

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

**TUESDAY, 9 APRIL 1991**

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

**ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF TOOWOOMBA SOUTH**

**Resignation of Member**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to inform the House that I have been advised that Mr Clive John Berghofer has been elected Mayor of Toowoomba. In accordance with section 7 of the Local Government Act 1936-1990, Mr Berghofer has been taken to have duly resigned from the Legislative Assembly consequent upon his election as Mayor of Toowoomba.

**Seat Declared Vacant**

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.01 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That the seat in this House for the electoral district of Toowoomba South hath become and is now vacant by reason of the resignation of the said Clive John Berghofer.

Motion agreed to.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

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

**ELECTORAL DISTRICT OF NUNDAH**

**Resignation of Member**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to inform the House that I have received the following letter from Mr Phillip Arthur Heath, member for the electoral district of Nundah—

"Dear Jim,

This letter is to inform you of my resignation as member for Nundah, effective from 5.00 p.m. 5th April 1991.

Thank you for your assistance during my tenure.

Yours sincerely

Phil Heath."

**Seat Declared Vacant**

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

"That the seat in this House for the electoral district of Nundah hath become and is now vacant by reason of the resignation of the said Phillip Arthur Heath."

Motion agreed to.

**COMMITTEE OF SUBORDINATE LEGISLATION****Resignation of Mr R. J. Quinn**

**Mr SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have to report that a vacancy exists on the Committee of Subordinate Legislation consequent upon the resignation of Mr Robert Joseph Quinn, MLA, from that Committee.

**Appointment of Mrs J. M. Sheldon**

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.03 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That Mrs Joan Mary Sheldon, MLA, member for the electoral district of Landsborough be appointed to the Committee of Subordinate Legislation to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Robert Joseph Quinn, MLA."

Motion agreed to.

**PETITIONS**

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

**Human Relationships Education**

From **Mr Harper** (14 signatories) praying that the Education Department be directed to abandon the anti-family human relationships education experiment in schools.

**Adoption Law**

From **Mr Dollin** (38 signatories) praying that the amendment to the Adoption Act be enforced specifically to allow adoptees 18 years of age and over and birth parents the right to identifying information regardless of an objection to contact being placed.

**Paper-recycling**

From **Mr Comben** (78 signatories) praying for Government assistance to paper-recycling industries, for the development of recycling processes and to maximise use of recycled material in products.

**Tobacco Levy Increase**

From **Mr Comben** (39 signatories) praying that the tobacco levy be increased and that the proceeds be channelled into an independent foundation for health promotion, research and sponsorship of sport and the arts.

**Speed-limit near Schools**

From **Mr Beattie** (156 signatories) praying for the urgent implementation of a speed restriction to 40 km/h in the vicinity of all schools.

**Religious Education**

From **Mr Braddy** (200 signatories) praying for the Education Department to be directed to abandon all work on the P-10 religious education curriculum and allocate resources to the existing religious education system.

**Excision of Sapphire and Rubyvale from Proposed Anakie Mining Common**

From **Mr Lester** (123 signatories) praying for the township areas of Sapphire and Rubyvale to be excised from the proposed Anakie Mining Common.

**Inclusion of Emu Swamp in Proposed Weyba National Park**

From **Mr Comben** (147 signatories) praying that the lease over Emu Swamp and surrounding verges be resumed and included in the proposed Weyba National Park.

Petitions received.

**PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table—

Reports for the year ended 30 June 1990-

Queensland Ambulance Services Board

Queensland Rural Training Schools Boards

Reports of the Queensland Law Reform Commission—

Report N: 40 Consolidation of Real Property Acts

Report N: 41 The Protection of Statements made to Religiously Ordained Officials

Orders in Council under—

State Housing Act 1945-1990

State Housing (Freeholding of Land) Act 1957-1984

District Courts Act 1967-1989

Supreme Court Act of 1921

Co-operative and Other Societies Act 1967-1990

Magistrates Court Act 1921-1990

Jury Act 1929-1990

Regulations under—

Referendums Act 1989-1990

Architects Act 1985

Ordinance under the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1990

Proclamation under the Legal Aid Act Amendment and Public Defence Act Repeal Act 1991

Rules under the Coroners Act 1958-1990.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Absence of Ministers during Question-time**

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.08 a.m.), by leave: The Government has decided that, when Ministers will be absent from the Parliament for question-time, I will inform the House before question-time. If any member then wishes to ask a question without notice of that Minister, he or she can direct the question to me as the Leader of the House and, in most cases, I will obtain an answer for the member on that day.

I have to inform the House that, this week, the Minister for Land Management will be absent from the Parliament as, unfortunately, his mother passed away on Sunday night. I am sure that all members join with me in passing on condolences to Bill and his family.

Also, today, the Minister for Primary Industries will be absent from question-time, as he is performing an official opening in Toowoomba.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Letter from Sergeant Reynolds and Senior Constable Harris to Commissioner of Police**

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.10 a.m.), by leave: On 14 March 1991, the member for Condamine, Mr Littleproud, asked a question in relation to a letter sent from Sergeant Reynolds and Senior Constable Harris to the Commissioner of Police. That letter was said to have been written on 20 September 1990. Neither the letter nor its contents was ever brought to my attention by the Commissioner of Police. I gave an undertaking to the member for Condamine to raise this matter with the commissioner.

The commissioner has advised me that a vigorous search was made of the records of the Police Department. That search has failed to locate any record of the Police Department ever receiving the letter from the two police officers, Reynolds and Harris. I table a letter from Commissioner Newnham on this issue.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Establishment of Casino in Brisbane**

**Hon. K. E. De LACY** (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.09 a.m.): Yesterday, Cabinet decided to call expressions of interest for the establishment of a casino in Brisbane. An interdepartmental committee has prepared a strategy, which was adopted by Cabinet. Tender documents have been prepared for three potential sites in Brisbane, namely, Queensland Place, the South Bank and the Old Treasury Building.

I note that in this morning's press some concern has been expressed about the heritage value of the Old Treasury Building. I can give an assurance to all members of this House that any potential tenderer for the Old Treasury Building will have to abide by and enhance the heritage value of that particular building. The brief which has been prepared spells out in minute detail the requirements which the tenderer will abide by to enhance the building's heritage value.

Advertisements calling for expressions of interest will be placed in the national and the international press on Friday. Expressions of interest will close on 9 September and a final decision to allocate the licence to the preferred tenderer will be made by the end of the year. Also, I advise members of the House that Cabinet has decided to enter into an exclusivity agreement with the preferred tenderer to the extent that the licence-holder will have 10 years exclusive operation of the casino and that no other casinos can be built within a 60 kilometre radius of Brisbane.

I report that, pending consultation with the Cairns community, Cabinet has given in-principle approval to the establishment of a casino in Cairns. That consultation is currently taking place and a decision will be made within a month.

**QUESTION UPON NOTICE****Timber-harvesting, Cooloola State Forest**

Mr BEANLAND asked the Minister for Primary Industries—

"(1) What has the Queensland Forestry Service calculated was the sustainable yield of timber which can be taken from the Cooloola State Forest 451 and how did the service reach that calculation and over what period?

(2) What has been the volume of timber taken from the Cooloola State Forest 451 for each of the past 10 years and how was it calculated?

(3) What is the volume of timber which has been allocated to be taken from the Cooloola State Forest 451 for 1991, and how was this allocation arrived at?

(4) Does the variation between the average annual harvest of timber taken from the Cooloola State Forest 451 over the past 10 years and 1991 have anything to do with the fact that it is due to become a National Park after 1 April and, if so, what is the reason?"

**Mr MACKENROTH:** On behalf of the Minister for Primary Industries, the answer is as follows—

(1) State Forest 451 Cooloola, together with several other State forests, forms part of the Gympie allocation zone which supplies Crown log timber to five sawmills in the Gympie area. The total annual allocation to these mills from the Gympie zone is currently 21 260 cubic metres. The determination of the allowable rate of harvest from any zone is based on three fundamental steps—

- (i) Mapping of accessible and productive forest area;
- (ii) forest inventory which physically measures a percentage sample of the growing stock within various forest types and productivity classes; and
- (iii) a computer-based model which predicts the growth of the forest over several harvesting cycles. Forecast sustained yield then forms the basis of yield regulation.

The current allowable cut for the Gympie zone was calculated using such methodology in 1979. It should be noted that, although the Forest Service has area information and timber stand information for all State forests in the zone, the third step of yield prediction is carried out only for the zone as a whole for timber management purposes. Some State forests may supply a large proportion of the annual cut within a zone for a period of years before the logging front moves to another part of the zone. There is no specified annual allowable cut for Cooloola State forest as such. It should, however, on average provide about 14 per cent of the sustained yield in the Gympie zone over a period of a full growth cycle.

(2) Over the past 10 years, sawlog removals from S.F. 451 Cooloola have totalled 43 412 cubic metres. The following figures are for the year to 30 September (allocation control dates from 1 October to 30 September)—

1982	3 045
1983	3 373
1984	2 210
1985	4 836
1986	5 203
1987	730
1988	5 006
1989	13 068
1990	5 007
1991	934 (to 15 March 1991)

(3) The rate of removal from Cooloola for the period 1 October 1989 to 31 March 1991 was set at 6 000 cubic metres, which equates to 14 per cent of the sustained yield in the Gympie zone over a two-year period. Of this 6 000 cubic metres, only 59 cubic metres remains to be removed after 15 March 1991.

(4) For many decades, Cooloola State forest has been managed for sustainable timber production. The Government's decision to phase out timber production has had no bearing on the subsequent management of timber resources on this State forest.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE****Letter from Commissioner of Police to Senior Constable Harris**

**Mr COOPER:** I refer the Minister for Police and Emergency Services to the ministerial statement he made just a few moments ago in which he said that the Commissioner of Police could not locate the report referred to by the member for Condamine. I will table a letter from the Commissioner of Police to Senior Constable Harris acknowledging the existence of the report. I ask: what action does the Minister intend to take in respect of the Commissioner of Police giving misleading information? The letter from Commissioner Newnham to Senior Constable Harris states—

"It has been drawn to my attention that a report submitted by you dated 20 September 1990 requests a copy of a report from the Director of Prosecutions relating to the discontinuance of prosecutions against Mr. J. W. Huey. I do not propose to provide you with such a copy.

A copy of your report"—

this is the report which it was said does not exist—

"has been provided to the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission."

I table a copy of that letter.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I find it quite surprising that the Leader of the Opposition would ask that question today, because during the recess I contacted the member for Condamine and informed him that the police could not obtain or find that letter.

**Mr Littleproud:** That's irrelevant.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** It is very relevant because I would think that, if the honourable member had a letter of acknowledgment from the Commissioner of Police, he would have made it available to me during the recess so that the commissioner could have given the further information. The member for Condamine advised me that the first letter to which he had referred was in the documents that have been tabled in the Parliament. I obtained that letter from those documents and forwarded it to the Commissioner of Police. His advice to me, which is contained in the letter that I tabled this morning, is that they have no record of that letter. His advice to me is that he has no knowledge or recollection whatsoever of that letter. If the honourable member has a letter and tables it, I will take that matter up with the commissioner.

I ask the Leader of the Opposition: what action does he want me to take?

**Mr Cooper:** It's up to you. You're the Minister.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I am asking the Leader of the Opposition: what is he suggesting? I am quite clear about it. It has never been brought to my attention. I have done everything that I told the Parliament I would do, but I will take that matter back to the Commissioner, seek further advice from him and inform the House. I think the Leader of the Opposition has done a very sly and nasty thing in that the member for Condamine obviously had that letter and, during the last sitting of Parliament, the Opposition had the documents, which were stolen from the Police Department.

**Tully/Millstream Hydroelectric Scheme**

**Mr COOPER:** I refer the Premier to the task force report on the Tully/Millstream project, which advocates that the project proceed, and to his reported support for this important development. I ask: given that if we are to avoid power cuts later this decade the power station decision will need to be made in a matter of months, how does he intend to make the Federal Government abide by the commitment given to him by Senator Richardson prior to his Government's decision to withdraw from legal action after the State election? In spite of Canberra's current dithering and buck-passing, will he ensure that his Government makes a decision in Queensland's best interests?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I thank the honourable Leader of the Opposition for the question because I was trying to organise one from my own side on this matter, but this makes it a bit easier. We as a State Government cannot do what the Leader of the Opposition suggests, that is, make the decision unilaterally. His suggestions in that regard betray a typical ignorance of the legal situation, namely, that the Federal Government has the ultimate regulation-making power in respect of World Heritage listed areas. That has been established by the High Court in the Franklin Dam case, as the Leader of the Opposition should know. So ultimately we have to work in consultation and cooperation with the Federal Government in respect of this matter.

As for the status of the report—it has not been adopted in principle by the State Government, as was suggested in some sectors. Yesterday, State Cabinet agreed to receive the report. It has been forwarded to the Prime Minister for consideration by him, the Federal Environment Minister, Ms Kelly, and the Federal Government. The report has also been forwarded to the joint management authority under the chairmanship of Professor Ken Wiltshire. There will be consultation with those two organisations. As well, there will be consultation with the community and, in particular, with industry and various community groups, particularly environmental groups, which have had a longstanding interest in this matter and expressed an interest in being involved in discussions with the State Government and generally with the process. We will certainly engage in such discussions. I refer honourable members and the Leader of the Opposition to pages 164 and 165 of the report of the task force.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Can we get a copy of the report you are referring to?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** As far as I am aware, the report is publicly available. The honourable member is technically a member of the public. I invite him to avail himself of his legal rights in that regard.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Good, open government, isn't it? You don't know whether it is available or not.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** It was publicly available yesterday. Has the honourable member heard of Goprint, which prints Government papers?

On page 164 of the report, the task force quotes from the original report of the World Heritage Committee and the technical evaluation report that was presented to the committee by the IUCN—the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources. The IUCN report stated—

"Within the nominated property are a number of existing and proposed land uses that will require careful management to ensure they result in minimal damage to natural values. These include stock grazing, mining claims and a proposed extension to the Tully-Millstream Hydro-Electric Scheme."

The task force stated further—

"It is apparent that the Tully-Millstream Scheme was not considered by either IUCN or the World Heritage Committee as being a major impediment to listing, only as one of several matters that would"—

and I quote again from the technical evaluation—

"require careful management to ensure (they) result in minimal damage to natural values."

The task force made one point of which members should be made aware. It is—

"It must be accepted that 'development' is not inadmissible in World Heritage Areas. In the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park, for example, development in various forms is ongoing."

The report later deals with that aspect in greater detail. As I said, the report is publicly available for any members of the Opposition who are genuinely interested in this matter. I note that the Leader of the Opposition is not even listening to my answer to his question.

Nevertheless, I will proceed for the benefit of other members of the House who are genuinely interested in this issue.

The task force indicated that the next, most logical alternative to the Tully hydroscheme is a coal-fired power generation scheme that would, on its estimates, cost the taxpayers of this State some \$270m more and would, over the life of the operation of that plant, belch into the atmosphere some 48.5 million tonnes of carbon dioxide. That would have obvious consequences for the greenhouse effect. As for the environmental questions and the assumptions that underline the cost calculations—those matters will have to be the subject of detailed study by the State Government—now that it has the report—the Federal Government and the joint management authority which, as I understand it, has the responsibility for ensuring that such schemes, if and when they proceed, are managed in a way that preserves the environmental values of the World Heritage listed area. This is a time for rational and calm consideration both of this report and the attached reports, which are quite voluminous and quite technical. I urge honourable members, including the Leader of the Opposition—if, in fact, he is genuinely interested in the issue—to give the reports that consideration.

#### **Employment of Principals in Queensland Schools**

**Mr PREST:** I ask the Minister for Education: is he aware of concern about the spilling of the positions of principals in Queensland's 35 larger schools? Can he explain to the House the reason behind that course of action?

**Mr BRADDY:** I am certainly aware of the public criticism by some of the principals in the 35 special class category schools and some of their supporters. I shall outline to the House the reality of this matter. In the course of restructuring the department and schools in this State, it was decided that, for the first time, there would be created a special category class of principals who would receive a salary of \$61,500 per year. That salary structure means that only 20 people in the Department of Education receive a higher salary than that of those principals. That confirms the need for principals in our largest and most complex schools to be adequately and substantially remunerated. Previously, those principals, together with other principals in the top category, received salaries that were less than those of 100 people in the Department of Education. Honourable members would realise the significant upgrading of that salary structure.

All of those principals have been advised that their jobs will have to be advertised and that they are able to apply for reappointment. All of them will appear before the very same selection panel comprising senior officers of the department. One of the regional executive directors, namely, Gail Mackay, the newly appointed executive director of the northern region, will be a member of that selection panel. Ms Mackay is an exemplary principal who was praised in very lavish terms by the member for Burdekin, Mr Stoneman, when it was announced that she would become an executive director in the northern region. Mr Stoneman has spoken very highly in this place about her ability and of his pleasure at her appointment. I agree with his assessment of Ms Mackay. As I said, all principals will go before the very same selection panel, which will comprise a representative or two from outside the department. All or some of those principals will be reappointed to their positions. What happens to those who miss out, if there are any? All of those who miss out, if there are any, will be reappointed either as a Class 1A principal or to an equivalent position. At its maximum level, that salary will be \$58,000, at least 20 per cent higher—

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**Mr BRADDY:** I will come to that interjection. That salary will be 20 per cent higher than they received before the restructuring took place. I stress that all of them will receive, as a minimum, a salary that is 20 per cent higher than they received before the restructuring took place. They will not replace any Class 1A principals, as Mr Elliott suggested in his interjection. Principals from all of the other classes have been reappointed to their positions. They can be appointed to Class 1A

principalships only where there are vacancies. If there are no such vacancies, for whatever position they take up in the Education Department or in other schools, they will still receive a Class 1A salary, which means that they will be substantially remunerated with a salary that is 20 per cent higher than they received before. We are about the business of getting the best principals in the most serious, most significant and most complex schools in this State.

#### **AIDS Education**

**Mr PREST:** I ask the Minister for Education: has he seen reports that the Queensland Parents and Citizens Council has welcomed the news that high school students will be informed of the danger of AIDS? Can he inform the House of the reason behind the Government's move on this issue?

**Mr BRADDY:** The move, of course, is to remedy a situation which was not being well handled and which was a legacy from our predecessors who are now in Opposition. They reluctantly decided that some AIDS education had to take place in this State, and they arranged a system whereby only Year 12 students in our high schools would receive that education—and they could receive it only from registered medical practitioners. We have examined the situation. It is clearly not good enough for it to continue. Whether we like it or not and whether or not we deplore it, as of course we do, there is objective evidence of substantial sexual activity amongst some adolescents who are about the age of 13. As the ages go up to 14, 15 and 16, there is an increase in the numbers who engage in serious sexual activity. Therefore, to confine AIDS education to Year 12 only is to deny those younger students information that would be relevant to them and that should lead to either their desisting from that activity or at least knowing the risks they run from the activities in which they engage.

We are about to institute a program whereby health educators—people who are trained to give health education—will be given more in-service training to enable health education to be given as appropriate from Years 8 to 12 in our high schools. I deplore the comment made by the Leader of the Liberal Party, who referred to this as a sexy issue. I do not know what standards he has in making those comments, but there is nothing sexy about people contracting AIDS and dying of AIDS. This is a matter of health education, a matter of life and death. Already in Queensland 100 people under the age of 25 are HIV positive. Similarly, some other members of this place have made comments in relation to the matter deploring what we are doing. The situation is real. Young people in this State must be given the information in a way that is sensible and rational by people who are trained as educators. We will do that in conjunction with the Health Department and the National Centre for HIV Research at the University of Queensland. It will be a properly planned and implemented program that is necessary for the health and information of the young people of Queensland.

**Mr Lingard** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Fassifern to cease interjecting.

#### **Collinsville Coalmine**

**Mr BEANLAND:** In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to comments made last week by the manager of the Collinsville coalmine, Mr Taff Greenwood, that MIM was considering cutting back by 50 per cent the operations of the mine, which would mean a further loss of 300 jobs because the State Government had not yet replied to requests by MIM nor met its election commitment for a reduction in coal rail freight rate charges. I ask: can the Treasurer inform the House why the Government has failed to announce a rescue package to save the mine and the jobs of the 600 remaining miners?

**Mr De LACY:** I thank the honourable Leader of the Liberal Party for the question. Let me say that the State Government does not need gratuitous advice from the Liberal

Party on how to conduct its negotiations. I am aware of the comments that were made by Mr Beanland when he travelled around Queensland promising to abolish taxes and trying to sound relevant to the people of Queensland. I am also aware of the comments made by Mr Taff Greenwood, which I did not find helpful at all. For the benefit of Mr Greenwood, I point out that negotiations are taking place with Collinsville Coal, or with MIM. He may not know about them. The best advice that I can give him is that, if he does not know about it, the best thing for him to do would be to keep quiet about it. His comments are not helping.

In general terms, the Queensland Government is discussing the issue with Mount Isa Mines. With its approval, we have examined its cost projections for the future and we are endeavouring to establish the extent to which assistance is required. We are very much aware of the importance of the Collinsville mine to the town of Collinsville and, indeed, to the economy of Queensland. We will play our part in ensuring that that mine continues to exist. I am not going to conduct our negotiations publicly, as the Leader of the Liberal Party would have us do, but I am still hopeful that the whole issue can be resolved and that that mine continues to exist. In conclusion, I simply say that I have found the kinds of representations that we are getting from the member for Bowen, Mr Smyth, very helpful. The comments made by the Liberal Party are not helpful at all and they are not doing anybody any good, least of all the people of Collinsville.

