultant to an international conference on community participation held in Spain in 1988. Professor Brownlea has served on a range of advisory committees for Government departments and Ministers in the fields of health, education and family services. He is currently chairperson of the Human Relationships Education Reference Committee.

While the strategic liaison committee will focus on metropolitan issues, Professor Brownlea expects that the committee will, in time, build up a community perspective on mobility and transport. The committee members appointed to work with Professor Brownlea are—

Dr David Pitts, an environmental planning consultant with a background in land use and transportation planning;

Dr Keithia Wilson, an expert in the organisational aspects of community consultation;

Professor Ted Kolsen, from Queensland University, who has extensive experience in transport economics; and

Dr Barry Corrick, an environmental monitoring consultant who has been successful in leading a resident action group.

As you can see, Mr Acting Speaker, this is truly a committee of eminent Queenslanders. I am delighted at the calibre of those who will be advising the Department of Transport and helping the Goss Government make community consultation part of transport planning.

SELECT COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES**Privilege Attaching to Parliamentary Papers**

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (10.20 a.m.): In accordance with the decision of the Select Committee of Privileges on 13 March 1991, I lay upon the table of the House copies of submissions received by the committee concerning the matter referred by the Speaker on 6 December 1990, namely, a review of the privilege attaching to parliamentary papers. The committee continues to work on this important matter, and will report to the House in due course.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (10.21 a.m.): Mr Speaker, in view of the crisis confronting the Australian wheat industry, I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Is the honourable member seeking leave?

Mr PERRETT: That is what I said. I said, "I seek leave."

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member may seek leave.

Mr PERRETT: I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 35

NOES, 49

Resolved in the negative.

QUESTION UPON NOTICE**Upper Norman Creek, Holland Park West**

Mr FENLON asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for Housing and Local Government—

"With reference to flooding problems at Holland Park West associated with the flood plain of Upper Norman Creek—

(1) Is he aware of flooding problems experienced by residents in the vicinity of Birdwood Road, Holland Park West, and the problem of land fill being illegally left on private land in the flood plain to Upper Norman Creek?

(2) Are there adequate legal powers available at the moment to control the dumping of land fill on flood plains and to take action against land owners who have illegally dumped such land fill?

(3) If this is not the case, what measures does he intend to take in order to provide sufficient powers to deal with matters of this nature?"

Mr BURNS: I thank the honourable member for his continued interest in the problem of flooding caused by filling in or building on flood plains and low-lying blocks of land. At the outset, I would explain that, in general terms, there can be two

classes of flood plain. The first is lands which are subject to long-term inundation by historical flood waters such as occurred in 1974 and, secondly, lands which are affected by short-term inundation resulting from flash flooding associated with local high intensity storms. Lands may fall within both classes but may also fall only within a single class.

I am aware of the local flooding problems being experienced by some residents of Holland Park West in the vicinity of Upper Norman Creek. I understand those problems result from high intensity storms in the catchment area rather than from the phenomenon of flooding of a general nature. In other words, the properties in question can be regarded as class 2 lands in terms I have already spoken of. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated issue. I am sure that all members can identify areas in their electorates which suffer from this disability.

The specific reference to this particular locality by the member for Greenslopes appears to be related to a proposal to redevelop certain land in the vicinity of Birdwood Road and Sorbiston Street, which is presently being used for the conduct of a retail plant nursery business. It is intended that the land be rezoned to enable the establishment of town houses and accommodation units. From representations made to me in relation to this proposal, concerns are held that, if the redevelopment is allowed to proceed, the run-off to Norman Creek will be substantially increased and that the proposal may include realignment of part of the creek which flows through the land. The question of whether the land should be redeveloped or not is one for determination, in the first instance, by the Brisbane City Council, or the Local Government Court, as the case may be.

Further, as Upper Norman Creek appears to be a boundary watercourse within the meaning of the Water Resources Act, the matter as to whether the creek is to be permitted to be realigned or not rests with my colleague the honourable the Minister for Primary Industries.

I have no specific knowledge of the member's claim that land fill has been illegally left on private land in the flood plain. I would not be surprised if the topography of this area has been altered by people endeavouring to flood-proof their properties. Surveys would have to be carried out to confirm this. Should it be found that the lands have been filled, I am unable to advise whether such actions have been lawful or not. However, certain issues are clear. Firstly, boundary water courses as defined in the Water Resources Act, come under the control of the Water Resources Commission. The control of any land fill in the bed or on the banks of a boundary water course requires that the prior approval of the Water Resources Commission be obtained for such an activity to be lawful. Secondly, with regard to controls over the dumping of land fill on private land, I would advise that the town plan for Brisbane provides for the Brisbane City Council to control the filling of lands which were affected by flood waters in the historical floods of 1955, 1967, 1972 and 1974. Where lands have been affected by any of those floods, I consider that the powers vested in the council are adequate.

In relation to lands which were not affected by floodwaters in the historical floods of 1955, 1967, 1972 and 1974, it may be that the controls over the dumping of land fill on private land are inadequate unless the provisions of the City of Brisbane (Flood Mitigation Works Approval) Act can be utilised. I am advised that the provisions of this Act provide the council with the power to implement works to alleviate flooding provided that a complete "scheme of works" is to be undertaken. Once again, this Act is administered by my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Primary Industries and he would be able to clarify whether this Act can be utilised in this way.

Lastly, the member has sought advice on what measures I intend to take in order to overcome local flooding problems in the area. I have to advise that, in my view, in this case the matter is one which is the sole responsibility of the Brisbane City Council and that I have no power or authority to order the council to take action in relation to these matters. I add that I share the honourable member's concerns about the problems caused to neighbours as a result of indiscriminate filling of flood plains and low-lying lands. Should the Brisbane City Council or, indeed, local authorities generally press to

extend their control over such matters, I can assure the honourable member that I would be supportive of any reasonable action proposed to be taken.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Mr COOPER: I direct a question to the Attorney-General. Yesterday he said that the Director of Prosecutions had carried out an exhaustive investigation of allegations against former superintendent John Huey after the case had been initiated by a police officer and had been taken over by the Director of Prosecutions. This statement was in direct conflict with his advice to the solicitors Bailey and Bailey dated 28 February last year in which he said in the final paragraph of the letter—

"In relation to other matters raised by yourselves on your client's behalf, I am of the view that the correct body to investigate any claims of misconduct on behalf of Mr Huey or any other officer is the Criminal Justice Commission. Neither I, nor my Department, have the power or the facilities to conduct any such investigation."

I remind the Minister of his responsibilities under the Director of Prosecutions Act 1984 which states, under section 10, that the director shall—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will complete his question.

Mr COOPER: I have almost completed it. I must make the point. Section 10 provides that the director shall, upon the direction of the Minister or of his own motion, prepare, institute and conduct an examination of witnesses in relation to an indictable offence before justices. I table the relevant copies of the Act and the letter from the Attorney-General to Bailey and Bailey. I ask: which issue is true? Has the Attorney-General misled the House, or did he lie in his response to Bailey and Bailey on 28 February? In the light of the facts that I have outlined, will he now order a full investigation of evidence against Huey?

Mr WELLS: It is a pleasure to hear yet again from the honourable the Leader of the Opposition. I told him once yesterday; I told him twice yesterday—in fact, I told him six times yesterday—what happened. Now I am going to tell him again. What happened was that Bailey and Bailey wrote to me on, I think, 12 February, or some such date.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr WELLS: I think it was 12 February. I responded to them saying, "Thank you, I have got the stuff and I have sent it to the Director of Prosecutions." The Director of Prosecutions wrote back to me saying that the matter had been before the courts in 1983 and that the then Attorney-General had, after a committal hearing had found that there was no case to take to the courts, declined to present an ex officio indictment.

When I received that advice from the Director of Prosecutions, I wrote back to him and said, "Yes, but even so, could you advise me whether or not, in all the circumstances, an action should be brought?" He wrote back with an unequivocal "No". That was in February. I wrote to Bailey and Bailey saying, "I have received advice from the Office of the Director of Prosecutions. However, this is not a firm of detectives. If you want to have the matter investigated—that is, if you want to have people going out with magnifying glasses doing police search work on the matter—then you should go to the Criminal Justice Commission." That is what I said in February.

At that stage, we had a problem with resources in the Office of the Director of Prosecutions.

Mr Cooper: You've got a problem now.

Mr WELLS: No. It was a problem that was left to us by the honourable member's Government. The honourable member was very strong on talking about law and order, very strong on window-dressing and very strong on standing up in this House and

mouth off about how he was going to do something about law and order. But what did he do? He let the Office of the Director of Prosecutions wind down so much that there were not enough people to prosecute fraud or to institute actions in respect of the confiscation of the profits of crime. That is not surprising, because the people involved with those instrumentalities were all mates of the National Party. At that stage, there was a problem with the resources, and this Government moved rapidly to correct it.

When the new Director of Prosecutions, Mr R. N. Miller, QC, was appointed and the difficulty had eased, I decided that it was time for a further review of the matter that had already been referred to me twice by the Office of the Director of Prosecutions. In the meantime, an action concerning the Huey matter had been brought by a police officer. The Director of Prosecutions stepped in and took over the prosecution. On his own initiative, he discontinued the action pending a fuller examination of the material that the complainant had.

What I am saying to the Leader of the Opposition, and what I hope that Opposition members will finally get into their thick heads, is that in the middle of last year all the material that that complainant had was very thoroughly examined by the Office of the Director of Prosecutions. I contrast the very thorough examination of that material by the Director of Prosecutions with a police investigation. They did not go out with magnifying glasses and take fingerprints. That is not what the Office of the Director of Prosecutions does. Honourable members opposite must understand that it is not a district attorney's office. Section 10 requires the Director of Prosecutions to make a legal assessment of matters that are submitted to him. In the middle of last year, the Director of Prosecutions had at his disposal all the matters which the complainant in that case had before him. He thoroughly examined them and made a legal assessment of them. In August, he wrote to me with an exhaustive opinion—and I thank the Leader of the Opposition for quoting my words—an exhaustive advice to the effect that it would not be proper to bring any action, and he proposed to bring none.

That is what Opposition members knew yesterday. As a matter of fact, it is what Channel 7 knew yesterday. However, the Leader of the Opposition does not appear to have quite taken it in. Honourable members might think that that is because the Leader of the Opposition is thick as a brick. However, I advise honourable members that that is not so. The Leader of the Opposition—knowing what the facts are, but nevertheless running on a different railway line—is not thick as a brick, dense, retarded or anything like that. What honourable members are witnessing from the Leader of the Opposition is a mystical experience. He has transcended reality. He knows what reality is. He knows that the reality is that I referred the matter to the Director of Prosecutions not once or twice, but three times. He knows that, in August, there was extensive opinion to the effect that the Director of Prosecutions proposed to do nothing. Yet the Leader of the Opposition goes on with this mystical experience of transcending reality. Indeed, I would say that that mystical experience of transcending reality is the greatest mystical experience that has ever been had by anybody since Buddha attained nirvana some considerable time ago. The Leader of the Opposition is welcome to repeat as many times as he likes statements that he knows are untrue. For as long as he wishes, we will sit here and talk about this matter. He can waste his questions for just as long as he likes by repeating those that he asked yesterday. He will get the same answers as he got yesterday.

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Mr COOPER: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the meeting that deputy commissioner of police Blizzard had with former CIB head, Superintendent John Huey, following which Huey subsequently resigned on 19 September last year. I ask: did the Director of Prosecutions, Mr Royce Miller, contact the Premier directly to outline the seriousness of new evidence against Huey some time before the Blizzard/Huey meeting? If so, what action did the Premier order as a result of that discussion? Did it include instructions to the effect that Huey should resign?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The honourable member's question is in three parts. The answers are in order: "No", "Not applicable" and "Not applicable".

Warwick City Council

Mr PREST: I ask the Premier: is he aware of plans by the Warwick City Council to host a debate on the forthcoming referendum on four-year parliamentary terms? Can he confirm that the debate is being organised to raise desperately needed funds for a local charity? Is he aware of anything that might prevent that proposed debate from going ahead?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yesterday, when my office was contacted by the chairman of the Warwick City Council, who extended an invitation to participate in a debate on the referendum——

Mr FitzGerald: It's a mayor at Warwick.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I understand that Warwick has a mayor. When I was invited to participate in a debate on the four-year terms, I thought it was a novel approach and a refreshing change from the usual, sterile studio environment that players in this profession are offered. I understand that a similar invitation was extended to the Leader of the Opposition. On Monday, I have a busy program with Cabinet and an official lunch. But I am prepared to rearrange my program to meet that debate, because I believe that it is a refreshing change and a good idea. It also represents a good opportunity for the people of this State. Indeed, I am told that the debate is for a very good cause, namely, the Blue Nurses. I am told that it has the support of the local member, Mr Booth. I am happy to meet the challenge, and to rearrange my program accordingly.

I have no fear of going into National Party heartland. The debate is a good opportunity for country Queenslanders. Although I am not sure, I presume that the organisers of the debate would be prepared to allow representatives of all media outlets to attend. I believe that, by that means, that is, by having all media representatives in attendance, the Leader of the Opposition and I could reach not only the heart of country Queensland—the good people who pioneered the Darling Downs and the west and have done so much to build the economy of this State—but all Queenslanders in terms of the arguments for and against four-year terms, and let them make an informed decision. I am prepared to put myself before the citizens of the National Party heartland and the representatives of every media outlet.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Lockyer and the member for Warrego under Standing Order No. 123A.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am told by the member for Warwick that he cannot get his leader to front but that he can get the deputy leader to front. My question is: will the real Leader of the Opposition stand up?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lockyer is warned under Standing Order No. 123A.

Cape York Space Base

Mr PREST: I ask the Premier: is he aware of claims that the State Government is not cooperating with companies involved in the proposed Cape York space base, and can he inform the House of what the State Government has been doing to assist in the development of that proposal?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am happy to answer the question. Let me say how pleased I am that the Government Whip rose to ask that second question. If he had not, we

would have sat here for hours watching Russell squirm, because he certainly would not have stood up. When it comes to the issue of the space base—we have seen again the representative of the Opposition who is prepared to front in Warwick and debate this important issue carry on with his typical approach of knocking Queensland and knocking any new project, as he did on a radio program this morning with a series of falsehoods and misrepresentations designed to try to undermine confidence in this State and the great things that are happening in this State now and that will happen in the future. Among other things—and this summarises the contribution of Mr Borbidge on the radio—he claimed falsely that, as far as the Queensland Government was concerned—

"There's an absolute lack of commitment, there's a disinterest there that is really quite alarming."

He referred to our refusal to meet senior representatives associated with the space base project. That, of course, is false. I repeat: that is false. There are only two possibilities: either the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is being deliberately untruthful or he is incompetent. Minutes after that interview, that incompetence or deliberate untruthfulness was confirmed by Mr Malcolm Edwards. On the ABC program, when asked about the matter by Mr Henshaw, Mr Edwards said that the main stumbling blocks have been the participation of other equity-holders—not the Government, but the private sector investors. Mr Edwards continued—

"Where we have needed the support of Governments, we have received that enthusiastically.

...

But we're certainly not seeking to get more from the Government than their continuing good will."

He concluded with these comments—

"Well from, as I said, from both Governments whether it be the conservative party or the Labor Party, we have always had the greatest support from them. We believe that when we have asked something of the Government, we have been assisted to the extent possible and I am hopeful that that continues and in this environment at the moment there are many projects that are seasoned rather than risk that are having trouble, so I think we should just keep a perspective on Cape York."

In his very last comment, Mr Edwards put down Mr Borbidge and his knocking quite effectively, when he said—

"I wish we could as a nation start to look to more positive situations of how we can make things work rather than tending to enjoy bad news or create it for ourselves."

That sums up the Deputy Leader of the Opposition—knocking, undermining confidence and spreading falsehoods.

The other challenge that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition must answer if he is to continue to participate with any credibility in this debate is what more he wants us to do. If all of the private sector people that we have spoken to are to be believed—and I believe that they are to be believed—what Mr Edwards says is right. He says that the problem is equity—getting private sector investment. If investment is the problem, let this person—this posturer from "Paradise"—answer this question. Does he suggest that we adopt some Queensland Inc. approach? Does he suggest that the Queensland Government put equity into the project? If he does, he should say so and he should say how many hundreds of billions of dollars of Queensland taxpayers' money should be put into what was always, and must be in the future, a private-sector driven project. Let him answer that instead of spreading deliberate falsehoods and trying to knock and undermine the economic future of this State.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Surfers Paradise! I call the Leader of the Liberal Party.

Cost of Fraser Island Inquiry

Mr BEANLAND: I ask the Premier: in light of his Government's frequent announcements on the cost to the taxpayer of the Cooke inquiry and the Criminal Justice Commission, can he inform the House how much the Fitzgerald inquiry into Fraser Island has cost the Queensland taxpayer to date and what is the estimated total cost?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I was told that the honourable member was going to ask that question today and I have the answer here somewhere, if you will just bear with me, Mr Acting Speaker. I received a number of tips on questions that the honourable member might ask and I have the answers here. I simply want to make sure that the honourable member gets his answer because I am sure that is why he asked the question.

Last week, another one of those paranoid, conspiracy press releases was made by the member for Toowong. He said he wanted to know what the cost of the Fraser Island inquiry was because the Government was keeping this a secret. He actually managed to fool a couple of journalists into running this story. This amused us, because on 19 December last year I issued a statement to the press gallery outlining the progress and cost of that inquiry. I will quote from my press release, which states—

"The Fraser Island and Great Sandy Region inquiry has so far involved:

- almost 400 submissions
- . . .
- three public hearings
- seven visits/inspections of the region
- employment of more than 50 inquiry staff
- circulation of 700 copies of initial discussion paper released in May."

The total funding that had been allocated at that time was \$1.7m. I stress that the great bulk of that relates to public servants from various State Government departments who have been working on this matter as a coordinated team. I wish to stress that even if there had been no inquiry whatsoever, this work and the costs associated with it would still have been undertaken by those public servants in the various departments. Therefore, a portion of that \$1.7m is money that would have been inevitably expended anyway.

There have been some additional funds expended on private consultants in respect of which we do not have the final accounts as yet. We expect that the total cost will exceed some \$2m, which, as I say, includes the cost of those public servants who were working on it. The costs would have been very substantial if Mr Fitzgerald had charged for his services, and there may have been some justification for that, given that his time, involvement and commitment has been much more than was originally anticipated. Notwithstanding that quite substantial change in terms of his time commitments and the inroads that has made into his own private practice, to his credit Mr Fitzgerald has kept to his commitment to discharge his role in the inquiry as a service to the community. If the member for Toowong wishes, I will table the press release so that he can see the figure. Despite what the honourable member has been saying, it has been well publicised.

Queensland Business of the Year Award

Mr PALASZCZUK: I ask the Minister for Manufacturing, Commerce and Small Business: will he advise the House if it is his intention to continue with the Queensland Business of the Year Award?

Mr SMITH: The history of the Queensland Business of the Year Award is that it commenced in 1984 with the award being funded by Qantas, Metway Bank, CWA, Australian Airlines and Apple Computers. The DID, which was the predecessor of my

department, supplied the secretariat and a considerable amount of work was required to keep the award rolling along. There were a limited number of applicants because of other awards that were in existence, namely, the Tourism Award and, latterly, the Australian Small Business Award. It is my intention to actively support the ASBA, which is the official national business award presented by the Advance Australia Foundation with major sponsorship from the Yellow Pages.

Mr Elliott: You're going to knock it on the head, in other words.

Mr SMITH: I would like to tell the honourable member the whole story. All States support those awards. There is a winner and a highly commended position in three categories of the award at State and national level. In addition, there are winners at the regional level, in much the same way as the Queensland award. Therefore, it becomes quite obvious that to some extent the Queensland award was duplicating the national award and causing confusion in the minds of participants.

The last time the Queensland Business of the Year Award was awarded was in 1989. Since then, I have discussed the continuance of that award with the major sponsors. I have advised them of my decision to support the national award, which will continue to provide the opportunity for small business to show that it can excel. In addition, it will provide them with the opportunity of competing at a national level. It will reduce confusion overall. The fact is that last year—which was the first year that the Queensland Government gave major support to the Australian award—the firm of MITEC, which is headed by Dr John Ness and which was successful in winning the national category, has given that scheme a lot of focus and credibility. I believe that the interests of small business are best served by putting our full weight behind the national award and discontinuing the Queensland award.

Report on Brisbane River

Mr PALASZCZUK: In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer to claims by the Brisbane Lord Mayor that she has instigated a report on the Brisbane River, and I ask: will the Minister inform the House whether this initiative announced by the Lord Mayor has been undertaken as a result of her own programs and policies?

Mr COMBEN: I was certainly interested to read in the *Courier-Mail* last week that the Lord Mayor's announcement that she will spend \$150,000 on investigations into sewerage outlets and nutrient levels of the Brisbane River. In actual fact, the matter should be put into context because, after some two years of investigations, my department has decided that we need to know what the nutrient flow is into the Brisbane River and what the future discharges from sewerage by a whole range of shire councils and the city council will be. As a result of that inquiry, the Government has asked local authorities to put up the money for that study because, after all, they are discharging effluent into the Brisbane River. The Brisbane City Council has agreed to spend \$150,000, but that is not an initiative of the Brisbane City Council, which was in actual fact the last of the local authorities to respond. I am very pleased that it eventually decided to do so.

This means that, for the first time, the opportunity of being able to understand what is going into the river will arise. The Government will be able to decide whether or not in the future the river will be green because of the nutrient load from sewage, whether a higher quality of discharge into the river is needed, or, perhaps, even less discharge. This will be the first step towards formulating a proper Brisbane plan. I hope that over the next four to six weeks the Premier will announce a major plan for the Brisbane River involving all the local authorities and interest groups. This will certainly be a step in the right direction, but the Lord Mayor should be getting on with the job of administering Brisbane instead of claiming credit for something that the Labor Party had to chase her to do for a period of more than two years.

Report by Detective Sergeant J. P. Reynolds to Criminal Justice Commission

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Attorney-General, I refer to a report to the Criminal Justice Commission of 2 July 1990 by Detective Sergeant J. P. Reynolds, who was subsequently removed from the Huey investigation. I wish to cite that report, which reads—

"The reason I commenced proceedings in relation to the fabrication of evidence complaints is that I believe there has been a whitewash of this investigation either through corruption or incompetence."

I ask: does he reject the assertions of Detective Sergeant Reynolds, or will he instigate further inquiries in accordance with the provisions of the Director of Prosecutions Act?

Mr WELLS: It is more in sorrow than in anger that I rise on this occasion because it seems to me that the Opposition is questioning the integrity of the Criminal Justice Commission. This is a very alarming development because members of the Opposition are the very same people who not very long ago rose in this Parliament and moved a motion calling for a vote of confidence in Sir Max Bingham. Now, they are questioning the competence and the integrity of the Criminal Justice Commission. This comes to me as a devastating blow because I had always believed that these people were consistent in the views they held. I thought that they were people of grim determination, but they are not. They are querying the efficiency, integrity and competence of the Criminal Justice Commission. As I say, it is more in sorrow than in anger that I say this. It is really very distressing.

Mr Littleproud: Will you carry out that investigation now?

Mr WELLS: I have explained this to the honourable member before, but I will explain it just once more. All the police investigations that were available in the middle of last year went before the Director of Prosecutions Office. All the material that was available to the people who are leaking information to members of the Opposition was in the hands of the Director of Prosecutions Office at the time.

Mr Harper: How do you know?

Mr WELLS: Because he took over the proceedings. The honourable member for Auburn, Mr Neville "Guess What? I Once Used To Be Attorney-General" Harper interjects and asks me how I know. He really ought to know. I know because the Director of Prosecutions took over the prosecution, and when one takes over a prosecution—and I will put this very, very simply—one gets all the stuff from the person from whom one takes over, if one happens to be the Director of Prosecutions, and one looks at all of it. One does not conduct an "investigation" in the sense that that term is applied to police activities. If a person happens to be the Director of Prosecutions, he does not adopt what happens in *L.A. Law*. The Director of Prosecutions is not a district attorney; rather, the Director of Prosecutions in the British Westminster system is the officer who looks very closely at all the documents that have been gathered and put before him, and he makes a determination.

A Director of Prosecutions can make a determination to prosecute. He can recommend prosecution or he can make a determination not to prosecute. There might be all sorts of reasons why a decision not to prosecute might be made. Let me cite a very hypothetical instance—a very, very hypothetical instance. Say, for example, a front bench member of the previous Government had been engaged in behaviour such as driving around this State noting likely looking restaurants and places he had gone past and writing out lists of people with whom he might have had lunch, or with whom he would like to have had lunch and, although not having the lunch, nevertheless claiming expenses for it. If that had happened and it came to the attention of a prosecutorial authority—just consider this hypothetically—the prosecutorial authority might decide not to prosecute and might decide, for example, that the documents could not be located or that

the witnesses' testimony would not come up to proof. Take another example: say another senior Minister——

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will complete his answer.

Mr WELLS: Mr Acting Speaker, I wish to give some examples of how a prosecutor's discretion might be exercised. What if another senior Minister in a previous Government used ministerial expenses to buy flowers and chocolates for a lady. Hypothetically, let us say that that had happened. If that had happened, a prosecutorial authority might decide not to prosecute in that case because, perhaps, the receipts were not available or the witnesses could not be found—or maybe there is a sufficiently convincing argument that it was an accident, a clerical error, or an isolated case which would mean that it just would not be worth pursuing. Those are the sorts of factors that members of the Opposition need to know are taken into account by prosecutorial authorities when they decide not to prosecute.

Mr Acting Speaker, might I say that honourable members opposite are very well aware of these factors. Having given that explanation, I would just like to conclude by saying that an "investigation" in the sense that the honourable member is talking about—which is a misuse of the word—has been carried out because the Director of Prosecutions examined all that material in the middle of last year. If the honourable member is talking about material that has become available since the middle of last year, and if, indeed, Channel 7 is talking about material that has become available since the middle of last year and since the advice of the Director of Prosecutions was provided in August, and if it is material that was not available to the complainant in that case, they ought to come forward with it. If they do not do that and do not make it available to the appropriate authorities—if they have any such material—what they are doing is obstructing justice.

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a further question to the Attorney-General, I refer to new evidence dated 20 August 1990, which was tabled by the Leader of the Opposition in this place on Tuesday of this week, in particular to a report to the Director of Prosecutions by Sergeant Reynolds, who was removed from the Huey investigation, and also Senior Constable Harris, which says in part—

"We consider that as a result of our investigations not only is there evidence to support the five summons upon which complaint was made, but the most compelling evidence supports charges of perjury. We have information that indicates that further offences of perjury were committed by Huey during the judges inquiry into Judge Pratt, interfering with Crown witnesses and compounding crimes. It will be appreciated that we have been prevented from further investigating these matters."

I repeat—

"It will be appreciated that we have been prevented from further investigating these matters."

I ask the Attorney-General: did the Director of Prosecutions bring this report to his attention and, if so, why did he fail to act in accordance with the provisions of the Director of Prosecutions Act?

Mr WELLS: The Director of Prosecutions had that document at the time that he gave the advice to the effect that no further prosecution could properly——

Mr Borbidge: You said it was July. You said "any evidence after that".

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WELLS: July——

Mr Borbidge: Who are you hiding?

Mr WELLS: Mr Acting Speaker, July was the date——

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Surfers Paradise under 123A.

Mr Borbidge: What about the Premier?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Surfers Paradise to withdraw from the Chamber.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I order the member for Surfers Paradise to withdraw under Standing Order 123A.

Mr COOPER: I rise to a point of order.

NAMING OF MEMBER

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I name the member for Surfers Paradise under 124.

Mr COOPER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the House——

SUSPENSION OF MEMBER

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (11.11 a.m.): I move——

"That the honourable member for Surfers Paradise be suspended from the House for seven days."

Question put; and the House divided——

AYES, 49

NOES, 34

Resolved in the affirmative.

Whereupon the honourable member for Surfers Paradise withdrew from the Chamber.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I refer the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to a letter that police officers Reynolds and Harris wrote on 20 September 1990 to the Commissioner of Police. I remind the Minister that this letter was written after the Director of Prosecutions made his ruling on the Huey matter, as referred to by the Attorney-General. The letter states—

"Further criminal offences have been committed . . ."

The letter further states—

"As police officers involved in a complex investigation, we have been prevented from carrying out further investigations . . ."

I ask: did the Commissioner of Police bring this to the Minister's attention? Will he tell this House on what grounds the Commissioner concurred with the order to prevent police officers Reynolds and Harris from carrying out further investigations into Huey, bearing in mind that it was after the decision announced in this House by the Attorney-General?

Mr MACKENROTH: No, the matter was not brought to my attention by the Commissioner of Police. I will take the matter up with him and I will make the information available to the honourable member when the House resumes in three weeks' time.

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I refer the Attorney-General to a report submitted to Commander Mengler of the Criminal Justice Commission on 2 July 1990 by Detective Sergeant Reynolds, who was subsequently transferred from the Huey investigations, which states—

"I am satisfied that there have been criminal offences committed by the abovenamed and further I would expect to obtain criminal convictions in relation to the complaints made before the court on even date. I am further satisfied that despite these matters being brought to persons in authority, they have failed to be acted upon."

I ask: is the Attorney-General aware of this report and is he prepared to substantiate claims made to the Parliament yesterday in respect of insufficient evidence being available to proceed against Superintendent Huey?

Mr WELLS: The question of the Criminal Justice Commission is not a question for the Attorney-General.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WELLS: No. The question of the CJC does not fall within my ministerial responsibilities, so it is better that the honourable member should find that out from the CJC. However, the question with respect to Huey does fall within my ministerial responsibilities. The answer to that is that, with respect to the document that the honourable member just referred to the Minister for Police, I believe—and I will let the honourable member know if my belief is incorrect—that the Director of Prosecutions had that document at the time of the advice that he gave me in August. I recall that that document was attached in his file to the advice that he gave me. Therefore, I believe that that was taken into account by the Director of Prosecutions. He had that stuff at that time, so what the honourable member has got is not new evidence. If I am incorrect

in that, I will get back to the honourable member. However, for the time being, I ask him to take it that what he has there is not new evidence.

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Mr HARPER: Yesterday, in answer to a question from the Opposition Leader, the Attorney-General said that the Director of Prosecutions had conducted an exhaustive investigation of allegations against former Superintendent John Huey after the case had been taken over by the director from a police officer. Last night, on the Channel 7 news, in reference to these allegations and the claim by the Attorney-General that these matters had been exhaustively investigated, the reporter said—

"To our knowledge, not one principal witness has been spoken to by officers from the CJC or the Director of Prosecutions Office."

On 30 June 1990, the two police officers from whom the prosecution was taken by the Director of Prosecutions claimed to have spent some five hours briefing the Government member for Rockhampton North, who expressed his surprise that no action had been taken and was concerned that these officers expressed fear of personal and professional harm. I seek a direct answer as to whether the member for Rockhampton North voiced his concerns to the Attorney-General and whether the allegedly exhaustive investigation to which the Attorney-General referred yesterday included interviews with any of the principal witnesses.

Mr WELLS: Yes, I did say that the Director of Prosecutions had conducted an exhaustive investigation. What that means, to give it to the honourable member in plain English, is that he had all the stuff that was available in the middle of the year—from July. I want to clarify what happened and the confusion of the member for Surfers Paradise about July and August. From memory, July was the time when the Director of Prosecutions took over the prosecution that had been launched by the police officer. August was when he finalised his examination of the matter and gave me his final advice.

It was the case that there was an extremely exhaustive examination of all the material which was available to him, which I think was available to the honourable member, and which I think was available to the member for Rockhampton North. To my understanding, all of that material has been looked at. If there is anything additional, that ought to be provided to the appropriate prosecutorial authorities.

Funding for TAFE Colleges

Mr HARPER: I ask the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations: having regard to the Federal Government's acceptance of an urgent need to retain and increase the number of apprentices and to increase training through colleges of technical and further education, and despite the Minister's earlier denials of the facts, firstly, on what basis has necessary funding been denied to existing TAFE colleges, thereby preventing them from fulfilling their complete roles? Secondly, on what basis has funding been withdrawn from allocations previously made for major TAFE building projects, at Dalby, \$5m; Ingham, \$4m; Stanthorpe, \$3m; and Mareeba, \$1.7m? Thirdly, why has the Minister previously denied knowledge of at least some of these major commitments? Fourthly, would the Minister not agree that it is yet another cynical political exercise to deny decentralised rural communities equal opportunity to the access and infrastructure benefits which would have resulted from adherence to the previously approved major building proposals?

Mr Warburton: I will answer, first, the last part of the honourable member's lengthy question. Yes, I deny that the present Government allocates a capital works program in this State in respect of TAFE on anything other than a needs basis. I want to make that very, very clear. We do not indulge, and never will indulge, in the type of activity for which the previous Governments became rather famous.

Mr Veivers: Not us.

Mr WARBURTON: It was well-known.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: It was well-known. The evidence is there for everybody to see that the previous Government indulged in the greatest pork-barrelling exercise right across the education capital works spectrum for the whole period that those Governments existed.

To answer the other parts of the honourable member's question—I believe that the first part referred to some comments that I had made. I would have to deny those. I never have said that we did not have problems with apprentice intake. In fact, this year the problem is rather serious. As I indicated yesterday in a ministerial statement, it is one of the reasons why in December last year I took certain steps. I sent a lengthy submission to Mr Dawkins, my Federal counterpart, for the purpose of endeavouring to get the Commonwealth Government to understand that this State, as well as other States, needed considerable additional funding to carry out programs and to meet an exceptionally large unmet demand in TAFE. I am the first to admit that there is an exceptionally large unmet demand in TAFE. However, I want to make a comment about funding so that honourable members in this House can understand the real problem that I have. In the last State Budget, we did increase, in real terms, the moneys going into TAFE colleges throughout the State. That was acknowledged by the Commonwealth Government. However, it is a fact that for over a period of more than 10 years, whilst the previous Government and former Liberal/National Party Governments reigned in this place, there was an underfunding by the State to TAFE.

Mr Veivers: It wasn't us, it was the Federal Government.

Mr WARBURTON: What I have said is true.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WARBURTON: Honourable members should hear me out. I am not going to stick up for the Federal Government as regards the formula that it applied during all those years. I am saying that the measurement of Federal Government assistance was against the State financial input into TAFE. For that reason, we have been underfunded quite dramatically in the area of capital works and recurrent funding for a considerable period—in fact, for over 10 years. If I were to meet the unmet demand in TAFE in 1990, I would have needed an additional \$50m. That is the level of money about which we are talking.

I am aware of the interest of the honourable member for Auburn in this matter. As I have indicated, I accept that we have got some problems such as the unmet demand, apprentices out of work at the moment because of failures in particular industries, and traineeships at a reducing level. That is the reason why I made the submission. That is the reason why I was happy to admit that the Hawke industry statement acknowledged that that position exists not only in this State but right across the country. That is why I hope to be able to announce next week, in a joint statement with Minister Dawkins, that we are able to reach agreement on a very significant Commonwealth financial contribution which will assist Queensland to get some of those unemployed people into work.

Truancy and Corporal Punishment

Mr LINGARD: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to newspaper reports which refer to the lack of discipline in Queensland schools with students playing truant.

Government members interjected.

Mr LINGARD: Mr Acting Speaker?

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr LINGARD: I ask the Minister for Education whether he will give an unqualified guarantee to parents and teachers that there will be no removal of corporal punishment for students guilty of wilful disobedience and wilful misbehaviour?

Mr BRADY: I thank the honourable member for his question. He is referring to some extravagant reports relating to truancy. The position in relation to truancy is as it always has been. The majority of students are behaving in a responsible manner and, from time to time, a small minority take advantage of truancy. The corporal punishment situation remains as it always has been.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions with or without notice has expired.

DRAFT BILL INCLUDED IN REPORT OF ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMISSION ON QUEENSLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (11.31 a.m.): I move—

"That the House adopts, as suitable for enactment as law, the draft Bill included in the Report of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission on the Queensland Legislative Assembly Electoral System made under section 2.11 (4) of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989-1990, being the draft Bill set out in Appendix G to the Report, Volume 2, as varied in the following particulars—

- (1) Page G.6, clause 3.1 (1), omit 'and in two newspapers circulating throughout the State', substitute ', 2 newspapers circulating throughout the State, and such regional newspapers circulating in any part of the State as the Commission considers appropriate'.
- (2) Page G.9, clause 3.3(4), omit 'subject to subsection (2) and (3), is to give due consideration, in relation to each proposed electoral district, to -', substitute 'subject to subsections (2) and (3), is to consider, in relation to each proposed electoral district, the following matters:-'.
- (3) Page G.10, at the end of clause 3.3 add the following subclause:
'(5) The Commission may give such weight to each of the matters mentioned in subsection (4) as it considers appropriate.'
- (4) Page G.13, at the end of clause 3.6 add the following subclause:
'(2) If, within the period of 10 days after the period of 30 days referred to in subsection (1), written comments are lodged with the Commission in relation to an objection that the Commission is required to consider, the Commission is also to consider those comments.'
- (5) Page G.15, after clause 3.9 (1) (d) insert the following paragraph:
'(e) the written comments lodged with the Commission in relation to an objection mentioned in paragraph (d);'.
- (6) Page G.19, renumber clause 4.2(5) as clause 4.2(4).
- (7) Page G.19, clause 4.3 insert 'the' before 'performance'.
- (8) Page G.20, omit clause 4.5, substitute the following clause:-
'4.5 Appeals against determination of Commission etc. (1) A person who is entitled to vote at an election of members of the Legislative Assembly may appeal to the Full Court of the Supreme Court against a determination made by the Commission under section 3.7 (1), on the ground that the determination has not duly been made in accordance with this Act.'

- (2) The appeal must be made:
 - (a) within 21 days of the publication of the determination in the Gazette; and
 - (b) in the manner prescribed by the Rules of the Supreme Court.
- (3) The Commission is the respondent to the appeal.
- (4) If more than one appeal is instituted against the determination, every appeal may be dealt with in the same proceedings.
- (5) Any person having an interest in the appeal may apply to the Court to be joined as a party to the appeal.
- (6) If an appeal is instituted under this section, the determination does not take effect until the appeal has been disposed of by the Court.
- (7) On the hearing of an appeal under this section, the Court may, in its discretion -
 - (a) quash the determination and, subject to such directions as it thinks fit, order the Commission to make a fresh determination under section 3.7(1); or
 - (b) dismiss the appeal;and may make any ancillary order as to costs or any other matter that it thinks expedient.
- (8) The validity of the determination may only be called in question in an appeal under this section.
- (9) An appeal against the determination is to be set down for hearing by the Court as soon as practicable after the expiry of 21 days from the publication of the determination in the Gazette, and is to be heard and determined by the Court as a matter of urgency.
- (10) Except as provided in this section, a decision or determination made, or appearing to have been made by the Commission, or any member of the Commission, under or for the purposes of this Act -
 - (a) is final and conclusive; and
 - (b) cannot be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed, set-aside or otherwise called in question in any court or tribunal on any ground; and
 - (c) is not subject to mandamus, prohibition, certiorari, injunction or any declaratory or other order of any court on any ground.
- (11) A reference in subsection (10) to a decision includes reference to a refusal or failure to make a decision.'
- (9) All consequential changes necessary to give effect to paragraphs (1) to (8) above."

On behalf of the Parliamentary Labor Party, it is my privilege to move this historic motion. Indeed, it is an historic occasion. With this motion, we formally begin the legislative process to bring an end to more than four decades—almost two generations—of electoral injustice and, indeed, worse, electoral corruption in Queensland. The legislation about to be introduced in this House today represents the most fundamental reform that this Government will undertake in office. Nothing is more fundamental to a democratic system of Government than free and fair elections.

With this legislation, we will give to the people of Queensland what they have been denied for so long, that is, a fair electoral system. With this legislation we will end what has been a blight on the democratic process for so long, that is, the political manipulation of our State's electoral boundaries. This work has been done primarily by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, and it should be noted from the outset and placed on the record that, in terms of this report and the work carried out by the

Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, no-one has questioned the independence, the honesty or the integrity of that commission. No political party or commentator of any worth has questioned the integrity, the honesty and the independence of that commission. This is the first time that this has occurred in this State. I think that is important to remember, because some claims will be made from one corner of this House that could imply the contrary.

This legislation is the product of the first and fundamentally most important of the recommendations of the Fitzgerald report on corruption in Queensland, which are to establish an electoral system free from political intrusion and political meddling. For the record, I will read those recommendations. The relevant Fitzgerald report recommendation stated—

"This Commission recommends that:

1. a properly authorized and satisfactorily resourced Electoral and Administrative Review Commission ('the Commission') which reports directly to a Parliamentary Select Committee on Electoral and Administrative Review be established by legislation to provide independent and comprehensive review of administrative and electoral laws and processes;
2. the Commission provide an enduring independent process to review and recommend the necessary electoral and administrative laws and guidelines and procedures;"

A major outcome of that review process is this motion and the legislation to come before the House today.

This legislation will be introduced in the context of the Fitzgerald reform process and in the circumstances of undertakings repeatedly given by the parliamentary Labor Party in the 1989 State election campaign. It is true that the recommendation does not exactly mirror my party's policy on the central issue of one vote, one value, the goal of that policy being, of course, to end the electoral corruption that I have seen in the whole of my adult life foisted upon this community by the National Party and its Liberal Party accomplices for 27 years. This recommendation departs marginally from the ideal. I would have preferred to be introducing legislation that did not contain any departure, however marginal, from one vote, one value. But to have done so would have meant my Government repudiating its solemn commitment to the voters of Queensland to abide by the umpire's decision in this matter—to accept the outcome of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission process. I believe that to have done so would have been wrong, but it also would have been massively injurious to the crucial task of re-establishing public trust and confidence in the integrity of the political process in Queensland, particularly in the integrity of the electoral system, which has been so badly eroded by decades of political interference by a succession of parties, but in most recent years by the National Party and the Liberal Party.

For the record, I will read the agreement and undertaking given by the leaders of the three major political parties to Commissioner Fitzgerald on 21 July 1989. That undertaking was—

" . . . all recommendations of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission with respect to electoral matters will be immediately implemented."

Let me make this point abundantly clear: I make no apology for moving this motion today. I am proud of it. Although I would have preferred one vote, one value—and together with my colleagues I will continue to support that and continue to campaign for it—we gave to the people of this State the fundamental promise they were looking for as we came to the end of the National/Liberal Party administration and all the corruption and rot that had gone with it. The most important thing that people were looking for was the restoration of democracy to this State, the restoration of some honesty to Government and the restoration to them of the basic foundations of any democracy, that is, an independent electoral process that delivers to the people a Parliament which accurately and fairly reflects the popular vote. They are things that

the National Party denied the people of this State. In response to the hypocrisy that will follow, let me remind people that that corruption could not have been achieved by the National Party without the deliberate participation of a dishonest and corrupt Liberal Party. Indeed, it was that former prominent Liberal Party Minister, Mr Lane, who was instrumental in terms of achieving boundary changes designed to suit city-based members of the Liberal Party. There are in the back corner of this House people who well know how the rort was done and how their party benefited from it.

In no way do the notional voting value provisions for a handful of seats in remote areas of the State overshadow the major and fundamental achievement of this reform of one vote, one value electoral justice for the vast majority—the overwhelming majority of Queenslanders. Rather, it very much pales in significance. Our promise was to Mr Fitzgerald. Immediately following that, outside the MLC building in George Street the leaders of the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party faced the public in one of the biggest press gallery rucks this country has ever seen. On behalf of our respective parties, we promised to abide by the umpire's decision.

Today, the Labor Party is keeping that promise. I understand that the National Party is prepared to keep that promise. However, what do we see from the Liberal Party? This year, we see the same dishonest corruption as we saw in 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962 and 1963 until 1983 when the Liberal Party was deservedly thrown onto the scrap heap by the people of this State. The principle that drives the Liberal Party today is the very principle that drove it when it was in bed with Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen rigging the boundaries—use the numbers to get the results you want, stuff the umpire, stuff the people of this State and do what is best for the Liberal Party! This Government does not intend to do what is best for the Liberal Party. The people of this State do not want to do what is best for the Liberal Party. For many years, that party miserably failed the people of this State. We are now seeing the other side of that very same corrupt coin that the Liberals used for generations.

I wish to emphasise one other point. The suggestion has been made that Queensland has a new gerrymander. What is the essence of a gerrymander? It is dishonest political manipulation by one party—the Government party. The Liberal Party should be very careful about this allegation that it throws about so carelessly. If that is what the Liberal Party is suggesting, in effect it is saying that Mr Sherman and the other four EARC commissioners, whom the Liberal Party participated in selecting, have taken part in a dishonest political manipulation in terms of the report and the electoral boundaries to be determined. If that is what the Liberal Party is saying, it should have the guts to say it straight out. If the Liberal Party claims that this is the basis of a gerrymander, it accuses the EARC commissioners of corruption, dishonesty and partisan politics.

I reiterate that nothing could be more fundamental than to uphold the unequivocal commitment that this Government gave to Mr Fitzgerald in terms of the electoral system in Queensland. Subsequently, this Government gave that commitment to this Parliament. On behalf of the oldest political party in this State and country, that commitment was also given to the people of this State during the 1989 election campaign at the formal and major policy launch at which this Government reaffirmed the undertaking, that had already been given twice, to abide by the umpire's decision.

Some people might claim that this legislation gives the Government the power to vote how it likes and to use its numbers to break its promise. This is the most important promise that the Labor Party gave during the 1989 election campaign. As far as I am concerned, I am morally bound to the people of this State to keep that promise. Nothing could be more fundamental to democracy and a commitment to what this Parliament is all about than to keep that fundamental promise in relation to the democratic future of this State.

I shall now make some comments about the procedural background and the contents of the motion before the House. Under the Act, the commission is empowered to investigate and report from time to time in relation to the system. In November 1990, as part of that process, EARC released a two-volume report and made a wide range of

recommendations, including the specific recommendation that the Government must now consider in relation to the redistribution of electoral boundaries by the end of this year. As drafted, the Bill repeals the existing legislation, terminates the zonal system, and preserves the existing Legislative Assembly pending the redistribution. Among its other provisions, the Bill authorises EARC to distribute the State into 89 electoral districts, with each electoral district being represented in the Legislative Assembly by one member. The principles also included that—

- the Commonwealth Electoral Roll be utilised to perform the redistribution of districts during 1991;
- the permissible degree of tolerance between districts be 10 per cent above and below quota; and
- there be a limited weightage for electorates of more than 100,000 square kilometres.

Other principles have been recommended for future redistributions. It is important that, to be able to effect an electoral redistribution as recommended by EARC, the Electoral Districts Bill be introduced as soon as possible. For that reason, I am today seeking the agreement of the House to adopt the Electoral Districts Bill, with certain variations that I will try to address in the balance of the time I have left for this speech. In due course, I intend to give notice of a further motion that will be concerned with the EARC report as a whole, and varied as this Assembly determines. At that time, there will be an opportunity for members to debate all the recommendations of the report. Subsequent to the release of the commission's report, the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review reported further and generally welcomed the overall thrust of the recommendations. The committee disagreed with the reasoning in respect of the weightage argument. However, it considered itself honour bound by the terms of the agreement and the promises to which I have already referred. The committee therefore recommended to this Parliament that it adopt the recommendation on this matter. The committee identified some matters of administrative machinery or legal principle on which it recommended departure from EARC's proposals. In preparing the Bill for Parliament, some further minor improvements or corrections have been identified. I will now address some of the details of those variations that are included in the motion before the House.

The first variation gives effect to the parliamentary committee recommendation that sought an enhancement of the obligations on the commission to advertise in regional newspapers. EARC had recommended that such notice be published in the gazette and two newspapers circulating throughout the State. The variation would provide opportunity to advertise in regional newspapers if it is considered appropriate. The second variation makes it clear that the commission's duty is merely to consider, in relation to each proposed electoral district, matters such as community of interest, means of communication, physical features and demographic trends that are specified in the subclause. The third variation is an additional subclause that puts beyond doubt the commission's discretion to give such weight to the specified matters as it considers appropriate. It will assist in minimising frivolous or political legal challenges to the commission's considerations.

I turn now to the fourth variation. The draft Bill provides for the lodgment of objections to a proposed distribution. However, it does not provide for any opportunity for comment to be made on those objections. In such a procedure in which there is no opportunity for public comment, there exists the possibility of an objector having the last bite at the cherry in the submission process. This proposed variation is an additional subclause, which provides for a 10-day period for comment on objections. The fifth variation is consequential upon the fourth. The sixth and seventh variations correct minor drafting errors in the commission's Bill.

In relation to the eighth variation—I draw the attention of honourable members to the conclusions in the parliamentary committee's review of EARC's report. The committee did not agree with EARC's provision in clause 4.5 of its draft Bill that decisions or

determinations should be exempt from the normal provisions for judicial review. I quote from the committee's report—

"There is no good reason given however for the exclusion of the court's traditional jurisdiction to review an exercise of administrative power if that exercise of power be unlawful. Indeed EARC's proposed inclusion of this privative clause is in contrast to EARC's own view expressed in its subsequent report on judicial review of administrative decision."

I agree with the opinion of the committee. It is something on which people of goodwill and good faith can legitimately disagree in respect of this matter. The variation before the House provides for an appeal that is equivalent to judicial review of the redistribution determination but incorporates some additional provisions to ensure that the right to review by the courts is exercised within reasonable limits. A similar provision is used in South Australia.

Clause 4.5 specifies that determinations of the commission that are not made in accordance with the proposed Act would be subject to appeal. It sets out those conditions and procedures. It prescribes a time limit of 21 days for applications to be made to the Full Court of the Supreme Court. The Full Court may either quash the determination of the commission or dismiss the appeal. So that inordinate delays do not occur in the redistribution process, the Bill requires an appeal to be heard and determined by the court as a matter of urgency. Clause 4.5 (10) provides also that, other than as set out in this section of the Act, a decision of the commission will be final and conclusive and not subject to further review. It is intended to ensure that the redistribution process is not delayed by legal proceedings brought before the determination has been made. The Bill provides ample opportunity to object and comment at early points in the redistribution process. Finally, the ninth variation is a housekeeping clause to make any necessary changes to the draft Bill which are consequential upon those variations to which I have given an explanation.

The passage of this Bill, amended as I explained, will enable EARC to commence preparation for and to conduct the historic redistribution called for in its report. As I said at the outset, the passage of the Bill will end the political manipulation of the State's electoral system by any party. I repeat: it is significant that nobody has questioned the integrity, the honesty or the independence of the commission. That is important, because it was that fundamental criticism, quite legitimate in the past, that caused the people of this State to doubt and to have no confidence in this place. The people who previously sat on this side of the House were here by means of corrupt laws and a corrupt process. If we want to have a just and fair result, we must have a fair and independent process. It has taken a Labor Government to achieve an independent and fair process. Out of an independent and fair process, we will achieve a fair result in terms of the legitimate democratic aspirations of the people of this State.

We do so proudly and with no sense of apology whatsoever. We made a promise. In 1989, I stood on the other side of the House during some of the most dramatic and controversial debates in this House and gave that undertaking. For good or for bad, we gave the promise. Yesterday, I said jokingly to people in my party that it seemed like a good idea at the time and, with the benefit of hindsight, it still seems like a good idea. The people of this State wanted confidence in the process and confidence in the result. We gave the promise and they showed their confidence in us; they gave us their trust. Today, we return that trust by keeping the most important promise that we made. This will be the most important reform that is achieved in this Parliament in this term.

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (11.51 a.m.): It is a moment of great honour to second this motion before the House. This motion gives effect to the recommendations of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review. It represents a triumph of democracy over the politics of privilege and reaction. My generation has suffered under the hands of a National/Liberal regime, which sought to strangle democracy in this State. The unfair electoral system that has prevailed for so long went hand in hand with a corrupt and authoritarian police force, a repressive system of public assembly

laws and a network of cronyism which choked public life in Queensland and created a climate of fear in which the spirit of freedom in this State was repressed. The motion before the House is part of a most important process to sweep away that repressive regime and to allow a system of fair play and democracy to prevail here in Queensland.