### **Rochedale Dump**

**Mr BEANLAND:** In directing my second question to the Minister for Health, Mr McElligott, I refer to repeated allegations by the Lord Mayor elect of Brisbane, Mr Soorley, and the member for Mansfield about the health risks surrounding the Rochedale dump, and I ask: firstly, has Mr Soorley raised with the Minister his concerns that the liner system of the dump will fail under flood conditions, secondly, that the buffer zone between the site and the residents is too small, and, thirdly, that the leachate from the land fill could leak into the irrigation systems of neighbouring small crop property-owners? Also, will the Minister be moving to withdraw Health Department approval for this dump in line with the Lord Mayor elect's promise that he will stop the dump going ahead?

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** No, I have not had those sorts of consultations with the newly-elected Lord Mayor. I understand that the previous administration had discussions with my department in respect to a number of potential sites for the dump and the Health Department has offered technical advice in respect of all of those proposed sites. I also understand that the Director-General of Health—or the chief health officer in this State—is required to give approval before the use of the dump site can proceed. That approval will take place further down the track. I have no doubt that there will be further negotiations between the Brisbane City Council and my department in respect of this whole issue.

### **Former Superintendent J. W. Huey; Letter to Commissioner of Police**

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** In directing my first question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I refer to a letter tabled by the Leader of the Opposition from the Commissioner of Police, Noel Newnham, in reply to a letter dated 20 September from Senior Constable G. Harris and to his question as to what action the Minister would take against the commissioner in relation to this letter. I believe that the Minister has now had time to peruse this letter. I ask: will the Minister inform the House of what action he intends to take?

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

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

**Mr MACKENROTH:** My answer to the honourable member's question, and, indeed, to the question asked previously by the Leader of the Opposition as to what action I intend to take, is quite simple—none. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition quite

deliberately misled this House. He tried to make this House believe that the Commissioner of Police had answered the letter of 20 September and had not informed me of that fact after I had asked him about the letter when the matter was raised with me on 14 March by the member for Condamine. On 14 March, when the member for Condamine asked me a question in this Parliament about this letter of 20 September, I stated that the commissioner had not brought that matter to my notice and that I would take it up with him and inform the House of what action the commissioner had taken about the letter at that time.

**Mr Harper:** How did they lose the letter?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** We have to look at the types of people we are dealing with and whether in fact the letter was ever sent. In his question this morning, the Leader of the Opposition led us to believe that the Commissioner of Police had misled me in his answer, in that he had in fact acknowledged the letter but informed me that he had no knowledge of it. What the Leader of the Opposition did not say is that the letter he tabled this morning was in fact dated 3 April 1991, which was 17 days after the member for Condamine asked the question in this Parliament. That letter was answered at the same time as the letter I tabled this morning, which says exactly the same thing.

**Mr Stephan:** You don't understand the question.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Of course I understand it. This morning, the Leader of the Opposition deliberately tried to distort the position by attempting to say that I need to take some action against the commissioner because he had not informed me of this matter. In his letter of 3 April, the commissioner stated that he had not informed me because he did not know about the letter. On the same day, he informed Harris that a copy of the report had been sent to the Criminal Justice Commission. The Leader of the Opposition did not read that out. All of the details have been sent to the Criminal Justice Commission. This morning, the Leader of the Opposition tried to make us believe that the commissioner had acknowledged the letter referred to in the question asked on 14 March and had failed to advise me of that. The Leader of the Opposition is being very, very deceitful.

#### **Industrial Relations**

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** Caught out again.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

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

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** My second question is directed to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, who would be aware—and all honourable members would be aware—that the National Party and the Liberal Party have always had a bad reputation regarding industrial relations in Queensland. I ask: will the Minister advise the House of the current situation regarding industrial relations in the public sector and industrial relations generally in our State?

**Mr WARBURTON:** As honourable members would be aware, I have always said that the future economic growth and stability of Queensland depends very significantly on the creation of a satisfactory and good industrial environment. This Government can be very proud indeed of what the statistics show.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** I will get to that in a moment.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I hope that members of the Opposition want to listen to this answer. If they do not, I suggest that they go outside. I am going to

demand that I be able to hear it. Today, I am actually in a very relaxed mood, so I can sit here and waste question-time while I wait for order in the House. I will now call on the Minister. I would like to hear his answer, and those who would not will have to go outside.

**Mr WARBURTON:** Mr Speaker, one can understand the type of interjections coming from members of both the National Party and the Liberal Party because in respect of industrial relations in this State, their record was disastrous. Every member in this House will recall very well indeed that their attitude towards industrial relations was to create industrial disharmony for what they believed would be their political advantage. That is the record—the very sad record—of both the National Party and the Liberal Party in this State.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr WARBURTON:** As I say, one can appreciate from the noise emanating from the other side of the Chamber that there is a great deal of truth in what I am saying. Mr Speaker, I must say that, fortunately, those days are gone. The statistics show clearly that this State and this Government can be very proud indeed of our industrial relations record in the private sector. By virtue of new legislation and because of the way in which this Government handles industrial relations, we have created very successfully the type of environment that is essential for economic stability and growth.

I am pleased to be able to advise all members in this House that, as far as the public sector is concerned, by way of consultation and by way of the application of good common sense as distinct from the confrontationist attitude that was adopted by the Liberals and the Nationals, the Government has negotiated a settlement with the public sector unions. The parties have appeared before the Industrial Commission and have accepted unanimously the recommendation that has been made by the commission. As far as the hopes and aspirations of Mr Santoro and others are concerned—if one can believe the comments that have been written—it must be very sad for them to hear what I am saying today. Yes, Mr Speaker; we have resolved those issues and we have resolved the voluntary redundancy issue in Queensland Railways. We have also resolved the nurses pay issue. Tomorrow, the commission will announce interim pay increases which, without knowing, I expect would be of the order of 5 per cent for the 5 000 police officers who serve in this State. All in all, let me conclude by saying that the record of this Government in respect of industrial relations in this State is one of which we can all be very, very proud indeed.

#### **Government Aircraft**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In directing a question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I refer to the hoax of the attempted sale of the former State Government jet. I ask: why has the BAe 125-800 been quietly repainted and the registration number reassigned to the recently purchased Westwind?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** Firstly, the jet was not "quietly repainted". It was detailed for sale. I point out that the situation in regard to the registration number is that the Westwind jet—

**Mr Borbidge:** It's got "Bureau of Emergency Services" on the side.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** No, it has not. The Westwind jet has "Bureau of Emergency Services", but the BAe does not. As I was saying, the BAe has been detailed for sale.

On the day that the Westwind jet was registered and shown to people, it had the former State Government jet's registration number. That fact was recorded in the media and it was not done quietly. The BAe has a temporary registration number to allow people to undertake flights if that is necessary, and it is also being used, when necessary, as a back-up jet. Nothing has been done quietly. As I have said before, the jet is now for sale. As soon as it is sold, I will make available full details in relation to the moneys paid for the Westwind and all moneys received for the BAe.

### Government Aircraft

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: has any Minister used the original Government jet since the purchase of the Westwind? In particular, what aircraft did he use to travel to Mount Isa on 10 March and to Bundaberg on 13 March during the course of the referendum campaign?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I can inform the honourable member that I flew to Mount Isa in the Westwind. The second one was?

**Mr Borbidge:** Bundaberg.

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I have not been to Bundaberg since I was appointed a Minister. Perhaps the Deputy Leader of the Opposition meant to say "Maryborough". Did he mean "Maryborough"? He seems to be the one with the information. As I said before, I have not been to Bundaberg since I was appointed a Minister. Obviously, that is what the honourable member is talking about. What was the second part of his question?

**Mr Borbidge:** The second part of the question was: did the Minister for Police and Emergency Services use the old Government jet since the Westwind had been purchased, and had any other Ministers?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** I have, and I am not aware whether any other Ministers have.

**Mr Borbidge:** You have? When?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** The Deputy Leader of the Opposition did not ask that as part of his question.

### Prison Industries

**Ms ROBSON:** I ask the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services: for the benefit of members, would he outline the nature of commercial industries being conducted in Queensland prisons? Are the products manufactured import-competitive? What future plans does he have for expanding prison-based industries?

**Mr MILLINER:** I thank the honourable member for her question because it is a very important and complex issue. The industries that are conducted in correctional institutions are a very important part of the rehabilitative process. It is also very important that those industries do not cut across the recognised business that is carried on in this State.

Presently, a number of industries are based in our correctional institutions, including bakeries, laundries and leather, metal, timber, tin, tailoring and mechanical workshops. The industries also cover nurseries, laundry processing, book-binding and printing, and agricultural activities such as dairying, pig and beef husbandry, and horticulture. Most of the goods produced and manufactured are not those that are normally imported, for example, bakery products. Contracts for the manufacture of products by the metal, carpentry and leather workshops are generally sought from Government agencies and do not replace imported products or generally compete with other industries. It is the Corrective Services Commission's policy not to compete with local industry.

Future developments for an extension of prison industries include—

in the next two years, the commission is planning to further develop the more traditional commodities such as timber, metal and leather. Their long-term objective is to take the high-quality products manufactured within the correctional centres, such as the furniture produced at Lotus Glen or leather goods from the upholstery workshops at Wacol, and establish a fully operational manufacturing industry—an industry which will have its own brand name and compete mainly within the export market so as not to cut across local businesses;

gaining more appropriate opportunities to supply State Government departments with products and services presently supplied by interstate and overseas resources; and to assist local industry in competing with imports by entering into joint ventures or subcontract arrangements.

#### **Rehabilitation of Sexual Offenders**

**Ms ROBSON:** In directing a second question to the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services, I ask: given the high percentage of sexual offenders in our prison communities, would he detail to the House the programs currently under way at the Moreton Correctional Centre to rehabilitate sexual offenders?

**Mr MILLINER:** I thank the member for Springwood for the question, because it raises an important aspect of corrective services institutions in Queensland, that is, the rehabilitative programs that are being carried out within our correctional institutions. The sex offenders treatment program offered at the Moreton Correctional Centre is the first of its kind in Australia and has been in operation since late last year. Presently, approximately 52 offenders are being treated, and it is anticipated that, by next year, approximately 168 will be on the program.

The program has been established in phases. Phase 1, the pre-entry program, which lasts 16 weeks, commenced last year. To service the needs of rehabilitating sex offenders throughout the prison population, the program took place in four centres—Woodford, Sir David Longland, Wacol and Borallon—and was conducted by the psychology and counselling staff from Moreton. Inmates who completed the pre-entry program successfully are now at Moreton for at least 32 weeks undergoing Phase 2—the intensive intervention unit. The program includes an autobiography of inmates' past experiences, diaries, depositions, reading exercises, group therapy work and individual work. The entire program is designed to encourage offenders to recognise their offences, admit to what they have done, recognise influences that can produce offending behaviour, and learn to control themselves when and if they reach the offending stage.

The centre is also working in conjunction with the custodial and community corrections and family services to develop initiatives for after-care of offenders and research. The program is extensive and rigorous. The US expert Robert Freeman-Longo, who was the keynote speaker at the recent Corrective Services conference on the treatment of sex offenders in custody, examined the Moreton program and said that it was equal to anything that he had seen.

Present statistics show that there is an 80 per cent recidivism rate of sex offenders, with two-thirds of those reoffending within the first 12 months. Overseas experience shows that, with the introduction of programs similar to that at the Moreton Correctional Centre, recidivism has decreased to as low as 20 per cent, with an average of 30 per cent. They are very promising figures. The strategic plan for Queensland correctional centres is to be able to offer the program to all sex offenders incarcerated within the next two years and, therefore, to reduce the recidivism rate considerably.

#### **National Parks; Good Neighbour Policy**

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I direct a question to the Minister for Environment. With reference to the Government's stated objective of acquiring 4 per cent of Queensland for national park purposes, I ask: can the land-holders of Queensland be assured that, in respect of future negotiations for acquisitions, the good neighbour policy put in place by the National Party Government will be pursued and that that same good neighbour policy will be maintained in relation to existing national park neighbours?

**Mr COMBEN:** Certainly, the assurance is given to the honourable member that the good neighbour policy will be maintained, as it has been maintained over the past 15 months. The statements by the honourable member last week about fencing all

national parks and forcing adjoining land-holders to make a 50 per cent contribution is nothing less than scaremongering, because there is no such policy as he proposed.

I point out to the honourable member that our policy was to double the national park to 4 per cent; National Party policy was to increase it to 5 per cent. I hate to think what sort of conditions and impositions the National Party would have put on the land-holders of Queensland if it had been re-elected to Government.

#### **Lakefield National Park**

**Mr ELLIOTT:** In view of the reply by the Minister for Environment to my previous question, I ask: will he explain to this House and to the people of Queensland his good neighbour policy at Lakefield national park which has resulted in the adjoining land-holders, who previously supported the park, now being required to pay \$70 a head by way of ransom to recover their own cattle mustered into the Lakefield national park cattleyard? If the Minister sees that action as being acceptable, will his Government give consideration to paying compensation to adjoining land-holders when feral pigs and dingoes bred in national parks venture into adjoining land-holders' property and cause damage and stock loss?

**An Opposition member:** This will be a good one!

**Mr COMBEN:** It will indeed be a good one. Again, the honourable member misrepresents the position. Last week, he told the people of Queensland that the National Parks and Wildlife Service and I had made a demand upon the adjoining land-holder for fencing of a certain area and said, "You have to pay 50 per cent." I will get it right immediately that actually the demand has been made——

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**Mr COMBEN:** Hang on. The demand has been made from that adjoining land-holder on the national parks service. The honourable member has the matter totally the wrong way round. The adjoining land-holder—the company involved—also sought grazing permits over certain parts of Lakefield. When we would not immediately kowtow and say, "Yes, you can have those grazing permits", we were served with a notice. We were actually served with a legal notice under the Dividing Fences Act. And the honourable member for Cunningham has been telling the rural community that I am demanding to have that fenced!

I will turn to the other part of the honourable member's question. In a situation such as that at Lakefield, which consists of some 264 000 hectares with several thousand cattle running in the centre of it, it is appropriate and a normal commercial undertaking that, on a major muster which was going to take us three months, we would continue with the regulations that the National Party put in place to be able to recover our costs. We increased the costs in accordance with the CPI to an appropriate level in accordance with our election promises and undertook the same policy that the National Party would have followed.

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

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

##### **Reorganisation of Education Department**

**Mr LINGARD** (Fassifern) (11 a.m.): After 18 months of ALP Government, the public service is reacting to blatant politicisation of all aspects of the public service in Queensland. Clearly, the most blatant example of the politicisation that Queenslanders can expect to see in the future was contained in the Gaming Machine Bill, which was debated during the last sitting week. Under that legislation, a person who applies to be the commissioner has to list all of his or her political affiliations—not only present political affiliations but also past political affiliations.

Previously in this House, I have shown that the reorganisation of the public service in Queensland is blatant politicisation and that it is based on a plagiarism of the ideas of the disgraced Peter Wilenski from Canberra. Twelve months ago, the ALP introduced into its public service reorganisation a document called *Making Queensland Work*. It was lifted directly from the booklet *Reforming the Australian Public Service*, which was lifted directly from the opinions of the disgraced Peter Wilenski, who associates with people such as Ros Kelly and Michael Delaney, who, of course, have links with Dawkins and Gough Whitlam. It was lifted directly from the Labor essays of 1983. As a result of all these innovations, Queensland has a public service full of distrust, contempt and hostility.

The most obvious recent example of blatant politicisation is the policies of the Government in regard to the selection of personnel in the Education Department. In short, the present confrontation between the Queensland Teachers Union and the Government could have been avoided if the Minister and the Government were not so intent on removing certain personnel from the Education Department and having an upper echelon that is committed to the ALP. The ALP Minister for Education needs to remove certain high school principals from their positions. To do this, he must cause a spill of high school principal positions. First of all, he wanted to spill all positions. After objections were received, he decided that he would spill only 35 positions. The Minister tried to get away with this by defining it as a conscience decision. However, this looked like being defeated in a legal fight with the Queensland Teachers Union. The Queensland Teachers Union threatened the Minister that if he continued to try to spill those 35 positions, there would be a legal fight.

What did the Minister and the Government do? They decided to subtly introduce a regulation in a recent edition of the *Queensland Government Gazette*. The Minister has not had the guts to lay that regulation on the table today. He subtly included it in the regulations contained in last week's *Queensland Government Gazette*. He has decided to try to slip it through Parliament. I have a copy of that regulation. That regulation now gives the Minister and the Government the ability to spill any positions in relation to any office which is subject to an industrial award whereby the salaries, duties and designations of the office are modified. If this regulation is allowed to pass, not only will the Minister be able to stipulate the number of positions that he wants to spill but also he will be able to spill any position in the future—not just a teaching position but any position in the public service. The wording of the regulation is, "whereby the salaries, duties and designations of the office are modified". If this Parliament allows that regulation to be passed, it will mean that in the future any Minister can get rid of a person by increasing his salary or changing his job description, changing his designation of office, and then saying that his office, his position, has to be spilled. That is ridiculous.

At this stage, in order to achieve his aims, the Minister wants to spill 35 positions. However, because of his desire to politicise the Education Department, because of his great desire to get rid of certain Education Department personnel, and because of his desire to have ALP sympathisers in the department, he has fallen into his own trap. The reason for that is that if this regulation is passed, the Minister will be allowed to spill 35 positions, but it will also allow him to say that he will not spill any positions. If this regulation is passed, the Minister could make a conscious decision, if he wished, and say, "I will not spill any of the secondary school principal positions." That is the position into which the Minister has trapped himself. He is simply trying to save himself the embarrassment of having the Queensland Teachers Union saying to him, "You cannot stipulate 35 positions. It is either all principals or no principals." What did the Minister try to do? He tried to slip in a regulation which would allow him to do it but, of course, it also allows him to say, if he really wants to, "No positions may be spilled at all." Clearly, the Minister does not want that. Clearly, he cannot do that, because this is all part of the politicisation of the Education Department. An editorial from a newspaper in a Labor Party electorate states—

"What a cynical exercise in bureaucratic self-seeking we are seeing in this latest move by the Education Department."

I will deal now with the politicisation of the whole Education Department. Within a few weeks of assuming power in 1989, the Minister brought to Brisbane a group of his friends and ALP supporters to advise him on how he should organise the Education Department. First of all, honourable members saw the many subtle resignations and retirements of Education Department personnel. Many of them took correspondence school positions. Many others retired or took outside jobs. Then there was *Education—Have Your Say* and the resulting booklet *Focus on Schools*. That was clearly a softener for the public. Then there was the reorganisation of the upper echelon of the Education Department, with the miraculous rise to the top of the tree of a couple of the Minister's friends and a couple of dead set ALP sympathisers and, of course, the implementation of new policies such as the one with respect to equal opportunity. People from interstate are coming to Queensland and taking top jobs. Now the wives of top people in the Health Department are being given jobs. All of a sudden the wives who have been left down in Canberra for a couple of months are coming up to Queensland and being given jobs. Many capable administrators were not given jobs at the start of 1991.

Clearly, most people within the Education Department see the appointments as political and the decision to drop some administrators as being based on politics. Anyone who has had the audacity to criticise these decisions has been threatened. In fact, one person, who wrote a letter to the paper, has now been told not to apply for a new position. That is politicisation! Honourable members saw that occur in South Australia during the Dunstan period when anyone over 35 was moved sideways. In South Australia it was called a lateral arabesque, and I suppose that Dunstan's involvement was the reason why the word "arabesque" was used. Anyone in the Queensland Education Department now over 35 years of age will be moved sideways—a lateral arabesque as it was called in South Australia. Queenslanders will see that happen in this present reorganisation because the Minister has to remove some principals if he is to move the upper echelon people who have missed out on jobs down into the principal positions area. If he is to allow for equal opportunity and interstate transfers, which quite obviously he wants to do, he has to deliberately spill those 35 principal positions.

What has the Minister done to allow him to do that? He has introduced a specific regulation, and tried to hide it in the *Education Gazette*, which allows him to spill as many positions as he wishes. Not only the Education Department but also the rest of the public service will now be affected. The Education Department is absolutely wracked by politicisation. I ask the Minister how he would honestly feel if he was 45 years old, with a wife and family, whom he had transferred all the way around Queensland in order to reach the position of being one of the top 35 principals. Because the Minister has politicised the bureaucracy, he is now saying to those principals that their positions must be spilled. They must lose their positions. No wonder the newspapers are full of community rejection of what the Minister is trying to achieve. The principals themselves completely reject the theory. It is politicisation at its very worst. Similar measures were provided in the Gaming Machine Bill. Now honourable members are faced with this regulation.

Time expired.

#### **Australian Banking Industry Ombudsman Scheme**

**Ms ROBSON** (Springwood) (10.10 a.m.): Today I wish to speak about the Australian banking industry ombudsman scheme, which was put into place federally about nine months ago. This scheme was long fought for by the consumer movement and the community in general. The concept is that the scheme gives consumers and users of banking services the opportunity to make complaints and have those complaints redressed through a specific ombudsman. Since the inception of the scheme and up until February this year, the ombudsman, Mr Graham McDonald, had received more than 1 000 written complaints and had answered some 5 500 telephone inquiries. This particular scheme has a multiplicity of uses for consumers because there has always been a problem in terms of addressing what consumers consider to be wrongs committed by banks. Even

to this day, with the ombudsman scheme in place, it is not an easy task for consumers to seek and achieve redress by banks.

I will outline briefly the powers and duties of the ombudsman and then make some general comments. The powers and duties of the ombudsman are to consider disputes relating to the provision within Australia of banking services by any bank—a member or a designated associate—to any individual, and to facilitate the satisfaction, settlement or withdrawal of such disputes whether by agreement, by making recommendations or awards or by such other means as seem expedient. The ombudsman may give advice on the procedure for referring a dispute to him, but it is not a function of the ombudsman to provide general information about banking services. He may require a bank named in a complaint to provide any information relating to the dispute the subject of the complaint, which is, or is alleged to be, in its possession. If the bank possesses such information, it shall, as soon as is reasonably practicable, disclose it to the ombudsman, which indicates a sense of timeliness in terms of redressing complaints. There is a requirement that disputes are in fact settled within a given period.

If any party to a dispute supplies information to the ombudsman and requests that he treat it as confidential, the ombudsman shall not disclose that information to any other party to the dispute or any other person, except with the consent of the first-mentioned party. The provision in that section protects the privacy of a complainant against some form of retribution or action against the complainant. Where a party to a dispute requests access to information on the ombudsman's file, the ombudsman shall make that information available, subject to section 6 of the Act. A final provision, which I think is quite important, is that, notwithstanding section 15 of the Act, the ombudsman shall not be bound by any legal rules of evidence. It is a fairly low-key approach to dispute resolution, which is a practice that is creeping in

across-the-board generally in the system of tribunals and the resolving of disputes.

One of the first criticisms that I wish to make in terms of the participation by banks in this scheme is that the scheme is designed to protect all consumers of banking services and yet Queensland's two major banks, Metway and the Bank of Queensland, are not participants. When the scheme was introduced on 18 June 1990, the Metway Bank indicated that it wished to sit back and watch how the scheme worked before it actually participated. I note that some nine months down the track, the bank still has not decided to join the scheme, and it would be interesting to hear what its reasons are for not doing that. However, in December last year, in an interview that was conducted on behalf of *Business Queensland* by the journalist, Louise Brannelly, the Metway Bank representative stated that, at this stage, it only handles complaints from individuals and that in time it will probably extend the scheme to cover incorporated bodies. However, the bank believed that it was well enough structured to deal effectively and efficiently with disputes. I might comment at this stage that there is no requirement by either mandatory or statutory regulation which in fact forces banks to keep records of complaints or makes it mandatory that they keep records of complaints. It is very difficult to assess how the nature of those complaints is dealt with, how effectively they are dealt with and how satisfied or otherwise consumers are.

One of the functions of the Act is that the ombudsman would be able to gather statistics and keep records. The Metway Bank claimed that it had received very few complaints and therefore it was not necessary for it to join the scheme. Mr McDonald, the ombudsman, made comments relating to the cost of dealing with consumer complaints. He said that if there was no dispute there would not be a cost to anyone. Therefore, he could not see why it would not be relevant for Metway to join in with the spirit of the scheme.

The Bank of Queensland general manager, Mr Graham Hart, said that "the scheme is an initiative of the major banks and the Bank of Queensland was only invited to join the scheme subsequent to its establishment". He said that the Bank of Queensland was not involved in the initial discussions in terms of setting-up the ombudsman's office and therefore his bank did not see any obligation to participate in it. Mr Hart said—

"We don't perceive we have the same need to address public image as the major banks who established the scheme.

We will see how the scheme develops overall and will make an assessment in the future."

My comment in response to that is that the idea of the scheme was notionally to establish some line of confidence in banks with consumers and users of their services. Quite frankly, the confidence in the banking system Australiawide has diminished quite considerably. I refer to actions such as those we have seen recently whereby banks have included in their ever-growing lists of fees and charges a charge for any account which has a balance of less than \$500 at any given time. This indicates clearly to me—and I have received at my electorate office many calls about this—that people who are on a low income or a fixed income, those who choose not to keep large amounts of money in the bank or who do not have large amounts of money in the bank, are being discriminated against. Personally, I cannot see any good reason for that. Having had a brief look at some banking figures, it seems to me that those small accounts make up quite a substantial capital base which the banks use for investment in return for their larger clients. So I cannot see why costs should be impounded downwards on the holders of accounts containing small amounts. That is particularly the case when, by and large, the holders of those accounts are people whose income is fixed or low.

I personally endorse the scheme; it is endorsed by the community sector and, by and large, it is endorsed by the banks. It gives the banks some sort of an out in terms of dispute resolution. It gives them some guidelines. The guidelines that are set up under the Act are very clear. They substantially set the parameters for the operation of banks in dispute resolution. In a sense, this scheme can save banks a lot of staff-time and money because there is a formal structure, which has been set up by the Federal Government, that will do that mediating for them.

Under the scheme, a compensation award of up to \$100,000, which is quite a substantial amount, can be made. As I said before, the number of telephone calls and written complaints that have been lodged indicate that the scheme has been largely endorsed by the using community. One of the areas in which it has been very hard to negotiate with banks is in relation to the terms and conditions of loans. The ombudsman, Mr McDonald, said that this accounts for some 25 per cent of the complaints. That clearly indicates that the rhetoric that has been going on in the community over the years about the way in which banks establish loans, the lack of competition between banks and the fixing of terms and conditions between the banks has been a major problem for consumers, and one about which they have felt very concerned. Recently, I noted in the media that banks are starting to compete by offering, in particular, mortgage loans with no legal fees being charged, and other incentives. That is a healthy sign which I attribute largely to the fact that this scheme has now been operating for nine months.

I call on the Queensland banks—the Metway Bank and the Bank of Queensland—to join in the spirit of this scheme, which has been very successful not only for consumers and users of banking systems but also for the banks themselves. I call on the banks to clean up their image, to get in there with it and to show their goodwill to the public of Queensland, whom the Government encourages to invest with them so that funds are circulated through the Queensland economy. The retrograde step taken by those banks by not participating in this scheme only bodes badly for them. I encourage them to reconsider their decision.

### **Education Department Appointments**

**Mr QUINN** (South Coast) (11.20 a.m.): In October last year, the Education Department prepared a report called *Focus on Schools*, which sought to address some of the problems facing teachers and children in State schools in Queensland. The Liberal Party agrees with many of the recommendations in that report. They are designed to improve the organisation of educational services for students. However, there are several key areas that the Liberal Party rejects totally. One of those relates to the manner in which dedicated and capable personnel are being treated and the very obvious political

results of this reorganisation. Teachers and parents should be in no doubt about a hidden agenda behind the Government's decision to spill the positions of 130 senior personnel within the department.

This action, along with the spilling of 35 special class high school principals scattered throughout the State, is not being undertaken for the sole benefit of students, as is often claimed by the Minister for Education. Rather, there is a deliberate plan to install Labor cronies and sympathisers in sensitive and influential positions at all levels within the education system. This move, driven by the Education Minister on orders from above, is ripping apart the careers of dedicated, competent, long-serving educational administrators and placing enormous pressure on both their professional and family lives. The education of children has been put on hold until July, when officers will be officially informed whether or not they have any future with the department and what that future will be. This blatant politicisation is being undertaken under the guise of implementing the *Focus on Schools* report. In making this statement today, I intend to focus on how this is happening, the process involved and its outcome.

My major concern lies with the way in which the Labor Party is manipulating the system for its own political advantage and ultimately to the detriment of schoolchildren in this State. Within the Education Department the percentage of political appointments will be small, but they will be installed in powerful positions that will enable the Minister to adopt a hands-off approach but still retain his political influence throughout the system. It is no accident that some of the appointments within the head office of the department have been filled by people who have been vehement critics of the policies of the previous Government, actively supported the Labor Party or who have undeniable links with the Minister for Education.

Perhaps the most blatant of those appointments is that of Frank Peach, a senior officer who was widely recognised as an ALP ticket-holder. In the old structure of the department, Frank Peach was Associate Director of Secondary Schooling in the Division of Schools. In seniority, he was third in that division—roughly equivalent to an assistant regional director. Overall, he would have been lucky to be counted within the first 20 senior officers in head office and within the top 30 senior officers in the State. Peach was selected to head the policy unit, which produced the *Have Your Say* and *Focus on Schools* documents before the restructuring began. During that period, Peach reported directly to, and worked closely with, the Minister for Education. Under the patronage of the Minister, Peach's star has risen dramatically to that of Deputy Director-General (Programs), which is arguably the second most powerful position within the department. Peach has risen from position 30 to position two. Others like Peach have been rewarded for their past efforts and loyalties with key positions within the department. They now effectively control the working lives of 40 000 employees. Transfers or promotions of personnel and changes to school curricula cannot be effected without their knowledge and approval.

Of the 20-odd positions filled to date, almost half have more than a touch of politics about them. Long-serving senior officers are all too well aware of the current situation. Selections have been decided by a panel consisting of a representative of the Public Service Management Commission, which is widely regarded within the public service as the Premier's hatchet team, and two political appointees from the Education Department, one of whom is Peach, and a senior officer from another department. Because an applicant's previous service record and ability to do a job carry little weight, the interviews and written applications appear to be the sole basis for selection. Yet the majority of the members of the panel have little or no experience in schools or educational organisation. How are they to determine the credibility and credentials of applicants as excellent administrators in the eyes of school personnel? Merit is the stated criterion for selection, but no definition of "merit" has ever been published. Interviewees are asked to project themselves into the positions for which they have applied. Under those circumstances, the use of an interview as the sole tool for selection is highly questionable. In truth, the whole process has been a sham from the start. Every effort has been made

to give it a thin veneer of fairness, but behind the scenes selective bias and favouritism are in operation.

Applicants for the vacant positions did not receive equal treatment. Some were specifically encouraged to apply. Others were given coaching in interview techniques and assistance in the preparation of their curricula vitae. Some were interviewed for 50 minutes by the selection panel, whereas others were afforded only 15 minutes. Some who applied for the positions that they held were given only a cursory interview. Their nominated referees were not consulted, even though they were told that that would be so. Such was the speed and ruthlessness with which particular applications were dismissed. As a result, two senior officers were dispatched to early retirement. Four others were placed on temporary assignment. Appointments have been touted as the best available, but some obvious incompetents have been installed.

Applications from interstate were invited, ostensibly to secure the best person available. Whenever that process has occurred elsewhere in the public service, a considerable number of refugees from the south have been appointed. In order to fill the Government's gender equity quota, in the last few hours prior to nominations reaching Cabinet for approval a number of female applicants were interviewed as a matter of urgency. If one sex has a quota of positions reserved for it, appointment by genuine merit is a farce. Female officers obtaining appointment under that system will never know whether they are token appointments to satisfy Government policy or officers capable of achieving their career goals through open competition. Fellow officers must also share those same misgivings.

One officer secured a position against competition from officers who had superior qualifications and experience. More than 100 officers were effectively ranked higher than the successful candidate. The promotion was made after a school assessment by a panel of departmental personnel which placed that officer low on the order of merit compared with similar colleagues. When deceit, blatant favouritism and political consideration are used to obtain the desired result, where are the Government's much-advertised principles of equity, social justice and equal employment opportunities? If the process is selectively biased, all appointments made by that process remain suspect. It is a tragedy that competent and non-political officers who have secured positions on genuine merit must also bear the same odour as the political appointments. Some officers have presented and will continue to present themselves before selection panels containing political appointees, without a chance of being fairly assessed. The panel's collective decision would have been determined before the interviews took place.

The message to the remaining officers who have yet to see the reality of this situation is loud and clear: in many cases, do not expect a fair deal. You will not get it. This is supported by the fact that some Labor Party branches and members of this House have openly taken credit for the demise of particular officers on the grounds of their perceived political affiliations. Even the rank and file is aware of the method and ease with which officers can be cast adrift and more politically acceptable replacements installed. This reduces the Education Department, its employees and students to a Labor toy to be manipulated at will for political purposes. When the current reorganisation of the department is completed, many senior officers above the position of school principal will be without a position. Because only 2 per cent of the current officers are female, a 25 per cent gender equity quota will displace even more than the anticipated 40 officers.

The Government also proposes to spill the special class of high schools. That has sent a shiver of fear through most school principals. The Education Minister has conveniently forgotten that all teachers and principals are assessed prior to promotion and that their current positions have been attained on merit. The recent salary increases are simply a recognition that they have been underpaid for a number of years. To now declare those positions vacant, rewrite the job descriptions and call for applications is the same as changing the rules while the game is still being played. Those 35 principals have been singled out. Using that as a precedent, the Government could attempt to justify extending the spill to more schools at a later date. No principal could have

confidence in a selection panel comprising three senior officers appointed under an unfair and unbiased system, especially when one panel member is the Deputy Director-General (Programs). Principals are not on contract. Even if they are successful in regaining their positions, they can be transferred by the director-general to any special class high school within the State. Unsuccessful candidates will be effectively demoted and most certainly transferred to another school, providing that one is vacant. That is despite the fact that many of them gained their existing positions over a long period after serving in many different schools in various parts of the State. No-one has yet spelt out what will happen if suitable schools are not available for those principals. In extending the spill to school principal level, there will exist an unbroken chain of political patronage stretching from the Minister's office to the class room level. Officers will be either the Government's own supporters or staff who are intimidated into providing politically acceptable advice.

Time expired.

**Mr DOLLIN** (Maryborough) (11.30 a.m.): It gives me much pleasure to rise to speak in the debate today. I will speak about the wool industry, mainly because it is obvious that it will concern all of us. Because of the grave crisis in which the wool industry now finds itself, we are being asked to subsidise that industry for hundreds of millions of dollars. To a large degree, it is a story of greed and hunger for profits taking over from common sense and falling world markets with a floor price that the world was not prepared to pay. While the Australian Wool Corporation kept the prices up around 800c a kilogram and higher, it was obvious that the world was only prepared to pay about 500c a kilogram. Members probably wonder why we have not heard much lately from members on the Opposition benches about wool. As my story unfolds, I am sure that honourable members will understand why. We no longer hear the Opposition condemning the Federal Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Kerin, for his handling of the wool crisis. At long last, they have seen the crows come in and settle, and they know where they are settling.

In the early 1970s, the floor price scheme for wool was introduced. It virtually allowed the industry to govern itself and to set its own prices, marketing arrangements and production levels. That was fatal.

**Mr Johnson:** They used their own money.

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

**Mr DOLLIN:** Things went along pretty well for many years. As the gentleman interjected, they used their own money. The AWC was running the show with little or no Government interference. It kept creeping the price up until it reached 870c a kilogram. If it could not sell the wool at that price, the AWC did not worry much, as it applied a level to the growers, asked for a Government guarantee and stacked the wool up into a heap, which grew bigger and bigger. However, it still kept increasing the price. The AWC seemed oblivious to the good seasons, the potential for overproduction and the threat of the collapse of world markets and was not prepared to listen to economists or, for that matter, anyone else. It was obvious to everybody what was going to happen in Europe.

**Mr Booth** interjected.

**Mr DOLLIN:** Without the communists, we do not have a market.

**Mr Booth:** They are freezing to death because——

**Mr DOLLIN:** Without the communists, we do not have a market, so we must be concerned that they have a dollar or two. Instead, the AWC played politics, blaming the Federal Government and, in particular, Mr John Kerin for all of its misfortunes. It seemed incapable of understanding that it had arrived at the greatest wool crisis that

Australian industry has faced in well over a hundred years and it did not seem to have a clue as to the reason for the crisis or what to do about it, apart from playing politics, abusing everybody else and not looking at itself. In July 1989, the Australian Wool Corporation wool stockpile stood at 10 000 bales. By December 1990, it had ballooned to 4.26 million bales. That would make Mount Everest look small. Based on a price of 700c a kilogram, that mountain of wool was valued at \$4.8 billion. That debt plus other borrowings of the AWC is guaranteed by the Australian taxpayer, in all amounting to almost \$300 billion. We have not always ridden on the back of the sheep. We always end up riding on the back of the worker. Storage and interest on that massive Government-guaranteed debt is \$350m to \$400m a year. Growers now ask that that debt be paid by the Australian taxpayer.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Gregory will cease interjecting. The member for Maryborough is making the speech, not the member for Gregory. I warn him under Standing Order No. 123A to cease interjecting.

**Mr DOLLIN:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your protection. If John Kerin had not stepped in and set up an inquiry, forcing the AWC, the Wool Council and industry-leaders to make a proper evaluation of the whole situation thus allowing them to see that they could not go on accumulating debt at such nightmarish levels, they would still be stockpiling. For that, John Kerin received nothing but condemnation. He was abused and called all sorts of names. People talked about how many millions of dollars in profit he had taken off the wool-growers. It was an airy-fairy price of 820c a kilogram that nobody in the world was prepared to pay. After spending weeks blaming everything and everybody except itself, the AWC decided that the next best thing to do was to shoot its way out of its problems.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** Are you aware that in Europe you just can't buy a woollen scarf because wool has been priced right out of the market? All you can buy are acrylic scarves.

**Mr DOLLIN:** I would not be surprised. The AWC then paid growers to shoot their sheep. In turn, it taxed the growers so that it could have the money to pay them to shoot their own sheep. Why the Australian Wool Corporation went for its guns in that situation is hard to understand. Perhaps because Sir William Gunn was the godfather of the floor price scheme, the AWC thought that it ought to stick to its guns. It is a shame that our own honourable member, Mr Billy Gunn, is not here today. That would have made a lot of guns. It did not make much sense. Most farmers were unhappy about it and are pleased to see it stopped.

We have not heard much from Opposition members about all of this because, at last, they now realise that they are getting a much better deal from John Kerin than they would ever get from their own Federal Opposition colleagues—Dr Hewson, Mr Fischer, Mr Lloyd and Mr McLachlan. An recent article in the *Courier-Mail* stated—

"The Federal Opposition yesterday accused the Wool Council of irresponsibility over demanding a government bail-out after the end of the reserve price scheme.

Liberal front-bencher Mr Ian McLachlan said wool growers who wanted the Government to pick up all the industry's debts were trying to socialise their losses."

Now they want to be socialists. The article continues—

"He said the Wool Council had continually demanded independence without government interference. But now that it was in trouble it wanted 'total interference in the form of a complete government bail-out'."

They just want the taxpayer to take over the bill. The article continues—

"That simply is not a responsible position for any industry to take, or its representatives, Mr McLachlan said.

Mr McLachlan, the Opposition's industry and commerce spokesman, is a former National Farmer's Federation President. He is one of Australia's biggest wool producers. The opposition is under fire from many woolgrowers for seeking the total dismantling of the reserve price scheme.

Legislation going through Parliament is aimed at suspending the scheme so wool sales can resume under a free market system, but with growers' returns being topped up to 700 cents a kilo with deficiency payments until June 30."

That is thanks to Mr Kerin. The article continues—

"After that the Government may reintroduce a much lower priced reserve scheme"—

but the study has recommended that that does not happen—

"in line with the market but senior advisers expect it to abandon a floor price completely. The opposition wants to limit AWC borrowings for supplementary payments to \$200 million and in effect to put a total limit on AWC borrowings of \$3 billion. The present debt is \$2.8 billion.

The National Party deputy leader, Mr Lloyd, who is the Opposition's Primary Industry Spokesman said the Opposition especially the National Party would not bow to threats from the wool council. But the council president, Mr Chip Sawers, said the Council would spare no effort to ensure that all woolgrowers and others dependent on the industry, understood the failure of the Opposition to support them."

**Mr Johnson:** Did you write that?

**Mr DOLLIN:** I put it together.

Mr Lloyd, the National Party Federal shadow Minister for Primary Industries said that it was imperative to bury the floor price scheme so that overseas buyers could feel confident that there was no chance of the scheme ever being reintroduced. That is what the National Party's fellow had to say about it and that is what Kerin had been trying to tell them for a long time. The Vine report has recommended that the Wool Corporation be done away with and split up into three different bodies.

A great deal has been heard about the export of sheep to Egypt and the disasters that occurred. One learned gentleman accused the wool industry of digging its own grave. The gentleman concerned is Mr Malcolm Fraser, who is a wool-grower himself. He branded industry leaders' opposition to vaccination as a condition for live sheep export as absolute madness. He said that many Australian shipments had been rejected by Saudi Arabia this year because they were riddled with disease. The disease is a horrid, pustulous, oozing condition. The animals will not eat and thus lose condition. The result is that the meat is tough. We cannot get the trade back unless someone has the guts to stand up and say that Australia has been at fault. Australia has been trying to sell sheep to the Middle East that it would not buy itself. Certainly no butcher in Australia would buy them. There is a major problem with the markets in the Middle East those responsible for it are industry leaders and those involved in the trade.

Time expired.

### **Wool Industry; Queensland Economy**

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (11.40 a.m.): In joining in this Matters of Public Interest debate today I plan to stray a little from my prepared script in order to comment on some of the statements made by the previous speaker. The statements made by the honourable member for Maryborough will have been recorded in this House, but it is vital that one or two facts be put into perspective and on the public record.

The honourable member indicated that the plight of the wool industry was caused basically through the greed and high-flying operations of wool-growers. I see the member for Archerfield nodding his head and other Government members similarly supporting the statements made by the member for Maryborough. It is necessary to understand that the wool industry floor price plan was funded 100 per cent by the wool-growers of this nation. For the record—and for the enlightenment of honourable members who obviously have no idea of the enormity of the problem and who are playing politics and trying to cover up the basis of the real problem—the floor price put in place by the wool industry in consultation with the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and the Minister for Primary Industries and Energy, Mr Kerin, was set at a level determined by the rise in the market.

**Mr Dollin** interjected.

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

**Mr STONEMAN:** The important part of my brief statement about this issue is that at no stage did the wool price ever drop near the floor price. It was always considerably in excess of the floor price right throughout the time it was at 700 cents and 870 cents.