We have seen already the reform to local authority elections, which provoked such bitter protests from those who sought to benefit from the old order of privilege. We have seen the reform to whistle-blowers' protection to enable those who had been frightened to speak out now to come forward to the responsible authorities and speak out. We have seen, through the electoral and administrative process, a system of pecuniary interests registers put in place. This reform, however, is the most important reform to come through in the process of electoral and administrative review for, in a democracy, an electoral system is the way in which the will of the people is translated into the shape of Parliament and the shape of Government.

When that electoral system is distorted, as it was in this State for so long, then the will of the people is frustrated. What we are witnessing today is a culmination of a process set in train following the heady days of the Fitzgerald inquiry and its report in July 1989. The Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, which was set up in the aftermath of that Fitzgerald report, on 7 April 1990 released its first issues paper. It had a statutory duty to conduct this review forthwith, and it did so.

This motion before the House is the culmination of the most systematic inquiry into Queensland's electoral laws that there ever has been. Those Electoral and Administrative Review commissioners faced onerous statutory duties laid down by this Parliament in section 2.23 of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act, that is, that the commission had a statutory duty to act independently, impartially, fairly and in the public interest. It had a statutory duty to make available to the public all submissions, objections and suggestions made to it in the course of its discharging its functions and otherwise act openly, if to do so would be in the public interest and fair. This is an extraordinary set of statutory duties. Who would have thought that it would have been possible several years ago to have embarked upon an inquiry of this nature, to have reposed such trust and confidence into men and women of integrity? Who would have thought that at the end of that day we would have an all-party parliamentary committee coming to this conclusion unanimously? I refer to paragraph 2.8 of the report of the parliamentary committee, which states—

"The Committee is satisfied that EARC has satisfied its onerous statutory duties as provided for in section 2.23 (2) of the Act. Indeed it is highly significant to note that the Committee has received no submission suggesting any breach by EARC of its statutory duties in respect of this review. It is a great tribute to the five Electoral and Administrative Review Commissioners that they have by their independence and diligence commended such universal public confidence in the integrity of the review process."

Indeed, this process involved the people of Queensland and that is why it has been such an important process. The commission obtained 268 submissions in respect of its initial issues paper and a further 124 submissions in response. That is a total of 392 written submissions. It is important to remember that the commission travelled the length and breadth of the State in order to enable the people of Queensland to have their say. Public hearings were conducted in Brisbane, Gympie, Rockhampton, Mount Isa, Townsville, Cairns, Longreach and Toowoomba. There were 72 witnesses before those public hearings and some 664 pages of transcript. As a result, the document which has come before the House is a document of high quality. It is a challenge to this House and for the members of this Parliament of a fundamental nature. The challenge is this: given that the members of that commission have discharged the duties given to them by Parliament, will the members of this Parliament honour the promise on which they were elected as members of this Forty-sixth Parliament by the people of Queensland?

That poses the most fundamental question in modern politics, namely, will politicians keep their promises? There is nothing more insidious to a democracy than that pervasive

cynicism by which citizens come to feel that their parliamentarians say one thing when in Opposition and another thing when in Government. That cynicism strikes at the heart of the attempts to rebuild a system of responsible government and free democracy here in Queensland. That historic tripartisan agreement emerged in extraordinary times. In the parliamentary committee report, there is much discussion of the issues surrounding the subdelegation of such power. It is one of those extraordinary moments in modern political history which places members of Parliament in a position where they have to look at the fundamentals. The learned constitutional authors Quick and Garran refer to the power of legislators in a modern democracy and point out that legislators do not hold power absolutely, but are mere trustees and grantees of power on behalf of the people. They state—

"The Federal Government and the State Governments are in fact merely different grantees and trustees of power, acting for and on behalf of the people of the Commonwealth."

True it be that Parliament is sovereign, but in a democracy the ultimate sovereignty rests with the people who confer power upon us on trust. The question is: will that trust be honoured? It is a very sad thing to learn that the Liberal Party intends to abandon that trust. In an eloquently written dissenting report, the honourable member for South Coast, Mr Quinn, puts the Liberal case. It is a case which will come to haunt the Liberal Party, for what it does is to say, "Yes, Mr Innes did make that promise, but no-one in their right minds would expect the Liberal Party to honour it." In the future, every time Liberal Party leaders go into an election, they will be haunted by the eloquence of Mr Quinn's dissenting report. For many years to come, it will be the albatross hung round the neck of the Liberal Party because members of the Liberal Party will come into this Parliament and argue that what their leader says should not be taken seriously and should not be honoured.

The provisions of this motion set out the central features of the reform process. Firstly, an independent commission is to be set up. That an independent commission—in the first instance, EARC—is to conduct a review is of fundamental importance. It should be independent commissions, not politicians, that draft the boundaries that constitute electoral districts. Secondly—and equally importantly—that process should occur in the open. It should be held as a result of submissions that are available to the world at large.

Mr Elder: Don't hide them in filing cabinets.

Mr FOLEY: Quite so. It should not be as a result of secret documents that are locked away in a filing cabinet, never to see the light of day. What an extraordinary abuse of accountability that was. It is therefore important that honourable members support the openness provided for in the motion adopting the provisions of the Bill. Equally important is the abolition of the zonal system, which is provided for in the Bill. The fundamentals of equal suffrage are to be found in the Bill, qualified by a limited form of weightage in remote electorates.

Mr Stoneman: You are not happy with that one, though.

Mr FOLEY: I take the interjection made by the honourable member for Burdekin who well knows that I am not happy with that recommendation. The question of honouring an agreement arises only when the agreement is inconvenient. If it were to be merely a reflection of my own view, then the question that is the real issue of whether or not this House will honour the trust placed in it by the people of Queensland would not arise. That having been said, the limited form of weightage cannot be said to prejudice the overall fairness of the result.

Mr FitzGerald: Never has.

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member for Lockyer speaks with the loud voice of guilt denying its existence. The country zone, which is such a pervasive feature of the present system, was an engine of injustice designed to protect the interests of the National

Party and to give an improper and unfair advantage. The destruction of that country zone is, indeed, one of the great triumphs of this process of electoral review.

I turn to the amendments to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission's draft electoral districts Bill. Amid the strongly held differences of members of the parliamentary committee, there were some matters on which all parties agreed. Those matters included provisions that are contained in the motion that is before the House, such as advertising in regional newspapers and an important provision for judicial review. There is also a provision in the motion for comments on objections, which represents a difference in terms of EARC's draft Bill, although not, significantly, a difference in terms of EARC's recommendations as to the procedures to be adopted by the independent redistribution commission. This is a very sensible provision because it ensures that any objections put in at the last minute can be the subject of comment, and eleventh hour changes that occur will have the benefit of input from others who might be affected adversely.

The issue of judicial review is one upon which members of the parliamentary committee achieved agreement. Indeed, it is very pleasing to see that provision enshrined in the motion before the House. I say that for the reason that no-one is above the law—not EARC, not anybody. Be a person ever so high, the law is above him. In this case, the provision exists for a challenge to be made in the Full Court of the Supreme Court if there is evidence of the redistribution process having breached the relevant law. I point out that that does not involve an appeal on the facts or the merits. It is not for the court to substitute its own view of where particular boundaries should be as a matter of judgment; rather, the provision is included simply to establish that the provisions of the law are adhered to. Indeed, the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission welcomed the enhanced availability of judicial review and the ousting of privative clauses in its later report on judicial review of administrative decisions and actions, which is currently being considered by the parliamentary committee. It is pleasing to see this provision in the motion. I note that the provisions of the motion entail a strict time limit and a duty of the Full Court to hear the matter with expedition. They are sensible provisions designed to ensure that the general public interest in ensuring that elections are not unduly delayed is properly observed.

It is timely to remember the words spoken on 26 September 1989 by the Leader of the former Labor Opposition who is now the Premier, which led to spontaneous applause in the public gallery. He referred to a historic tripartisan agreement and he made the following comment—

"This agreement . . . cannot be enforced in any court; it cannot be taken to the Supreme Court of Queensland or the High Court of Australia. It is an agreement based not on law but on honour. It is an agreement based on a promise to Mr Fitzgerald of Queen's Counsel, who carried out the most extensive and successful commission of inquiry into corruption, cronyism and good government that this country has ever known."

Today, this Parliament honours that agreement. It is a moment of triumph for those who believe in truth in politics. It is equally important, however, that we note the provisions for future electoral reform in Queensland. At page 30 of the parliamentary committee report, the committee discusses the future for electoral review in Queensland and notes, indeed, that EARC itself saw the reform of Queensland's electoral system as an ongoing process requiring much further investigation and work. At different places in its report, EARC suggested further investigations by a standing committee of the Legislative Assembly on electoral matters and by EARC itself for the Legislative Assembly. In that regard, it is of the greatest importance that we give due consideration to the provisions of international human rights law. The provisions relating to equal suffrage reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights were the subject of consideration by the commission. However, those matters are ones on which it is quite appropriate that there be ongoing debate and inquiry. For the struggle of the peoples of the world to achieve fundamental

human rights that have been the feature of international law in the twentieth century will not simply evaporate. Those provisions for equal suffrage are provisions which need to be kept into account at any future review. It is a proud day for Queensland. It is with great pleasure that I commend the motion to the House.

Mr COOPER (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (12.11 p.m.): I rise to support the motion—

A Government member: This will be good.

Mr COOPER: It will be right in line with what the honourable member is supporting, so it will be good. I do support the motion on behalf of the Opposition. I believe that the draft law is suitable for enactment as law. The principles that the National Party believes in and submitted to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission's Legislative Assembly electoral review are contained in the draft Bill and are set out on page G.9 in the appendices of the EARC report. They are—

"(a) community of interests within the proposed electoral district—including economic, social and regional interests . . ."

It is interesting that we have always supported those principles. It is good to see that Government members are supporting the same. The other principles are—

"(b) means of communication and travel within the proposed electoral district; and

(c) the physical features of the proposed electoral district; and

(d) demographic trends in the State . . ."

The final principle relates to weightage of not more or less than 10 per cent except for electoral districts at least 100 000 square kilometres in area, where the quota may be departed from according to a prescribed formula. We support those principles that have been laid down and want it to be well known. Of course, ever since the National Party's inception, it has been well known that it endorsed that criteria. It is interesting to note that that criteria has now been accepted by the Government.

The report of the Fitzgerald commission of inquiry stated—

"Public opinion must be given effect by regular, free, fair elections following open debate."

The question has to be asked: what is the meaning of "fair"? EARC, a body established by us when we were in Government, had the job of determining what the word "fair" meant based on its own research and from public submissions that it received. As in any debate on a very contentious public issue such as this is, it is easy for a term such as "fair" to have various meanings depending on the context in which it is used. Some people would interpret the meaning of "fair" differently from other people. Some people believe that one vote, one value is fair and others believe that proportional representation is fair. It is a matter of opinion.

The National Party believes that there are two criteria which must be judged to be fundamental to any consideration of single-member electorate electoral systems. They are, firstly, that the electoral system must be such as to allow the people as a whole to determine what Government they are to have. On a two-party preferred basis, the party receiving the support of the majority of the people is entitled to govern after an election—a majority Government. Secondly, the system must provide for adequate representation of the people as local communities, subgroups and individuals. But it must be said that neither of those criteria automatically gives a mandate to a system under which the number of electors in each seat are unequal or a system of numerically equal electorates. Either system can, given appropriate circumstances, satisfy both or comply with neither.

I will relate to the House the principles underlying the National Party's submissions to EARC, which are contained in its platform. Those principles are—

"The focal points of Australia's democratic tradition are its seven Parliaments. Modelled upon the mother of Parliaments, the House of Commons at Westminster, our Parliaments should ensure that Governments are responsible to the elected

representatives of the people, and thus to the people themselves. The preservation and enhancement of the operation of the nation's Parliaments is essential to the continued health of our democracy."

The National Party believes that the sole source of law, other than common law, should be those Parliaments. It believes that Parliaments should be comprised of members elected directly by the people who, in the case of Lower Houses of Parliaments or unicameral Parliaments, represent single-member electorates. The National Party believes that each adult person not under a legal disability is entitled to cast one secret, single, non-transferable vote for each election to each House of Parliament. It believes that the boundaries of each electorate should be determined by an independent electoral commission which acts upon criteria determined by the Parliament concerned. It believes also that, subject to the electoral boundaries as a whole being such that the right of the people to change the Government by a majority of the two-party preferred vote is preserved, the principal criterion for the determination of electoral boundaries should be the preservation within electorates of communities of interest based upon local government areas, and the balanced representation within Parliaments of the diverse communities of people within the State. Anyone who has travelled throughout the State knows its vastness and uniqueness and realises that we must have a political system that reflects that vastness and uniqueness. The National Party believes also that, to facilitate balanced representation, special allowance should be made by way of lower electoral quotas for remote and less densely populated areas.

As I have said before, the National Party supports this motion. The draft Bill does sit very comfortably with my party's platform. It is also clear that the National Party opposes the concept of numerically equal electorates—so-called one vote, one value. If one looks at the results where that principle is applied, one finds that in Victoria, South Australia and in the last Federal election, Government was rendered to the party which obtained less than 50.1 per cent of the vote—that is, minority Government. They are minority Governments. Hopefully, with this system, this State will be spared minority Governments.

An analysis of the 1990 Federal election suggests that the National and Liberal Parties would need to win 52.2 per cent of the Queensland vote to hold a majority of Queensland seats and 51.9 per cent of the national vote to win a majority of Federal seats. That is one vote, one value; it is a gerrymander; it is a corrupt system. At the 1988 New South Wales State poll, based on numerically equal electorates—again, one vote, one value—the Liberal and National Parties needed 52.5 per cent of the two-party preferred vote to win. Again, that is a one vote, one value, gerrymandered and corrupt system. By way of comparison, in Queensland, under the zonal system applicable in the 1989 election, 51.4 per cent of the two-party preferred vote was required for the Labor Party to win Government. The Labor Party won 50.3 per cent of the primary vote to win 60.7 per cent of the seats or, on a two-party preferred basis, 56.4 per cent of the vote. That was a weightage or community of interest system, to which this Government has referred as a gerrymander. Now the Government realises that it was wrong.

The National Party holds the view that the results federally and in the Labor States are not a mere coincidence but an inevitable result of a system of numerically equal electorates—one vote, one value—the boundaries of which are determined on a geographical basis without regard to the ultimate result. As I have said, those are boundaries that are corrupt. Just as a system of numerically equal electorates can produce an unfair result, so can one of unequal electorates, as did occur in Queensland in 1950. In that State election, Labor, with 48.87 per cent of the vote, obtained 56 per cent of the seats, while the Liberal and Country Parties, with 49.19 per cent of the vote, obtained only 41.3 per cent of the seats. In reality, more than 50 per cent of electors in that election supported the Liberal and Country Parties, because three safe country seats were uncontested. Such a result has not occurred in Queensland since 1950.

It is clear, at least to members on this side of the House, that the EARC undertook careful research and listened very intently to the electors of Queensland before

recommending the principles which underlie this draft Bill. It is equally clear that the research that the EARC undertook on the concept of equal suffrage was instrumental in developing the proposed criteria for the distribution and the inclusion of a fair weightage for remote areas. The commission argued that the meaning of equal suffrage, about which honourable members have heard so much—an expression used both in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was quoted this morning, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights—was not clear, although it implied equality of voting power. However, in its report, the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters stated that its advice was that the parties responsible for the drafting of the ICCPR did not intend the words "equal suffrage" to mean one vote, one value.

As a result of this confusion, the EARC consulted Professor Philip Alston, the director of the Centre for International and Public Law at the Australian National University in Canberra, on the exact meaning of equal suffrage. It sought his advice specifically on Article 25 of the ICCPR, where that expression is contained. This article included equal suffrage as only one of a number of human rights, such as the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs and the right to have access, on general terms of equality, to the public service. The commission was advised that the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs was the general principle of the article and that the right to vote by equal suffrage was only an application of that general principle. I remind the House that in Australia the legal position is that there is no requirement for equal suffrage in the Australian Constitution.

As I have said, the Opposition agrees with the EARC that a degree of weightage will not otherwise prejudice the fairness of the system and that it will not only assist in keeping those remote districts to a reasonable size—they will still be massive; in some instances they will be double and treble the existing size—but it will also provide a positive sign that the rest of the electorate recognised the problem, as the EARC was doing its research, and people generally accept that a form of weightage is in the interests of good government. Those are not my words; they are contained in clause 10.190 of the EARC report. I am also pleased that the Labor Party, which is now in Government, gave its support to the undertaking given by the three leaders at the time. I commend the Labor Party for that. An agreement was reached by the three leaders that the umpire's decision on the electoral system was to be accepted and would be abided by. I commend the Labor Party for that, just as I commend the National Party, which was most certainly going to abide by that decision absolutely. I am pleased also that the Government is supporting the draft Bill and those principles on which it is based—I repeat, community of interest and weightage—because they have been part of the National Party's platform since its inception.

The members of the Labor Party and the supporters of the one vote, one value policy should be able to admit quite publicly to supporting the wrong electoral policy for a long period. For a change, they can do the right thing on electoral policy and give a wholehearted, positive response to this motion. I sincerely hope that all members opposite do, because around the corridors of this place there are rumours that suggest that quite a few of the members opposite are having to be whipped into line. If that is true, it shows little understanding by those recalcitrant members opposite of the geographical characteristics that make up this State. I can only suggest that they travel a little more around the State.

The electorate as a whole should be reminded that in 1949, when the Labor Party introduced the zonal system, it held nearly all of the rural seats. It was just that the former Country Party/National Party picked them off one by one on merit. That is how to win elections, by winning the hearts and minds of the people, and presenting better policies, which is exactly what happened. Despite Labor's rhetoric and the policy of one vote, one value, the Old Guard of the party certainly does not have its heart in it at all. It has been drifting along with the academics—the Wellers, the Coaldrakes, the Swans, the Davises and the Left Wing members who like neat formulas and verbose reasoning but cannot relate to real people. Many rank-and-file members of the ALP do

not support the party's one vote, one value policy. For example, one only has to have read or have heard the remarks by the ALP candidate for the seat of Flinders on one vote, one value to know that the policy was not supported by ALP members outside the metropolitan area. I understand why completely, because the members of the National Party understand what it is like on the other side of the Great Dividing Range.

It is interesting to explore the electoral policy of the Labor Party. An examination of its policy from 1949 onwards suggests that it was prepared to embrace just about any system that it thought would have given it Government—very expedient! I suppose politics and expediency do run together. Prior to the 1983 State election, the former Leader of the Opposition, Keith Wright, said—

"As a matter of priority . . . a new Electoral Districts Act based on one vote, one value would be introduced."

That statement contrasted greatly with the 1979 policy of Mr Wright's predecessor, Mr Casey, the member for Mackay, who proposed a zonal policy.

ALP informants have told me also that the honourable member for Lytton, Mr Burns—unless he has had a change of heart since—had a very soft spot for the zonal system. In 1971, he was the very powerful State Secretary of the Labor Party. It seemed that the Labor Party's submission to the redistribution commission was based on zones. It is interesting when talking about the 1971 redistribution that the honourable member for Lytton said—

"The ALP had little to complain about in the new redistribution".

Therefore, his commitment to one vote, one value surely rings very hollow.

Another former Leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party, Jack Houston, also looked very favourably upon the zoning system. He must have done so or he would not have supported Labor's 1971 redistribution submission. Like the honourable member for Lytton, he thought that the result of the 1971 redistribution was not too bad for Labor. In fact, it was Mr Houston who said—

"The ALP appeared to be better under that redistribution than the 1958 redistribution."

The real division in the Labor Party about electoral policy occurred in 1979, under the leadership of the honourable member for Mackay, Mr Casey. At that time, the academics then in the Labor Party were pushing very, very strongly for the strict application of the one vote, one value policy. However, true to form at that time, in the days when the members of the Labor Party had pretty decent donnybrooks, a fight broke out in the party about electoral policies. The honourable member for Mackay engendered that when he resurrected the 1971 redistribution zonal proposals and prepared to submit it in the form of a private member's Bill. That proposed private member's Bill supported a two-zone system and at the time cut right across party policy. It is exactly the policy to which we have now agreed, a two-zonal system.

Some Labor members at the time were rather toey and outraged by the contravention of party policy. In fact, one academic member went to the extent of laying written charges against the then Leader of the parliamentary Labor Party, Mr Casey. Those charges were heard by the disputes tribunal but they were dismissed. The lawyer briefed by the honourable member for Mackay said that the charges were frivolous, and yet he supported the two-zonal system as against the official party policy of one vote, one value. In actual fact, that disputes tribunal virtually said that the Labor Party policy was one that really supported the zonal system.

I am pleased that today I heard another Labor leader—there have been quite a few now—in the form of Mr Goss, on this occasion support the principles of community of interest and weightage. He joins the other Labor leaders in this House, Mr Burns and Mr Casey. The only odd man out with the crew that is left is Mr Warburton.

As I said at the beginning of the debate, the Opposition supports the motion, and I am pleased that once again another Labor leader has seen fit to support the National Party in the carrying out of its policy.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.30 p.m.): I rise to speak to this historic motion, which significantly modifies the zonal system that has existed in Queensland now for over 40 years. However, let me say how disappointing it is that neither the ALP nor the National Party is committed to the removal of the weightage system, because the weightage system is still retained in this motion. Neither party is in fact supporting the principle of one vote, one value.

By not supporting the principle of one vote, one value, the ALP and the National Party are allowing future Governments to amend legislation to once again extend the zonal system in this State. Currently, it might apply to only six seats. However, under the proposals it could easily be extended to perhaps 26 or 36 seats. The Parliament needs only to amend the legislation to extend that weightage across the board to other seats. This motion accepts the principle of weightage; therefore it remains. Because of that, later I will move an amendment to this motion. The amendment relates to two matters, the first being weightage and the second being the Commonwealth Electoral Act. The Liberal Party will be moving that the weightage be removed and that its policy—and what I am sure the vast majority of Queenslanders believed was the policy of the Labor Party—of one vote, one value, be adopted. At the same time, the amendment will also seek to remove reference to the Commonwealth Electoral Act. The present electoral legislation should be adhered to. The Commonwealth electoral rolls should not be used in any future redistributions.

I invite ALP members in particular and National Party members to cross the floor and vote with the Liberal Party on electoral justice in this State. In fact, a few short moments ago, we heard Mr Goss' words. I challenge him to give ALP members a free vote in this place. If he believes in the statements that he uttered in this House, he will have the courage to give each and every ALP member a free vote. In particular, the member for Archerfield should be given a free vote so that he can support the Liberal Party on the principle of one vote, one value. I know that he believes in that and that he finds it very difficult indeed to stick to Mr Goss' proposition.

The Liberal Party position was made clear not only by me but also by my predecessor, Mr Angus Innes. We have supported a single zone, single quota, with a maximum 10 per cent variation from the quota. That is the system that is supported by all three major parties—Liberal, Labor and National—in the Federal Parliament. Sight should not be lost of that. What the Liberal Party is proposing is the same principle as that supported by all three parties in the Federal Parliament. No weightage applies to Federal electorates. One has only to look at the seat of Kalgoorlie, which I am sure every member knows is larger than the State of Queensland. I appeal to ALP members not to turn their backs on their supporters—their voters. That is what they are doing. No sort of hype, frenzy and hypocrisy that we have heard today from Mr Goss, their leader, will overcome the fact that they are disappointing their supporters by turning their backs on them. In 1989, the perception held by people out in the community was that ALP members believed in electoral reform such as one vote, one value. Each and every person in the community had that perception—long, loud and clear. No red herrings brought forth today by any ALP member will change that perception.

We need only to look at the statements made by all of those people who supported the ALP on this issue at the last State election. Today they are singing long, loud and clear that that was their clear belief and clear understanding. What are we to believe about the Premier's thoughts? On 1 February this year, in a letter to the Queensland watchdog committee explaining his backflip on the EARC proposals, the Premier wrote—

"In its submission to the EARC parliamentary committee the ALP made its commitment to one-zone, one-vote, one-value absolutely clear, a proposal I still support."

Why does the Premier not match his words with his deeds? Let him today stand and be counted. Are Mr Goss and the ALP saying that, had EARC recommended that the current four-zonal system remain, he would have found that acceptable? I doubt it. I believe that he would have found that completely unacceptable. I would like to hear from ALP members on this matter, particularly Mr Goss and his frontbenchers. I want to know whether or not they would have supported EARC had it recommended that the current zonal system remain. Again, I challenge Mr Goss to allow his members to stand today and be counted by giving them a free vote.

Let me refer to why Parliament should in fact not accept the EARC report. We have heard a lot about an agreement—an agreement that, despite the inability or refusal of the EARC parliamentary committee to accept it, was repudiated by the Liberal Party. That agreement was clearly repudiated. In fact, it was repudiated by the events that subsequently followed. The agreement related to a referendum that was to be held by the previous National Party Government. That referendum, to extend the term of the Parliament, fell through. It was never held. Had the referendum been passed and the term of the Parliament extended, that was a different matter. But the whole thing fell through. Nothing was held. The Liberal Party went to the people of this State on a clear election promise. I want to read to this House that clear promise. On a number of occasions during 1989, the previous Leader of the Liberal Party, Mr Angus Innes, promised—

"The Liberal Party would not give EARC a blank cheque on electoral reform . . . the Liberal Party would settle for nothing less than a fair equitable electoral reform . . . we want the zonal system replaced with a single zone with one quota, and a small but tolerable divergence of plus or minus ten percent."

I believe that that is clear enough for all ALP members of this House to understand. Throughout the electoral campaign, the electorate certainly knew the position of the Liberal Party. ALP members kept saying how a vote for the Libs was a vote for the Nats. Various people discussed this matter with me. They said, "You have made a clear commitment to electoral reform", and I explained to them what the Liberal Party's commitment was. Today, it turns out that a vote for the ALP is a vote for the National Party, because I understand that the ALP and the National Party are going to vote together on the matter of weightage.