**Mr Prest:** What rot!

**Mr STONEMAN:** I will take the interjection from the member for Port Curtis, who obviously does not have any knowledge of the wool industry when he says, "What rot!" I reiterate—at no stage did the sale price of wool go near the floor. It rose considerably in excess of that floor price at all levels until John Kerin made his statement which brought into question Government support for the floor price.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr STONEMAN:** If honourable members look at the March economic statement made by this State's Treasurer last year, the graph will show that until Kerin made his statement there was a parallel, but following the statement the price went straight through the floor overnight. The statement was made against the advice of buyers throughout the world who said, "Do not interfere with the floor price." That needs to go on record. One can argue about the pros and cons as to whether the floor price should have been 700 cents or 870 cents, but at no stage did the floor price come into effect until Kerin made his statement.

In response to the interjection from the member for Archerfield, who is another man who obviously has no knowledge whatsoever of the industry—I advise him and this House that when the price or market indicator was in excess of 1,000c a kilo for clean wool, the apparel market played only a very small role. The grower receives only a fraction of the cost of a suit. It is almost immaterial, irrespective of whether the suit costs \$1,000 or \$1,500. The fact of the matter is that in the apparel market, the costs are incurred after the wool is taken from the sheep. I suspect that the actual value of the raw wool contained in a suit costing \$500 or \$600 is approximately \$15 or \$18. That is based on wool costing 1,000c a kilo. Yet the member for Maryborough has the hide to say that the growers of this nation are greedy! The speech he has made will echo throughout the wool industry of this State and it will damn the Government.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr STONEMAN:** It was not my intention to enter into a debate on the wool industry, but I do so because I believe it is vital to put to rest the suggestions made by the honourable member for Maryborough. During the time remaining for my speech, I intend to briefly point out one or two economic indicators that are affecting this State. I am delighted that the Minister for Transport is in the House, because last night I was travelling to a Brisbane suburb with a taxi-driver who put his finger on the problem

confronting this State. As honourable members would have gathered from the speech made by previous speakers, this nation is being run by people who have no understanding of industry or government. The taxi-driver said, "They tell me Hamill has never done a day's work in his life." He was not referring to "work" in the academic or theoretical sense of the term; he was talking about commercial activity, such as taxi-driving, shop-keeping and rural industry work. Let me also refer to a letter published in the *Bulletin*, which says it all. It refers to a previous article, and states—

"I wonder if the good doctor reads at all? If so, she may recall the words of an H. G. Wells character: 'Yea, though I have escaped from the shadow of the Valley of Education, I fear no evil.'

There is nothing wrong with education as such, but voters, I think, will prefer a well-schooled but practical government which knows the realities of a farm, a business, a town or country household. Voters might ask whether a youngish minister, who must have spent perhaps 20 years between the start of kindergarten and acquiring various degrees, and years again in the rarefied air of a profession, found time to become much more than theorist.

I prefer the politician who can use hands as well as head."

In essence, that is what the taxi-driver said last night, and that describes the problem. I have in my possession figures relating to the half year ended 31 December that are interesting indicators of the state of the economy. For example, book-makers' turn-over tax revenue decreased by \$171,214, and I would suggest that that is a fairly major indicator of the way in which people are reacting. In contrast to that, casino revenue has increased by \$2.3m; Gold Lotto revenue has increased by \$7.6m; and Golden Casket revenue has increased by \$2.2m. I would suggest that, in desperation, people are turning to the much-vaunted gambling led recovery in Queensland. Of even greater concern is the fact that land tax revenue has increased by \$27,094,864, which represents a huge increase of 87 per cent that has been collected from these "greedy" people who are trying to get some dollars together to provide the resources that form the economic structure that is so important to this Government. In addition, payroll tax revenue increased by \$18,107,497. From those two components, approximately \$45m has been contributed to the economy of this State by the productive sector and the producers in this State are voting with their feet. Moreover, stamp duty has decreased by \$69,242,000, which is represented by a 16 per cent reduction. Surely that is also a major indicator of the confidence that is being lost in this State.

An article circulated by a New York based investment company, Sullivan Brothers, concludes that Australia's national economic growth will not be repeated in the March quarter, and it will be interesting to see the final figures. The indications from a survey of the relative risk of recession continuing over the next two years are that out of a total of 22 countries, Australia will be way out in front.

Time expired.

#### **Business Activities of Member for Burdekin; Loopholes in Corporate Law**

**Mr HAYWARD** (Caboolture) (11.51 a.m.): The invisible shadow Treasurer, the member for Burdekin, is a pathetic individual. He rises in this House and launches a personal attack by relating an imagined conversation he had with a taxi-driver. He is fond of making comments about other people's commercial activity, but I suggest his own commercial activity could not stand up to scrutiny in this Parliament. The way in which he behaves and carries on his activities has always remained a secret, yet if people cared to examine the type of commercial activity in which he engaged to get into Parliament—the type of commercial activity whereby he was constantly sucking up to Bjelke-Petersen to be endorsed—they would be horrified. Most National Party members who were part of the Bjelke-Petersen Government know that this is true. I am looking

at the member for Warwick, Des Booth, who is nodding his head. All members of this Parliament know what the member for Burdekin has done. He has not engaged in any commercial activity. He is a pathetic individual, a failed shadow Treasurer. Failure is all he represents and all he stands for. He has invented this story about a taxi-driver that he imagines he has bumped into.

**Mr Prest:** What about the shonky business with Wharton?

**Mr HAYWARD:** Exactly. What about the shonky little business deal he did in Burdekin when he was involved in some sort of an arrangement with the Housing Commission! Members of the Labor Party know the way in which he operates in his commercial activity. If it is not a jink that benefits the National Party, it has no chance. That is the way in which he operates. It is as simple as that, and he is a pathetic individual.

I wish to highlight to the Parliament what I consider to be a gross deficiency in the corporations law. The matter to which I specifically refer is the practice when a company is placed in receivership or liquidation and its directors proceed to become directors of another company without any form of penalty or sanction. The situation is so blatant that some directors have been known to redirect the telephone, redirect the mail and even take over and finish the work in progress of the previous company in which they were in a management position or of which they were directors. The victims are always the unsecured creditors and, in most cases, the secured creditors. In the case of a company going into receivership, the receiver is usually appointed by one of its secured creditors, which is usually a bank or a finance company. The security that they hold is usually over assets such as land and buildings which are owned by the company. All members of this Parliament would realise that this process involving banks and company directors does not happen overnight and that the directors are in a very good position to know exactly what is going on with the company with which they are involved and are able to put themselves into a position in which they can plan accordingly.

Perhaps the best-publicised example of what can happen relates to the activities on the Expo site of a company called Rathe Productions Incorporated. Members would recall an international scam in which a company known as Rathe Productions/Campbell Group (Joint Venture) Pty Ltd built many of the pavilions, managed them for the event and decommissioned them after the event. The company went into liquidation owing, on its proof of debt sheet, \$3.13m to creditors and, according to court affidavits which were tendered, the liquidators were only able to realise about \$300,000. What was important about that company was that its parent, Rathe Productions Incorporated, had its subsidiary wound up in similar fashion after the Vancouver Expo. It has continued to operate in that fashion. It has been alleged that, because Rathe Productions Incorporated built the US pavilion, the surplus that was received on that work was left in contracts handled by the US company. That information has never been disclosed to Australian creditors. The cost overruns were absorbed in the Australian joint venture. In other words, the income was loaded on the Rathe Productions Incorporated side of the deal and the joint venture carried all the cost overruns and other costs. The company's intention is to move to the next Expo in Seville, Spain and carry out a similar scam. At the creditors' meeting in Brisbane, creditors were so angry that the liquidator was instructed to write to the Seville Expo authorities to place them on notice about the company's activities and operational methods.

Members of this House have constituents who every day fall victim to similar scams--constituents who are unsecured creditors of these companies because they, the constituents, deal with them honestly and fairly. We all know that the ripple effect of liquidations flows through the whole community. A recent example of this ripple effect occurred in Caboolture and concerns a company called Jellyn Pty Ltd, which has been in receivership since 3 September 1990. The company's principal activity is described as corporate trustee. It traded Caboolture under the registered business name of Goldseal Constructions in. The company was principally concerned with the construction of RSL retirement units. Work was completed, the subcontractors, all unsecured creditors,

were not paid and the company was placed in receivership, as I said previously, on 3 September 1990. Meanwhile, one of that failed company's directors, Michael Colin Redford of Mackay, has remained a director of another construction company called Redford Constructions Pty Ltd, which continues to operate in the building industry. Amazingly, the trading name of Redford Constructions Pty Ltd is Redcon Constructions. The veil of corporate respectability has been used to protect another shyster in the building industry. What astounds me is that the people of Mackay continue to trade with this charlatan's company—a person who has left a bitter taste in the mouths of subcontractors and other creditors in Caboolture.

To an honest person, the role of a company director is a responsible one; to a shyster, it is a sham to be used to rob hard-working, honest people. The Corporations Act should be amended to ensure that people who are directors of a failed company cannot use the corporate veil and continue as directors of another company, especially in the same industry. There should be a statutory time limit for exclusion. The weakness means that creditors are unprotected. Even when the company is placed in receivership or liquidation, the administrator is appointed over the company and not the individual directors. That should be clearly understood by this Parliament. In the case of Jellyn Pty Ltd, the individual, Michael Colin Redford, simply walked away from the company leaving its affairs and debts behind.

Members of this Parliament who take an interest in construction activities in their electorates—I am sure that everybody does—would realise that many subcontractors and other suppliers gear up to complete a specific job. In this example at Caboolture, they were left to pay their employees, to pay for stock purchases and to complete the job, yet they received no money for it. The subcontractors become the punished people. Types such as Michael Colin Redford walk free while honest people are punished by debt and possible bankruptcy.

Most members would realise that the company structure is important to the capitalist system, particularly as a method of raising capital for ventures and not risking all of a shareholder's private assets. I am sure that all honourable members are aware of examples which have been brought to their attention. I know that my views are shared by many "insolvency" practitioners. The examples are frequent and most members of this Parliament would be aware of them. However, the time has come for Parliaments to get tough and deal with these corporate shysters. They are bleeding our towns and cities. Worse still, they breed a terrible cynicism in hard-working, honest people, because the system has betrayed them.

The law must be changed. As the law now stands, two of the sections which basically deal with this matter are sections 599 and 600 of the corporations law. Those sections deal with whether or not a person can manage certain corporations and how that operates. Section 600 is concerned with whether or not a liquidator has put in a report to the administered company to say that it is unable to pay its creditors 50c in the dollar. However, these two sections are ineffective because people escape by making all sorts of claims. They claim that the two relevant bodies were in fact only one entity or they engage legal counsel to argue that it was not their fault, that it was the result of a downturn in the company or factors that were outside their control. As I said, the law must be changed. There must be a requirement for a procedure whereby it can be objectively proven—

Time expired.

### **ELECTORAL DISTRICTS BILL** **Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 14 March (see p. 6870).

**Mr COOPER** (Roma—Leader of the Opposition) (12 noon): On behalf of the National Party Opposition, I rise in support of the Bill. It is major legislation in that it

provides the electoral system through which public opinion can be expressed at regular, free and fair elections. It embodies the principles that the National Party submitted to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission's Legislative Assembly electoral system review as being the matters to be taken into consideration when a distribution was conducted. Members of the Opposition believe it to be a fair system. The Opposition believes that the principles that have been embodied in the report, that is, the principles of weightage, community of interest, tyranny of distance and the unique nature of Queensland, have been largely embodied in this legislation. That was the determination from a totally and completely independent body and, as such, all sides should be satisfied with it. I am also satisfied that clause 4.5, which allows appeals against the determination of the commission, has been included, as this was also a proposal by my party to EARC.

It is of paramount importance that the electoral system should have general acceptance as fairly representing the will of the people. Without doubt, in spite of the fact that honourable members have heard quite a few ructions from certain minority groups recently, this Bill does have popular support. The principles on which it is based have been derived from the fairest of processes, that is, through the EARC—a completely independent body established by an Act of Parliament—which in turn was supported by all parliamentarians. All Queenslanders have had the opportunity, over quite a considerable period, to have input into the type of electoral system that Queensland should have. They have been able to do that by offering written submissions, making submissions at public hearings or commenting on the submissions that have been received. It was certainly a unique but also an extremely fair way of determining an issue of fundamental importance to the way in which the electoral system should operate. Honourable members should be confident, therefore, that this legislation will be the foundation on which the coming redistribution—and, may I stress, future redistributions—will be established.

Unfortunately, this legislation had hanging over it a shadow of uncertainty before it even began its passage through the House. When EARC's recommendations on the Legislative Assembly electoral system were released, the ALP and the Goss Labor Government tried to convince the electorate that the proposed electoral system was one vote, one value when it was quite obvious that it was not. Even the *Courier-Mail* stated in one of its editorials that it was a two-zonal system. If the *Courier-Mail* says that it is right, then it is right. However, at the same time there was a negative undercurrent towards the EARC recommendation emanating from Labor headquarters and the Premier's office. Uncomfortable and cautious words were tossed around in those august places. In the words of Queensland's most respected talk-back host, "The Premier did not embrace the report with both arms." At a later date, the very same respected talk-back host referred to the criticism of the EARC from the Labor side of politics. There is certainly no shortage of examples of criticism of its recommendations from the Labor side of politics.

Upon the release of the recommendations, the Premier said—

"The umpire in the review of the State's electoral laws is the Fitzgerald recommended EARC process."

That was certainly a big jump from the promise that the Premier made in May, in which he said—

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

It seems that the comments about the recommendations at Labor headquarters could only be described as terms that would be most unparliamentary.

The Labor Party endorsed the EARC recommendation on the basis of an undertaking given to the people at the 1989 election when the leader of that party said, "We will abide by the umpire's decision." It must be noted that no-one complained then. However, it seems that when that undertaking was given, Labor believed that the umpire would endorse its policy of one vote, one value, and that just did not happen. The policy purists of the Labor Party were most displeased when senior Labor Party officials said

that they had to go along with the recommendations. The rank and file members of the Labor Party should be accustomed to the Goss Government ignoring or overturning party policy. I cite the example of its policy on four-year parliamentary terms. It was written into its policy booklet that there be four-year terms with three-year minimum terms. When it became expedient, that was overthrown. Of course, that, too, blew up in their faces.

The EARC recommendations were a matter that was discussed by the powerful State council of the Labor Party. It is reported that the campaign director armed himself with speeches and advertisements from the State election campaign in order to convince the council to support the senior party officials who had already endorsed the EARC recommendations. It is understood that this had to be done to overcome the intense lobbying amongst delegates against the EARC recommendations. At that time, much emphasis was put on the sovereign rights of Parliament. According to one senior journalist, there was a body of opinion that the ALP should use its numbers to introduce party policy. According to reports, the State council made it clear that the Labor Party supported a uniform quota while accepting the EARC recommendations. Despite all the rhetoric, the Goss Government's commitment to the State Labor Party's policy is just paying pure lip-service to this Bill because its policy is in fact one vote, one value. There is no commitment.

**Mr Welford:** Hear, hear!

**Mr COOPER:** I hear, "Hear, hear!" That is the Labor Party's policy, is it not?

**Mr Welford:** Yes.

**Mr COOPER:** Yes. And that is what the Government is going to introduce after the next election. It will not give a commitment to the EARC process beyond this one. After the next election, if it gets there, I can see one vote, one value being introduced.

The Premier himself admitted that the acceptance of the EARC recommendations "would need a lot of explaining to party members" and went on to say, "We have got some way to go before this matter is resolved once and for all." I would say that there is quite a long way to go as far as members opposite are concerned because at this time they are only paying lip-service to it. At that time the Premier was referring to the all-party parliamentary EARC committee and probably hoping that it would be able to find a way out of the policy dilemma for the party and his Government. After all, the chairman of that committee was and still is Mr Matt Foley, who is a high profile and public advocate of equal suffrage. The party was hoping that Mr Foley and his members could pull a rabbit out of the hat and perhaps save the day on that score.

For better or for worse for the Labor Party, the parliamentary EARC chairman, on presenting the committee's majority report, admitted that Labor members of the committee did not agree with the recommendations of EARC but felt duty bound to endorse them because of the Government's pre-election promise.

**Mr Littleproud:** But now they're working their way around it.

**Mr COOPER:** Now they are working their way around it. We can see it coming. I will say more on that later.

The parliamentary EARC committee chairman did make his views clear about the electoral system proposed by EARC. He stated, "It's an inequality of votes with which I'm not happy." He told another media outlet that he was very sorely tempted to reject the weightage system. It seems that this unhappiness with the EARC recommendation permeated debate in the all-party parliamentary EARC committee. The National Party members on that committee presented a dissenting report to the Parliament, as it was certainly concerned with the qualified acceptance of the EARC electoral system recommendation. I certainly commend those two members, Messrs Stoneman and FitzGerald, for their commitment and dedication to that report. I also commend the National Party itself, whose principles eventually were adopted.

The dissenting report states—

"We are particularly concerned that the majority report is, in effect, largely a document of political rhetoric which panders to specific groups and individuals in quite an uneven manner. In many instances, the report of the majority damns the Commission with faint praise while using the 'tripartite agreement' (signed by Messrs Ahern, Goss and Innes before Commissioner Fitzgerald QC on 21-7-89) as the basis for reluctant acceptance of the recommendations. In our view this is quite outside the responsible actions of what one would think the public view of an all party report to Parliament should most properly constitute."

Madonna King's report in the *Courier-Mail* on the parliamentary majority report stated—

". . . by any standard was a waste of paper. Three months, parliamentary meetings and goodness knows how much taxpayers' money resulted in . . . a report which does nothing more than remind voters of a 1989 pre-election political promise."

In the lead up to the December 1990 closing date for comments on the EARC recommendations to the parliamentary EARC committee, proponents of one vote, one value, who have the dubious reputation of being nothing more than fronts for the ALP, also attacked the recommendations. The Citizens for Democracy mounted a public campaign against weighted votes, some academics long associated with the Labor Party in this State complained, and the Citizens Against Corruption warned that this was a gerrymander. A group of political activists, including well-known academics associated with the Labor Party, formed the Queensland Electoral Watchdog Committee to campaign against the recommendations. It stated, "EARC had derailed the reform agenda set in place by . . . Tony Fitzgerald." The ground for complaint was that it set a dangerous international precedent as the EARC decision had breached the international covenant on civil and political rights. This group endorsed the equal suffrage opinion that Tony Fitzgerald had given to the Labor Party in 1987 and rejected the EARC interpretation of the covenant which was founded on the advice of Canadian academic, Professor Philip Alston.

The watchdog group stated that Mr Fitzgerald, QC, had endorsed the principle of universal suffrage on the same grounds that Professor Alston had used to justify vote weightage under the international covenant. They argued that EARC's use of the international covenant on civil and political rights, Article 25(A), to justify vote weighting was foolhardy by world standards and possibly a world first.

Far too much has been said and made of the phrase "equal suffrage". Excessive claims should not be made about it without careful analysis of the results. It has been held up to be the perfect system, yet under the so-called principle some of the most blatant gerrymanders have flourished, rendering results whereby Governments can win office with a minority of the votes. These equal suffrage gerrymanders have occurred under all Labor Governments. At the State level, the National and Liberal Parties in Queensland would need to win 52.2 per cent of the vote to hold a majority of these seats. At the national level, the conservative parties must obtain 51.9 per cent of the total vote to win a majority of the Federal seats. One may ask: what is the Electoral Watchdog Committee doing about that particular gerrymander? At the 1988 New South Wales State poll, also based on one vote, one value, the Liberal and National Parties needed 52.5 per cent of the two party preferred vote to win.

Malcolm Mackerras, a senior lecturer in politics at Duntroon Military College and an acknowledged expert observer of Australian politics, made the statement that, in his view, the previous new electoral boundaries were the worst example of a gerrymander existing in Australia. In fact, he continued that the one vote, one value redistribution managed by Labor Governments has proven itself to be a flawed system. Every Labor Government has held onto government without obtaining a majority of the votes. So prevalent is this that a procedure should be devised to ensure that the Government of the day does win a majority of the votes on a two party preferred system. Failing this, at least there should be a compulsory redistribution to try to rectify the problem.

It is interesting to note that the so-called civil libertarians sitting opposite criticised the National Party for winning government with 39 per cent of the primary vote and, after that, a comfortable majority on a two party preferred basis, yet at the last Federal election they said nothing about the fact that Mr Hawke won government with a primary vote of 39 per cent. We did not hear one word about it. We have heard much about the white-anting of the EARC recommendation by satellite ALP groups and the lack of commitment from the Labor Party and the Labor Government. That gives rise to major concern. Those concerns have not been allayed, even by acceptance of this Bill at this time, but have been increased. Those concerns derive from reported statements that the Premier "may go to the polls early to obtain a mandate to change the weightage recommended by EARC". That is on the agenda. It is important to note that, when questioned about it, the Premier said that he "wouldn't rule out the possibility that the future Labor Government"—presumably his next—"wouldn't wipe out the recommended system and introduce a complete one vote, one value system with no weightages whatsoever". He gave no guarantees against that whatever.

So it is with a sense of unease that the Opposition debates the Electoral Districts Bill, absolutely unsure of the extent of its life under a Labor Government. The unease about the future of the electoral system was accentuated when one read the recommendations of the majority report of the parliamentary committee. I refer to the dissenting report of Messrs Stoneman and FitzGerald, who said—

"The priority recommendations for future review are narrow in content and focus specifically on international law, services for Members of Parliament and ultimate entrenchment, one would assume, of a system compatible with the philosophy of the majority. We are intrigued that although our suggestion that the electors should be recognised in any future review, this basic democratic right has not seen the light of day in the Report of the majority."