I believe that the agreement is simply a device to get the ALP off the hook because some members who represent western and northern parts of this State do not believe in one vote, one value. No doubt the Australian Workers Union faction of the ALP does not believe in that premise, either, but believes in weightage. The Liberals are not bound by Mr Goss' failure to take a stand on what is right and proper. The Liberal Party stands bound by what it believes is the correct and proper course to take for the people of this State.

Much has been said about EARC being the umpire. In fact, it is not; it is just a commentator. It is made perfectly clear in the legislation that this Parliament is the umpire--the decision-maker. The Act spells that out. There is nothing at all in the legislation about any outside agreements. The ALP knows that. All the hypocrisy in this place will not get away from that fact.

Let me consider what the ALP has to say about one vote, one value. In 1989, Mr Goss floated the story of the possibility of the Liberals supporting a two-zonal system. In the *Courier-Mail* at the beginning of 1989, Mr Goss stated—

" . . . the Liberals have sold out the course of electoral justice in Queensland."

An article in the *Sunday Mail* in July 1989 stated—

"Yesterday, Mr Goss said that genuine independent commissioners could only come up with one fair electoral system—one vote, one value."

Honourable members know what Mr Goss really believes in this matter.

I turn now to what former Opposition Leaders have said. I am sorry that they are not present in the Chamber, and I do not know whether they will take part in this

debate. I would like to hear their views on the weightage principle of one vote, one value. Following election after election, Mr Burns blamed the ALP's defeat on the gerrymander. According to *Hansard* of 11 March 1975, Mr Burns said—

"The notion that one man should have more than one vote or that his vote should be worth more than that of his neighbours is centuries out of date. It has no place in modern Queensland or modern Australia."

I refer also to a letter to the editor headed "Beanland fools no-one: Burns" that appeared in the press on 3 March 1989. That letter followed a statement that I issued to the effect that the Labor Party was not going to stick to the principle of one vote, one value. I sent that statement to the *Sun*, which printed it. In due course, Mr Burns made a reply to my statement. The section of his reply that relates to the matter of weightage states—

"Labor is the only major political party in Queensland that guarantees a fair and equal 'one vote, one value' electoral system."

What hypocrisy! What a let-down for the supporters of the Labor Party!

As to an agreement with the Liberal Party—according to *Hansard* of 10 March 1981, Mr Casey stated—

"Such agreement would include the introduction of electoral legislation to bring down a redistribution based on one vote, one value principle."

According to *Hansard* of 10 April 1985, Mr Warburton—another failed Leader of the Labor Party—stated—

"The Australian Labor Party supports constitutional government and parliamentary democracy. It believes that all electors' votes should be of equal value, no matter what their race, occupation, income or place of residence."

All former Leaders of the Labor Party have supported the principle of one vote, one value. Yet what do honourable members see today before this Parliament? Clearly, they see a significant divergence from that principle by none other than Mr Goss and his Labor Party members. There is no point in Mr Goss saying, "It departs marginally from the ideal." It departs significantly from the ideal! Either he believes in the ideal, or he does not.

Let me consider what is wrong with EARC's weightage proposal. The National Party's four-zonal system is to be replaced by the ALP's seven-zonal system. As a result, one zone will have 83 seats and six zones will have six individual quotas. The ALP cannot walk away from that. The 2 per cent rule is arbitrary. The majority report of EARC and the parliamentary committee supports the 2 per cent rule. On page 169 of its report, the commission states, "1% makes little difference" and "a 3% allowance would overcompensate and produce unfairness". Yet it is possible that enrolments could vary by as much as 2 to 1. Some western seats could have more phantom voters than real voters. EARC attempts to overcome the problems caused by remoteness. That is totally arbitrary, because no consideration is given to compensating for other factors. No consideration is given to the real factors. For example, EARC talks about the 2-to-1 factor and the phantom voters factor applying because of remoteness. But no consideration is given to the high number of non-English-speaking people in city and coastal seats who may not be voters. Nor is consideration given to the high number of transient voters in those centres, which makes it difficult to keep in touch with the electorates. No consideration is given to the high number of schoolchildren who cannot vote but who place demands on State services such as schools and welfare. Those factors are not considered by EARC. It considered only the remoteness factor and applied only two lines to its argument. Why should the problems of remoteness be corrected by maintaining an unfair electoral system? The problems of remoteness can, and should, be overcome by providing a higher standard of Government services to those areas.

In an effort to give voters in western areas a fair electoral system, EARC is imposing elements of unfairness on the remaining electors. That is quite clear. I say to Mr Goss and to other Government members: the electoral system is either fair or unfair. I repeat: it is either fair or unfair. The system cannot be slightly unfair. That would be like being

a little bit dead or a little bit pregnant. One either believes in the principle of one vote, one value or one does not. History will record that the Goss ALP Government failed to implement the principle of one vote, one value and that only the Liberals stood up, supported and were committed to that principle of fairness. I therefore move the following amendments—

"After paragraph (1) of the resolution, page 1, insert the following paragraphs:-

'(1A) Page G.8, clause 3.2(3), omit the subclause

(1B) Page G.8, clause 3.3(2), omit "except as permitted by subsection (3)"

(1C) Pages G.8 to G.9, clause 3.3(3), omit the subclause.'";

"Paragraph (2) of the resolution, page 1, omit 'subsections (2) and (3)', substitute 'subsection (2)'. ";

"After paragraph (2) of the resolution, page 1, insert the following paragraph:-

'(2A) Pages G.9 to G.10, clause 3.3(4)(d), omit the paragraph, substitute the following paragraph:-

"(d) demographic trends in the State with a view to ensuring, as far as practicable, on the basis of those trends, that the number of electors enrolled for the time being for the electoral district will remain within a margin of one-tenth more or one-tenth less of the average district enrolment until the State is again distributed into electoral districts in accordance with the law." ' ' "

In summary and as I indicated previously, that amendment abolishes the weightage. It sticks to the principle of one vote, one value, and it allows the State to return to using the State electoral rolls. It is worth while noting that not even the majority report of the parliamentary committee—which is supported by ALP members—believes in the EARC proposals. Mr Foley, for example, the chairman of that committee, was simply an apologist for the Hanlon gerrymander. Now he is an apologist for the new Goss gerrymander. On page (ii) of the summary in the report, the chairman states—

"While acknowledging that EARC's proposal will cause only limited deviation from the principle of equal suffrage the Committee is most concerned at the erosion of the principle and affirms its belief in a system of equal suffrage or one vote one value . . ."

The question must be asked: why did ALP members not support the principle? They either support it or they do not. Let us get away from the red herrings. If Mr Goss cannot do the correct and fair thing by the people of Queensland, the Liberal Party certainly can.

The committee does not support EARC. Page 22 of the report states—

"The Committee remains unconvinced that the cure to disadvantage caused by remoteness, poverty, or any other reason lies in electoral weightage."

Page 24 of the report states—

"The Committee is not convinced of the merits of EARC's argument that a weightage system of the kind described is warranted."

Because of the factional arguments and the internal problems of the party, it is quite clear that ALP members do not support that recommendation. Today, we do not see them support the principle of one vote, one value.

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (12.50 p.m.): This is an historic debate today but, as far as Queenslanders are concerned, it should be a debate in which all political parties honour the commitment that they made to Tony Fitzgerald, QC, on 21 July 1989. The historic tripartite agreement that the Labor Party honours today was that all recommendations of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission with respect to electoral matters will be implemented immediately. That was the agreement signed by Mr Goss, Mr Ahern and Mr Innes. To the Labor Party, that commitment was clear and it was considered binding. The people of Queensland welcomed that commitment. They

recognised the need for all political parties to commit themselves to the recommendations of an independent umpire if the gerrymander and electoral corruption were ever to end.

The people of Queensland did not trust politicians and they still do not trust politicians. They still believe that politicians act only out of self-interest and that they will do anything and everything possible to retain power unless constrained in some way. The Labor Party recognises that community perception. That is why we made the commitment that we did on 21 July 1989 and that is why today we endorse it and are putting it into effect. Members of the Labor Party believe that a promise is a promise. To break that promise would only confirm the worst fears of the people who voted for us on 2 December 1989, namely, that politicians are not to be trusted.

Mr Livingstone: The Liberal Party obviously aren't.

Dr CLARK: No. The people who voted for the Liberal Party should ask: what happened to that promise made by their leader, that promise that is now being ignored, forgotten and rationalised away? However, I would like to comment on what I regard as the schizophrenic performance of the National Party. Mr Deputy Speaker, when you listened to Mr Cooper as the Leader of the National Party endorse this motion here today, you may have thought that the National Party members of the committee had likewise debated around the table and decided to support the motion. It is illuminating then to look at the report that was tabled in the Parliament and to look at who voted for what. Honourable members will notice that in the conclusion of its report at section 5.5 the committee states—

"The Committee otherwise recommends that the provisions of the draft *Electoral Districts Bill* appearing as Appendix G to EARC's report be enacted by the Parliament."

This is what we are doing here today.

Opposition members interjected.

Dr CLARK: Yes, we have amended it because we agreed with the insertion of those administrative machinery matters. The basic proposals of that draft Bill are before the House today but, when it came to the crunch, the question was put that that paragraph stand as part of the report, and who voted? Those in favour were Foley, Clark, Welford and Robson and those against were Stoneman, FitzGerald and Quinn. At that time, Opposition members did not see fit to endorse a proposal that would give weightage. We have learnt through bitter experience that the National Party and the Liberal Party are never going to use the committee system properly. We believe that they only ever look for the best opportunity to make political mileage. I am sure that the National Party members of the committee would have been delighted had the Labor members rejected EARC's recommendations. That would have suited their purposes admirably. However, they have recovered from their disappointment at our support for EARC and have found other means to attack the Labor members of the committee, as can be seen in their dissenting report.

Then the National Party committee members claimed that, by honouring our commitment to the people of Queensland, we had brought the whole system of parliamentary committees into disrepute. That is an accusation that I would reverse and apply to them. If National Party members can be described as schizophrenic, one can only describe the performance of members of the Liberal Party as gymnastic as they backflipped away from the promise that they made. Curiously, the Liberal Party committee member claims that, by honouring our agreement to the people of Queensland, we have abandoned our duty to legislate in the interests of the entire electorate. The logic of that proposal quite escapes me. The member for South Coast went on to elaborate. He said—

"A proper consideration of the duties of a member of Parliament should exclude any accommodation of mere party political interests when they appear to conflict with the interests of the electorate as a whole."

I put it to members that the Labor Party was the only party on that committee that was not accommodating mere party political interests. Both the National Party committee members rejected the proposal in this draft Bill for weightage because it does not go far enough. This is perhaps in line with party policy. At page 8 of their dissenting report, the National Party members say—

"... if a principle such as weightage is worth recognising, it is worth extrapolating to a wider degree."

Of course, they did reject EARC's recommendations and I wonder what they say to the people in rural Queensland in the large electorates of Gregory, Warrego and Flinders. These people know that the National Party members voted against a recommendation that recognised the difficulties that members representing those electorates experience when servicing their electorates. This is a very strange performance.

Similarly, the Liberal Party sought refuge in the claim that it must honour its electoral reform promise of one vote, one value and that this must take precedence over the commitment made by Mr Innes to Fitzgerald. Again I quote—

"No Liberal leader can bind his or her party to a fundamental change of policy without its knowledge and approval."

How pathetic this retreat into procedural matters in the formulation of policy is! It takes no account whatsoever of the very special circumstances that led to that historic tripartite agreement with Fitzgerald—an agreement that all leaders recognised as necessary if the people of Queensland were to have any confidence in the electoral reform process initiated by Fitzgerald.

In their dissenting report, the Nationals claim that the EARC committee seems to be developing into a tool of political parties and becoming an instrument of philosophical expression rather than an advisory group to the Parliament. What hypocrisy! It is the National Party and the Liberal Party that are seeking to make political mileage out of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, and I am disappointed with both the National Party and the Liberal Party.

Mr Beanland interjected.

Dr CLARK: The Labor Party keeps its promises. I believe that the Liberals know that the EARC recommendations in this draft Bill will introduce a fair electoral system into Queensland. Of course, the Liberal Party could not bring itself to support the Labor Party because it would not suit its political purposes. The members of the Liberal Party will not admit this fact. They have their own respectable reasons for not agreeing with EARC's recommendations, and one of them is a claim that the parliamentary committee must be independent and should not be seen to be a mere rubber stamp. I agree entirely. The committee should not be a rubber stamp and it has not been a rubber stamp. That can be shown on any examination of previous reports put out by the committee. Our response to those claims of rubber-stamping are contained in sections 4.18 and 4.19 of the committee's report. It is interesting that this very issue was brought to the attention of the committee by the Queensland Watchdog Committee. A submission from the Queensland Watchdog Committee is quoted in section 4.18 of the committee's report, which states in part—

"We point out this issue of the independence of the Parliamentary Committee is an important one in itself—anything less would undermine the role of the Parliamentary Committee and would refuel the time old allegation that Queensland Parliamentary Committees are no more than a rubber stamp."

Section 4.19 of the committee's report states—

"It is clear that this Committee has a duty to act independently of the Executive but it would be quite wrong to suggest that the Committee must be independent of Parliament. The Committee is a Committee of the Parliament and members of the Committee have a duty to observe their obligations as Members of Parliament. The issue of independence in this case is not the familiar issue of the independence

of the Legislature from the Executive; rather it is the difficult democratic issue of whether Parliamentarians should act independently of, and contrary to, pre-election assurances to the people who elected them."

For the Labor Party, it is those pre-election assurances which must take precedence and which we are committed to.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Dr CLARK: As I was saying before the luncheon recess, the failure of all political parties to send a clear message to the electorate today that they support an independent commission and its recommendations for electoral reform will serve only to reaffirm the deep-seated cynicism felt by people about politicians. It saddens me that today's debate will reaffirm the belief in the electorate that politicians are indeed more interested in political, strategic games and in point-scoring rather than, to cite the words of Liberal members, "legislating in the interests of the entire electorate".

I will participate in the debate on the electoral districts Bill when it comes before the House at a later time, but at this stage, I want to put on the record my analysis of events leading up to what will be historic reform of Queensland's electoral system and my intense disappointment at the political manoeuvring of both the National Party and the Liberal Party. I also wish to place on the record my support for EARC and its recommendations. However, I also want to make some remarks about the committee system in the light of comments made by members of the National Party in their dissenting report. I wish to quote at some length the conclusion those members reached because I believe it demonstrates very clearly the dilemma that seems to be facing the committee. The statement of reasons for dissent read—

"It has not been possible to present to the Parliament a Report that has the considered and collective weight of all members. We regret that the whole system of Parliamentary Committees has been brought into disrepute by the manner and presentation of the majority Report.

We acknowledge that our dissenting report will not assist in bridging the Party-positional problem that has become an entrenched in this Committee's operations.

We believe, however, that it is our duty to raise these matters before the public so that at least some degree of informed debate as to the ongoing validity of the existing Committee system can take place, and we acknowledge that the legislation providing for the operation of the Committee was drawn up by the previous Government. This does not lessen our conviction that the system is not working as it should."

But what remedies do those members propose? What suggestions do they make? They do not mention any. Does that mean that they are intending to abandon attempts to work in a tripartisan way?

My experience of the parliamentary committee has not diminished my commitment to the committee system, but it does demonstrate that it will be many years before party political interests can be set aside in the interests of good legislation. Perhaps that can only ever be an ideal for which people can strive. Perhaps it may even be an unattainable goal. It must be recognised that at the heart of politics is the commitment to a set of values and principles that motivate people to join a party and enter politics.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation.

Dr CLARK: Thank you, Mr Acting Speaker. It is rather difficult to convey one's message in such a hubbub.

The fact that there are three major political parties in Queensland means that three political ideologies and philosophies exist to which party members are committed. As honourable members have witnessed during this debate, party members will vigorously defend those ideologies and philosophies. What does that mean for the committee system and its viability? I think it means that when political parties have very clear and differing

positions on an issue, it will be impossible to achieve consensus in committees. I think that that fact must be accepted because in those situations the end point is almost necessarily predetermined and parliamentarians do not really have much room in which to move. The last difficult task that was dealt with by the committee is a good example of that.

The nature of the electoral system that is most appropriate for Queensland is an example of one of those issues on which agreement could not realistically have been expected to be reached. However, that does not mean that committees or the system should be abandoned, or that abandoning the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Reform should even be considered. Already, the committee members have demonstrated that they can agree on certain matters when there is no clear party line or policy to direct them. Indeed, the electoral Bill that will be debated shortly contains three matters of an administrative machinery nature that were departures from EARC and on which we agreed, but it is significant that committee members could agree only on matters that were not the subject of a hard, high level political policy.

The success of the ambulance committee is a good example of consensus being reached and what can be achieved when a problem is presented. In that case, the problem was the provision of a better ambulance service. There was no predetermined answer set by party policy and all members of that committee were free to grapple with the problem, entertain and discount solutions and, finally, reach an agreement. The Parliamentary Committee of Public Works and the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts demonstrate that committees can work if they are not given an impossible job that polarises the views of members from the outset.

I am becoming a little wiser and a little bit more realistic, but I am definitely no less keen to work with members of the National Party and the Liberal Party on this committee in the interests of Queensland and of good legislation. I am therefore looking forward to the committee's deliberations when freedom of information and judicial review legislation are considered. I believe that it will be possible for members of the committee to work together to provide a framework in which consensus can hopefully be reached and to put behind them the dissension that has occurred in relation to electoral reform. There is a lot that can be done. The committee system is an evolutionary process and it is evolving in a positive direction. I appeal for cooperation from all members of that committee in working together in the interests of producing better legislation.

Debate interrupted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—Attorney-General) (2.38 p.m.), by leave: As a result of claims by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that his ejection from this Chamber was a result of a cover-up, I am forced to advise the House of the real agenda behind the barrage of questions that the Opposition has been asking in recent days about the Huey matter. I advise the House that I have told the Special Prosecutor what I propose to say, and he has informed me that my remarks will not prejudice any case that he is handling. The National Party's attack is an attempt to discredit Huey because its members believe that he will be a witness in the forthcoming trials——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr WELLS: Mr Acting Speaker, methinks they protest too much. As I said, the National Party's attack is an attempt to discredit Huey because its members believe that he will be a witness in the forthcoming trials arising out of investigations concerning political figures. I believe that the so-called legal investigator who plays a starring role in the Channel 7 miniseries on Huey is in fact working for the firm of solicitors engaged by one of those political figures.

All the many documents relating to the allegations of criminality against Huey were examined very thoroughly by the Director of Prosecutions when he took over a prosecution of Huey in the middle of last year. This, I assume, includes all documents referred to in question- time by the National Party in this House. I suspect it includes all documents in the possession of Channel 7. However, if there is any further evidence which was not available to the Director

of Prosecutions on 27 August, it will be examined by him. If a police investigation is necessary, it will be undertaken by the Criminal Justice Commission. The Director of Prosecutions and Sir Max Bingham have confirmed this today. It is a matter for the Director of Prosecutions and Sir Max Bingham, not for the Government, and always has been. The Director of Prosecutions advised me, at the end of August, that there was no evidence on which a prosecution could be properly brought. The truth is, however, that the National Party in this place is engaged in an attempt to pervert the course of justice and prejudice a trial——

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will continue.

Mr WELLS: —in the hope that a conviction will not be obtained.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. I find the comments that the Opposition is trying to pervert the course of justice abusive. I would like those remarks to be withdrawn.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order.

Mr WELLS: Channel 7 is presumably the unwitting instrument for this purpose. I believe that the material which founds the current miniseries was touted around to a number of reputable media outlets before the instigators finally found someone who would run with it. The National Party's role in this conspiracy is grossly irresponsible and should be roundly condemned.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Will the Clerk read the Order of the Day?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. Under Standing Order 108A, I move——

"That the House take note of the statement."

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! It is up to the Minister to move that. The honourable member is out of order. I call the Clerk to read the Order of the Day.

Mr COOPER: I seek leave to move a motion without notice condemning the Government for its failure to act on this investigation.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I call the Clerk.

Mr COOPER: I seek leave of this House to make a statement.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! We are in Government business.

Mr COOPER: Mr Acting Speaker, I was on my feet. This is a most serious matter and I insist that I be heard.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will sit down. We are in Government business and we will return to the debate.

Mr COOPER: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will sit down while I am on my feet. I have ruled that we are in Government business.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr COOPER: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to sit down.

PRIVILEGE

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (2.42 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. The debate was adjourned. I and other members of the Opposition sought the leave of the House to make a personal explanation and to move a notice of motion and that leave was denied us, with respect to you, Mr Acting Speaker, before Government business was resumed.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I am ruling that there is no point of order. We are in Government business, and Government business takes precedence.

PRIVILEGE

Former Superintendent J. W. Huey

Mr COOPER (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (2.43 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I will take this as the last matter of privilege.

Mr COOPER: This is the first matter of privilege. The issues in relation to the Huey case do not, as was referred to by the Attorney-General—and certainly in the minds of National Party members, at least—relate directly to the Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen case, which was the accusation made by the Attorney-General.

Government members interjected.

Mr COOPER: The Attorney-General did accuse us.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I do not want to do this, but I have to do so. I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A for showing disrespect for the Chair.

Mr COOPER: Mr Acting Speaker—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. The Leader of the Opposition will sit down. As we are in Government business, a Minister is allowed to make a statement. He is a member of the Government. We are now in Government business, and I call the Clerk to read the Order of the Day.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order—

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I will now explain to members of the Opposition Standing Order 124. If members abuse the Rules of the House and disregard the authority of the Chair by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business of the House, they are breaching Standing Order 124. I have taken two points of order. I have ruled that the House is in Government business. That ruling will stand. I will regard any further matters of privilege or points of order as being disrespectful of the authority of the Chair. I call on the Clerk to read the Order of the Day.

Mr LINGARD: I rise to a point of order. The Leader of the Opposition rose on a matter of privilege. He was howled down half-way through stating his matter of privilege. No ruling has been made on that matter of privilege. I ask you, Mr Acting Speaker, to consider the matter of privilege raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I have considered the remarks that the Leader of the Opposition was making. They were not a matter of privilege. I will now call the Clerk to read the Order of the Day.

Mr LINGARD: Mr Acting Speaker, I rise on a substantive motion. On behalf of the Opposition, I now move a motion of dissent against your ruling that the Leader of the Opposition will not be heard. This is a substantive motion. I am rising on a substantive motion——

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! Under the Standing Orders, the motion must be in writing. I ask the honourable member to forward it to me in writing. The House will now get on with Government business.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (2.48 p.m.): Under Standing Order 332, I move—

"That so much of Standing Orders be suspended as would prevent the Leader of the Opposition from making a statement immediately."

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I will not accept that motion. The House is in Government business.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I call the member for Burdekin. The Clerk has read the Order of the Day. The House is in Government business.

Mr STONEMAN: I rise to a point of order. At what point did the House come back into Government business? I have not heard the Clerk read the Order of the Day.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The House has always been in Government business this afternoon. That is the point. The Minister made a ministerial statement during Government business. If the member for Burdekin wishes to participating in the debate, he can now rise and speak.

DRAFT BILL INCLUDED IN REPORT OF ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMISSION ON QUEENSLAND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Debate resumed.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (2.50 p.m.): I just wanted to make sure exactly where I stood, because I do not believe that many members on this side of the House have been able to follow the logic of some of today's events. Nevertheless, I think it is particularly significant that during this debate today on the Premier's motion honourable members have heard pontificating about the reversion of this State, with the passage of this motion, to truth, honesty, justice, openness and all of those things that have been expounded, yet honourable members have just seen exactly the opposite by the members of the Government. I believe that the people of this State should be made aware of that fact. I do not know how one can get truth, honesty and justice in this Chamber. However, it is part and parcel of the reason for my dissent, along with that of my colleague Mr FitzGerald, from the report that was tabled in this Parliament. That report has been misquoted. The previous speaker in the debate on this motion, the honourable member for Barron River, misquoted a part of our dissenting report. She stated that we had made no reference to any suggestions. I am aware that the honourable member for Barron River is a very nice, but very naive, member. For her benefit, I quote from page 3 of our dissenting report, which states—

"In our view the Committee should try and achieve a broad community over-view within its responsibilities as an all-Party group and do so in such a manner that the bridge from independent Commission to the Parliament is achieved in a considered, rather than in an adversarial and rhetorical, manner. This approach has

been shown to work in other Parliaments to such a degree, in some instances, that Committees are successfully and cohesively chaired by Opposition members."

That section goes on to say—

"The Parliament is the forum where debate, votes and formal proceedings are used as a means of determining the laws that govern the community and it is entirely reasonable and traditional that philosophy, politics and majority numbers be used in that place. The Report to which we are dissenting draws those lines at a much earlier stage and we believe this is not the expectation nor the desire of the broad community."

I put that on record because, quite clearly, the honourable member for Barron River—probably innocently—quoted out of context from our dissenting report.

I join with the Leader of the Opposition—and I will certainly be followed by other speakers from the Opposition—in supporting this motion. It is extremely important to note that there was a fundamental basis to the commission report. It contained an understanding fundamental not just to all of those things that the National Party holds dear but, more particularly, that are so important for the continuing good government of people throughout the State rather than the sectional and vitriolic utterances and nonsense that has been emanating from some Government members today. The fact is that the debate is all about the leaders' agreement about the matter of electoral systems. That is what the three leaders of the political parties were talking about. They were not talking about the total amount of electoral systems and so on; they were talking about the Electoral Districts Act and the matter that is before this Parliament today. It is about boundaries, zones, weightage and electoral suffrage or that much touted term one vote, one value. It is not about all of those other matters. It is not about the preferential voting system or voting cards. It is about a quite clearly defined agreement that was made. As did the previous speaker, I associate myself with the party that gave those undertakings. The Opposition is not moving one iota from that undertaking.

It is important to recognise that, after literally hundreds of submissions, as outlined today by the member for Yeronga, and thousands of words given in evidence, and after all of the events that occurred prior to the writing of the commission's report, the commissioners came up with a clear and unequivocal statement. The clear and concise findings to come out of the commission's report following those submissions were a positive upholding of the principle of electoral weightage. That is what the members of the National Party have been on about throughout the years and that is the system that they have supported. It has never been espoused as a system being the means by which any party should come to power. The system is designed to support people in varying circumstances across this State. I again make the point that under no circumstances does any member on this side of the Chamber believe that any weightage or zonal system, call it what one likes, should be the means by which a party comes to power. In fact, the last time that happened in this State was in 1950, following the 1949 Hanlon Labor Government redistribution.

It is significant that across this nation the only Governments that are in power, in minority terms, are Labor Governments, with the exception of the Queensland Government. The Queensland Labor Government is in power through the zonal system and because it gained a majority of votes and a majority of members at a general election. Under no circumstances and in no case has that happened other than during the 1949 redistribution, when the Hanlon Labor Government came to power. However, there is this fixation that the electoral zonal system, or any system that encompasses weightage, is somehow the only means of gerrymander. That is absolute rot. Sir William Knox, a former Leader of the Liberal Party, spoke about that in this House before any of the current members of the Liberal Party were even elected. He acknowledged that one vote, one value could not preclude gerrymanders. He talked about the dumbbell electorates where an electorate boundary encompassed a town, went along a railway line or some

such course, and then around another town. There can be that type of numerically equal drawing of boundaries, but it does not mean that it is not a gerrymander.

At the Federal level, the Commonwealth electoral system is a gerrymander of the first order. It sets it up in nice legal terms, but the fact of the matter is that it is an art form that has been further refined. A similar system was further refined by the New South Wales Government to such an extent that the Labor Government in that State needed only 47.5 per cent of the vote to assume power. That is irrefutable. I again draw to the notice of this House the comments of Mr Malcolm Mackerras. I have no idea of his political affiliations. However, I do know that he is a fearless commentator. I remember this quote well because I heard it when I was in Canberra a couple of months ago. In respect of the New South Wales redistribution, Malcolm Mackerras said that it at least gets rid of the New South Wales Labor Government gerrymander, which is the worst example of a gerrymander in Australia. That is the model that the Labor Party would really like to espouse and, unfortunately, our colleagues in the Liberal Party seem, in their misguided way at the moment, to be pushing. They do not realise the implications of what it is all about.

Reluctantly, the committee members accepted the commission's recommendations. The committee members were dragged screaming to the barrier. From a reading the report, it is unbelievable to see the way in which they damned the commission in every phrase and in every paragraph. In the end they said, "However, we are honour bound." To my mind that is the greatest example of hypocrisy that I have ever seen. I also make the point that the person who came up with the phantom voter concept was Mr Noel Robertson, with whom I have been in contact to discuss the proposal because I believe that there should be discussion between people who have an understanding of the need for these types of philosophies.

Mr McGrady: A good Labor man.

Mr FitzGerald: The member for Mount Isa says he is a good Labor man.

Mr STONEMAN: I would say that Mr Robertson could be classed as a good Labor man. He is the old style Labor man who acknowledges that one has to look after people in difficult and varying circumstances. He is the type of person who originally would have been behind the philosophy of the Hanlon Government, which introduced the first proposals for zones and weightage. Mr Robertson recognised the impossibility of servicing electorates in those far-flung areas such as Mount Isa, Cook and Gregory and, I might add, many other electorates. I have indicated in writing and publicly, and I indicate again to this House, that I believe that the Opposition accepts the motion moved by the Premier and the umpire's decision. However, if a principle is worth espousing, it is worth following through to its fullest extent, provided it does not bring with it a situation where for one reason or another a Government that does not enjoy the majority will of the people is put in place.

Dr Clark: Why didn't you vote for this? Why didn't you support EARC?

Mr STONEMAN: I wish to discuss a number of matters that are part and parcel of this motion, which supports weightage. By this motion, the Government has—no doubt very reluctantly—now supported weightage.

Dr Clark interjected.

Mr STONEMAN: The honourable member is screaming and caterwauling about paragraph 5.5.

Dr Clark interjected.

Mr STONEMAN: Members of the Opposition dissented from paragraph 5.2, which states—

"The Committee disagrees with EARC's reasoning for a limited weightage for electorates over 100,000 square kilometres . . ."

If they want to say that, so be it. The paragraph continues—

" . . . however the Committee regards itself as honour bound to recommend to the Parliament that this recommendation along with all other recommendations . . . be adopted."

That is what we were dissenting from. As committee members, we are not, were not and should not be honour bound by any outside commitment. As members of Parliament having party affiliation, I believe we are bound, and we accept that. We have never moved from that. But what is the point of having a committee system if it is going to be fettered by a deal done by a QC, a radio station or anyone else. Why have a committee? That is the basis of our condemnation of the commitment to the undertaking given by the majority of the members that they were in some foolish way honour bound. I believe they are honour bound in this House. However, the committee is a committee of the Parliament, quite separate from the undertakings given at an earlier stage. Those aspects of my comments have been well researched and, I believe, eloquently put in the dissenting report to Parliament, which I commend to some members opposite who have not read it.

There is a fundamental flaw in the argument that runs through the Government's rhetoric. I refer particularly to the comments made by the Premier. I ask the Premier: where in the Fitzgerald report did it suggest that there was electoral corruption? Mr Fitzgerald noted that there were expressions of concern. After those expressions of concern were given full rein by all the eloquent evidence, submissions and speeches that were made in respect of the commission, the commission did not suggest once that there was electoral corruption. It did not suggest once that the zonal system was in itself corrupt. I challenge the Premier, Mr Foley and other members opposite who continue to refer to corruption—the greatest example of which we have seen today in this House—to show me where those gentlemen, regardless of whether it be the commissioner, Mr Fitzgerald, or anyone else, said that corruption existed in this Parliament or in this State over the years. They cannot do it. The processes of democracy have never been denied in this State. They did not find corruption, nor can they or will they. The fact of the matter is that corruption is in the system such as the one that exists in the Commonwealth and which existed previously in New South Wales, where it was given the veneer of respectability by this myth of one vote, one value. Then out came the dumbbells, the snaky electorates, and the little ones that run here and there like wagon wheels all over the State.

The thinking members of this House would agree that those minority Governments should not be replicated in this State by any means, let alone by any weightage structure. I believe the weightage system should be extrapolated to take into consideration the factors concerning electorates which are less than 100 000 square kilometres. But I accept the determination of the commission. The fundamental principle and the truth of the matter is that the commission could not move away from that basic point. The commission said that, if it were to adopt the equal suffrage or the mythical one vote, one value system, it would have worked against the interests of all Queenslanders. That sticks in the craw of all Government members. They have put their foot on the sticky paper. They have tried every way possible to edge out of it. We all know what blew up from there. The only way in which the wheels of Government could be kept on the rails was to undertake this process of reluctant acceptance.

It is of great regret to me—and, along with my colleague Mr FitzGerald, I have noted this—that for some reason or other the committee did not find it necessary to travel to the far-flung areas of this State such as those represented by Mr Hobbs, Mr McGrady, Mr Johnson and all of the other members who have an unbelievable job to do in servicing electorates that otherwise would be impossible for anyone else to contemplate. From the air-conditioned comfort of this building, the committee was able to make a judgment on the basis of just looking at a book. However, we did find it necessary to visit Western Australia, New South Wales and New Zealand. But the fact

remains that we did not consider the people who are most at risk under this system—and they will continue to be at risk.

For most of my adult life I have lived in the far-flung areas of the State. No matter what Mr FitzGerald, the other members of the committee and I put up, it was going to be ignored. I predict also that it will be ignored when the committee undertakes its review of local authority boundaries. I predict that the Government will find the rearrangement of local authority boundaries too hard to contemplate. The Government has started running backwards already. Because of the electoral backlash that is growing by the hour, it will be impossible to implement the rearrangement. The Government will slide out from underneath this commitment. It will be too hard until after the next election, then watch out.

It is unfortunate that the debate cannot be maintained on a considered and reasonable basis. When the seconder of the motion spoke, with all the power and the glory that he could muster, the vitriol, hatred and corruption and all those sorts of things flowed out of him. That is up to him. The Opposition is in agreement with the Government. The motion is eminently sensible. I believe the weightage principle is one that has stood the test of time, will continue to stand the test of time and will serve this State well into the future, as it has in the past. However, it should never be accepted that the mere throwing out of a few trinkets—a four-wheel drive here and a telephone there—is what people in the remote areas need. They need access to their member and their member needs access to them. They need special consideration. Most of all, they need a continuation of the weightage system that the Premier has moved today. That system will continue to need refinement so that those people are increasingly better served. They are the people who should be looked after because they do not have the privilege of access that other members of this House, especially those in the closer-in areas, are able to enjoy.

Time expired.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (3.08 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in this debate. I concur with the remarks made by the previous speaker, the honourable member for Burdekin, Mr Stoneman. This debate comes before the House after a long process that has occurred in Queensland over the past couple of years. The Opposition welcomes this motion before the House. It is rather ironic that this issue is being debated from a party political point of view. The National Party says that the Bill that will be coming before the House allows for an electoral weightage system. The Liberal Party says that it believes in one vote, one value. I understand that the Liberal Party's foreshadowed amendment will project the future electoral make-up, and growth patterns throughout the State. I am not quite sure where the Labor Party stands. It says, "We do agree with one vote, one value. We have always agreed with one vote, one value. However, because an agreement was made, and because we have been to the people with that agreement, we shall support the motion." The people of Queensland should be warned that, when the Government can get out of the agreement that Mr Goss signed—and I believe that will be before the next election—the Government will have a mandate to bring into this House whatever electoral system it sees fit. There is no way in the world that the Labor Party embraces the philosophy of electoral weightage as encompassed in the Bill. The Labor Party does not accept it. I do not believe that the Labor Party will live with the electoral weightage system. I am afraid that, when members who represent northern and western electorates in this State are removed from office, the Labor Party will revert to a one vote, one value basis.

Mr Bredhauer: Don't hold your breath.

Mr FITZGERALD: Does the honourable member not believe me? He probably will not be a member of this House at that time. I do not believe that the Labor Party will remain in Government in this State.

The term "electoral corruption" has been bandied around this House. Section 5.1 on page 38 of the majority report of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, states—

"The Committee is confident that the package of reforms will put an end to electoral corruption in Queensland."

The honourable member for Burdekin and I disagreed with that statement. The committee stated that there had been electoral corruption. The genesis of the report goes back to the Fitzgerald inquiry. What did Fitzgerald say about "electoral corruption"? That is the term that the honourable member for Yeronga tends to use when talking about the report with which the member for Burdekin and I disagreed strongly. Section 3.3 on page 127 of the Fitzgerald report, which deals with electoral laws, states—

"The fairness of the electoral process in Queensland is widely questioned. The concerns which are most often stated focus broadly upon the electoral boundaries, which are seen as distorted in favour of the present Government, so as to allow it to retain power with minority support.

Irrespective of the correctness or otherwise of this view, the dissatisfaction which is expressed is magnified by the system under which electoral boundaries are determined. It has not always been obvious that the Electoral Commissioners were independent of the Government. Submissions and other material upon which the Commissioners have proceeded have been secret. The Commissioners did not report to Parliament, but to the Premier."

That was a fairly strong statement by Commissioner Fitzgerald. Nowhere in his report does he say that there has been electoral corruption. I invite the honourable member for Yeronga to identify anywhere in the report where it is mentioned. Perhaps some of the people involved with past Electoral Districts Acts might have said, "He has put the finger on us, hasn't he?"

I turn now to EARC, which was set up by the Parliament as a result of the Fitzgerald report. What did it say about electoral corruption? That report is a fairly thick document, but it makes no mention of electoral corruption. That is in the mind of the beholder. Section 10.191 on page 160 of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission's *Report on Queensland Legislative Assembly Electoral System* states—

"The Commission is satisfied that the application of equal suffrage throughout Queensland will prejudice the quality and effectiveness of representation in the most sparsely populated areas of the State."

It did not mention one vote, one value. Section 10.186 on page 159 of the report states—

"No amount of money or facilities can entirely overcome the twin tyrannies of time and distance."

I am sure that the member for Warrego would be rather interested in that comment.

The majority report of the committee spoke about electoral corruption. On the morning after that report was released, the *Courier-Mail* carried an article headed "Death of the gerrymander" and "Goss: It sounds the death knell of corruption". It is interesting to note that those headlines appeared beside other headlines such as "Teen sex trauma" and "Free mutton for needy". I believe that the member for Warrego had something to do with the graziers' plan for free mutton for the needy. Madonna King, who wrote the article, virtually said that the gerrymander had ended. In all of the articles on that day, the reporters used the words "one vote, one value", and then they realised that the principle of electoral weightage is still accepted in Queensland by a commission that was established by legislation under the auspices of Fitzgerald. Whether Labor Party members like it or not, that principle of electoral weightage will be enshrined in the legislation that will soon be before the House. They will have to apologise to their supporters from one end of Queensland to the other by saying, "We have a particular point of view, but we are afraid that we will have to accept another point of view."

The honourable member for Toowong made a pertinent point when he said that the commission is not the umpire but the commentator and that this House is the umpire. I accept that. There is no way in the world that present or future members of Parliament should enshrine into Queensland's constitution the method of voting. The history of the way in which electoral districts have been drawn shows that Queensland had some single-member constituencies and some multiple-member constituencies, that our forefathers did not see the need for women to vote, and that there was compulsory voting. All of those issues were tied in and, over the years, changes were made gradually. Queensland had a bicameral system of Parliament. Now it has a unicameral system. Things have changed and they continue to change gradually. Whether the Queensland Parliament will again have an Upper House, I do not know. At present, I am not in favour of that, but no doubt people in the future may be in favour of it. We have a mechanism whereby, with the will of the people behind them by way of referendum, future Governments can do that. There is no way in the world that anyone should say that the legislation that will be introduced and passed during this Parliament will enshrine a system of electoral districts for the people of Queensland to use.

Leaders of parties make statements and commit their parties to certain actions. We have heard that the Liberal Party does not agree that Angus Innes had the right to commit the Liberal Party, after the election, to statements that were made in a letter that was signed in front of Mr Fitzgerald, QC. The Labor Party bases its whole argument as to why it disagrees with the findings of EARC on the fact that the letter was signed by its leader, Wayne Goss, and, therefore, it must accept that. In relation to statements by leaders of parties—I will quote statements made by Sir William Knox when he was Leader of the Liberal Party. On Friday, 8 November 1985, on the *Today Show* on Channel 9, he was being questioned about the electoral gerrymander. The interviewer said—

"Okay, so that when this latest electoral redistribution is described as 'the world's worst gerrymander and an embarrassment to Queensland and Australia', you agree with that?"

Knox replied—

"No, that is the ALP propaganda."

Later, when talking about the battle that goes on between the conservative parties, he said—

"Well there has got to be some hard bargaining between the conservative parties in order to retain the Treasury benches and that no doubt will happen but the propaganda by the Labor Party that this is the worst gerrymander in the world is just a lot of nonsense."

Knox also said—

"You have got to face the facts that the commentaries on the electoral redistribution in Queensland in the last twenty years indicates that there is no gerrymander.

...

Now the Liberal Party itself supports a philosophy of weightage"—

I am quoting from the then Leader of the Liberal Party—

"and that has been accepted not only in this State but in other States as well the only area where there is under-representation virtually is of course, in western Queensland where the electorates are very small, but elsewhere the electorates fall more or less within the same range."

At the end of the interview, the commentator said—

"Sir William, a lot of people will be surprised to hear you say that there has been no gerrymander or rigging of the boundaries."

I was not a member of Cabinet at that time and I was not privy to some of the discussions that took place, however the then leader of the Liberal Party said that Queensland had no gerrymander. If people in the following of the Liberal Party say that there has been a gerrymander in Queensland, they should look to their then leader, who was well respected. In fact, he had two goes at being Leader of the Liberal Party. That is very important.

Mr Prest: Mr Knox sat in this House with 36 per cent of the primary vote in Nundah.

Mr FITZGERALD: The honourable member for Port Curtis is starting to talk about minority Governments, yet he does not want to talk about any other Labor Governments in Australia, including the most recent Labor Government in New South Wales. I inform him that the National Party's submission was to have electoral weightage.

Mr Prest: We had Bill Knox who had been in this House for many years couldn't even hold his seat in 1989. Prior to that, he held it with 36 per cent of the vote.

Mr FITZGERALD: I remind the honourable member for Port Curtis that north Queensland is famous for many things, one of which is the cane toad. At least the venom of the cane toad can be used for something, but a use has not yet been found for the venom of the honourable member for Port Curtis.

Mr Prest: He's definitely not Ginger Meggs.

Mr FITZGERALD: If the honourable member wants me to take the point so that *Hansard* can record it, I will. I do not think that I could take offence at being likened to that comical character, who was a bit of a larrikin. If the honourable member wishes to pursue that course, fair enough, he can do so.

The National Party embraces the proposed electoral system. We acknowledge that it does not meet all the requirements of everyone in this House. Obviously, the member for Port Curtis is rather upset with the legislation that will be introduced. He is having difficulty explaining to some of his constituents the reason why the Government is not implementing Labor Party policy. I would like him to ask his leader to assure this House that the Labor Party will never have one vote, one value whilst any of those members are in this House or ask them all to make a commitment that they will accept electoral weightage as being a fair basis for an election. I would also like him to acknowledge that there are many other ways that gerrymanders can exist.

The issue before the House today is whether we accept this Bill that will be presented by the Premier later. I accept it. I support the motion that is before the House and I look forward to the debate on the legislation when it comes before Parliament.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.25 p.m.): I rise to join this debate on the motion of the Premier and also to second the amendments proposed by the Leader of the Liberal Party earlier in this debate. A couple of aspects of this debate need to be examined, and over the next few minutes I intend to do so. One issue is the position adopted by the ALP. It is worth reminding the Government and its members of some of the remarks made by members of the Labor Party in other places. A second issue is the problem with the basic principles that are being enshrined, firstly, in this motion and, secondly, when the Bill is introduced later. It is worth putting this debate into a recent historical perspective, because that is what seems to be the Government's position.

Not too long ago, in November 1990, the leading ALP senator in Queensland, Senator Mal Colston, gave a speech in the Senate. It is worth quoting a few of the points he made in his speech. He said—

"I intend to outline the danger that new electoral boundaries in Queensland, the State I represent, will not shed the cloak of malapportionment that has for so long blighted Queensland's electoral system."

Further in his speech he went on to reiterate the position of the Labor Party. He said—

"The policy is quite specific. It states:

'Labor believes that the essence of representative democracy is an electoral system based on the principle of one vote one value. To this end Labor will institute an independent electoral commission which will establish fair electoral boundaries based on geographical community and population factors, with an optional preferential system of voting with a 10 per cent tolerance. There will be no electoral zones.' "

This is the ALP's No. 1 and longest-serving senator in this State. He went on to say—

"I would urge the parliamentary committee to consider the adverse consequences of the weighting proposal. Just because the EARC has made a recommendation to have two classes of electorates does not mean that the idea is sound. My assessment is that the weighting proposal should be rejected and the State Government should take this opportunity to reject this aspect of the EARC's advice. If it does not, an unacceptable zonal component will remain an unpalatable feature of the Queensland electoral system."

That is the position of the ALP's leading Queensland senator, Senator Colston. He understands what the Labor Party's position is and he understands where he thought the Labor Party was going. That speech was made in November last year and there was not one mention in that speech to the Senate about the Labor Party possibly compromising its principles because of something else that was done. There was no indication that the Labor Party was to go back on its long-standing policy. No, that has come up recently, and I will return to that in a moment.

Mr Santoro: Do you think it is fair to say he hadn't been briefed by then?

Dr WATSON: He probably had not been briefed. In addition, in November last year, a joint media conference was held by people who have been strong supporters of the ALP and who have run independent committees, some of whom have been members of the ALP. I am referring to a joint media conference by Dr Ross Fitzgerald, Dr Noel Preston and Mr Chris Griffith, which was held on Sunday, 11 November, which is a fateful day. I will quote a couple of paragraphs from that statement—

"We believe Queensland's political leaders may have committed themselves prematurely to implementing EARC's report without understanding the large differences in vote values that it advocates.

In the two days following the release of EARC's recommendations, media reports described the suggested electoral weightage in western Queensland seats as 'mild'.

Not until Saturday was it fully understood EARC was proposing a system that unashamedly would continue this state's history of votes of grossly unequal value.

...

The ALP Government, the Liberal Party, and their supporters must decide whether they can live with implementing a system that continues zones, this time based on geographical density, and electoral malapportionment, which has been the basis of the corrupt Queensland system."

This was the challenge that Fitzgerald, Preston and Griffith put to the Liberal Party and the ALP. Today, honourable members are seeing that the ALP has failed to meet the challenge put to them by their own members—not by somebody who is biased in favour of the Liberal Party, but by some individual members of the ALP who have been running with the ALP on this issue for a long period. What can explain that turnaround?

Mr Dollin: Keeping our word. That explains it. You're not.

Dr WATSON: The honourable member says that members of the Labor Party are keeping their word. That is interesting, because earlier today I listened to the Premier and I also listened intently to the member for Yeronga. Listening to them took me back

a few years. I notice some young ladies and gentlemen from a school are present in the public gallery. I can remember very clearly when I was studying Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*.

Mr Smyth: Come on, give us a couple of lines.

Dr WATSON: I will give the honourable member a couple of lines. Any honourable member who has actually studied that particular play——

Mr Foley: Get it right.

Dr WATSON: I hope I am right. Honourable members might recall Mark Anthony's oration, which was a fairly important part of that play. Mark Anthony had started to talk to the citizens of Rome and to query what was going on.

Mr Foley: ". . . and Brutus is an honourable man."

Dr WATSON: The member for Yeronga understands what I am saying. During his oration, Mark Anthony repeated some words a number of times. I can remember Mark Anthony said that Brutus said Caesar was ambitious——". . . and Brutus is an honourable man." Those words seem to suggest an appropriate epitaph for today's motion: "Goss supports EARC, and Goss is an honourable man." I say that because that was the way I heard the speech.

Mr FitzGerald: You got that bit right.

Dr WATSON: If the honourable member remembers *Julius Caesar* and the way in which Mark Anthony said those words, he will appreciate that it was said quite sarcastically. Listening to the Premier today, I was reminded of that speech because I was hearing a similar statement being made and I did not really believe it. Mark Anthony did not believe that Brutus was an honourable man, and no-one believes that about the Premier.

The honourable member for Yeronga and others have tried to indicate that, during the controversy surrounding electoral reform and throughout the Fitzgerald inquiry, there was a statement signed by the three leaders of the political parties at that time. They are trying to point to some sort of smoking gun—to revert to yet another era—in the form of a signed statement. There was not any signed statement. It was simply a press release, and it is significant that the press release was compiled in the context of a proposal for a referendum.

Mr Foley: Irrespective of the outcome of the referendum.

Dr WATSON: What is the premise then? The premise is that there be a referendum. The honourable member understands logic, and he would know that, if the premise is false, the conclusion is false. There is no way that that fact can be avoided. There was no referendum and, because of that, nothing else follows. The honourable member might want to pretend that he is being honourable and might want to try to save his neck by relying on a press release that was issued at the relevant time, but no-one in this Chamber believes that. The honourable member is simply trying to twist the facts to try to sustain an argument. His argument is illogical and contains a non sequitur.

It is absolutely amazing that the Premier, the honourable member for Yeronga and their running mates can come into this Chamber and say, "Here is a press release that binds the leaders of the parties." I could give those honourable members tonnes of press releases that show that the ALP has made promises leading up to an election but that were broken afterwards. What happened in relation to Fraser Island? What happened about the toll-road on the north coast? What happened to the promise of "no new taxes"? When it suits the purpose of members of the Labor Party, they tear up press releases and throw them out. It is only on occasions when they want to invoke a press release as being an important document for them to hide behind that they advance these types of arguments. It is absolute nonsense.

Members of the Liberal Party understand that the real reason is that the malapportionment originally established by the Labor Party favours certain sections of the Labor Party, that there is an advantage in having a malapportionment of the type that exists in Queensland's electoral system for the ALP and for the AWU factions. Members of the Liberal Party understand that and think it is legitimate for certain factional members of the ALP to try to get their way. We understand that the AWU wants to make sure that it tips the balance against those Socialist Left people who try to attack the internal political structure of the ALP. Members of the Liberal Party understand that and are happy to let ALP members play their little games, but in this debate we are talking about a matter of principle and how the electoral system in this State will run for the next 10, 15 or 100 years, depending on how long this State remains the way it is. That is what this debate is all about and that is what the debate that will take place in a couple of weeks' time will be all about when honourable members return to this Chamber to debate the Bill itself.

I will deal with some of the EARC proposals. It is important that we understand those details to realise why this is a matter of principle. The central proposal is that the number of electors in each electorate in this State will be the same except for electorates of over 100 000 square kilometres, in which case an arbitrary 2 per cent rule applies. In those large electorates, 2 per cent of the constituents will be phantom voters.

Mr Connor: We know how good they are at that.

Dr WATSON: We know how good the ALP is at using phantom voters. That is at the heart of another matter before this House relating to the Commonwealth electoral roll. The critical point is that 2 per cent of the voters in the electorate will be phantom voters. What is wrong with that? A number of issues are involved. The first issue is that the 2 per cent is arbitrary. Why is it not 1 per cent or 3 per cent? It seemed like a good idea to pick 2 per cent. On some other occasion, it may seem like a good idea to change that number. The choice of 2 per cent was arbitrary, but the principle is as to whether or not there will be electoral weightage.

The argument put forward in support of some malapportionment is that remoteness should be taken into consideration. We in the Liberal Party understand and support the position of members of the National Party who have to represent very large electorates. We believe that those people should be compensated in some way. There is no doubt that remoteness causes problems. However, why pick remoteness—distance—as the criterion on which to make adjustments? All our electorates differ significantly. As honourable members would know, we could pick all kinds of arbitrary differences. For example, we could pick the number of non-English-speaking constituents in a particular electorate. Honourable members know that non-English-speaking constituents create difficulties with communication. It takes much more time to communicate with people whose primary language is not our own. However, will that be compensated for in these suggestions by EARC? No. EARC decided to compensate people for living in remote areas. That is an arbitrary decision which I do not believe can be justified on any logical basis.