People are being left out of it; they are being left with no say at all and with no consideration whatever being given to them. If entrenchment was so important to the members who wrote the majority report of the all-party parliamentary EARC committee, why then did the majority report not propose entrenchment of this Bill? The answer is quite simple: the principle on which the electoral system contained in this Bill is based is one to which the Labor Party is philosophically opposed. I challenge the Government to entrench it and keep it as it is.

As I said at the beginning of my speech, this legislation is probably the most important legislation that this House will consider this year. As I said also, the Opposition supports this Bill. It is one of the most important pieces of legislation to come before this House this year because, for the first time in about 40 years or a little bit more, it alters the electoral system of this State. That is significant. It behoves all members of Parliament and all the people of this State who are interested in the political system or politics to enter into the spirit of the new system. We do so accordingly. I dare say that all political parties will be competitive in their approach and accept the fact that this new system has been derived from very extensive consultation throughout the State. Everyone has had the opportunity to have input into it.

However, there is one aspect of the Bill that we in the Opposition believe is defective. The Bill fails to ensure a trigger mechanism for further redistributions. Clause 3.3 (4) (d) at line 15 states—

"until the State is again distributed into electoral districts in accordance with law."

I cannot find anything in the Bill that describes what is required under "in accordance with law". In the Federal electoral legislation there is a trigger mechanism which ensures that a redistribution takes place at certain times. There is nothing in this Bill to ensure that. So it is clear that, in the absence of provisions for a further distribution, the current distribution requirements set out in clause 3.3 (4) (d) are completely and utterly unworkable. It is certainly of great concern that a provision dealing with subsequent distributions has been omitted. The only explanation I have is that it may have something to do with an internal compromise within the Labor Party to enable it to move for a

one vote, one value redistribution immediately after the next election—that is, of course, if it wins the next election.

**Mr Welford:** That's nonsense.

**Mr COOPER:** We will remember the honourable member. All we ask is that the Government give that commitment. We would like to see written into the legislation some commitment to trigger mechanisms for future distributions.

At the Committee stage, I will be moving that a new Part 3A be inserted to provide for subsequent distributions. I hope it will receive the support of the Government—there is no reason on earth why it should not—and this will then go some way toward easing the concerns in the community about the future of the electoral system that is contained in this Bill before the House. It is also with a certain degree of sorrow that I say I fear for the future of this Bill, as all of the hallmarks indicate that its life is limited by this Labor Government and the Labor Party. There is no commitment at all to the principles on which this Bill is founded; really, there is merely lip-service. It would be a democratic tragedy if EARC's review of the electoral system, which had the support of the vast majority of Queenslanders, should come to nought and be replaced by a party political electoral system, which would be uppermost in the minds of Government members. I again remind all members of this House that a commitment was given to abide by the decision of the umpire—EARC. When EARC recognised factors such as weightage, community of interest, tyranny of distance and the unique nature of this State, two parties then honoured that commitment—and so they should have. Otherwise, what is the purpose of giving commitments of such an important nature?

The Opposition is worried that quite a few Government members and their supporters have an abiding faith in the system of one vote, one value; that they can no longer accept the umpire's decision and are tending to walk away from it. Honourable members will see the proof of that in the Opposition's foreshadowed amendments that will provide a trigger mechanism for future distributions based on the principles established by EARC. I believe that it has been established that, by allowing for a two-zonal system and the principles of weightage, tyranny of distance, community of interest and so forth, under this new legislation the vast, sparsely populated areas of this State will remain as massive electorates. There is no way in the world that any one member will be able to provide adequate personal service to people in those areas. Nevertheless, this legislation recognises the principle of weightage. The Opposition believes that it is absolutely justified that people in sparsely populated areas receive reasonable political representation similar to that afforded to people in more closely settled areas. It is possible for constituents in closely settled areas to receive the benefits of close political representation.

The Opposition recognises the remoteness, loneliness and disadvantages experienced by people living in remote parts of the State. It believes that because those areas are very productive, they must be populated and maintained. People in those districts are entitled to a reasonable amount of political representation. They have that under this legislation. The Opposition wants this Government to give a commitment to future distributions via the trigger mechanisms contained in the Opposition's foreshadowed amendments. The Opposition commends the Minister for introducing this legislation and supports it. Hopefully, the Government will give a commitment to future distributions, and that this legislation will not be solely a stopgap measure.

**Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (12.25 p.m.):** This Bill abolishes the repugnant zonal system which for decades has been a blight on Queensland democracy. Clause 1.2 of this Bill repeals that engine of injustice which was the hallmark of the previous Government. Section 5 of the Electoral Districts Act of 1985 set out four zones. That section and that Act will henceforth be known only as a matter of history. They will no longer be shackles upon democracy in Queensland because, with the passage of this Act, the zonal system will be gone, and gone for good. The Electoral Districts Act of 1985 is abolished by the Electoral Districts Bill currently before the House. The Act provided for four zones.

Zone 4, which was called the country zone, was the instrument by which the former Government chose to distort the basis of electoral democracy in this State. That sorry history must never be repeated in this State of Queensland.

Let me deal with some of the contributions made by the honourable the Leader of the Opposition. It is pleasing that the National Party is supporting this reform. I must confess, though, that the argument raised by the honourable the Leader of the Opposition was a little curious. His assertion appears to be that when the *Courier-Mail* reports something, it must be right. What an extraordinary contribution to political scholarship! I believe that that marvellous statement will echo in the history of political scholarship in this State. I hope that the honourable the Leader of the Opposition keeps it well and truly in mind in the months and years to come.

Similarly, I find it a nice irony that the National Party continues to refer to groups such as Citizens Against Democracy and the Queensland Watchdog Committee as fronts for the Labor Party. This willingness to attack people who speak out from their own particular philosophies is a hang-over from those days in which all criticism was subject to the broad brush stroke of rejection. Indeed, those groups have demonstrated a singular vigour in contributing to the debate over this important issue.

The fundamental principle upon which the parliamentary committee majority adopted the central recommendation of EARC is well stated. I do not intend to recite the arguments that were outlined at some length some months ago in the course of the previous debate. However, I believe that it is important for all members of Parliament to ask themselves this question: what is the source of their power to make laws? The answer to that question must be that, in a democracy, the source of their power to make laws derives from the people themselves. When members of Parliament are elected upon particular terms of trust by the people of Queensland, they must honour that trust and abide by the promise given prior to the election. It was on that very plain basis that the majority of the parliamentary committee formed its view.

In the past, the keeping of promises in political life in Queensland was such a rare event that it is even a matter of comment in the cartoon in today's *Courier-Mail*. That the Labor Government again kept its promise in relation to no new taxes was a matter that attracted comment. It is indeed extraordinary that the keeping of promises should attract comment, but one must suppose that the standards of cynicism which are so pervasive in the community will take some time before they adjust to the simple proposition that members on this side of the House regard the giving of promises to the people as something of profound importance and not as a mere device to procure votes at an election.

Let me turn to a matter that has been little considered in the course of the previous debate, namely, the procedures to be followed under this Act. Nowhere is the contrast between the Electoral Districts Bill 1991 and the Electoral Districts Act 1985 more stark than in the case of the procedure to be followed. The procedure set out under the previous Act was a procedure shrouded in secrecy. It was a procedure that led ultimately to submissions being enclosed in a filing cabinet, said to have been in the then Premier's office, which is now said to have been lost. That must never again be allowed to happen. The structure of this legislation ensures that it will not happen. Part 3 of the Electoral Districts Bill 1991 contrasts markedly with Part 3 of the Electoral Districts Act 1985. The commission—in this case, EARC for the first distribution—has a duty to invite suggestions, to invite written comments and, under clause 3.1 (2), to make copies of all or any of such suggestions available for perusal at places throughout the State as the commission considers appropriate. Similarly, it has a duty under clause 3.4 to give reasons for its proposed distribution. This giving of reasons, the giving of the basic data that comes before the commission, means that this process is to be an open one. What is the significance of that for political life? The significance is not merely that of open and accountable government; it is a significance in that political corruption will be prevented. Corruption flourishes where secrecy abides. In order to have a corrupt system, it is necessary to have secrecy. This strikes at the heart of that arrangement by ensuring

that the process of electoral redistribution occurs out in the open, for all the world to see, with reasons being given. Even after the initial comments have been the subject of further comments, it includes the provision in clause 3.6 for the commission to consider objections within a further 10 days after the period of 30 days previously referred to. That means that the process is one in which not only can the people have a say but also the people can be seen to have a say and in which the citizens the length and breadth of this fair State may be assured that the process is open, honest and accountable.

I turn to the provisions for appeal. I note the observation of the honourable the Leader of the Opposition in welcoming this provision for appeal. In the original EARC report, the commission recommended that there be a privative clause, that is to say, a clause that would have the effect of ousting the jurisdiction of the courts if EARC were to act unlawfully or beyond power. The original clause 4.5 (1) (b) provided that a decision or determination made or appearing to have been made by the commission could not be challenged, appealed against, reviewed, quashed, set aside or called in question in any court or tribunal. It provided further that such a decision is not subject to mandamus, prohibition, certiorari, injunction or any declaratory or other order of any court.

I am pleased to say that members of all political parties on the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review rejected that recommendation by EARC. That is not to say that the recommendation of itself was sinister or untoward, merely that the recommendation removed the traditional scope of the courts of law for judicial review. It is an elementary principle of judicial review that the courts are not there to make decisions on the merits. They are there to ensure that the decisions of administrative authorities are made lawfully and within the power conferred by Parliament. It should therefore be understood that the appeal mechanism that is provided for in clause 4.5 of this Bill is not a last-minute chance to ask the Full Court of the Supreme Court to second guess the electoral boundaries. Far from it. It is a fail-safe mechanism so that any elector may approach the highest court in Queensland and complain if there be any breach of the Act under which EARC is charged by the Parliament to carry out the redistribution. It is a mechanism which is designed to be expeditious. The appeal in question must be made within 21 days of the publication of the redistribution in the gazette and the provisions of the Bill require the court to deal expeditiously with the applications made before it.

This is an important step. It is one which reflects a general trend against privative clauses and towards a greater accountability of administrative authorities to review by the Supreme Court. Be you ever so high, the law is above you. That principle needs to be applied in the case of privative clauses, for if we continue to allow such clauses to remain at the back of pieces of legislation, the administrative authorities exercising their power under legislation will be immune from the proper scope of judicial review to which they should be subject. That is to say, this Bill marks not only a new era of accountability to the people, but also a new era of accountability of the redistribution process to the law of the land by ensuring that proper principles of law are applied and that any elector who complains that the law has been broken may have his or her case heard before the Full Court of the Supreme Court. I support the Bill, and congratulate the Premier on introducing it into the House.

**Mr BEANLAND** (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.40 p.m.): This is, indeed, historic legislation that is before Parliament today. Many of the points contained in the legislation were covered by the motion that was before the Parliament last month. However, a number of other aspects still need to be touched upon today. This legislation significantly modifies the zonal system that has existed in Queensland for over 40 years. I can understand the disappointment felt by many people and groups out there in the community who feel betrayed by the ALP through this legislation, because neither the ALP nor the National Party is committed to removing the system of weightage that is enshrined in this legislation. The principle of one vote, one value is certainly not adhered to. For our part, the Liberal Party will be opposing the Bill at the second-reading stage and moving amendments to abolish the system of weightage. I invite ALP members to cross the

floor and bring electoral justice to Queensland. In fact, I challenge Mr Goss to give ALP members a free vote, and we will see how good the principle is.

The Liberal Party's position was made perfectly clear by my predecessor, Mr Angus Innes, prior to the last election. He indicated quite clearly that the Liberal Party supported a single zone, a single quota and a maximum of a 10 per cent variation from the quota; the same system supported by all three major parties, the Liberal Party, the Labor Party and the National Party, in the Federal Parliament. Today, we do not hear a word about that from the members of the ALP as they walk away from their commitment on the matter at both Federal and State levels. Shortly, I will return to the commitment that they made in this State.

There is certainly no weightage of Federal electorates, and even electorates such as Kalgoorlie, which is in fact larger than the State of Queensland, has no weightage attached to it. The members of the ALP are turning their backs on their supporters who believed them in 1989 when they said that they supported electoral reform and one vote, one value. This is certainly the perception and the reality in the community. I was amused to hear the previous speaker, the member for Yeronga, talking about the Government honouring its election commitments. Everyone knows that the Government introduced a new tax in its last Budget in the form of a half a per cent borrowing charge, and there have been broken promises regarding Fraser Island, where the logging continues, and the Sunshine Coast toll road. There is no way in which this Government can move away from the fact that this is a clear broken commitment by it in office.

I will look at the whole matter and will not go down every track concerning the so-called agreement in regard to the referendum that was not held prior to the last State election. When Mr Ahern was Premier, not even the National Party believed that that agreement was binding. The referendum was not held and the agreement fell by the wayside. We then moved on to the election which was held on schedule. That agreement concerned the referendum that was to be held to extend the term of the previous Parliament by six months.

I turn now to look at what is being proposed by the Labor Party today under this legislation. Not even Mr Foley, or the ALP members on the parliamentary committee who make up the majority of his committee, supports the proposal that is before Parliament today. If one reads through the report, one finds that Mr Foley is an apologist for the Hanlon gerrymander, and now he seems to be an apologist for the Goss gerrymander. Page 2 of the chairman's summary 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. . ."

Mr Foley and other committee members now have their chance to stand up and be counted in relation to this very basic principle. Page 22 of the report also sets out other aspects considered by the committee. The committee reiterates that it does not support the commission and states—

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

At page 24, the committee states—

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

The ALP is again trying to con the voters of Queensland in relation to this whole exercise.

Cabinet is asking this Parliament to rubber-stamp a new gerrymander by establishing a new zonal system. The present proposal mentions six electorates, but tomorrow the proposal could relate to 36 electorates. Who knows? Federal electorates contain no weightage, so why is the Queensland Government indulging in this type of manipulation? Is it to satisfy the AWU faction of the ALP—one of the two factions that run the ALP

organisation in this State? I am sure that you, Mr Deputy Speaker, are very much aware of that. That faction, together with the Socialist Left faction, runs the ALP's organisation. Are they out to gain some clear benefit from this weightage? Do they believe that they can win additional seats in the western and northern parts of this State? I dare say they do.

Whenever the Government brings this legislation before the Parliament, the Liberal Party will be offering amendments of the type that I will be proposing later to test the Labor Party's commitment to the principle of one vote, one value. A great deal has been said by the ALP about EARC's being the umpire. Let me say quite clearly that EARC is not the umpire. The umpire is this Parliament, and the legislation that established EARC—as I mentioned when the draft Bill was discussed last month—sets out very clearly that this Parliament is the umpire and that EARC is merely the commentator. The Premier's thoughts on this matter are indicated by a letter sent by him to the Queensland Watchdog Committee on 1 February this year, in which he attempted to explain his backflip over EARC's proposal. The letter stated—

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

Why does not the Premier match his words with his deeds? I think it is quite clear that he needs to stand up and be counted on this matter.

There are several other aspects that are supported by the Liberal Party that I shall mention briefly, and other aspects that are not. Members of the Liberal Party certainly support the proposal that allows EARC to carry out this redistribution, but the legislation—and I understand that at some time in the future legislation will be brought forward to allow redistributions to occur—relates purely to an imminent redistribution. The Liberal Party supports the open process that will make the submissions public and provide for display of submissions from the general public. In the past, the Liberal Party has always supported an open process and has made its submissions public. At a later stage, I will outline more fully the Liberal Party's opposition to the proposal for a joint State/Federal electoral roll. The Liberal Party believes that the Federal electoral roll has major shortcomings that have been spelt out in several reports.

The report from the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review certainly shows that, as far as members of the ALP are concerned, the committee is not independent. It is a farce, and members of the ALP who propose or promote a contrary impression are engaging in a sham. If those ALP members believe that Mr Goss would have accepted whatever EARC submitted, then I pose this question: would Mr Goss and other members of the ALP have accepted EARC's recommendations if it had recommended the retention of the current four-zonal system? I say that they would not, and I think that is a fair statement. They would have found it unacceptable. However, because they believe that this recommendation suits the ALP's long-term political aspirations, they are indicating their acceptance of it today. Their motive is one of cheap political expediency. To gain an insight into what the ALP really thinks about the principle of one vote, one value, I will refer to comments that have been made previously by members of the ALP. For example, the Premier, Mr Goss, stated in the *Courier-Mail* on 5 January—

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

He was saying that the Liberal Party would not stand up for the principle of one vote, one value and that it wanted a two-zonal or three-zonal system. However, the proposal presently before the Parliament is in fact a seven-zonal system. One zone will contain 83 electorates and a separate zone will contain the remaining six electorates in the western and northern parts of this State. The following comments have all been made by former Leaders of the Opposition. For example, on many occasions in *Hansard*, Mr Burns stated his views. On 11 March 1975, he stated—

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

Mr Casey stated his agreement with views expressed by members of the Liberal Party and stated in *Hansard* on 10 March 1981—

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

We know now that it would not be possible to enter into an agreement with the ALP on that basis because it would not be honoured. Mr Warburton stated in *Hansard* on 10 April 1985—

"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."

It is quite apparent to everyone that today Parliament is being asked to rubber-stamp a new gerrymander for this State. An examination of the proposal and an analysis of its defects reveals that even EARC admits, on page 169 of its report, that a 1 per cent arbitrary rule would make little difference but a 3 per cent allowance would overcompensate and produce unfairness. Therefore, the commission plucked out of the air the possibility that enrolments could vary by as much as two to one, which would allow phantom voters to be counted as real voters in a number of western and northern seats. In adopting the arbitrary figure to allow anything up to a two-to-one variation, EARC attempts to overcome the problem caused by remoteness, yet it makes no allowance for the high number of non-English speaking people who may be voters in a number of city electorates, the high transient populations in a number of city electorates, and the problems caused to State members in those electorates in communicating with their constituents. No consideration is given to those matters. The bottom line is that we have an electoral system that is either fair or unfair. It cannot be slightly unfair, which is like being a little pregnant or a little dead. One is either pregnant or, in the other instance, dead. This is a half-baked ALP proposal to suit its own purposes. History will record that the Goss Labor Government failed to implement the principle of one vote, one value and that only the Liberals stood up and were counted and supported this very important principle.

I notice that this important piece of legislation also touches on the number of seats. Although the Liberal Party is not persevering with its submission to have the number of seats reduced to 82, it is worth while noting that the ALP submission to EARC contained a proposal for 99 seats. In 1985, Mr Warburton and a number of other Labor spokesmen claimed that 82 seats were sufficient. In its submission to EARC, the Liberal Party agreed that 82 seats were sufficient. However, in its submission to EARC, the ALP wanted 99 seats. That is totally and completely unjustifiable. In 1985—a mere six years ago—even the ALP said that it was unjustifiable to go from 82 to 89 seats.

Today, Parliament will vote on this historic legislation which does not fulfil a clear commitment to the people of this State—a clear perception gained by the people of this State—from the ALP that it would honour its election commitment of one vote, one value. I understand the position of the National Party. For a long time, it has staunchly opposed the concept of one vote, one value. Today, it will support the legislation. However, the ALP's position is totally contrary to its long-standing position on the matter. Later in the debate, when the opportunity arises, I will welcome ALP members who might give consideration to crossing the floor.

**Mr WELFORD** (Stafford) (12.56 p.m.): How extraordinary that the Leader of the Liberal Party should stand there and expect to welcome any members of the Government across to his side of the Chamber after the pathetic showing of the Liberal Party in recent council elections and on the referendum! Why anyone would want to align themselves with that motley crew of incompetents sitting at the back of the Chamber—barely recognisable as members of the Parliament, barely recognisable in the electorate and barely heard in the recent elections—is utterly beyond me. Only someone as cynical about State politics as Denver Beanland could possibly postulate such a proposition.

**Mr Elder:** Who?

**Mr WELFORD:** Denver who? I welcome the Electoral Districts Bill. It is a massive reform of the electoral system of this State. In many ways, it does for the Liberal Party what the Liberals never had the courage to do for themselves. It introduces into this Parliament the prima facie principle of one vote, one value. But it also does something else that the Liberal Party today is failing to do, that is, it abides by an election promise.

The Electoral and Administrative Review Commission was set up as an independent commission as a result of the report of Tony Fitzgerald, QC. As an independent commission, it has made recommendations to the Government. The previous speaker spoke long on what the electorate had in mind when this Government as the Labor Party Opposition prior to the last election made its election commitments. I will tell you, Mr Deputy Speaker, what the people of Queensland had in their minds. They had in their minds that this Government would keep its election promises and they had in their minds the promise by the present Premier, Mr Goss, that this Government would implement the electoral recommendations of EARC—agreement on which was reached between Mr Goss and the Leaders of the National and Liberal Parties at that time. That is what this Government is doing—abiding by its election commitment and keeping its promise.

As the member for Yeronga indicated, the provisions of this Bill provide a stark contrast when compared with previous electoral districts legislation that came before this House under the former National Party Government in coalition with the Liberals. One of the most impressive elements of the Bill is the repeal of the previous Electoral Districts Act 1985, which is brought about by clause 1.2 of this Bill. To my mind, that is one of the most pleasing and relevant factors in the Bill.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr WELFORD:** Prior to the luncheon recess, I mentioned that one of the most important provisions of this Bill, or at least one of the most significant provisions of this Bill, is clause 1.2, which repeals those previous Dark Age pieces of legislation dreamt up within the hallowed but secret halls of the National Party bunker at Spring Hill and designed to try to entrench the National Party's position. As it turns out, of course, even those Bills, as extreme as they were, proved to be an abysmal failure for the National Party's electoral prospects. But as if that provision is not enough, the point is driven home in clause 1.3. That provision, which is the definitive expression of what this Bill is all about, states—

"On the commencement of this Act the zones of representation into which the State was divided by the Electoral Districts Act 1985 cease to exist."

Touché! So it should be that the zonal system of the National Party, with the support of the Liberal Party for some 26 years, has finally been brought to an end by this Bill—

**Mr FitzGerald:** By the Labor Party.

**Mr WELFORD:** And by the Labor Government, which has introduced this Bill. This is a Bill that the National Party and the Liberal Party probably would never have introduced in this House, notwithstanding the fact that it was recommended by the independent Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. Those two provisions are fundamental to what this Bill is all about. But, as the member for Yeronga said, and as I commented briefly before, it is the procedural provisions of this Bill that stand it in stark contrast to the provisions of the past. I will examine those provisions, starting with Part 3 of the Bill. Clause 3.1 provides that as soon as practicable after commencement of the distribution, the commission will invite public submissions and written comments in relation to those suggestions. What is more, copies of all of those suggestions and submissions will be made available for public perusal under subclauses (2) and (3). Clause 3.2 goes on to set the principles under which the redistribution and the submissions will be considered. First of all, it sets a quota. I will go into some detail about this so as to place on the record for the people of Queensland how this process is to work.

The prima facie principle of one vote, one value is first of all established in clause 3.2, that is, by dividing the number of electors on the roll in the State by the number of electoral districts to be established, and that is 89, which is the present number of members in this Parliament. A quota, that is, an average of the number of electors divided by the number of electoral districts, or electorates, is to be the quota from which a margin of allowance will be permitted in terms of the numbers of electors in each seat. So, for example—just to use sample figures—if there were 890 000 people in the State and that number was divided by 89 electorates, then there would be 10 000 people per electorate as the standard quota. That quota is only varied in very special cases, which are set out in clause 3.3. That clause provides that where an electoral district, or an electorate, has an area exceeding 100 000 square kilometres, the actual number of electors can be smaller, so long as a number equal to 2 per cent of the area of that electorate, added to the number of actual electors, will be enough to bring it within the quota, or the margin of allowance. The margin of allowance is, of course, 10 per cent. That is the basic principle of one vote, one value, that is, that there are equal numbers of electors in each electorate subject to an allowable tolerance of 10 per cent. In these special cases, one can add 2 per cent of the area of an electorate to the number of electors actually in the electorate to bring it up to a quota that is a minimum of less than 10 per cent of the average.

I will again give a numerical example. Say, for example, one had an electoral district that was in fact 100 000 square kilometres in area. Let us say that, on the rough figures that are currently available, the quota for all seats across the State, on current elector population and numbers of seats, is 20 000 voters. Given the 10 per cent tolerance, that means that seats will be allowed to have between 18 000 and 22 000 electors. However, if an electorate is at least 100 000 square kilometres in area, then one can take 2 per cent of that area, that is, 2 000, as a number, and add that to the number of actual electors to bring it up to the minimum permissible number. Taking that example, where the quota is 20 000, in an electorate that is 100 000 square kilometres, one can add 2 000 notional voters to the actual number to bring it up to the minimum within the tolerance. If the minimum within the tolerance is 18 000, that means that one could have 16 000 actual electors within an electorate and use the notional 2 per cent of the area of that electorate to bring it up to the minimum of 18 000.

That is how that special case provision of clause 3.3 permits electorates that are at least 100 000 square kilometres in area to have less than the normal 10 per cent tolerance from the quota. It goes on to provide that in considering those electorates and all other electorates, the commission must take into account community of interests; namely, economic, social or regional interests. It will also take into account means of communication, travel and physical features such as highways, rivers and the like, and also demographic trends. The demographic trends are relevant because the Bill provides that the distributions will occur in such a way that each electoral district will remain within the allowable margins of tolerance for the full period of the distribution's effect; that is, until the next redistribution.

That is basically how the fundamental principles of the distribution are to occur. We then go to the further procedures which make this Bill such an item of marvellous democracy. It then states that the reasons for the proposed distribution, which are to be prepared by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, will be given in writing and made public, and any member of the commission who disagrees can also set out those reasons for disagreement in writing.

Clause 3.5 provides for public notification by way of maps to be displayed in each electorate at a place where the public has access and other places where the commission considers appropriate for public perusal. Furthermore, it is to be published by notice not only in the *Government Gazette* but also in two newspapers circulating throughout the State. Even the notice in those newspapers must contain a map of all the names and boundaries of all the electorates proposed in the commission's first proposed distribution.

The Bill then provides for an objection procedure whereby any person can, following the notice of the proposed distribution, within 30 days lodge written objections with the commission. Under clause 3.6, the commission must not only consider those objections but also any comments on those objections, and those comments must be lodged within 10 days of the closure of the 30-day objection period. The process is entirely open. All those objections and comments themselves will ultimately be made available. Based on the objections and the comments, clause 3.7 then provides for the commission to make its determination on the distribution of electorates in the State. The reasons for the final determination are to be rendered in writing, along with any dissenting recommendations of a commissioner.

Clause 3.9 contains an important provision which provides that, as soon as practicable after the determination under clause 3.7, the commission will give the Minister—in this case, the Premier—a copy of all the original suggestions and comments, the proposed distribution and any member's disagreement with it, all objections and written comments on those objections and the commission's determination and any member's disagreement with that final determination. By this Bill, the Minister is required, within five sitting days after receipt by him, to lay all that material before this House. For the first time for more than three decades, this House has before it legislation which requires the Government to disclose all the procedures and all the submissions that are to go before the review process under this distribution. That process never occurred under the National Party. The procedures and submissions were jealously guarded by it from start to finish.

Clause 3.10 makes another important point. In all these procedures, the commission is taken to be making an investigation for the purposes of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989-1990. Accordingly, clause 3.10 allows the commission to conduct public hearings and to conduct itself in a manner that is consistent with its obligations under its own Act. I remind honourable members of the provisions of section 2.23 of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act which specifically provide that the commission shall act independently, impartially, fairly and in the public interest, and shall make available to the public all submissions. Its own Act, incorporated in this Bill, reinforces the responsibility of the commission to act openly, accountably and in the public interest. That is a fundamental departure from the practice of the past.

A number of comments were made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party about the Bill and about the Government's intention in relation to electoral reform. I, for one, am very proud to have been part of the parliamentary committee which handed down its report on the EARC report on electoral reform. There is nothing sinister and there is nothing concealed in the intentions of the majority of the members of that committee, nor of the Government in its view about electoral reform. We are clear about what our party's policy is, and we stand by that policy. We also stand by a fundamental promise made before the election, and that is something that neither the members of the Liberal Party nor the members of the National Party, in practice, have been able to do in the past. There is nothing sinister about that report. What it says is what you get.

Mr Cooper spoke about Mr Foley at some later stage mustering support to pull a rabbit out of the hat and do something else about electoral reform. If ever there was a hat out of which a rabbit were to be pulled, it was the hat passed around the National Party members to select their current leader. Nothing that the Leader of the Opposition said can detract from the fact that this Bill will end forever the corrupt gerrymander under which he and his party clung to office for many years. He spoke about some hidden agenda in the future.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr WELFORD:** I hear the member for Lockyer attempting to interject. There is no hidden agenda for the future. The report states quite clearly that there are matters that require further consideration. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights is a matter which requires further investigation. The report of the independent commission contained an opinion from Professor Alston. Without in any way attempting

to judge that opinion, I point out that it is simply an opinion proffered at the request of EARC. As the Leader of the Opposition conceded, since then a number of other opinions have been given by watchdog committees and the like. They are matters which require further investigation. That is why this Bill does not proceed beyond the current distribution. That is why this Bill provides for the very first distribution after it comes into effect.

Time expired.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (2.47 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join in this debate. I agree in only one respect with what was stated by the honourable member for Stafford, who has just resumed his seat—this is temporary legislation. The Government has no intention of leaving this legislation on the books for any length of time beyond which it is respectable so to do. Members opposite have given a clear commitment that if, by some fluke, the Government is re-elected next year, this legislation will be repealed. As a result, those members who have spoken about the 1985 Act being repealed by the passage of this Bill through the House will then have an opportunity to speak once more on the electoral districts legislation that will be presented to the House after the next election. There is no doubt about that.

I support the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition that this legislation contains no trigger mechanism for subsequent redistributions. I am sure that every member of this House realises that the legislation should contain a mechanism—a formula—so that redistributions can take place when it is deemed desirable. The trigger mechanisms should be spelt out clearly in the legislation so that, depending on his whim, the Premier at the time cannot say, "I have a glorious feeling coming on. I have trouble with some of my troops. I will threaten them with a redistribution if they do not toe the line. If I want to take some action to assert my authority, I will call on another redistribution." All members of Parliament are sensitive about the boundaries on which they were elected to office. One has only to start talking to them about redistribution to know that they are extremely sensitive. All of them are slightly puzzled about where the boundaries will be drawn and whether they will have a seat that they believe their particular party and they in particular will be able to win at the next general election.

One has only to look at the *Queensland Parliamentary Handbook* to see evidence of the number of redistributions that have taken place over the years. As the State's population has shifted from one place to another, redistributions have taken place and seats have regularly disappeared.

**Mr Dollin:** They were all gerrymanders.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member for Maryborough says that they were all gerrymanders. Most of the redistributions in this State were implemented by the Labor Party. I am glad that the honourable member has recognised that.

**Mr Prest:** What rot!

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The honourable member asks for a little bit of levity when he talks about redistributions. He may be able to hold his seat, but it will certainly be done with a lot more luck and a lot more finesse than he is displaying in this Chamber at present. This Bill raises a number of issues that have been mentioned before, such as the end of the defined zonal system. Members of the Opposition and members of the Government have said that it will be a great day when we see the end of the zonal system. I should not reiterate it, but I will do so for the record: the zonal system was introduced by a Labor Government and over the years refinements were carried out to the process. Mention was made of the end of the gerrymander. Since the coalition Government came to office in 1957, the Labor Party in this House cannot say that it was ever denied office in Queensland because it did not gain the required number of seats when it obtained the required number of votes in the electorate. The Labor Party never achieved the required number of votes until the last election, when it won office with the system in place which it complained was a gerrymander. Therefore, that

argument is put to rest. The Labor Party was never denied office because of the existing zonal system.

The member who spoke immediately before me—and I notice that he has now left the Chamber—talked about the quotas and the variations of 10 per cent. He said that that was the accepted figure around the world for a one vote, one value system. That may be so. We all know that it is an arbitrary figure. Why have 10 per cent? Why not have 5 per cent or 20 per cent? It is just an arbitrary figure. The honourable member referred to an electorate containing about 20 000 people. He said that once the quota had been set at 20 000, the electorate could then vary between 18 000 and 22 000 people. Those people who continue to argue that the existing system disadvantaged their electorate really want to check that figure. I represent the seat of Lockyer, which is in the south-east zone. The majority of members in this House have seats in the south-east zone.

The number of constituents in my electorate has always been within 10 per cent of the State average. When all the country seats, the far-northern and far-western seats were taken into consideration, the number of constituents in Lockyer was within 10 per cent of the average. So the constituents were not disadvantaged because of the zonal system. When there were 82 members in this House and, later on, when there were 89, the number of constituents in Lockyer was still within the tolerable figures. Therefore, it is a lot of rot to say that people in that electorate have been disadvantaged. Yes, the number of electors in some of the seats has got out of kilter. I remember the time when the National Party represented, numerically, the 10 largest seats in the State. One could not say that it disadvantaged the people of Lockyer. It was certainly a disadvantage for people in seats such as Landsborough and other very large seats at that time. I note that at this stage the Government has backed away from putting into place the trigger mechanism for redistributions to occur in the future. That is a shame. It supports my belief that this is only temporary legislation.

I have never been happy with a fixed zonal system. I believe that the weightage system within this legislation, which has been accepted by the Labor Party and the National Party, is excellent. The boundaries will be drawn up according to the criteria of the weightage system. Problems are created when one starts drawing defined lines on maps and deciding which shall be the south-east or the provincial city zones. The people who draw up the boundaries should have the full flexibility of the criteria given to them by this Parliament.

The member for Stafford said that the redistribution will be truly independent. Although I respect the commissioners who were appointed to the EARC commission, they were not appointed in a very democratic way. As I have mentioned previously in this House, the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review had been nominated by this House and the notice of motion had been given. However, that committee was not put in place, and was not given the responsibility of electing the commissioners. This Government met during the week before that motion would have been debated and made the appointment "with consultation"—those were the words it used—but it did not go through the clearly identified process that should have been followed at that time to elect those commissioners. I have no complaints about any of the commissioners who were appointed. However, I have complaints about this Government and the process that it used to put those commissioners in place. Even though the notice of motion for the appointment of that parliamentary committee was on the books, the Government would not bring the motion on for debate. I will continue to prosecute that argument with the Government, because I believe that it is trying to deceive the people of Queensland as it has done on many occasions in the past.

I draw the attention of the House to clause 1.5 of the Bill. With due respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, because the previous speaker mentioned a clause of the Bill, I shall canvas some of the issues relating to clause 1.5. It suggests that any by-election that occurs after this Bill becomes an Act will take place under the existing electoral boundaries. This morning, the House resolved that two seats be declared vacant, namely, Toowoomba South and Nundah. I will not detail the circumstances surrounding the seat of Nundah.

However, I forecast that the Goss Labor Government will get a lesson in the vagaries of political life when it faces the people of Nundah very shortly. I am also certain that because it forced the seat of Toowoomba South to be declared vacant, it will get another lesson in the vagaries of political life. That was one of the most horrific things that this Parliament has done.

The member for Yeronga spoke about members being elected for three years. The people of Toowoomba South elected their member for three years. What did they get? Because of legislation passed by this House, that member was hounded out of this place. He was told that he could no longer serve in those two positions of mayor and member of Parliament. He was elected as the Mayor of the City of Toowoomba. He intended to remain as the mayor. The people of Toowoomba voted by about 25 000 votes to 10 000 that he should remain as mayor. Those people will be resentful of the fact that they have to vote at a by-election for that seat.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Campbell): Order! The honourable member will come back to the Bill.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** With respect, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am speaking to clause 1.5, which discusses how elections shall take place if a by-election is called after this Bill goes through the House. Clause 1.5 states that the by-election in Toowoomba South will be fought on the existing boundaries.

In the past, because of increasing and decreasing population, the boundaries in Toowoomba have changed regularly. The second member to represent Toowoomba, which was formerly known as Drayton and Toowoomba, was W. H. Groom. From the history books I have learned what great representation that man gave to the area. For 39-odd years he represented the Toowoomba South area. At one stage, he held the position of Speaker of this House. He married the first cousin of one of my ancestors, a Littleton, in Toowoomba. I have a great affinity with him. I know that he had a rather chequered history in his early life. He was a convict. However, he became the first Mayor of Toowoomba. This Government is now preventing the current Mayor of Toowoomba from serving out the remainder of his term in this Parliament. I can understand easily how this House can pass a law that a member cannot hold both positions. However, I believe that this House owes it to the people of Toowoomba South to allow that member to represent them in this House. They elected him for three years. I refer to remarks made earlier by the member for Yeronga about electing members for three years. The people of Toowoomba South elected Clive Berghofer to serve them in this House until the next general election. They will resent the fact that they will be forced to vote in a by-election to elect his replacement. I give honourable members a tip: a National Party member will be elected to that seat. Taking a punt, I suggest that the Liberal Party, the outsider, will win the seat of Nundah. I wish it all the best in that challenge. There will be a swing against the Goss Labor Government. Because of clause 1.5 of this Bill, the people of Toowoomba South will vote against the Labor Party. They will tell the Goss Government what they think of its leader and how he has performed in this House.

The subject of members' electorates and how members should be elected is a touchy one. It must be remembered that the National Party's submission stated that the National Party believes in doing away with the zonal system. I do not believe that the Government has given any credit to that submission. We looked at the system and decided that it needs changing; we need to abolish the defined zones, but we should have a weightage. The independent commissioners, as they have been referred to, have come up with a recommendation of a weightage system. However, we have no commitment from the Government that it has accepted that. All that the Government has said is that, for the time being, it has accepted that recommendation. After the next election, if the Government happens to get back into office, it will introduce a redistribution Bill into the House. This is only temporary legislation as far as the Government is concerned. This House should put in place the mechanism for this legislation to stay as permanent legislation. The trigger mechanisms should be put in place for the new redistribution to take place.

I completely disagree with the member who spoke before me, the member for Stafford, who said that there is no hidden agenda. To use a colloquial term—no hidden agenda, my foot! If the Government really means what it says, why on earth would it not put the trigger mechanism in place? As we pointed out, the Opposition supports the legislation. However, we believe that it does not go quite far enough. Clauses need to be added to make the legislation function in such a way that this House can be proud of it.

**Mr FENLON** (Greenslopes) (3.01 p.m.): I rise to speak in the debate in support of the Electoral Districts Bill. In doing so, I affirm my agreement with the statement made by the Premier, Wayne Goss, when the motion for the introduction of the Bill was debated on 14 March 1991. The Premier stated—

"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."

This Bill marks the end of the Queensland gerrymander. It marks the end of electoral corruption in Queensland and it is the culmination of a process which commenced with the commission of inquiry conducted by Tony Fitzgerald, QC, and to which the Labor Party has constantly been committed. It represents the fulfilment of undertakings made to the electorate by Labor's leader, Wayne Goss, prior to the 1989 election.

This proposed law to reform Queensland's voting system was born out of an extraordinary span of history. As such, it should not be surprising in the sense that this Labor Government has had to adopt a single-minded approach to grappling with the various principles and issues that have arisen during the carriage of this Bill to this point. The most difficult of these matters that the Government was required to confront was the retention of a weighted system of defining electoral boundaries for a handful of electorates in far western and north Queensland. This provision in the Bill arises directly from the process put in place as a result of the Fitzgerald inquiry recommendations. Mr Fitzgerald recommended the establishment of an independent commission—the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. It was charged with the responsibility to provide an independent and comprehensive review of administrative and electoral laws and processes. It was also required to provide an enduring independent process to review and recommend the necessary electoral and administrative laws, guidelines and procedures. After extensive research, consideration of public submissions and hearing of evidence throughout Queensland, in November 1990, the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission—EARC—produced its report on the Queensland Legislative Assembly electoral system. In doing so, it provided the initial draft of the Bill which is before the Legislative Assembly today.

One fundamental issue that EARC was charged with the responsibility to address was the question of whether to implement equal suffrage in the form of equal-sized electoral districts with a 10 per cent tolerance. It was in relation to that point that the EARC decided to depart from the principles of equal suffrage and to employ a weighted system for some electorates. At page 64 of its report, EARC gave the following reasons for that departure—

"(a) In certain remote areas good government would be prejudiced under equal suffrage because the electors in those areas will have insufficient access to their Members.

(b) Extra electoral allowances and facilities will assist but not overcome this problem."

The report of the independent EARC was subsequently considered by the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, consisting of members from each party and very ably chaired by the member for Yeronga, Matthew Foley. The parliamentary committee then reviewed the commission's report and recommended an appropriate course of action to the Parliament. In doing so, it adopted the principal recommendations of the commission and the draft of the new electoral laws. It did so

with certain amendments, which could be said to be of a technical nature not pertaining to electoral matters and which were supported unanimously by the members of the parliamentary committee.

In deciding to support this Bill, I have had to weigh up the same set of conflicting principles as those which my colleagues on the parliamentary committee have had to confront. The fundamental conflict is this: on the one hand, the Labor Party leader, Wayne Goss, promised the people of Queensland that he would immediately implement all of the recommendations of the EARC with respect to electoral matters yet, on the other hand, the EARC departs from the principle of equal suffrage espoused within Labor Party policy of one vote, one value. The then Opposition Leader, Wayne Goss, clearly and forcefully gave undertakings to the people of Queensland in relation to abiding by the outcome of the EARC process. He affirmed those undertakings on three separate occasions. Firstly, on 21 July 1989, an agreement and undertaking was given by the leaders of the three major political parties to Tony Fitzgerald, QC. The leaders of the Labor Party, the Liberal Party and the National Party undertook that "all recommendations of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission with respect to electoral matters will be immediately implemented". That agreement was reached by the three leaders in the dying days of the National Party Government when this most fundamental element of the reform process was in severe jeopardy. Mr Fitzgerald called the party leaders together and the agreement was forged in order to keep the reform process on track. It was an agreement on behalf of the respective parties to abide by the umpire's decision.

Secondly, the intent of the Labor Party to follow through the agreement forged with Tony Fitzgerald, QC, was affirmed by Wayne Goss in State Parliament on 26 September 1989. Spontaneous applause broke out in the public gallery when Wayne Goss told Parliament that the agreement was based not on law but on honour and reinforced the Labor Party's commitment to abide by the umpire's decision. Thirdly, the same undertaking was given shortly before the 1989 State election by Labor's leader, Wayne Goss, during his major policy speech to the people of Queensland. It was an undertaking that was confidently given to the people of Queensland because restoration of democracy in Queensland was seen as fundamental to the restoration of honest and accountable government and to the restoration of the political institutions that ensure that corruption and cronyism no longer flourish. It was based upon a belief that only an independent electoral process could deliver a Parliament which reflected the popular vote proportionately and fairly.

Such an electoral system has not been evident in Queensland for the past four decades. The decision to abide by these undertakings in the face of EARC's departure from the principle of equal suffrage is also coloured by a wish to repair Queensland's dissolute political culture. Queensland people have developed a strong sense of cynicism, albeit quite understandably, through their experience in recent years with politicians and promises made by politicians. I consider the restoration of some belief in the integrity of politicians is as important as restoring the integrity of the electoral system itself. Both elements are fundamental to the functioning of a healthy political system, and it is little wonder that the Queensland political system has been so severely diseased.