The recommendation by EARC, which will be supported by the Labor Party in this House, creates a potentially long-term problem. From time to time in this place, we hear that the population in south-east Queensland, along with that in the Cairns area and the Whitsundays, will explode in the next decade. That demonstrates why this recommendation is so poor. If there is an increase in population in those areas, it will exacerbate the problem of weightage in terms of the number of people in electorates. The point is that people in the south-east corner and other areas of the State with large population growth will be more disadvantaged by this principle as time goes on. It is wrong to support a system which not only creates a malapportionment initially but also creates and supports a principle which, as is suggested by all the demographic studies that are available to the Government and to us from reputable people, ensures that the malapportionment will be exacerbated over time. That is a fundamental problem that I do not believe this Parliament ought to be creating.

As my time is running out, I conclude by saying that the Liberal Party is consistent. It went to the election on the basis of a single zone with the same number of voters in each electorate, plus or minus 10 per cent. We intend to see that principle implemented to the best of our ability.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (3.44 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I speak to the motion before the House. Much has been said today, and in previous years, about the electoral system in Queensland. However, we must attempt to get down to tintacks and ascertain the motives of the people who pursue these issues.

Mr Dollin: Tell us what the Liberals are up to.

Mr HOBBS: I do not know what the Liberals are up to at the moment, but they are on the wrong track. We must understand that, for various reasons, politicians have been pursuing the one vote, one value electoral system. I can appreciate that politicians follow that line for political purposes. However, other groups such as the civil libertarians and some church groups are pursuing this matter actively. I do not wish to enter an argument on that matter, but during the Christmas period a person named Brian O'Halloran of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission made a scathing attack on the proposed weightage system that was recommended for the electoral system in Queensland. I am a Catholic myself. I do not believe that the Catholic church would support a person trying to peddle Left Wing ideals under the guise of speaking for the church——

Mr Dollin: You're accusing the Catholic church.

Mr HOBBS: No, I am not accusing the Catholic church. I am saying that these carpetbaggers try to——

Mr Foley: That's disgraceful.

Mr HOBBS: It is not disgraceful; it is the truth.

Mr Hayward: You're doing the same thing yourself.

Mr HOBBS: That is not correct. Honourable members might recall that Brian O'Halloran was also involved in the SEQEB dispute. He was the guy who wanted mobs to go out into the streets. He is using the guise of speaking for the Catholic church to try to peddle his Left Wing ideals. What a disgrace! There is more than that. There are also the academics who come out under the guise of being independent political analysts. What about the Coaldrakes, the Wiltshires, the Ross Fitzgeralds and Chris Griffiths from Citizens for Democracy? All they are doing is peddling the ALP line. It is as simple as that. They have been doing it for a long time. Members of the Government know that as well as I do. Unfortunately, they have had the ear of the media to portray their ideals to the public.

Mr Foley: If they're peddling the ALP line, why are they criticising us now?

Mr HOBBS: Mr Foley is supposed to be the great civil libertarian. When he entered Parliament, people said, "At least Matt Foley will be fair." Matt Foley is a Labor Party man. That is the line that he pushes. Being fair has nothing to do with it.

One vote, one value is a great catchcry. It sounds nice. It rolls off the tongue. The ignorant and the less well-informed members of the public may support that view because it sounds nice. However, their support is based on the belief that one vote, one value is fair. The political motives of those whom I have already mentioned have ensured that this lie is spread to the electorate at large. That statement is not mythical. Members of the ALP in my area are slowly waking up to just exactly what one vote, one value is likely to do to them. The Opposition appreciates that weightage goes a small way towards fixing the problem, however it does not go anywhere near far enough to ensure reasonable representation for people in isolated areas. Members of the ALP in my area have come to the realisation that one vote, one value has serious implications for the west. I said

to them, "What do you reckon about one vote, one value now? What do you reckon about the Labor Party? How is it going?" They said that they did not believe members of the National Party who told them prior to the election that the Labor Party would expand the electorates. They said they thought that one vote, one value was first past the post. That was their belief. They did not believe that a Labor Government would give them one member for an area probably four times the size of Victoria, but now they believe it. It is a bit like what has happened to the railways in my area. They are closing down. The courthouses are closing down. People are finally realising what is happening.

Mr Foley interjected.

Mr Hayward interjected.

Mr HOBBS: Members of the Government cannot see it because they never go out into the remote areas, so they do not know what is going on. Members of the Government know that the people in the west will be severely affected by this.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! I ask the honourable member to continue with his speech.

Mr HOBBS: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. I congratulate the Labor Party on its propaganda war. It has done an extremely good job. It has convinced a lot of people that one vote, one value is fair, but it is not fair.

An honourable member: Of course it's fair.

Mr HOBBS: What rot! The whole truth about electoral fairness is far from the hyperbole that is put out by the ALP and its spokesmen, whom I have already mentioned. If they are really honest, all politicians and those who have some political knowledge acknowledge that the biggest gerrymander in Australia is one vote, one value, particularly in the Federal sphere. Members of the Government can shake their heads——

Mr Hayward: Seriously, the Northern Territory, isn't it—Labor wins 55 per cent of the votes and gets 100 per cent of the seats. That's a real worry for you, isn't it?

Mr HOBBS: One vote, one value is in the Federal sphere as well as Western Australia, Victoria and South Australia. In Western Australia the Labor Party is lucky to get between 47 per cent and 47.5 per cent of the vote, yet it keeps increasing its seats in the Parliament. That is happening under one vote, one value—that great system that members of the Government say is fair. It is absolutely disgraceful. Members of the Opposition talk to members of the Government outside this place. Government members know that, at the end of the day, their real aim is to try to get more seats in this Parliament. This is the way that the Government is doing it. It is as simple as that. It is politics. The Government will use any method at its disposal, be it committees or whatever else. The Government has the numbers on the committees, anyway. That is the way.

Mr Bredhauer: Do you support the four-zone system?

Mr HOBBS: I think that there is a need to upgrade the electoral system as we go along.

Mr Bredhauer: Do you want a four-zone system?

Mr HOBBS: I say that a weightage system is definitely needed.

Mr Bredhauer: If the system is so fair, how come the Cook electorate has 50 per cent more constituents than Warrego, Gregory or Roma? Answer that.

Mr HOBBS: I think that the honourable member will find that the areas are all very different. The electorate of the honourable member is only a little bit bigger than my electorate, so I do not know what he is whingeing about. I do not see what his problem is. Those other States have probably the most corrupt and gerrymandered

system that this country has seen. People talk about corruption; there is certainly corruption in the minds of those people who espouse the one vote, one value system.

Earlier, I mentioned the subject of weightage. The Opposition does accept the weightage principle. I accept the fact that EARC has come up with this proposal. However, the Opposition does not believe that it goes anywhere near satisfying the needs of people in remote areas.

My electorate of Warrego is the same size as the State of Victoria. If I could join up all the council and main roads throughout my electorate, they would be as long as the main highway around Australia. That would not include the minor roads in my electorate. Honourable members can therefore appreciate its size. The electorate of Gregory is twice the size of Victoria.

Mr Palaszczyk: Don't you have an allowance for your aeroplane?

Mr HOBBS: No. I have an allowance like every other member in this place. Whether I use a push bike or an aeroplane, I receive the same allowance.

Mr Palaszczyk: What about your allowance for your petrol?

Mr HOBBS: Yes, an honourable member has an allowance for petrol, whether it is used for charter or personally. Mine is no more than other members receive.

Mr Palaszczyk: You still use it.

Mr HOBBS: Yes, and I use all of it, too. In fact, I use more than what is provided.

The problems of distance and isolation are hard to explain to people who have not experienced them. Isolation is a phenomenon that one has to experience. The distances in my electorate are enormous. One can drive and drive and drive and not seem to be getting anywhere. Yet, even when I am driving in Brisbane, I tend to think that driving across to the other side of town is a fair distance. However, that is not the case. Members have to keep in touch with the reality of the problems associated with distance. Those members who have never experienced the effects of distance and isolation do have great difficulty appreciating those problems.

People living in those remote areas do not want better schools than those that are provided to city dwellers. They do not want better roads than those that are provided in the cities. They do not want better Government services or even electoral representation better than that which is provided for city electorates. What they are asking for is that the Government provide an acceptable service to those people who live in the remote areas of the State. It falls on the shoulders of members of Parliament to ensure that people in those isolated areas receive those services.

Mr Hayward: What sort of service did you say?

Mr HOBBS: All sorts of services are required, as I mentioned before, such as roads, schools and Government services in general.

Mr Hayward: Surely you don't have to read them! Surely you know what they are?

Mr HOBBS: If the member had been listening, he would have realised that I was talking about those services that are pushed for by the local members in their electorates, hopefully for the betterment of those people who live there.

When the number of electors in those remote electorates is reduced, the sheer weight of numbers will make it impossible to maintain services in those electorates because their members will not have the same influence on the Government or in the Parliament to push for them. When I was a shire chairman, various people would always be pursuing a particular aspect in their particular division, whether it be a road or whatever. On many occasions, they just could not understand the problems of the other divisions. It was a case of everyone fighting for the largest sum of money they could get. That is what will occur here. There will be so many politicians representing metropolitan

electorates that their influence on the Government will vastly outweigh that exerted by members representing isolated areas.

In relation to the problem of distance, I mentioned that my electorate of Warrego, which is about 220 000 square kilometres in area, is about the same size as the State of Victoria. . The size of the electorates represented by the 18 members of Cabinet total approximately 2 000 square kilometres.

Mr Hayward: What about people?

Mr HOBBS: I appreciate that people are involved and that is a very important factor.

Mr Hayward: That's very important at elections.

Mr HOBBS: It is certainly a very important factor. People in the south-east corner of Queensland have ready access to their members of Parliament. I notice the member for Archerfield nodding in agreement. People in the remote electorates of Queensland do not have the same ready access to their members of Parliament. It is as simple as that.

Mr Hayward: Is that some sort of admission on your part?

Mr HOBBS: No.

Mr Palaszczuk: What about telephones?

Mr HOBBS: The honourable member well knows that there are telephones in those districts but many times they do not work, which is a real problem. I appreciate that the telephone service is being improved all the time, but that is not the point. A member of Parliament needs to get around his electorate and talk to the people so that he can understand their problems. If he sits in the office using a telephone all the time, he will not get very far at all.

At the end of the day, I believe that for the people whom I represent in those remote and isolated areas the proposed Bill will be a sad reflection on the Government.

Mr Dollin: Do you support the Bill?

Mr HOBBS: Put it this way, it is a case of its being the best of a bad bunch of options that have been provided. The Opposition recognises the fact that the principle of weightage has been mentioned, and that is about all it is.

The people whom I represent would be disappointed if I did not say that we do look with concern to the future. I certainly hope that this Government will, in its wisdom, be prepared to give them a fair go when the time comes for the provision of Government services, even though they will have fewer representatives and fewer people to fight for them.

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (4 p.m.): It is with some pride that I rise to join in this debate. From the point of view of the Liberal Party, this debate is concerning itself with the issue of electoral corruption. That is ironic, because it follows fairly hotly on the heels of the other form of corruption that was discussed yesterday, and that is the possible corruption of the system.

The ALP won the 1989 election on the issue of corruption of the administrative system and corruption of the electoral system. It is ironic that, these days, we are reviewing the Labor Party's performance to date in relation to those two most important issues. Members opposite are apologists for their Ministers. In fact, over the past two days, Mr Foley has taken on the dual role of being the apologist for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, and today he has taken on the role of being the apologist for the Premier.

Mr Foley: We work as a team.

Mr SANTORO: I am sure that they do. And what a team! Very soon, the public of Queensland will come to realise exactly what a crooked and wobbly team they make.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. The member for Merthyr is deliberately misleading the House. He is saying that the people of Queensland do not in any way support this Government. I would refer him to the latest opinion poll, which shows that support for the Labor Party has gone up by 1 per cent and that the standing of the Premier has remained the same. The honourable member is misleading the House.

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

Mr SANTORO: I simply remind——

Mr FOLEY: I rise to a point of order. I ask the honourable member to withdraw his reference to "a crooked and wobbly team" in so far as it entailed a personal reflection upon me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Would the honourable member withdraw that statement?

Mr SANTORO: I do withdraw that comment if the honourable member finds it offensive. I simply remind honourable members opposite that, if they engage in the same tactics as they engaged in last night, I am sure that I will be able to incorporate the rest of my speech in a motion on the following day of sitting. So I would be very pleased to use whatever democratic opportunities I am allowed in this House to express my views. When I talk about electoral corruption and corruption of the administrative systems, I should also add corruption of the democratic processes which should exist within this House. Every time that I say something to which the Minister does not have an answer, he gets his lackeys to get up and interject on me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! This has nothing to do with the motion before the House. I ask the member to return to the motion being debated.

Mr SANTORO: I am trying to make the point that this behaviour is consistent with what has been manifested in the activities of the Labor Party and this Government in other areas, including the issue of electoral reform. They are just not living up to the promises that they made. They said they would deliver electoral reform based on Labor Party policy of one vote, one value as well as on a whole series of other statements, including those made by the honourable member for Yeronga.

Let us consider what the legislation will do. More importantly, I want to amplify the points that have been made by the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party as to the reasons why the legislation will be introduced. I suggest that we are looking at the big compromise. It is similar to what occurred yesterday when we heard that almost every recommendation of the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice and almost every recommendation of Sir Max Bingham's commission were implemented. Today, the Premier said, "I clearly acknowledge that we are not implementing ALP policy. I clearly acknowledge that we are not implementing the policy on electoral reform that we went to the people with." That is another little qualification. The Labor Party is rapidly becoming the party and the Government of qualification. As it did today, the Government comes into this place and bares its soul by saying, "We qualify our statements by saying that we are ignoring our election policy; we are ignoring the Labor Party's policy; we are ignoring what the people thought they were electing us on. However, that makes it right. Just because we admit it, it is right." I can tell members of the Government that there are many people out there who do not believe that the Government is right. Members opposite can go and talk to Griffith, Wiltshire and others, many of whom are resigning from the Labor Party.

Mr McGrady: How would you know?

Mr SANTORO: Because they stated it. I will take the interjection from the honourable member for Mount Isa. Unlike him, I read the papers and I listen to their statements on radio and TV. They are resigning from the Labor Party.

Mr McGRADY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SANTORO: Here we are, another one!

Mr McGRADY: The honourable member's party cannot even field candidates in the local authority election in Mount Isa.

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

Mr SANTORO: Mr Deputy Speaker, without wanting in any way to cast any aspersions on your chairmanship, I really think that I deserve a little bit more protection than you are affording me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I consider that a reflection on the Chair. I ask the honourable member to withdraw it.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am happy to satisfy you, particularly with respect to the Chair, so I withdraw it.

What the Government went to the election on and what it is now proposing are total contradictions. The honourable member for Moggill, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, hit it on the head when he said that this is the greatest compromise of ALP principle which is based on the striking of factional deals. Very shortly, I will speak about the role that the AWU has played in ensuring that this particular piece of negation of basic Labor Party principle has in fact occurred. That is what it is all about. It is the Labor Party's attempt to prop up a Premier whose greatest power base is the AWU. I will continue to remind members opposite of that. Let me refer to a discussion that I have had with a senior member of the AWU. He all but named the candidates who will be endorsed in the seats in the north Queensland area, which is the area that in all likelihood will benefit from the review of electoral boundaries. That is what this is all about. I go on record as saying that it will come to pass that AWU candidates will pick up that endorsement in the hope that they will bolster the Premier's power base. That is what it is all about. Those candidates are already there.

It is absolute effrontery for members of the Labor Party to try to drag the Liberal Party down to their level. They say that the Liberal Party has forfeited principle. In the past, I have said in this House—and I say it again—that, unlike members of the Government who have been tested only once and failed the test of standing up for their principles and policies, the Liberal Party was tested. When it was confronted with the opportunity of staying in power or standing on its principles, the Liberal Party chose principle. It said to the people of Queensland, "We will stand aside from Government and the administration of this State, and will opt for reform, including electoral and administrative reform." That is what the Liberal Party did. This Government cannot fairly claim that it has put itself through that test and come through it with principle and dignity intact. I do not believe that anybody, including Government supporters, believes that this Government is standing up for the principles that it has been espousing for 10 years.

New Farm in my electorate is good, strong Labor Party territory. Many Labor Party voters approach me at election information booths in New Farm and say that, because the Labor Party has abandoned them with respect to one of the most essential principles on which they have supported Labor Party candidates in the past, namely, the principle of electoral reform, they will not be voting Labor in the forthcoming city council election.

The Liberal Party has supported consistently a fair electoral system based on electorates of similar size, with 10 per cent variation either way. The Liberal Party was prepared to forsake the ultimate and cherished goal, namely, power. On 11 March 1987, Sir William Knox gave notice of a motion, which remained on the notice paper until

26 April 1988. The Liberal Party's performance on this issue has been consistent and honourable. That is more than can be said for the Labor Party's performance. The amendment moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party seeks to sustain and support the principle which the Liberal Party has supported consistently for many years. Together with my other Liberal colleagues, I am proud to support the amendment, which seeks to maintain the principles of the Liberal Party and those that the who have voted for the Labor Party have been demanding and will continue to demand. When the Liberal Party again has the opportunity to govern this State, it will uphold those principles. That is what this debate is all about. The list of speakers for this debate includes the Goss apologists: Foley, Clark and Robson. No other Government members are prepared to join in this debate.

Mr PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. During this debate, the member for Merthyr has persistently referred to honourable members by their surnames. Standing Orders state that all members in this House should be referred to as the honourable member for such and such a seat. Mr Acting Speaker, I ask you to rule accordingly.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Archerfield is correct. The member for Merthyr will address members by their correct titles.

Mr SANTORO: I am happy for Hansard to alter my reference to members by their surnames. I am happy to oblige.

Government members are not prepared to commit themselves, because they know that their words will be very closely considered by many ALP members and ALP voters. I commend the member for Yeronga, and the other members of the committee, who had the guts and the courage to speak in this debate. At least they are prepared to stand up and be counted. They will be counted very seriously.

What arguments have been put forward by the ALP as to why we should accept this bastardisation of principle and policy? The reasons given are: "Because it is the umpire's decision", "Because we made a promise to abide by the umpire's decision" and "Because a committee made the recommendation". Let me consider what other people have said about the decisions of the committee. Yesterday, Minister Gibbs stated that members are elected to this place to make decisions and to govern. Members—not the committees, including the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice and the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review—will make the decisions. However, when it is convenient to say that a parliamentary committee has recommended that something be done, all of a sudden that inconsistency creeps into the argument. In relation to the role of committees and their influence on the process of Government and in terms of the types of policies, pledges and promises that the Government implements—it is inconsistent. I will not detail, as the honourable member did, the full list of promises that the Government has broken. The Government seems very keen to deliver on its promise to abide by the umpire's decision, but it does not seem to be equally keen to deliver on promises of implementing independent gaming commissions, on promises relating to the logging of Fraser Island and toll-roads—the list goes on and on. I repeat: Labor Party supporters such as Fitzgerald and Chris Griffith are becoming more and more aware of the fraudulent attitude taken by the Government on this very important issue.

The Labor Party is hopelessly compromising not only itself but also the expectations of Queenslanders. While I am on this point, I refer to the gerrymander. The ALP basically appropriated the gerrymander in Queensland as its issue. With the help of media, other interest groups and spokesmen, the Labor Party rode into power on a sustained campaign of electoral fairness. The ALP in Queensland was never denied power because of the gerrymander. Not once was its popular vote on the two-party preferred basis within cooee of 50 per cent in all of the elections between 1957 and 1989. At the last State election, the ALP finally won a majority of the vote and it now enjoys a handsome majority in Parliament. For the benefit of those who, in the past, gave prominence to such calculations, it is worth noting that the ALP won more than

60 per cent of the seats in the Parliament with a fraction more than 50 per cent of the primary vote; the Liberals hold 10 per cent of the seats despite having polled 21 per cent of the vote. It is obvious who has been the real victim of the gerrymander. The Government still seeks to entrench that gerrymander and its effect on the Liberal Party. The honourable member for Yeronga may shake his head, but the Liberal Party will not blame the system, as Labor did in similar circumstances. Liberal Party members will continue to remind people and to argue as we are doing today.

As to the people who are abandoning the Labor Party—I ask: where are those apologists in relation to the Federal system? The impact of the Federal gerrymander is worse than the impact that the gerrymander has had in this State. The Liberal Party will continue to remind those people who support and place their trust in the Labor Party that the ALP Government is doing nothing other than prostituting its principles. Government members can squeal all they like, but Liberal Party members will continue to remind the people of Queensland that the Government is breaking promise after promise—whether it is the reform of administrative systems which seek to keep out corruption or whether it is the reform of the electoral system which also should seek to keep out what Government members used to define with gay abandon as electoral corruption. The Government is as guilty of lack of reform as any other party that it has accused of doing that.

When the Bill is debated, I will speak in more specific terms about its provisions. However, my general remarks today will be repeated time and time again not in this House but outside it. In private, Government members have all admitted to me that it is hurting. The Liberal Party will continue to remind supporters of the Government that it is only the Liberal Party, through amendments such as those before the House courtesy of the Leader of the Liberal Party, that will deliver electoral reforms.

Mr QUINN (South Coast) (4.21 p.m.): I will not speak for very long today. I will confine my remarks about the Bill to the debate when it occurs. Instead, I will address the bulk of my remarks to the so-called historic agreement on which the Labor Party bases its approval of the motion before the House. When members are elected to this Parliament, they enter through the doors to deliberate in the best interests of the whole State—not just of those voters who supported their respective political parties, not for the political party which endorsed them, but for all of Queensland. All honourable members have enormous pressures placed upon them in relation to matters that come before the House. It is the genuine parliamentarian who can put aside those obvious prejudices and deliberate with only one thought in mind, that is, to act in the best interest of all Queenslanders. That is the traditional role of a parliamentarian under the Westminster system of Government, and that is the role that all Labor Party members are abandoning today. By retaining it in the Labor Party platform, they recognise that the principle of equal suffrage is desirable for all people living in this State, but they claim special circumstances to justify their deviation from the traditional parliamentary role.

To introduce this motion supporting legislation which the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review has found to be contrary to the good of the entire State is the greatest act of political hypocrisy since Labor Premier Ned Hanlon introduced the original zonal system in 1949. The Labor Party at that time went against its own policy of one adult, one value, as it was called, and introduced the basis of the present zonal system. Today, the Labor Party revisits 1949. The crux of this debate centres on the so-called agreement entered into by the leaders of the major parties with Mr Fitzgerald on 21 July 1989 and whether or not the political parties considered themselves bound by it. The understanding of that so-called agreement can best be illustrated by an interview given by the Premier the day after that meeting. A report in the *Sunday Mail* of 23 July 1989 basically stated that, although he had agreed that the Labor Party policy of one vote, one value stood, if there was a conflict between Labor Party policy of that time and the outcome of the recommendations from the Fitzgerald report, then the Labor Party would cross that bridge when it came to it.

Mr Foley: Have a look at *Hansard* for 26 September and 27 September.

Mr QUINN: Those were his clear words, that the Labor Party would cross that bridge when it came to it. I tell the honourable member for Yeronga that this is the bridge and he should not have the hypocrisy to sit over there and say that it was a tripartisan agreement. Clearly Mr Goss never regarded it as such at that time. The honourable member should not have the hypocrisy to say that this was an unequivocal promise. One day after the agreement, Mr Goss did not consider it in any of those terms at all. The honourable member cannot say that it was an express promise, because Mr Goss never regarded it as such. Mr Goss—who was then Leader of the Opposition—regarded it as a worthless scrap of paper to everyone, except the members of the National Party. Because he said that it was their gerrymander which was at fault and under the Fitzgerald spotlight, he did not consider himself or the Labor Party to be bound by that agreement. That became obvious only one day after the agreement was issued.

Later, when seeking to clothe himself and the Labor Party in the cloak of Fitzgerald approval, Mr Goss committed the Labor Party to the same promise as was made by the National Party. This happened later—not at that time. Thus the Labor Party went into the last election campaign with two distinct policies on electoral reform. The first was its long-held policy on one vote, one value and the second was its commitment to EARC's recommendations. This was a duplicity of policies. Secretly the Labor Party hoped that the EARC proposals and Labor Party policy would turn out to be one and the same. That is how desperate the Labor Party was before the last election. They decided to promise anything to the people and sort the mess out afterwards. That is what the Premier meant on 26 July when he said, "We'll cross that bridge when we get to it." This is the bridge.

Mr Dollin: We are crossing; we are keeping our word.

Mr QUINN: That is right. This is the bridge, and it is obvious that the Premier is not Horatio defending the bridge of one vote, one value. In fact, the Premier has turned out to be Brutus, and the people of Queensland who voted for the Labor Party in the knowledge that it supported equal suffrage have felt the Labor Party knife buried between their shoulder blades. That is the reality, whether members of the Labor Party realise it or not. The Government made two promises on electoral reform and it is now choosing between them. By selecting EARC's proposals, the Labor Party has clearly demonstrated that it wants electoral weightage, as it did in 1949, despite years of agitating for what was then called one adult, one vote. This also clearly demonstrates that for all these years from 1949 onwards the Labor Party policy of one vote, one value has been a fraud and its actions are based on the prospect of electoral success rather than acting in the best interests of Queenslanders.

It is a sad day when voters are being deceived on such a massive scale over such an important issue. Hardly any Labor voters had heard of this so-called historic agreement, yet they all know about Labor's policy of one vote, one value. They placed their trust in the Labor Party, and that trust has now been smashed because Labor wants a zonal system to retain its present seats in the House. That is the truth. The Labor Party does not have the political courage to admit it and seeks to cover itself by promoting a self-promoted historical agreement which has no bearing on the motion before this House.

I support the amendments recommended by the parliamentary committee in regard to EARC's proposed Bill on the Queensland electoral system but, as I stated in my dissenting report, I do not support the Bill itself. Therefore, I will be opposing this motion.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (4.28 p.m.): I rise to speak on what is without a doubt the most important subject that I will ever debate in Parliament, because it deals with the actual fabric of democracy in Queensland. For 32 years, Queensland has had an electoral system that was not only the shame of this State, but also the laughing stock of Australia.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr CONNOR: I will get to that. I might add that it was put there by a Labor Government, but it was refined and reinforced by our side of politics. I admit and accept that fact, but there is one important fact that members on the Government side should accept, and that is that the system they now intend to put in place could keep whoever loses at the next election in opposition for another 32 years. Government members should think about that carefully.

Mr Pearce: Back it up.

Mr CONNOR: I will. If the honourable member waits, I will get to that. That is what the last gerrymander did to the Labor Party.

Mr Pearce: What did it do?

Mr CONNOR: It kept the Labor Party in opposition in this State for 32 years. I do not know how many of my colleagues on the Government side of the House read the EARC report on the history of the electoral system in Queensland, but I did. That report contains great detail as to how a Labor Government put the gerrymander in place, how that Government justified it and how the gerrymander kept an energetic conservative Opposition in opposition for years. It was only a major ruction within the Labor Government that allowed the Opposition to win office. This ruction was a bit like the corruption and Fitzgerald issues that rocked the foundations of Queensland just two years ago, and it took those issues to unseat the conservative Government in Queensland. I read back and found out that commitments were made by the Liberal Party to put an end to that gerrymander in the run-up to the election 32 years earlier. Again, I want to be honest. I feel great shame because all those years ago members of the Liberal Party sold out. I can use no words other than "sold out" because they continued the electoral gerrymander that the previous Labor Government introduced.

Mr Gibbs: He would have been a stronger man.

Mr CONNOR: I want to put that on the record because members of the Government, particularly the backbench members, should understand that eventually there will be a change in Government and a different group of representatives will occupy the seats in this Chamber. They will look back on the present Government and consider how the ball was kicked when it was dropped at its feet. I can assure honourable members opposite that their term in office will be judged on how they deal with this piece of legislation and on nothing else. In years to come, no-one will be particularly interested in which Minister messed up which portfolio or what type of industrial relations legislation was implemented, but they will be interested in how the present Government dealt with the basic democratic structure of Queensland.

I want to touch briefly on the proposed system. There is no doubt in my mind that it is a gerrymander. The only difference is that it is a two-zone gerrymander, not a four-zone gerrymander.

Mr Dunworth: Seven.

Mr CONNOR: Or a seven-zone gerrymander. Whatever way it is looked at, it is still a gerrymander because it is not one vote, one value. Even given the structure that the Government intends to put in place, a vote in some regions of the State will be worth double the vote of people in other parts of the State. Queensland will finish up with some electorates containing approximately 10 000 voters whereas the quota will be approximately 20 000.

Mr Szczerbanik: Where is this going to happen?

Mr CONNOR: The honourable member knows very well—Warrego, Gregory and other electorates in the western districts. It is not possible to be a little bit pregnant. It is either a gerrymander or it is not. The system that the Government intends to put in place

will be its shame. Members of this Government will take that shame with them to their deathbeds and they will ask themselves, "Why did I do it? Could I have acted in some way differently?"

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr CONNOR: I know that the honourable member will find what I am about to say very difficult to come to grips with, but let us suppose that the Labor Party loses the next election. Hypothetically, what if Queensland voters elect a Government of a different political persuasion next time and it takes over the Goss gerrymander, thereby keeping the Labor Party in Opposition for another 32 years? Government members should just think about that for a moment. What do they think the next generation of Labor politicians will think of them in 20 or 30 years' time? They will regard present members of the Government as elder statesmen in 20 or 30 years' time, and they will be relying on honourable members opposite for advice. The future generation of parliamentarians will go to them and say, "How did it happen? How did you allow the gerrymander to continue in Queensland? Why didn't you stand up for one vote, one value?"

Mr Livingstone: Why didn't you for 30-odd years?

Mr CONNOR: That is exactly what I said before. It is the shame of the Liberal Party that it sold out. I agree with the honourable member, but this proposal is the shame of Labor members opposite. They are the individuals who will have to live with it. Thirty-two years ago, I was not a member of the Liberal Party. Honourable members opposite are in the Labor Party now, and they are the individuals who will have to live with this decision.

Government members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr CONNOR: They have failed to implement one vote, one value and they will have to live with it. When the Labor Party establishes, by virtue of the proposed legislation, that it is part of Labor's philosophy to believe that a gerrymander of whatever type is justified and that there should be some electoral weightage in the system, it will be a gerrymander by another name. Who is to say that it will be only a 2 per cent weightage? Why can it not be a 3 per cent weightage or maybe even a 4 per cent weightage? Why does it have to extend only to electorates over 100 000 square kilometres? Why could it not be extended to areas over 80 000 square kilometres or 70 000 square kilometres? In three years' time, why can it not be extended to 50 000 square kilometres?

Mr Schwarten: Are you a coalitionist?

Mr CONNOR: The Liberal Party's position is that it will get rid of the gerrymander. The Liberal Party's position is quite simple: if it has the numbers, it will get rid of the gerrymander. Labor members have had the opportunity to get rid of it and they have failed. Better still, in three years, or five years or six years, a Government could bring in a gerrymander that applies right across-the-board. Why should a limit be set at 100 000 square kilometres? Why not just have the gerrymander applying everywhere? It will degenerate into a free-for-all—which is something that Labor Governments know all about—and by fiddling round the edges, the Government will be able to manipulate the system to effectively have electorates of whatever size it wants and in whichever area it wants. Labor Party members say, "But we have an independent commission that will oversee the drawing of these boundaries. We've got EARC this time." Labor members should think back to 1986, when Queensland supposedly had an independent commission drawing the boundaries in Queensland.

Mr Livingstone: They weren't independent. They were supported by the Liberal Party.

Mr CONNOR: I agree, but this is what the people of Queensland will rely on next time to redraw the boundaries.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr CONNOR: Mr Lane gave advice on how the boundaries should be drawn. Does the honourable member not remember? He gave advice.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr CONNOR: And so was I. In 1986, Queensland supposedly had an independent commission drawing the boundaries and administering the system. Does any Government member believe that that was a fair redistribution? No-one believes that. That is what Government members will be relying on in three years' time.

Government members should look at the position from a distance, look at it as the next generation of Labor Party politicians who will be sitting in their seats—except they will be on this side of the Chamber in Opposition—in 30 years' time. They will be sitting there and saying to themselves, "How can we possibly beat this Government?" It will be a conservative Government. Because of the gerrymander—the two-zonal system that is being introduced now and which may be modified in 30 years' time—Government members' colleagues at that time will not be able to win an election. In the year 2020, they will be saying, "We haven't been able to win for years because the gerrymander has been stacked so strongly against us." They will wonder who put them on the Opposition benches for a generation. They will blame the Government members at present in this Chamber. They will ask, "Why did the members of the Labor Party in 1991 sell us out?" These future politicians, Labor Party members, will come knocking at the door of honourable members opposite. What will they tell those future politicians? Will they tell them that an independent commission told them that they had to vote that way? No, they cannot say that, because that is not true. Will Government members say, "That was our mandate. That is what we got elected to Parliament for, to vote for a two-zonal gerrymander"? Do Government members honestly believe that in 30 years' time anyone will believe that? They will not. They will know that the mandate was one vote, one value. For 32 years, members of the Labor Party have been complaining about the gerrymander. Now that they have the ball at their feet to remedy that position, they reintroduce the gerrymander. Those future politicians will not be concerned with a few months in 1990 and 1991; they will be concerned about the 32 years that the Labor Party was in Opposition because of the gerrymander and the fact that, when it had an opportunity to change it, it reintroduced the gerrymander. They will not be concerned with any excuses put forward today.

Do Government members honestly believe that the people of Queensland who voted them into office after 32 years in Opposition because of a gerrymander, only to see them replace it with another gerrymander, could possibly put them in office again? That is why Government members will be in Opposition after the next election. The people of Queensland do not believe what Government members are doing. In 20 or 30 years' time, what reason will Government members give to the next generation of Labor members of Parliament? They will say, "I was forced to vote along party lines. That was the way the party wanted me to vote." That is the only excuse they will be able to offer. The future Labor politicians will not believe that. They will claim that all that was necessary was for three or four Labor backbenchers—like the ones on my left—to get together in caucus and say that they would cross the floor and vote for their party policy of one vote, one value. If they did that, the whole thing would come tumbling down—and Government members know it. The politicians in 30 years' time will know it as well. They will ask, "Why didn't you cross the floor?" Honourable members opposite would only have to do it in the caucus. If three or four Labor members threatened to cross the floor, the Goss Government would drop this electoral proposal quickly. It should live up to the mandate upon which it was elected. Those future politicians will say to Government members, "The ball was at your feet and you didn't kick it." Did Government members attempt to talk to some of their colleagues quietly behind the

scenes and say, "Our own party platform is one vote, one value"? Did they ask, "How can we be doing this? Why is it that an independent commission is running our party and not us?"

Mr Sullivan interjected.

Mr CONNOR: If the honourable member wants to interject, he should do so from his own seat. For a moment, Government members should picture one of their colleagues with his hair going grey, sitting on the verandah at home with his wife. They should picture a young politician, possibly a future Premier, whom the member has known for years and for whom he has a great deal of regard, coming up to him. The young person would have a great deal of respect for the honourable member until he realises that, because of this proposition, he will be in permanent Opposition. He would adopt that attitude when he read the 1991 *Hansard* and saw what the member said and how he voted. Honourable members should picture that situation. That is what is hurting the honourable member for Glass House so much. I invite honourable members to picture the situation. What members of the Government say behind the scenes will not matter in the year 2020. They will be judged by what is recorded in *Hansard*. They will be judged by what is on the public record. Members of the Government should make absolutely sure that their real thoughts and motivation today—in 1991—are on the record.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr CONNOR: The honourable member is not in his correct seat, either. Members of the Government will be judged by what *Hansard* records. I can assure them that if they go ahead with the legislation, as proposed, they will be judged very badly by their own peers.

Mr DUNWORTH (Sherwood) (4.47 p.m.): I am delighted to join the debate on this motion for electoral reform—or lack of reform. Honourable members are debating the perpetuation of the gerrymander, or malapportionment, in Queensland—the replacement of the four-zonal system with an updated, high-tech 1990s edition. Now Queensland will have a seven-zonal system. I must admit that I have rarely seen such smug hypocrisy as that displayed by the Premier and his obsequious lackeys. The Premier came into this Chamber, wringing his hands, and said, "I cannot break my word to the people of Queensland", when he knows that that promise did not apply to this redistribution motion but to the promise of the former Premier, Mr Ahern, to introduce electoral reform and to abide by the umpire's decision if unanimous approval was given by the three leaders to extend Parliament for a period of six months.

I think that honourable members should examine the veracity of the Premier's word. What is it worth? He said that he would stop logging on Fraser Island; he said that he would drop the toll on the Sunshine Motorway; he said that he would not introduce any new taxes; and he said that he would not increase taxes above the rate of the CPI. I suggest that honourable members ask the conservationists, the people of the Sunshine Coast, the electricity authority and the small-businesspeople whose livelihoods, futures and families are being destroyed by massive increases in land tax. Everyone knows the answer.

Mr PREST: I rise to a point of order. Should not the honourable member be heard in silence, seeing that this is his maiden speech?

Mr DUNWORTH: I thank the honourable member. As I said, everyone knows the answer. I suggest that the Premier asks "Father" Soorley to hear his confession and to absolve him for his deceit—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. As a practising Catholic, I find that remark about the Catholic church to be totally offensive, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Sherwood to continue.

Mr DUNWORTH: Thank you for your protection, Mr Acting Speaker. I ask the Premier: what is more important—electoral justice for the people of Queensland or his own immensely inflated ego? I remind the Premier of words that he might recognise—

"There is a yawning gap between what this Government says and what it does; between the flowing promises and the actuality; between the expensive public relations brochures and the truth."

As T. S. Eliot said of *The Hollow Man*, I say of the Premier and the Labor Party front bench—

"Between the idea

And the reality

Between the motion

And the act

Falls the shadow."

The shadow is over democracy.

I invite the Premier to look at his front bench and take particular note of the vacant seats of the failed leaders—those who have adjusted quickly to pragmatism and power before principle—

Mr PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. Mr Acting Speaker, I ask you to rule on the content of the speech by the member for Sherwood. He is not referring in any way to the motion.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: I will allow the honourable member to continue because he is harking back to what members have said about democracy and voting systems in Queensland. I call the member for Sherwood.

Mr DUNWORTH: I invite honourable members to consider what that champion of the battler, the Honourable T. J. Burns, Deputy Premier, had to say—

"The Australian tradition is one of equality. While we continue to strive for equal educational opportunities, equality before the law and equality in the distribution of wealth, we must still hold to the first tenet of equality—the equality of votes. Whether a man is rich or poor, whether he is a clerk, a farmer, a doctor or a labourer, he has an inalienable right to an equal voice in Government, whether he lives in Wynnum, Spring Hill, Sandgate or Inala. He has the same right of equal representation in this Parliament. The notion that one man should have more than one vote or that his vote should be worth more than that of his neighbour is centuries out of date. It has no place in modern Queensland or modern Australia."

I agree with the Minister, but where is he today?

Mr Coomber: Who said that?

Mr DUNWORTH: Mr Tom Burns said it. I will table those quotes. What did the Honourable Neville Warburton, the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations—obviously he is not in the Chamber either—have to say on this issue? He said—

"One might reasonably ask why members of Parliament who now have free telephones, electoral offices, electorate secretaries, electoral allowances and broad travel entitlements should not still be elected on a one vote, one value principle. The case for equal electorates is clearly stronger in 1985 than it was even in 1910."

I would say that it is much stronger in 1991 than it was in 1985 or in 1910. The Liberal Party agrees with the Minister, but where is he today? I suspect that the Minister wants to be as good as his word. It did not matter much what the Honourable Ed Casey, the Minister for Primary Industries, the "Caspalp Kid", had to say because nobody ever listened anyway. It did not matter what Mr Wright said either because he is even more irrelevant now, as a Federal member, than he was when he was Leader of the Opposition in Queensland.

An honourable member: Keep at it, mate.

Mr DUNWORTH: I am enjoying it. All of these former failed Labor leaders, who were vanquished at the polls, blamed the gerrymander. They said that the gerrymander beat them, not their own total ineffectualness. What did members of the present front bench say? Would honourable members believe it—I could not. The Honourable Bob Gibbs, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, even commented on the need for electoral reform.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nerang.

Mr DUNWORTH: The Minister is not here, either. He is probably enjoying Mr Ainsworth's hospitality or pleading with the committee of the Indooroopilly Golf Club, one of Brisbane's most expensive and most prestigious clubs, to accept his application for membership. I ask: what is wrong with the golf clubs at Gailes or Oxley? Not good enough now! The Minister is recorded in *Hansard* as saying—

"Nor does the Labor Party hold itself responsible for the actions of people who might have gerrymandered this State's electoral system in the past."

The Labor Party will certainly be held responsible for the continuation of the rotting of the electoral system. The Honourable David Hamill, the Honourable Paul Braddy, the Honourable Keith De Lacy, and even the Honourable Geoff Smith, the Minister for Industry and Commerce, are recorded as having had something of significance to say on this issue. The Minister said—

"However, in a modern society in the last years of the twentieth century, no-one can justify giving one human being a greater right than another"—
this is good stuff—

"to such a basic and fundamental right as casting a vote."

I agree totally with the words of the Minister. These Ministers will be indicted by history. Their word was not their bond. They could not be counted. They deserted their constituency—all for the sake of their leader's massively inflated ego. The Honourable Pat Comben, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Labor Party's answer to "Blazing Saddles", tried to ride a horse from Cairns to Brisbane seeking support for one vote, one value but, alas, as he has in his portfolio, he lost his way. As with conservation, he has the right intentions but he cannot perform.

I now turn to some of the apologists on the back bench. They all do what they are told. That great fighter for democracy and human rights, the "Uriah Heep" from Yeronga, has sold his soul to the Premier in pursuit of the Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs portfolio. The honourable member's ponderous words ring extremely hollow. What is the price of principle? Obviously very little! I must say that I am very disappointed with his transparency. I never believed that he would become the Premier's sycophant. Apparently though, such is Labor Party politics! I am pleased to see the member for Brisbane Central in the House. Why is he not listed to speak in this debate? What would his great mentor, the late Dr Denis Murphy, have to say about his protege. Dr Murphy revamped the Labor Party; his number one goal was one vote, one value. If it was not for Dr Murphy, the honourable member would still be working for the railways. I am very surprised that he is not speaking in this debate. Is the price of a portfolio, acquiescence, servitude and silence? I am saddened to say that it is so in the Labor Party.

I make the same offer to members of the Labor Party as in the past they have made to members of the Liberal Party and extend to them the invitation to join the members of the Liberal Party in supporting our leader's amendments to the resolution.

Government members: Oh!

Mr DUNWORTH: It is openly extended. Honourable members are very welcome to join the members of the Liberal Party. I find it laughable to see the Premier and the members of his party sitting and voting together with the great Satan of the Labor Party, the members of the National Party, to oppose democracy in Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DUNWORTH: I cannot go for much longer. I know honourable members are enjoying it immensely. I will finish with a quote from Mr Joe Begley, the Premier's press secretary—

"Gerrymander is just a polite word for the blatant rigging of Queensland's electoral boundaries. Its nothing short of a rort."

That is a quote from the Premier's own press secretary. Queensland now has a seven-zonal gerrymander.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order!

Mr DUNWORTH: I have endeavoured to put the motion in perspective. It is a betrayal of democracy and a betrayal of Labor Party principles. It is a lie to the electorate. It is a sham and a deceit. I support the amendments to the motion moved by the Leader of the Liberal Party.

Ms ROBSON (Springwood) (4.59 p.m.): After those totally irrelevant comments from the member for Sherwood, I am speechless. I will try to make some relevant comments in connection with this motion.

Comments from members of the Opposition and the Liberal Party indicate clearly to me that they hold the keeping of electioneering promises to the people of Queensland in absolute contempt. This ALP Government has honoured its promise to accept the decision of the umpire, that is, the decision of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, on this particular aspect of State electoral reform. I accentuate "on this particular aspect" because, as the committee has made quite clear in its report, this does not necessarily apply to all matters of administrative machinery, but it specifically applies to the promises made on this matter of electoral reform.

A specific promise was made by our leader, and now the Premier, on this issue. The Labor Party promised the people of Queensland that it would stick by the decision of the umpire, and it has done that. The Government has kept its promise.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms ROBSON: Talk about political integrity! It is people such as Opposition members who reinforce the notion that the general public has that politicians cannot be trusted. With some of the rubbish that I have listened to here this afternoon, small wonder!

By claiming that the previous Liberal Leader, Mr Innes, issued a media statement subsequent to the signing of that agreement which exempted him from honouring it, the Leader of the Liberal Party has very conveniently opted out of the historic tripartite agreement that his former leader, along with the other two leaders, made in 1989. He may have issued a media statement, but I have yet to see any evidence of it printed anywhere. Liberal Party members have sourced it only as being a media statement.

A Liberal Party member interjected.

Ms ROBSON: Surely, if it had been published, the media outlet would have been sourced. Let us be reasonable and rational.

Honest electoral reform was the essence of the Fitzgerald inquiry report—honest reform administered and overseen by an independent umpire. It is all in the report. All members opposite allude to having read the report—or at least parts of it. Why else did Fitzgerald recommend electoral reform if not to start to clean up the systems operating in Queensland at the time?

The EARC committee was ably and patiently chaired by the honourable member for Yeronga. I pay tribute to the way in which he has put up with some of the machinations that have gone on. I might add that I am very proud to be a member of that committee. The committee's processes are very sound. I am constantly extremely

disappointed that the deliberations and decisions of the committee are misrepresented in this House and in the media by members opposite.

Mr Booth: One of your blokes leaked everything.

Ms ROBSON: No, they have not leaked anything at all. There have been no leaks from the committee. If the honourable member can show me any evidence of leaks, I will take that statement back. But he has to give me the evidence first.

Mr Booth: I know what they used to do.

Ms ROBSON: I am talking about this particular committee.

Today, the member for Burdekin misled the House by representing that any suggestions that were put forward by non-Labor members of the committee were ignored. That is blatantly untrue. It is documented. He knows it is untrue. It is shameful that he is politicising the committee. Yet he criticises the committee for being political. He wants to make up his mind about where he stands on that.

The chairman of the committee, Mr Foley, the member for Yeronga, has gone to great pains to accommodate any reasonable suggestions that have been put forward, but that of course is conveniently ignored when we get into debate. Personally, it is my belief that, considering all the relevant evidence to be considered in our function to monitor and review the functions and activities of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, the processes of our committee have been honest and fulsome. The Opposition squeals because we in the Government kept our promises—that is obviously foreign to the way in which the Opposition operates—but it is what we think the people of Queensland deserve.

As I said before, and I will say it again, this Government believes in the committee structure. We on this side do not have a divine knowledge. We know that honest reform requires fulsome consideration. The Leader of the Opposition talked about gerrymanders in other States. What about the record of past National Party Governments? As an example, in 1980, the National Party won 27.9 per cent of the votes, which gave it 42.7 per cent of the seats. In 1986, it won 39.6 per cent of the votes, which gave it 55.1 per cent of the seats. Members opposite have kept the people of Queensland in the dark about honest electoral systems and denied in schools educational access to an understanding of political and Government procedures. They were members of a Government which banned in schools the use of the Federal constitutional instruction kit and the Red Cross kit, amongst others. These were useful educational tools from which our children would have benefited. It is a great comfort to know that the report of the commission and the recommendations of the committee recognise this outrageous type of practice. In recommendation 13.28, the committee recommends—

"The Commission recognises the need for an increased flow of public information on parliamentary and electoral matters both in schools and in the wider community. Accordingly it recommends that:

- (a) A Queensland Electoral Commission, if established, should have a function of the promotion of public knowledge of electoral and parliamentary matters. This could be achieved by means of education and information programs.
- (b) The Legislative Assembly should investigate the feasibility of establishing a Parliamentary Education Office in the precincts of the State parliament to facilitate more effective use of school and public visits to Parliament House.
- (c) The Queensland Education Department should assign priority to electoral/citizenship education for introduction in primary and secondary schools in this State."

And isn't it about time that that happened!

Further, the committee is delighted to endorse the commission's recommendation which talks about our heritage of civil liberties. In that regard, I refer to items 3.6.12 and 3.6.13 of the committee's report. Item 3.6.12 states—

"The Committee notes an appalling lack of general awareness of our heritage of civil liberties. Every school child should know of the foundations of our State and Federal Constitutions and of the great British statutes such as the Bill of Rights of William and Mary and the Magna Carta of King John which have shaped the rights and freedoms we enjoy today."

Item 3.6.13 states—

"The Committee is pleased to note EARC's recommendation in this area and endorses it absolutely. The Committee considers that a greater awareness amongst the public of electoral and parliamentary matters will be of considerable assistance in maintaining the honesty and integrity of the electoral system, and the effectiveness of electoral scrutiny."

The member for Warrego should be ashamed of himself for mounting such a cowardly attack on Brian O'Halloran of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission of the archdiocese of Brisbane, a man whose deep commitment to social justice deserves the respect of all Queenslanders. It was a disgraceful attack which should never have happened in this House.

We have promised fair and honest electoral reform as advised by Mr Fitzgerald, QC, in his report. We have delivered on that promise. Members opposite have broken their promise to the people of Queensland to abide by the decision of the independent umpire. Now they are trying to defend their dishonest actions by bellowing mournfully in the debate on this motion. The people of Queensland will remember this. It serves only to reinforce the widely held view that one cannot trust politicians. The consciences of Government members are clear. During this debate, I have heard no convincing arguments which indicate that the same can be said of members opposite.

The member for South Coast, Mr Quinn, spoke about crossing bridges. This Government has crossed the bridge, and dynamited that bridge behind it. There will be no more gerrymanders in Queensland. This State will have a fair electoral system adjudicated by an independent umpire. I support the motion.

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (5.09 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions. I thank especially all members of the parliamentary committee from all parties, including Mr Foley, Dr Clark, Ms Robson, Mr Welford—who is unable to be here today—Mr Stoneman, Mr FitzGerald and Mr Quinn. That committee has a difficult job. I believe that the Parliament owes a debt of gratitude to those members. Obviously, they have had considerable work to do, both in terms of quantity and complexity. That work is an important part of the process. Unfortunately, there were some defects in the early stages of the committee system. The way in which some aspects of the committee's work have been politicised is unfortunate. However, we must persevere. I believe that, in the long term, the establishment of a committee system under this Labor Government is something that this Government will be proud of as a Government. I believe also that the committees will serve the Parliament well into the future, even in that far-distant time when the Labor Party is no longer sitting on this side of the House.

I single out one particular aspect of the work of the committee members, that is, the way in which they were able to join in a recommendation in respect of judicial review. As I said in my introductory remarks, that is one sector in which they departed from the recommendation of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. However, I believe that people of good faith can legitimately disagree on that issue. I believe also that, in this motion and in the legislation, this Government has struck a good balance in terms of its approach to judicial review. I thank the committee members for their deliberations in that regard.

I thank the members of the National Party for their support. Although I was unable to hear all of their contributions, it seemed as though their support was a curious mixture of support while still wanting to criticise something. I am not going to complain about that. I am happy to have their support. I join with the member for Springwood in expressing disappointment at some fairly unfortunate comments by the member for Warrego. I believe that he made a quite unnecessary, inappropriate attack on Mr O'Halloran from the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace. I say that, remembering that the position that he has taken is inevitably critical of the position taken by this Government. But that is his right. It is unfortunate that the National Party continues its past bad habit of undertaking personal attacks on people who want to speak out on social justice issues.

As to the contributions of members of the Liberal Party—as I predicted, their contribution was fairly disappointing. However, as to their approach to this issue—at least one can say that they are consistent. When the Liberals were in coalition with the Nationals, they used their numbers to get the result that suited them best, in contempt of the public and the public interest. The Liberals are doing the very same thing now. At least they have been consistent. I certainly respect them for that.