However, it will remain a point of singular amazement—despite all that has happened in Queensland and the deafening call from the people of Queensland who demand honour and the keeping of promises by politicians—that the Liberal Party continues to insist that the promise given by the Leader of the Liberal Party before the 1989 election should not be adhered to now. In a sense, this is not surprising, given the well-established track record of the Liberal Party as conscious collaborators with the National Party in engineering electoral corruption and brawling with their coalition partners over the pickings of the rotting carcass of the Queensland political system. Indeed, it is no surprise to see that hypocrisy forthcoming when one remembers that the Liberal Party has rigged electoral boundaries with Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen during electoral redistributions since the 1950s. It was, in fact, the former Liberal Party member and Minister, Don Lane, who worked closely with the National Party to rig boundaries to suit city-based Liberal

members. The electoral corruption that dragged the State down for so many years could not have occurred without the direct support of a dishonest and corrupt Liberal Party. Yet, today—when one would have thought that the Liberal Party might have wished to distance itself from its ugly past—it fails again by rejecting the undertakings of its former leader to abide by the umpire's decision in this instance and turns its back on the people of Queensland simply because the conclusions of the umpire do not suit the Liberal Party.

I can certainly say that the conclusions of EARC do not entirely suit the convictions of this Labor member, but I will cherish reporting to the people of the Greenslopes electorate that this Labor Government considered that adherence to its promises to the people of Queensland has remained its supreme objective. Despite my concurrence with the implementation of the umpire's decision in the form of this Bill that is now before this Parliament, I have strong criticisms of EARC's conclusions. My criticisms concern the recommended departure from the principle of equal suffrage. The Bill achieves this departure by provisions which create electoral districts containing equal numbers of electors with a permissible tolerance of 10 per cent above or below the quota with an exception of a handful of large electorates. In respect of proposed electoral districts of 100 000 square kilometres or more in area, redistribution commissioners may depart from the quota. Under the EARC recommendation, this could be achieved by a formula that gives a weighting according to the size of the proposed electorate expressed in square kilometres. The EARC commissioners speculated that, if implemented, this formula would result in five of the 89 electoral districts being subjected to weightage. It would mean that approximately 25 000 electors out of a total electorate of 1.8 million electors would be taken out of the five remote electorates in question. It would represent a weightage of about 2 per cent across the system.

My criticism of the departure from the principle of equal suffrage arises, firstly, from some of the factual conclusions that the commissioners arrive at and, secondly, from the legal principles upon which the commissioners relied in reaching their conclusions. Both of these factors stand for immediate scrutiny upon any future review of the electoral commission mooted by EARC. I wish to outline briefly my criticism of both aspects of the reasoning adopted by EARC. The arguments for and against the commissioners' conclusion are well canvassed in the EARC report. The commissioners argue, as I have already indicated, that in certain remote areas good government would be prejudiced under equal suffrage because electors in those areas would have insufficient access to their members. Further, they conclude that extra electoral allowances and facilities will assist, but not overcome this problem. I find the commission's argument extremely shallow in factual terms because it fails to establish what additional difficulty constituents in the remote areas in question would have if the boundaries of the electorates were expanded to encompass a large area. The question is: how many additional electors would be living further away from the member's electorate office, and how much more difficult would it be for these constituents to see the member in person or speak by phone? This margin of additional difficulty for those electors was never addressed in such detail and I believe that it is a very marginal difficulty.

The distances for constituents in these remote areas are undoubtedly very great and are measured in driving and flying time rather than in kilometres. I believe that the actual increase that would occur with the implementation of larger electorates would result in a negligible number of constituent travelling hours. Further, there is more shallow reasoning offered as to why a net increase in such constituent travelling hours could not be minimised by additional electoral facilities for the local member, such as the establishment of free 008 numbers or satellite electorate offices in smaller townships within the electorate. It is ironic that electors in remote regions should now be complaining so vehemently about access to their local member when in so many instances local National Party members have continued to manage substantial business interests, with the inevitable result that the electorate business took second place.

As a full-time representative of the Greenslopes electorate, I have my own difficulties in communicating with the electorate which are more substantial than my

country colleagues. An obvious difficulty which the EARC commissioners have recognised is that of access to the mass media. I do have access to a local newspaper that covers one part of the Greenslopes electorate and this publication is only interested in issues with a very local orientation. However, when it comes to some commentary in relation to general issues which affect the whole population, essentially I have no access to the mass media since it is mostly left to the principal players in the metropolitan area, such as the Ministers. In contrast, members in remote centres have practically any comment that they wish to make broadcast on a range of mass media outlets without any great effort at all. Like other members of the Legislative Assembly, I have commitments that take me out of the electorate regularly, and in order to concentrate upon the range of commitments that I have, I try to organise my face-to-face meetings with constituents each week into an uninterrupted block. I try to deal with the remainder over the phone, or in conjunction with my electorate secretary. I am not convinced that the same arrangement could not work well in any remote locale.

The concentrated attention applied by the EARC commissioners to the matter of electors' access to their members, while important in itself, is unfortunate because it supplants consideration of the more fundamental issues pertaining to political representation. The most fundamental issue pertaining to the election of a member of the Legislative Assembly and to subsequent representation by that person is political power on the floor of the Parliament. This issue is at the heart of the great democratic tradition that has evolved in the Western World. It is a tradition and right that has reached its highest form in its enshrinement in international law, yet in this instance the commissioners found that it should be subsumed essentially because of extra travelling-time endured by an unknown number of electors. I find this as difficult to accept as is the reasoning employed to deviate from the principles of equal suffrage that are now enshrined in an international covenant which is recognised by the Commonwealth of Australia.

The principle of international law that is concerned here is Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Among other things, it states—

"Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity . . . to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage."

The EARC commissioners, in deviating from the international covenant, relied upon advice from Professor Philip Alston, director of the Centre for International and Public Law at the Australian National University, Canberra. The effect of his advice was that an approach to the one vote, one value principle should be tolerated, which falls significantly short of requiring absolute numerical equality. Any semblance of credibility of the advice of Professor Alston was very severely ravaged in a subsequent submission by Mr Paul O'Shea on behalf of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties. Mr O'Shea, a former University of Oregon teaching fellow in judicial politics, civil rights and international relations, outlined a number of serious flaws in Professor Alston's advice to EARC. Scrutiny of the advice revealed that on a number of occasions, the references that Professor Alston relied upon served only to support the argument for numerical equality when it came to the application of the principle of one vote, one value. For example, when it came to the United Nations record in relation to Article 25, it explains that it will "leave States parties to the Covenant free to regulate their own electoral systems, provided each vote carried equal weight".

I therefore agree with the conclusion of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review that the committee was not convinced of the merits of EARC's argument that a weightage system of the kind described is warranted. The EARC conclusion, based upon the advice of Professor Alston, flies in the face of modern interpretation and application of the international covenant in countries such as the United States and Canada, as well as European countries and Australia itself. A disparity of up to 10 per cent is widely sanctioned to cope with population movement, but nowhere is such a deviation from the equal weightage principle condoned formally under the terms of the international covenant. The EARC conclusions are not logical in terms of the facts and law upon which they rely and, moreover, they are inconsistent in terms of attempting to compensate for alleged disadvantage incurred by electors living in

remote areas. To be consistent, EARC should have pursued weightage for the many other groups in Queensland who suffer electoral disadvantage because of their ethnic background, illiteracy, poverty or ill health. Yet, by evoking such fine-tuning to account for the myriad difficulties experienced by electors to varying degrees in each electoral district, I believe the integrity of the international covenant would be undermined even more and the door would be left even wider open for future manipulation of the electoral boundaries.

Although this Parliament is clearly impelled to implement the recommendations of EARC at this point in history, it is even more clear that the situation is not resolved. It is significant that EARC considers reform of Queensland's electoral system as an ongoing process. In its wisdom, the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review has put forward three matters that it considers to be appropriate priorities for future review, which are: Queensland's electoral obligations under international law; further facilities and services for members; and entrenchment of the electoral system. People should be able to look forward to future review of such matters. When the electors of Greenslopes vote at a State election, I know that they do so with the intention that their interests should receive a full and proportionate voice on the floor of the Queensland Parliament. I am sure that those very same electors will not be happy with the continuance of a system indefinitely that ensures that, in some remote parts of the State, it will take about half as many electors as those in the electorate I represent to have a voice on the floor of the Parliament.

While I will continue to complain heartily about this deviation from the principle of universal suffrage, there are considerable grounds for rejoicing over the fundamental achievements of this reform in bringing one vote, one value to the vast majority of Queenslanders. Moreover, it puts into place an independent electoral commission that I believe will remain free of the political interference which has been so blatantly exercised in the past to produce corrupt electoral boundaries. Even with numerical equivalent electorates, the system can be open to political manipulation. Therefore, this reform is equally as important as the removal of the zonal system that provided a very substantial foundation for sorting the electoral system boundaries.

It is a great irony that at this point in history we are debating the Electoral Districts Bill, because exactly 100 years have passed since the occurrence of a number of very relevant events in Australia and particularly in what was the colony of Queensland. They were events that forged the foundations of political parties, our very system of government. Today, those events are central to the principles that we are debating. In 1891, Queensland was delicately poised on the brink of what could have become a civil war. Ten thousand shearers—some of whom were armed—were spread in camps across the western areas of Queensland. They were striking as a result of an outright attack by pastoralists who were largely controlled by large financial institutions. They set out to break the shearers union and the level of real wages. The shearers maintained their position throughout that period in a controlled and disciplined manner. They sought the parliamentary path to democratic reform and to the establishment of universal suffrage in this State. It is also ironic that the predecessor of the Australian Labor Party—the Australian Labour Federation—drafted its first political platform to include universal suffrage for all elections.

Time expired.

**Mr SANTORO** (Merthyr) (3.21 p.m.): Mr Speaker, we are today debating a Bill the contents of which have been and will remain of fundamental interest and importance to all Queenslanders. Queenslanders have waited for 50 years to set right the principles of electoral justice in this State. Now that a significant reform opportunity has arrived, it is imperative that we do not now waste or even emasculate the opportunity that has been so long in coming. The terms "gerrymander", "malapportionment" and "electoral weightage" reflect no credit on those who abuse the electoral trust of the people by sacrificing democratic principle in pursuit of expedience, adhockery or short-term partisan

gain for one favoured political party. Unfortunately, this is what will happen in this Parliament today.

The Liberal Party applauds the ending of the four-zonal malapportionment system under which it has been unfairly disadvantaged and under which Queenslanders have in fact been denuded of their full democratic rights throughout most of the post-war period. But, as a Liberal Party member of this House, I have the responsibility to seek and support the full restoration of democratic principles in Queensland and to ensure that neither the Parliament nor the Queensland voters allow themselves to be duped into believing that the full promise of reform is being delivered, because only part of the promise by the ALP is being delivered by the provisions of this Bill. For this to happen after so many years of denial of electoral justice in Queensland is merely to signal to the world that this Parliament is content again to have the door ajar for a return of apathy and electoral abuse, when determination and electoral vigilance are so obviously required. Unfortunately, this is the signal which the Labor Party and the National Party—not the Liberal Party—will send from this place today. To lack the determination to insist upon implementation of the basic principles of electoral fairness and justice and so leave the electoral door ajar is to enable an unnecessarily easy widening of that opening to new malapportionments in the future.

On this point, I must commend the simple candour and honesty of the remarks made in the dissenting report of the two National Party members of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review at page 8 of the *EARC Report on Queensland Legislative Assembly Electoral System*, when they said—

"We . . . make the comment that if a principle such as weightage is worth recognising, it is worth extrapolating to a wider degree."

I agree with their logic but I am fearful of the aspirations of the National Party, the Labor Party or any other party, for that matter, which may come to regard a door left ajar as an electoral door meant to be opened wider. The Liberal Party recognises that danger and stands firmly and proudly behind the fundamental principle of electoral justice, that being that the vote of one person in the State of Queensland should be equal to the vote of any other person, irrespective of where those people live.

The Liberal Party solution is therefore axiomatic—Queensland simply must not leave the electoral door ajar! It cannot be denied that "if a principle such as electoral weightage is worth recognising", as some people claim, there will always be pressures to accommodate it to an increased extent. The basic fact of electoral justice and of Liberal Party policy is that the so-called principle of electoral weightage is not worth recognising. Indeed, it is not a principle at all and it is certainly not a necessity, as has been put forward by EARC and members opposite.

The concerns of the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, often quoted by members opposite, regarding the weightage question are recorded in the parliamentary committee's report at page 19, and properly so. Referring to the famous 1963 USA case on electoral matters, *Reynolds v Sims* (1963) 377 US 533, the Council for Civil Liberties notes that even in 1963 the US Supreme Court noted that—

"Modern developments and improvements in transportation and communications make rather hollow in the mid-1960's most claims that deviations from population based representation can validly be based solely on geographic considerations. Arguments for allowing such deviations in order to ensure effective representation for sparsely settled areas and to prevent legislative districts from becoming so large that the availability of access of citizens to their representatives is impaired are today, for the most part, unconvincing."

Such arguments are even less convincing in the 1990s, bearing in mind the advent of fax machines and other technological and communication developments.

Let members in this place bear in mind that there are Federal electorates larger than the largest Queensland electorates, and they exist without engendering any need or any call for weightage in the Federal electoral system. In view of this, the needlessness

of electoral weightage in Queensland is even more apparent. In short, there are other preferable ways of dealing with geographical considerations. Over time, those ways become easier, not harder, as technology develops and such qualification as the US Supreme Court may have wanted to allow to the application of equal suffrage relates not to geographical considerations per se but to the integrity of various political subdivisions. What Queenslanders should not lose sight of, and what the Liberal Party has not lost sight of, is that there is a choice to be made and two different costs to be incurred in accommodating the admitted difficulties of members in very large electorates. There is a choice of system and a choice of cost. The cost to be paid is that either they dilute and subvert the principles of electoral justice and equality which were themselves hard won over the centuries or they pay the financial cost of providing supplementary facilities to those elected to represent large electorates. EARC recommendations, unfortunately, encompass both these steps. There is no need for the breadth of this approach, albeit there may in fact be more need for greater depth or willingness to pay the requisite financial costs than is presently proposed by EARC.

The weightage strand of the EARC approach is as unnecessary and inappropriate as the need for supplementary resources in large electorates is apparent. EARC accommodates the matter of supplementary facilities by recommending the provision of many more facilities to assist members of Parliament representing large electorates. It may well be that even more is necessary in the way of electorate secretaries or other supplementary facilities. By turning from that question, and by so readily running to the acceptance of electoral weightage and the ad hoc dilution of the principle of electoral equality, EARC—and those who endorse its recommendations—have demonstrated that the few dollars that might thereby be saved are more than the democratic principle is worth. The Liberal Party will not join the Labor and National Parties in this hasty sell-out of democratic electoral principles. It will not resile from its longstanding commitment to electoral fairness and equality. Today, the Liberal Party remains the only party in this place and in Queensland which truly stands firm in its demands for electoral justice. It has stood firm on that issue for many years.

Nobody denies that EARC has done good work for us—in some areas and within limits—but in terms of fundamental electoral principles it can be fairly stated that EARC has failed us. It has been seduced into accepting the view that electoral principles are not fundamental but are merely rough guides to be departed from casually and to an unsubstantiated ad hoc extent when the political circumstances of the day offer a temptation to that effect. We are left with a picture of Queensland with unelected members of the commission with their fingers in the hole of Queensland's political dyke. And this hole is of their own making! The tide of electoral inequality is already flowing through. Who is to say that it is not capable of becoming a flood tide? Who is to say that it is not capable of swamping the aspirations of those voters who have voted for a Labor Party for years hypocritically committed to an end to electoral impropriety, malapportionment and gerrymander?

I listened with interest to the speech by the honourable member for Greenslopes. He gave an even greater apologist performance in speaking about these matters than did the honourable member for Yeronga. I heard the honourable member for Greenslopes condemn and castigate the EARC recommendations. I heard him condemn and castigate the views of the majority of members of the Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review in regard to the EARC recommendations. He did not have the courage to stand by what he said in his maiden speech on 20 March 1990. The honourable member would not take an interjection when I tried to ask him whether he remembered what he said. I will refresh his memory as to what he did say. Prior to the next election, the Liberal Party will also remind his electors of the promise that he made in his very first speech in this place. The honourable member for Greenslopes said—

"In fact, I will argue that any form of zonal system is anathema to this principle embodied within our Constitution. For all the people to have that say in their own

destiny, one vote, one value must be the natural conclusion and the only foundation to provide good government. This is the most fundamental challenge that lies before the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. Voting is not only about political representation in an electorate; it is about an equal right to determine how political power is exercised."

I listened with great interest and pity as the honourable member ducked and weaved and tried to con his way out of the commitment that he made to the electorate of Greenslopes. He does not have to distribute copies of his speech in his electorate because the Liberal Party will reproduce the relevant sections for him, together with his initial commitment, and take out advertisements in the local newspapers. The honourable member can rest assured that the Liberal Party will remind his electors over and over again that he does not have the courage to stand by the very first commitments that he made in this Chamber.

**Mr Fenlon** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** The honourable member has every right to be agitated. By the time the Liberal Party is finished with the honourable member, he will not be well and truly agitated in this place; he will be well and truly agitated out of his seat. The recently begun reform process in Queensland—

**Mrs Edmond:** "We will lead you out of the wilderness. It will take a woman to do it."

**Mr SANTORO:** The Liberal Party will also be looking at one particular woman, who holds the seat of Mount Coot-tha. The majority of the parliamentary committee has sought to straddle a barbed wire political fence put up by EARC. It is obvious that the member for Greenslopes has had difficulty straddling that fence. That committee has sought both to pay tribute to EARC and to record its concern about the erosion of the principle of the equality of people's votes. I suggest that that principle cannot be bought in half-doses. Either we pay unstinting tribute to EARC for the integrity and unprincipled commitment of its work or we recognise, however sadly, that EARC's own recommendations amount to a continuation of an electoral system which concerned Queenslanders have so anxiously sought to end. Those are the sorts of concerns that were expressed by the member for Greenslopes. I really must pay tribute to him for having the courage to rise in his place and voice those concerns. However, the crunch comes when one is required to put up one's hand. Despite his protestations, when the honourable member puts up his hand, he is going to be on the Government's side. The Liberal Party will tell the electors of Greenslopes that their State member is putting the party before his constituents, whom he claims to represent with so much integrity and honesty. The majority report of the parliamentary committee has sought to resolve this dilemma by choosing to say that the fundamental and ongoing rights of Queensland voters as a whole are less important than a tripartisan pre-election promise, the interpretation of which is somehow said in the report and in this place to be immutable.

**Mr Fenlon:** Wasn't Angus Innes your leader? Didn't he make a promise?

**Mr SANTORO:** I am coming to Mr Angus Innes. The Liberal Party records its dissent from that majority view. Such dissent is clearly outlined in the dissenting minority report of my Liberal colleague the member for South Coast within the overall report of the parliamentary committee. It must be noted that the parliamentary committee majority makes it clear that it knows where its obligations lie in the matter of electoral principle, yet at the same time it illustrates its willingness—however piously reluctant—to sacrifice that principle for reasons of short-term electoral expedience. No more basic responsibility sits upon the shoulders of members of this Parliament—particularly the pious apologists opposite—than to ensure that the fundamental rules of the political process, including the electoral process, are laid down clearly and adhered to with conviction. No such basic responsibility can be sacrificed—again, however reluctantly and however partially we may pretend it to be—without placing in peril the democratic process itself. To allow

unelected individuals to impose upon the people such sacrifice of fundamental principle is unpardonable and remains absolutely unacceptable to the Liberal Party, as it was to Mr Innes and to the Liberal Party during the last session of Parliament.

Taken on its own terms, such acceptance of the diminution of the principle of equality of votes means that having made one mistake, in the form of an allegedly tripartite pre-election promise to sign a blank political cheque for a small group of unelected commissioners, Labor now feels compelled to compound that mistake by adding another in the form of a departure from electoral equality. Indeed, the Goss Government entices us to do this, even though we know at the time of the second mistake involving weightage that it is a mistake. We are further enticed to enshrine this admitted mistake in legislation and glorify it in the name of "the outcome of the culmination of Queensland's long created reform process". We are enticed to do this, despite the recognition by the Labor majority members—listen to this—of the parliamentary committee on page 34 of the report "that there are powerful reasons that no such promise of delegation should ever again be made". That is despite their recognition that this is a procedure so wrong that it should never be repeated.

What the Goss Government puts before us today can thus be observed to be its three-fold claim to good government. The first tenet of this claim for good government is based upon its very naked philosophy that one good mistake deserves another. Having committed itself to a bad procedure, the Goss Government now commits itself to bad results as well. The second visible tenet of Goss Government philosophy is the claim that it is a responsible Government, conscientiously committed to the reform movement. The Goss Government asks whether Queenslanders would mind not noticing when that Government sacrifices its principles, along with the expectations of thousands of concerned Queensland voters who seek propriety more than partisan gain. The third visible tenet of Goss Government electoral reform philosophy is to commit itself, at least in words, to EARC's endorsement of the need for a reinvigorated program of public education in matters of democratic responsibilities. I notice that there are some schoolchildren in the public gallery to whom this undoubted education program is going to be directed. However, it demonstrates that the Labor Party, in actual deeds, states that the education it provides to the Queensland public is comprised of a reading of Murphy's Law, that one good mistake deserves another, and the story of the Emperor's New Clothes.