The Bill, which deals with the basis of the future electoral system, discharges our promise to abide by the umpire's decision. Of course, as part of the ongoing review of electoral issues, we still have to deal with a range of matters. This Parliament will do that in due course, whether that be by way of motion, legislation, regulation, debate or whatever form in which it is necessary to deal with the outstanding matters and the ongoing process of reform.

In thanking all members for their contributions to this debate, both today and during the considerable debate that led up to this debate, I thank especially the members of my party for their support of the promise that I gave in 1989—not once, not twice, but three times. That was an important promise. From my point of view, it was the most important promise that the Labor Party made. All members of the Labor Party quite properly have supported me, and I thank them for that. They have also discharged their responsibility to the people of Queensland and the people of their electorates to whom they gave the promise to abide by the umpire's decision. Although that involved some difficult decisions for each member of the Government party, and a difficult resolution of the conflict between the umpire's decision and a pure one vote, one value position, I believe that those members made the right decision. It respects the electorate much more than the arrogant born-to-rule mentality of the Liberal Party. I thank them for that. I believe that, in the long term, all thinking commentators and the people of Queensland will respect them for that. I believe also that the judgment of history—not just tomorrow, but in the years ahead—will show that when the Labor Party had the opportunity to do what suited it best, it kept its promise and met the trust that the electorate placed in it in 1989.

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

AYES, 9

NOES, 69

Resolved in the negative.

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

AYES, 70

NOES, 9

Resolved in the affirmative.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (5.31 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to make provision for the distribution of the State into electoral districts."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and Explanatory Notes presented and Bill, on motion of Mr W. K. Goss, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (5.32 p.m.): I move—

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

It is important that all members recall that in his report Mr Tony Fitzgerald identified the need for Queensland's administrative and electoral law and processes to be subjected to an independent and comprehensive review. That report identified the

requirement for the establishment of a properly resourced and authorised Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. It also stated that one principal matter for which the commission should be responsible and which should be given priority was—

" . . . a review of the electoral system, especially the fairness of the electoral boundaries, the basis of representation, the process of registration and counting, and the distribution of electoral material at polling booths."

Consequent upon that report, in 1989 this Assembly passed the Electoral and Administrative Review Act giving authority to the establishment of EARC. That Act also specifies the commission's functions, including its duties for investigation and review of the Queensland electoral system. In discharging its responsibilities under the Act, in November 1990 EARC released the *Report on Queensland Legislative Assembly Electoral System*. The report recommended, among other things, that EARC conduct one initial electoral redistribution in 1991 and that that redistribution be undertaken in accordance with the principles and procedures set out in the proposed electoral district Bill, included as appendix G in its report. Furthermore, EARC recommended that the conduct of subsequent redistributions be undertaken by an independent three-member redistribution commission.

Following its release, EARC's report underwent the scrutiny of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review. As part of that process, the committee identified three matters relating to administrative and legal principles on which it recommended departure from EARC's recommendations. Two of these matters related to this Bill. In moving today's motion for the House to adopt a draft electoral districts Bill as suitable for enactment as law, I outlined the principal provisions in the Bill and detailed those issues relating to the draft Bill on which the parliamentary committee did not agree with EARC's recommendation. I also gave an explanation of other proposals for amendment to that draft Bill. In speaking to that motion, I stressed the importance of an early introduction of the Electoral Districts Bill to enable an electoral redistribution, as proposed by EARC, to proceed in 1991. The debate and passage of the Bill, as amended and adopted by today's resolution as being suitable for enactment as law, will facilitate that redistribution process.

I therefore commend to the House the Electoral Districts Bill which has been adopted by this Assembly as being suitable for enactment as law.

Debate, on motion of Mr Cooper, adjourned.

ELECTIONS AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (5.36 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Elections Act 1983-1990."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (5.37 p.m.): I move—

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

The amendments to the Elections Act 1983-1990 now before the House are the direct result of recommendations contained in two reports of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. Firstly, the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission's report on a Queensland joint electoral roll review was produced pursuant to the requirement in the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989-1990 for the commission to investigate the compilation of electoral rolls of the electors in each electoral district.

Secondly, the report on the Queensland Legislative Assembly electoral system was compiled pursuant to section 2.10 (1) (a) of the Act which empowers the commission to investigate and report from time to time in relation to the whole or part of the Legislative Assembly electoral system, the operation of the Parliament, the whole or part of the public administration of the State, including any other matters specified in the Fitzgerald report or referred to it by the Legislative Assembly, the parliamentary committee or the Minister.

In the first-mentioned report, the commission focused its attention on whether Queensland should either maintain a separate electoral roll or enter a joint electoral roll arrangement with the Commonwealth and, if so, what the nature of that arrangement should be. The criteria used by the commission to assess the joint electoral roll question were—

- (a) integrity of the roll database;
- (b) costs to Queensland;
- (c) public perceptions and convenience; and
- (d) support for Queensland's administrative needs.

During its investigations, the following issues were identified by the commission as to whether Queensland should enter into a joint electoral roll arrangement with the Commonwealth—

- (a) differing enrolment eligibility criteria for Australian citizens and British subjects for Commonwealth and State rolls and other eligibility requirements;
- (b) other State systems supported by the State Electoral Office;
- (c) capacity of the Commonwealth to meet Queensland needs;
- (d) relative costs of separate and joint electoral rolls;
- (e) managing the introduction of the joint electoral roll;
- (f) problems reported in other States with the joint electoral roll arrangements; and
- (g) relative accuracy of the State and Federal rolls.

The commission concluded that Queensland should enter a joint electoral roll arrangement with the Commonwealth. It was recommended that legislation to give effect to the following matters be drafted as a matter of priority—

- (a) that a joint electoral roll arrangement should be negotiated by the Queensland Government with the Commonwealth roll forming the basis of the joint electoral roll;
- (b) that the State enrolment qualifications should be the same as the current Commonwealth qualifications;
- (c) that Queensland should adopt the disqualification criteria for prisoners and persons of unsound mind specified in the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918.

The Bill presently before the House fulfils the requirements put forward in the commission's recommendations. In accordance with the first recommendation, the Bill empowers the Queensland Government to enter a joint roll arrangement with the Commonwealth to enable administrative arrangements to be made in relation to the joint electoral rolls.

Secondly, the Bill provides that qualifications for enrolment shall be the same as those for the Commonwealth by providing that a person who is entitled to vote at Commonwealth House of Representatives elections is entitled to vote for elections of the Queensland Legislative Assembly. Thirdly, the Bill preserves the present entitlement of British subjects who would otherwise lose their entitlement because of the adoption of Commonwealth qualification for enrolment to vote at Queensland elections.

I can assure honourable members that the object of entering into the joint roll agreement with the Commonwealth is to provide an advantage in the administration of the Queensland electoral system. Prior to entering into the agreement, I will need to be satisfied of the following matters—

1. that the Commonwealth can provide electoral rolls to support both the Legislative Assembly and local government elections;
2. that the Commonwealth will be able to provide roll information for State purposes to State departments and agencies and members of the legislative Assembly; and
3. that in entering the joint roll agreement there will be a financial advantage to Queensland.

In this way, the electors of Queensland can be assured that their interests are fully protected.

The second Electoral and Administrative Review Commission report recommended that "the first step towards the establishment of the desired independent electoral authority should be taken forthwith i.e. creation of the statutory office of Electoral Commissioner". The commission foreshadowed that this person "will ultimately be responsible for implementation of recommendations which are made and subsequently embodied in legislation". The commission recognised that there may be difficulties associated with establishing the office of electoral commissioner prior to enacting legislation to establish the electoral commission. It suggested that, as an interim solution, the office of electoral commissioner could be created by amendment to the Elections Act 1983-1990. The latter course has been adopted and as an interim measure the office of the Electoral Commissioner will be created by an amendment to the Elections Act.

The Bill contains the important features that the commission recommended should be repositied in the office of the Electoral Commissioner. Firstly, the Electoral Commissioner will be a statutory officer who will be appointed for a fixed term of up to seven years. Secondly, a person will not be eligible for appointment or, if appointed, the appointment will not continue once the appointee has attained the age of 65 years. The Electoral Commissioner may be dismissed by the Governor in Council on the grounds of mental or physical incapacity. In addition the Electoral Commissioner must be dismissed by the Governor in Council if he or she becomes bankrupt, is absent without reasonable excuse for specified periods, or engages in paid employment outside the duties of his or her office without the Minister's approval.

Finally, although the staff of the Electoral Commissioner will be public servants, the commissioner will be granted all the powers and responsibilities of the chief executive of a department of State so far as his or her staff are concerned. These measures lay the foundations for ensuring that the Electoral Commissioner will be able to exercise his or her functions with absolute independence of judgment, and be insulated as far as possible from improper partisan influences. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Hobbs, adjourned.

QUEENSLAND TOURIST AND TRAVEL CORPORATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Wolston—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (5.42 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Act 1979-1989 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Wolston—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (5.43 p.m.): I move—
"That the Bill be now read a second time."

On 1 May 1990, the Government established a committee of review chaired by Mr Jim Kennedy to review the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. That committee reported on 30 July 1990 and made a number of far-reaching recommendations. It is as a result of that report that this Bill is before the House today. Mr Kennedy's committee undertook extensive consultation with the industry before making its report. Many of the recommendations of that report are already being implemented. These amendments constitute the legislative changes necessary to the process of reform.

The Bill incorporates a number of significant reforms. In line with the thrust of making statutory corporations more independent, the general manager of the corporation and the chief executive officer of the department are removed from the board. The board is to consist of seven members. The appointments will be made with due regard to a person's management skills and knowledge of the industry. One person from the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing and one from the Treasury Department may be appointed as observers at the meetings of the board. The corporation's power to engage in or participate in tourist or travel ventures or developmental projects is removed. This power is removed as a direct result of a recommendation of the Kennedy report. The report, after extensive consultation with the industry and the community, concludes that it is not an appropriate role of government to be directly involved in tourism development projects. The business units of the QTTC have each been constituted as separate body corporates—Atlas and Queensland Holidays and Travel—with the same board as the QTTC. This will enable those units to operate on a proper commercial basis. The units will have greater operational and decision-making flexibility, with a corresponding improvement in efficiency and performance. The Bill requires the QTTC to prepare a State tourist industry strategy plan, after extensive consultation with the industry, the community and Government departments. The strategy plan, by involving such extensive consultation, will help alleviate the friction and uncertainty between the industry, local communities and environmental groups that has occurred with the significant growth of this industry.

If the tourism industry is to develop its full potential, all stake-holders must be involved in the planning process. This Government wishes the industry to develop a responsible and coordinated approach to tourism development that is supported by the community. A regional tourism ministerial advisory council consisting of 15 persons to be appointed by the Minister has been established. The ministerial council is to report to the Minister on all matters associated with the regional development of tourism and is required to meet at least twice a year. The Bill emphasises the role of the QTTC in both domestic and international tourism and travel. The tourism industry has had a testing period over the past 18 months, but the Government feels that these amendments, together with the other recommendations of the review committee that are being implemented, will result in a better structured QTTC with a strategy plan to carry it confidently into the next century.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

PAWNBROKERS FEES VALIDATION BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.46 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to validate and make lawful the collection of certain fees for certain renewals of pawnbrokers' licenses."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.47 p.m.): I move—

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

This Bill is required to validate an error in proofing the Pawnbrokers Regulations 1989. These regulations were the subject of review as a consequence of the Regulatory Reform Act. This Act automatically invalidated these regulations on 30 June 1989. The review process required the redrafting of the regulations and their regazettal prior to that date. Prior to this redrafting the fee payable for the renewal of pawnbrokers' licences was gazetted at \$267. This is the correct fee. However, due to a printing error, the fee was gazetted subsequently on 24 June 1989 at \$67.

The Police Service continued to charge applicants the previously correct fee of \$267. Some 33 licences were renewed during the period June to December 1989 at \$267. The fees were regazetted in December 1989 and the error was rectified. The Committee of Subordinate Legislation, during the course of its deliberations, detected this error and was of the opinion that validating legislation was required to make lawful the Police Service's collection of the \$200 in excess of the gazetted amount. The Crown Solicitor, the office of the Attorney-General and the Parliamentary Counsel are of the same opinion. This Bill will validate the collection of the fee at \$267 from June to December 1989. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Turner, adjourned.

RIVER IMPROVEMENT TRUST ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.49 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the River Improvement Trust Act 1940-1985 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (5.50 p.m.): I move—

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

I seek leave of the House to have the second-reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The River Improvement Trust Act was enacted in 1940—

- (1) to provide for the control of erosion in relation to part of the Burdekin River;
- (2) to make financial provision to repair damage occasioned by cyclone and flood to the banks of the Burdekin River;
- (3) to constitute a trust charged with guarding against the future occurrence of cyclone and flood damage to the banks of the Burdekin River; and
- (4) to provide for the constitution of trusts in relation to other rivers in Queensland.

Although the legislation was enacted to enable a trust to be established for the lower reaches of the Burdekin River, the Legislature had the foresight to provide for the establishment of other trusts as they became necessary. That foresight has meant that there are now 21 river improvement trusts throughout the State. Eleven trusts are located in northern Queensland, seven are located on the Darling Downs, two are located in the Ipswich/Boonah area and another is located near Stanthorpe. In 1983, the objectives of the Act, as reflected by the long title, were changed to emphasise the need for protection and improvement of the beds and banks of rivers and the repair and prevention of riverbank damage, and for the prevention and mitigation of flooding. The Act continues to make financial provision with respect to the discharge of trusts' functions.

In 1959, the River Improvement Act was amended to increase representation from constituent local authorities from one to two members, one of whom may be the chairman of the local authority. Before the 1959 amendment, only the chairman was entitled to represent the local authority. The 1959 amendment and subsequent amendments enable a river improvement trust to make arrangements with any corporation, instrumentality or authority created by or under an Act for the corporation or other body to contribute towards the undertaking and/or maintenance of any works undertaken by the trust in question. In some cases the contribution is significant and, where that has been the case, endeavours have been made to have the corporation or other body represented on the trust. However, the Act presently limits membership of a trust to a Government representative, appointed by the Governor in Council, who is also the chairman, and two representatives from each of the constituent local authorities. Unless the representative of the contributing corporation is appointed as the Government's representative and becomes chairman, there is no satisfactory provision in the Act as it currently stands to accommodate the interests of major contributors.

The Bill which I have introduced remedies the problem by providing for the Governor in Council to appoint up to two additional members to a trust where there are obviously sound reasons for doing so. One such reason would be to enable a significant contributor to a trust's activities to be represented on the trust. But the amending Bill allows for even greater flexibility in the membership by providing for the appointment of one or two additional members who have special expertise in matters of concern to a trust. Because, under the River Improvement Trust Act, representatives of the Government hold office at the pleasure of the Governor in Council, additional members need be appointed to a trust only during the time required to satisfy the particular needs of the trust.

Some may argue that, with the appointment of a Government representative to a trust and the appointment of two additional members, the two members of a single constituent local authority could be outvoted at trust meetings even though the local authority was providing the trust's funds. On the one hand, there would be no need to appoint additional members to a trust that was in an ongoing maintenance phase unless there was something very wrong with the trust's operations. If that were the case, the Government would have a moral obligation to interfere to protect the interests of the ratepayers within the local authority's area. On the other hand, if a trust were undertaking capital works to which the State Government and possibly the Federal Government were contributing funds, then it may be most desirable for the State Government to have specialist representation on the trust during the development and construction phases of the works. It may well be a condition of Federal funding.

This Government will not unnecessarily impose its will on subordinate bodies. However, it reserves the right to guide those bodies if the need arises. As honourable members will be aware, a river improvement trust's principal activities are to make good or prevent further damage to rivers. In Queensland, as is the case elsewhere in Australia and overseas, there is a growing recognition of the need for integrated catchment management which draws together land care, land development, water resource development and drainage in individual river catchments. Integrated catchment management is a major initiative which the Government and my department are actively addressing. Pilot projects are already established in various parts of the State to explore issues and institutional structures necessary to give effect to an integrated approach to managing our catchments. At this time, elements of land and water management and use are dealt with under separate legislation and by a number of agencies that are not always fully aware of what the others are trying to achieve.

I envisage that the River Improvement Trust Act, with further appropriate amendments at a later date, could provide the necessary legislative vehicle to pull together the several discrete activities I have just mentioned. The form of these changes will evolve from the work now under way and the pilot studies already in place. In the meantime, however, making provision for additional members to be appointed to trusts will encourage consultation between trusts and other interested groups. It will also provide an opportunity to extend trust roles and membership where a community wishes to explore and evolve the objectives of integrated catchment management in a particular region. This will be particularly relevant where the pilot schemes and trial programs are already in place to gauge public response to the integrated catchment management concept. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Perrett, adjourned.

FORESTRY ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (5.51 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Forestry Act 1959-1990, and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (5.52 p.m.): I move—

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

I seek leave to have the second-reading speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Forestry Act 1959-1990 in certain respects. The principal amendments provide for—

- a self-registration camping procedure for State Forest land;
- the introduction of on-the-spot fines for certain offences; and
- increased penalty provisions.

Under the provisions of the Forestry Act, the Conservator of Forests is charged with the responsibility of managing the forest estate in accordance with the stated objectives. The overall purpose of the Queensland Forest Service, under the direction of the conservator, is the sustainable production of forest products and services within a balanced conservation program. This includes the multiple use management of State forest land in accordance with the long-term best interests of the community.

Although timber production is the primary aim of the Forest Service, under the multiple-use concept our forests provide for a wide range of recreational activities in natural settings. To provide for community needs, selected parcels of the forest estate have been developed as State forests parks. Many of these areas are available for overnight camping. Statistics indicate that, during the past 12 months, overnight stays on State forests have totalled in excess of 400 000. At present, the Act requires a permit to be issued for those desiring to camp on these areas. The purpose of the permit system is to guard against excessive visitation which would be to the detriment of the forest environment and the overall expectations of campers. However, experience has shown that at various intervals throughout the year, the level of visitation is such that the number of campers need not be restricted. Accordingly, the amendments as now proposed will allow campers to self-register during non-peak periods by completing a form available in the camping area. The correct way to register will be prominently displayed at each area. The form involved is made up in two sections, one for the payment of the camping fee, the other to be displayed on the camping structure. The streamlining of the system will

have considerable community benefit and will significantly reduce administrative workloads associated with permit issue.

As part of the service's visitor management strategy, provision has been made in the Bill to extend the conservator's ability to regulate visitor activities by the erection of notices which must clearly indicate their intent. Failure to observe the requirements of the notice would constitute a breach of the statute. This Bill also provides for the introduction of on-the-spot fines for certain offences under the Act. At present, all proceedings for offences must be by way of complaint and summons. However, it is considered desirable that, for minor offences, the alleged offender should be afforded the opportunity to determine the matter without court involvement. I point out, however, that the issue of tickets does not in any way prejudice a person's right to have the matter heard before a court. The proposed amendment mirrors the legislation presently in place for the management of public use of Fraser, Moreton and Green Islands.

The third significant amendment proposed relates to the penalty provisions. Under the Act, offences currently fall into two categories—forest offences and general offences. The maximum penalty for a forest offence is double that of a general offence. The existing penalties for a forest offence are \$240 minimum and \$1,200 maximum, whilst for a general offence they are \$120 minimum and \$600 maximum. Under the amendment proposed there will be only one offence. This will eliminate the anomaly of unauthorised interference with forest products on Crown land attracting a far lesser scale of penalty than that applying to the same offence on State forest land. It further provides for the deletion of minimum penalties and for an increase in the maximum penalty to \$6,000. Retention of minimum penalties could be seen as being incongruous with the doctrine of separation of powers and as such cannot be supported.

Provision has also been made for courts to have the power to impose harsher penalties on those persons convicted for a second or subsequent offence against the same section of the Act or for an offence which is similar to a previous offence against the Act. The maximum penalty in this instance has been set at \$12,000. The plundering of our forests of valuable epiphytic plants for commercial gain is becoming more prevalent and of major concern to the Queensland Forest Service. Despite increased surveillance by forest officers, many unauthorised removals go undetected due to the nature and location of the forest estate. Accordingly, penalties should be of significant magnitude to deter would-be offenders. It would seem that the current penalty does not achieve this objective, as can be witnessed by at least one individual having been convicted on a number of occasions for large-scale removals of epiphytes. As honourable members would realise, these plants have high demand in the community and attract considerable prices at nurseries and flea markets. Other amendments contained in the Bill are of a minor nature and lend themselves to an enhanced administrative system. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Stephan, adjourned.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (5.53 p.m.): I move—
"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 9 April 1991."

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (5.53 p.m.): Mr Acting Speaker, it is the right of the Opposition to debate this motion. In view of the time—there are seven minutes to go before 6 o'clock—the Opposition has no intention whatsoever of dividing the House and causing a great disturbance. However, I remind members on the Government side of what happened in this place 14 or 15 months ago when exactly the same situation arose and honourable members were tied up in a two-hour debate. Every member of the Opposition has the right to debate this motion and say that the Opposition disagrees totally with what has gone on this week, particularly today.

There are 52 notices of motion on the business paper that have not been debated. These notices of motion—which go back as far as 6 March 1990—include topics such as the Cape York project, voluntary employment agreements, the Cooke inquiry, the China Steel proposal, the Ensham coal deposit and the Criminal Justice Committee. These are all topics that should have been debated but they have been pushed onto the back burner.

This week, honourable members have debated only two pieces of legislation. Honourable members have discussed the Gaming Machine Bill and the EARC legislation. Today, when members of the Opposition wanted to discuss openly the Huey case, what did the Government do at 2.30 this afternoon? It had the Attorney-General make a statement and, as he is wont to do, he ran out of this Chamber and did not continue the debate. That has happened before with the Attorney-General. He throws all the abuse he possibly can. On one occasion when he had a little bit of abuse thrown back at him, what did he do? He fell apart in tears, ran out of the Chamber and refused to return to vote in the next division. That is this Government's Attorney-General! Yet, this afternoon he again threw abuse. As soon as he had thrown it, he left the Chamber and did not participate any further in the discussion.

This afternoon, honourable members heard notice given of a motion of dissent. If the Government had wanted to, that motion could have been debated and the question of privilege raised by the Leader of the Opposition could have been debated. Whether it would have been won by the Opposition is debatable, but it should have been discussed so that the Opposition could have had an opportunity to discuss the whole Huey case. Instead, the Government chose to follow the cheap practice of throwing abuse at Opposition members and closed down the whole debate so that nothing further could be discussed.

The House now has 52 notices of motion on the notice paper and only two pieces of legislation have been discussed this week. I ask honourable members on the Government backbench: how many questions have they asked this week? What do they think of question-time in this Parliament? Today, because of a whim of their leader, they sat there and chose not to ask their questions. They did not want to ask any further questions. They just sat there and did not object one little bit.

I say to the Leader of the House and to Mr Acting Speaker that what has happened in this place during this week, and especially today, is absolutely disgraceful. It is not the Westminster system. Quite obviously the Opposition has not been allowed to —

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: Order! That is a reflection on the Chair and I ask the honourable member to withdraw those comments and apologise.

Mr LINGARD: I withdraw those comments. I am not quite sure whether a member usually has to apologise, but I will apologise to satisfy you, Mr Acting Speaker. That has really been the story of the day. That is exactly what has happened during the whole day. Statements such as those made by the Attorney-General and other Ministers absolutely appalling. I say to those members sitting on the Government backbench that if they believe that what has happened here today is correct, then they know very little about being in Government. When the Gaming Machine Bill was introduced into this House yesterday, Government backbenchers allowed words such as "political affiliations" to be included in that legislation, which I believe is disgraceful. Although the Opposition is not going to delay the House by dividing on this motion, I express the Opposition's concern at the way this House has been run this week, and especially today.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (5.56 p.m.): I wish to reply briefly to two points that were made by the member for Fassifern. The first concerns his statement that there are 52 notices of motion on the notice paper. A couple of weeks ago, the Government decided to allow the Opposition to debate one of its motions.

An Opposition member: One of them.

Mr MACKENROTH: It was the first one. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition then issued a press statement to all the media criticising me because I had wasted the time of this Parliament by debating his motion. At the end of last year when the House was sitting for longer than usual hours, the Opposition criticised the Government because it was sitting long hours. So far this year, the House has been sitting more reasonable hours, but it would appear from what has just been said by the member for Fassifern

that in fact he wants to sit longer hours so that honourable members can debate more issues.

I did not set the number of speakers on the Gaming Machine Bill. Opposition members decided how many members would speak in that debate. I believe that the Government allowed reasonable debate. It did not gag the debate. It allowed the debate to flow. On Tuesday night and Wednesday night the House rose at a reasonable hour. The Opposition spokesperson chose to speak for 90 minutes on the legislation, and it is his right to do that, but Opposition members should not then criticise the Government because it debated only one Bill and one motion. If Opposition members want to, when the House resumes on 9 April, the Government can extend the time and debate some of these motions. However, if the Opposition wants to do that, it should not criticise the Government for sitting late at night. It cannot have it both ways.

Mr FitzGerald: You can't win.

Mr MACKENROTH: One of the hardest things to do is to please Opposition members. That is correct, because when the Government allowed the Opposition to debate its own motion, Opposition members complained, and when the Government does not allow the Opposition to debate its motions, Opposition members complain about that. I really do not know what they would like, but when they finally decide, please let me know. I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Mr Acting Speaker——

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The question is——

Mr FitzGerald: You have to put the first motion that was moved. It has to be put.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: The question is that the first motion of the Minister be agreed to. As many of that opinion say, "Aye"——

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order.

Mr ACTING SPEAKER: To the contrary, "No". I think the "Ayes" have it. Order! The position is that I understood that when the member for Fassifern spoke that he said that he was not going to divide or anything like that. I then gave the call to the Leader of the House, who moved the motion. Under the Standing Orders that then finishes the debate because he had moved the motion, and had replied, and that finishes the debate.

Mr MACKENROTH: Mr Acting Speaker, I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 6 p.m.