**Mr Fenlon** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** The honourable member can just wait. It is coming.

In respect of the latter story—Queenslanders cannot avert their eyes from the fact that the supposedly principled reformist Goss Government has stripped itself of its principles. High-sounding phrases about ending gerrymanders and restoring electoral propriety are all right in speeches, but when it comes time to put them into practice, like so many of its other promises, the going gets too tough for Labor and it simply gives up—Fraser Island, north coast toll roads and the list goes on.

Queensland again winds up with a Government without the courage and conviction to implement a fair electoral system. That is the public education that the Goss Government now puts before the people of Queensland. Principle is not for practice; near enough is good enough. This is the reality behind the rhetoric. This is the education in real politics that the Goss Government so nakedly puts before Queensland, notwithstanding its attempts to blind the complacent and the apathetic by shrouding its actions in vacuous political phrases. Labor members themselves recognise—honourable members heard the bleating from the member for Greenslopes—the electoral principles which Queensland voters deserve, but they failed to enact them. They failed to rise to the challenge put before them by the members of the Liberal Party in this place and will not dare vote against the dilution of principle hitherto so precious to members opposite and those who voted for them. I further note that on page 29 of its report the parliamentary committee accepted that there is a good reason why the decisions of an independent redistribution commission should be final and conclusive. I, together with the Liberal

Party, accept this finding, provided that the redistribution is performed within legitimate parameters of democratic principle worthy of this Parliament's endorsement.

Referring to the alleged tripartite agreement that the political parties would do whatever some outside body told them to do, the parliamentary committee, on page 34 of its report, observed that there are powerful reasons why no such promise of delegation should ever again be made. That mistake admitted on the part of the other two parties in this place, the Liberal Party wishes to emphasise to the people of Queensland that one big mistake most emphatically does not deserve another. As my colleague Bob Quinn, the member for South Coast, noted in his dissenting report—

"The overriding duty lies in legislating in the interests of the entire electorate."

Accordingly, the honourable member for South Coast further stressed in his dissenting report that the Liberal Party, for its part, in fact never offered to underwrite a blank cheque. He correctly cites election policy speeches to that effect, including Angus Innes' media release on 5 October 1989 that the Liberal Party would not give EARC a blank cheque on electoral reform and that the Liberal Party would settle for nothing less than fair, equitable electoral redistribution. The Liberal Party never gave the blank cheque that members opposite gave to unelected commissioners. They have proven that constantly, and they will continue to tell the people of Queensland that the people who have sold them out on their deliberate aspirations are those members opposite.

Time expired.

**Mr BREDHAUER** (Cook) (3.42 p.m.): Honourable members on this side of the Chamber have just been the subject of another unrestrained onslaught from the member for Merthyr. It is like going three rounds with a cream puff. Members of the Liberal Party are like a box of lamingtons—a sprinkle of sweetness on the top, something dark underneath, but basically spongy in the middle.

The passage of this Bill marks a milestone in the history of this Parliament. For the first time in many years, a process of establishing electoral boundaries will be set in train which the people of Queensland and national and international observers can have faith is free from political interference. The substance of this Bill, and the initial process of redistribution derived from and implemented by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, eliminates the odour of electoral corruption which has tainted recent redistributions. This Bill sounds the death knell of the iniquitous four-zonal electoral system over which the National and Liberal Parties resided for so many years to their mutual and questionable benefit.

The document *A History of the Queensland Zonal Electoral System* by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission contains a discussion of the arguments justifying electoral weightage in the form of the four zones. Firstly, I want to speak about those. The first of those justifications is listed as "Rural areas, where both Members and voters are disadvantaged by size and remoteness of their electorates, need proportionally greater political representation as compensation"

for that size and remoteness. I want to use this opportunity to debunk the myth that the four-zonal system was designed to redress the imbalance of size and remoteness. In order to do that, I have drawn on some figures from the Forty-fifth *Queensland Parliamentary Handbook*, the State Electoral Office and various other matters. I want to speak about some of those electorates that are located in the western and far-northern zone under the current zonal system, of which I represent one and of which the member for Mount Isa represents another. I want to talk a little bit about the size of those electorates and their remoteness because, under the National Party, the basis for recent redistributions was to provide compensation for that size and remoteness through the zonal system.

The western and far-northern zone contains eight electorates. At this stage, two of those are held by the Labor Party and the remaining six are held by the National Party. The National Party seats are Roma, Gregory, Warrego, Flinders, Peak Downs and Balonne. I invite honourable members to consider the size of some of those seats. For example, Roma contains 44 900 square kilometres. It has a current electoral enrolment

of 8 356, and the principal centre, the town of Roma, is 472 kilometres by road from Brisbane. In comparison with the 44 900 square kilometres of the Roma electorate, the electorate of Cook is 350 750 square kilometres in land area. That does not take into account a lot of the water that is in between the land. The electorate of Cook has an enrolment of 13 670, which is well over 50 per cent greater than the enrolment in Roma. In relation to the electorate of Cook—the distance from Brisbane by road, give or take the odd deviation depending on the roadworks being undertaken on the peninsula, to the tip is 2 652 kilometres, and then quite a long swim from the tip to Thursday Island. So there is really no substance to the argument that the present zonal system, particularly in the far north and west, presents the opportunity for redressing the imbalance of size of electorate or of remoteness.

I refer now to Mount Isa and another electorate of similar size, Peak Downs. The electorate of Peak Downs is 45 800 square kilometres in area. It has an enrolment of 9 603 and the main centre of Emerald is 927 kilometres by road from Brisbane. The electorate of Mount Isa, which has an area of 41 300 square kilometres, has an enrolment of 14 137 and the principal centre of Mount Isa is 1 777 kilometres by road from Brisbane. So really the zonal system does nothing to compensate the people who live in the most remote parts of the State and in some of the biggest electorates. I want to put on the record an end to the myth that the four-zonal system was implemented to help the people who live in the remote areas. It does no such thing. In recent redistributions, the four-zonal system was designed to help the National Party and, prior to 1983, the Liberal Party. They were the major beneficiaries of electoral malapportionment.

Much has been made in this debate by the netball team in the corner opposite—and the member for Merthyr is part of this—about the Liberals' highly principled stance on the issue of one vote, one value. Assuming the moral high ground, as they have done, they have regaled us at length with pious criticism—and it usually is pious when it comes from the Liberal Party—of the departure from Labor Party policy and would have us see the members of the Liberal Party as the bastions of democratic principle. But let me ask: where were the Liberals in the days when the debate on the zonal system really counted? They were in bed in coalition with the Nationals. They were supporting the Nationals in abusing the electoral system to give the result that we have now. What was the true motivation of the Liberals in opposing redistributions in the past? Was it their unyielding belief in the fundamental principle of equal suffrage?

**Mr Santoro:** Are you going to cross the floor?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** The meaningless interjections from the motorised mouth from Merthyr are as inane as they are incessant. What was the Liberals' motivation? Was it their unyielding belief in the fundamental principle of equal suffrage or a display of political opportunism based on blatant short-term self-interest? Honourable members should not take my word for it but should refer to EARC's history of the zonal system. I will quote a couple of passages from the report on the 1977 redistribution about what the Liberal Party's motive was for opposing redistributions. The report states—

"When interviewed for this report, Don Lane indicated that the 1977 redistribution had been opposed by Liberal parliamentary members because it was an election year and they were concerned that they would not have time to become acquainted with their new constituents."

There is no concern about one vote, one value there. There is no concern about a four-zonal system. There is no concern about electoral malapportionment. All the Liberals care about is whether or not they will have time to go around their electorates and get re-elected. The report states further—

"Liberal members were concentrating on their own survival and the increasing competition between the coalition partners made them fear that a redistribution would disadvantage them. It was suspected that the National Party decision to proceed with the redistribution was a direct result of the 1976 Liberal Party

Convention decision to proceed with three-cornered contests against the National Party."

There is no high moral ground on electoral redistribution there; there is blatant self-interest and nothing else. So when did the Liberals suddenly discover the true meaning of a fair electoral system? Only when the electorate had handed them out a thrashing at the 1983 State election and reduced them to the irrelevant rump they remain today. By then it was too late for the Liberals to take a stance. It was just a public exercise in self-flagellation. The Nationals had used the system, and they had used the Liberal Party, to secure Government in their own right with a majority of seats on a minority of votes. The Liberals' performance here today is an exercise in navel-gazing, a demonstration of what could have been—if only. It epitomises why the electorate has continued to spurn them at the Federal and State levels and now, in the most embarrassing way, at the local government level.

The Electoral Districts Bill has some important features to which I will refer briefly without dealing with the specifics of the clauses. Obviously, as I have mentioned, the redistribution is to be undertaken by EARC. I find it ironic that the member for Lockyer can attack the independence of the review process on the basis of some technicality about the appointment of the members of EARC. He acknowledges that all three parties in this House consented to their appointment. We know the history of previous redistributions. In those cases, the National Party appointed the commissioners. We know the history of the lost filing cabinet. For the honourable member to imply that, on the basis of some technicality, the redistribution process will not be independent is really laughable. The redistribution is to be on the basis of a quota which is determined by the commission, and that the quota is to be, in essence, the number of electors divided by the number of seats. The quota can be varied by the commission as it considers necessary, by a tolerance of plus or minus 10 per cent. There is also the feature of the variation in land area of 2 per cent for seats in excess of 100 000 square kilometres. That will be of significance to about six seats. Another feature of the Bill is the right of appeal if the redistribution has not been carried out in accordance with the Act. That does not give us, the 89 members of this House, the right to appeal if they do not think the boundaries quite suit us but only if we can argue—

**Mr Santoro:** You might end up getting one of those good seats.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I can guarantee the member for Merthyr that the electorate of Cook will still exist. I would not mind betting that the redistribution starts on Boigu Island at the very northern end of the Cook electorate. I guarantee the honourable member that the electorate will continue to exist and that it will still be a Labor seat after the next election.

The right of appeal is an important process. However, members cannot complain simply because they do not like the outcome of the boundary draw. This Bill is not based on the pure adoption of the principle of one vote, one value. No-one on this side of the House has claimed that. My colleagues and I still hold that principle as the essence of the system. However, it does mark the most important reform to our State's electoral system since 1949 and restores the confidence that the people of Queensland can have in an unbiased non-political process for determining such important matters. More fundamentally, this Bill is based on the commitment that the Labor Party gave to the people of Queensland in the Premier's November 1989 election policy speech. Honourable members would be aware that the Premier said—

"My Government will move swiftly to see that the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission conducts an open and comprehensive reform of the electoral system and the boundaries, and we will abide by the umpire's decision."

If members of the Labor Party are to stand condemned for conforming and complying with their election promises, I am happy to be condemned.

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (3.54 p.m.): I join in this debate with a considerable amount of pleasure in some respects and a great deal of sadness in other aspects.

Honourable members are hearing the same old regurgitated vitriol from Government members who have spoken about gerrymanders, the zonal system and the processes that have led to it. That is particularly sad, because the spirit of the whole debate should be about trying to lay down a template that is in the best interests of the people of this State, not denigrating the past. It should be understood that a great deal of good has come out of the past systems. In fact, the process of balanced and weighted representation was one of the foundations of development of this State.

The attacks being made represent continuing attempts to underline the mistaken belief that the zonal system seems to be the only gerrymander in existence. That is not the case. The gerrymander that exists in the zonal sense is a figment of the imagination of Government members. Regardless of the size of electorates and where they are located, during the past 40 years no Government was elected which would otherwise not have been voted into power if the system had been different. During the past 40 years, after the infamous Hanlon Government was in power—Government members seem to be upset about that and have apologised and carried on a treat—not one Government was elected in this State by a minority of the people. That is a principal underlying factor in terms of democracy. When I first became a member of this House, Queensland had 82 electorates. Prior to that, the figure was approximately 70. Governments have been elected by a majority of the people.

I concede that a review of electoral boundaries was necessary. That review was agreed to by all members of this House. I concede that the end result of the review may not necessarily have met with everyone's approval. Nevertheless, one of the main factors—in fact, probably the main factor—to come out of the whole review was that the zonal system was not wrong and was not proved to be wrong.

**Mr Beattie:** That's not what they said. I've got the document here.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Nowhere in that report do the commissioners say that the zonal system created corrupt and minority Governments and did not operate in the best interests of the people of this State. One would hope that the new system that we are debating is fair. With a great deal of reluctance, the fairness of the system is being accommodated by members of the Labor and Liberal Parties. That is very sad. The fact of the matter is that the umpire has spoken and that Government members do not like chewing what he had to say. The National Party expresses some reservations about the new system. My colleague the member for Lockyer and I did that via the dissenting report. I believe that the member for Merthyr indicated that we believe that if a principle is worth adopting in terms of weightage, it is worth extrapolating to the extent of a full view of the weightage process. It was diminishing to such an extent that, finally, it ceased to take effect. I reiterate that the number of voters in a particular electorate should not be the reason that any Government came to power. However, parliamentary representation is about representing the people by whom members are elected so that they can adequately put forward their concerns and views, represent their interests and provide them with a fair share of the goods and services that are a reasonable part and parcel of their expectations in the payment of their taxation dollar. I do not believe that any member would disagree with that reasonable principle.

The electorate of Gregory has enjoyed the tradition of being well served by a number of fine National Party members. For many years it has been the largest electorate in this State. When I first came to Queensland, I was an elector in Gregory. In fact, my first vote was cast in that electorate for Sir Wallace Rae—then Wally Rae. He was succeeded by Bill Glasson, and now Vaughan Johnson. Those people have incredible dedication. I pay tribute to people such as Bob Scott and Steve Bredhauer, who similarly represent large electorates. At the end of the day they know that, because of the concentration of voters, the services that they are able to extract from Governments—regardless of their colour—for their electors are not going to be anywhere near commensurate with those that apply in many other electorates, including my own electorate. I make the point again that it is not merely a matter of counting people and dividing the numbers so that each electorate has the same number of people; it is a matter of

the way in which the members can serve the people in those electorates. That is of particular importance.

In terms of fairness, we need to consider the way in which Governments serve in total the people that they represent. It is particularly important for them to take account of the way in which the Government manages. The present Labor Government seems to feel that one vote, one value and, therefore, numerically equal electorates—which is, of course, impossible to achieve—will bring about good and fair government. Unfortunately, that is not the case. Let us consider what happens in some of the other States. I draw to the attention of honourable members an article that lobbed onto my desk today and therefore, I assume, onto the desks of a number of other members. It is the March 1991 pamphlet of the Institute of Public Affairs. It refers to State inefficiencies costing \$7 billion. Honourable members opposite would be very interested in some of the comments that are made in that article. It stated—

"An IPA study commissioned by EPAC has found strong evidence that there is potential for nearly \$7 billion to be saved by all States adopting the expenditure levels of the most efficient State. This should be achievable without measurably reducing the quality or level of services.

There are wide differences between States in efficiency of spending and, hence, in the scope for expenditure savings. Victoria appears"—

a one vote, one value State, I might digress by saying—

"to be easily the least efficient State and Queensland the most efficient."

That should be taken into account. Let me reiterate the statement—

"Victoria appears to be easily the least efficient State and Queensland the most efficient on the basis of"—

wait for it—

"1988/89 Commonwealth Grants Commission data."

Who was in power when that came to pass? Who was the Government of the day? It was the National Party with its so-called corrupt gerrymander that brought about the fiscal management referred to in the Commonwealth Grants Commission—I repeat, the Commonwealth Grants Commission—data. Under a heading "Potential Scope for Savings" in billion dollars on an annual basis, the article states that New South Wales has a capacity to save \$2.2 billion, if it were to adopt the National Party processes of management, and that Victoria has a capacity to save \$2.4 billion. Both of those States have a one vote, one value, so-called fair, non-gerrymandered electoral structure. What a lot of rot! What about the fairness to the voters under that system? There is no accountability whatsoever. In the article, Queensland is, of course, level-pegging because it is the benchmark. South Australia has potential scope for savings of \$0.8 billion; Western Australia, \$1.1 billion; and Tasmania, \$0.3 billion. Even Tasmania, with the great old Hare-Clarke system, is not equal. The article continues—

"Although some States argue that their higher per capita expenditures are evidence of higher quality service rather than inefficiency, there is no evidence to support this."

That is a very profound statement. According to the figures published by the independent review and because of the protocols that were put in place previously, the people of this State save \$1,000 per voter per year. If any honourable member can tell me that that is not fairness, that that is not accountable government, I am not here. Government members are saying that, if they carve up the State into equal numbers, it will make for good government. Let us see. It is another debate altogether, but all of the pointers indicate that the Government is faithfully following Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the old New South Wales model. The evidence is there. I have no doubt that Government members will read this with a great deal of delight later on.

One of the subjects broached by those who disagree with the principle of weightage is that the solution to the weightage/fairness problem is to be found in some form of

gadgets. They say: give a member of Parliament a few gadgets; give him a four-wheel drive and an 008 number and he will be okay; you can give him another office. Members such as the honourable member for Gregory, the honourable member for Cook, the honourable member for Warrego and my colleague the member for Roma have large electorates. It was interesting that, when the member for Cook made a comparison with Roma, he referred to the closest point to Brisbane, not the furthest point from Brisbane; but when he talked about Cook, he referred to the furthest point from Brisbane. I am not in any way saying that Cook is not a huge and unmanageable electorate. Unfortunately, I can see no way in the world that it will diminish in size. It could well grow in size, as will many other electorates. However, allowances per se do not compensate for personal contact. That is what the members in those large electorates have to concern themselves about. There is a problem. A cost is incurred by voters in accessing the services provided by their tax dollar. They pay the same tax dollar as people in city electorates. Lack of service is not addressed by reducing representation. The needs of the electorates of Cook, Gregory, Warrego, Roma and even the electorates on the coast, such as my electorate, that are larger than the average, can not be accommodated by reducing the representation of those people.

Let us make a comparison. I am pleased that the member for Brisbane Central is in the Chamber. The honourable member can correct me if I am wrong but, assuming he lives in his electorate, I assume that it would be about a five-minute drive from his home to this Parliament.

**Mr Lingard:** And gets lost.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I am not about to denigrate the member. I think that he does the best he can under the circumstances. I am aware that he has factional problems. The fact is that it would take him 10 minutes at the most to come here and similarly 10 minutes to drive to his office.

One electorate that comes to mind, which is not a very big electorate, but is a good electorate in many other ways, is my own electorate of Burdekin. It is a medium-size country electorate. It is the twelfth-largest electorate in the State but is under 20 000 square kilometres in area.

**Mr Beattie:** How many people?

**Mr STONEMAN:** At the moment about 14 100, and they are scattered over 18 000 square kilometres.

**Mr Beattie:** Seven thousand less than I have.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Yes, but unlike the honourable member, I cannot run around my electorate in five minutes on a pushbike. In fact, the honourable member could pick up most of his electorate as he jogs through the park. I do not want to be facetious. I merely wish to make these points in this debate—which will become a part of the history of this State—so that they are in print. It takes Mr Beattie 5 or 10 minutes to get to his office, but it takes me 45 minutes to get to my office. That is my choice. I live in approximately the centre of my electorate.

**Mr Beattie:** Are you in your electorate? Do you live in it?

**Mr STONEMAN:** Yes. It is about a 45-minute drive from my home to my office. If I lived in one of the more far-flung areas, it could take an hour and a half, two hours or three and a half hours if I lived right up at the top end. If I lived in Gregory or Flinders it could take me a day and a half. Instead of the 5 or 10 minutes that it takes the member for Brisbane Central to access Parliament, it takes me half a day—and I am one of the better served members in this House. I have a motor car that comes to the door and a jet service, so I am not in the worst position. The honourable member for Barron River is in a worse position because it takes her another hour or thereabouts in an aeroplane to get to her electorate. These factors must be acknowledged and compensated for. This means that I spend two months of every year merely driving to my office, and, like a number of other members, one and a half months of the year

flying to Brisbane. That should be compared to the 10 minutes per day spent by Mr Beattie to travel each way. Members like me spend a total of three and a half months every year totally out of contact with our constituents because we are driving to or from the office or attending Parliament. This does not include electorate travel. The honourable member for Brisbane Central has electorate travel as well and is also out of contact. I am only talking about when members are travelling from A to B. I do not say that it is an easy job to represent a city electorate. I understand that it is difficult. In many ways, it is harder to maintain personal communication because in many cases city members do not have a central focus. I acknowledge that, but if a member puts up his or her shingle, people can reach them far more easily than they can reach Mr Johnson, Mr Bredhauer, Mr Cooper or others. No-one doubts that. There is a minimum of three and a half months when the member representing an average-size country electorate is out of communication with his electors and vice versa.

Those are the sorts of things that must be accommodated as being part and parcel of the weightage process. The commissioners obviously accepted that as one of the reasons. There were a number of valid reasons. Members have to drive for hours to service their electorates. I do not say that that is necessarily the most onerous task in the world, but it has to be done if a member is to service his electorate properly. When a member is sitting in a motor car driving for hundreds of kilometres, he or she cannot do electorate work. In fact, a member becomes his or her own chauffeur. That fact needs to be acknowledged. The member for Broadsound is nodding his head because he is in the same position as I am. I am confident that his electorate is either much the same or slightly bigger than mine. The other matter regarding access to electors that must be understood is that at lunch-time a city member, such as the member for Brisbane Central, can zip home from Parliament and attend a function, such as opening a school or a building and be back here in time for the resumption of Parliament.

**Mr Beattie:** I do that.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I know that the honourable member does it and so does the member for Yeronga. Good luck to them. I do not belittle that fact because it is necessary and it works both ways. It must be understood that members who represent far-flung electorates—and the larger the electorate, the more difficult it is—do not have that facility. Similarly, city members can go home in the evenings. That is something that the members representing far-flung electorates—regardless of where they sit in this House—do not have at their disposal.

**Mr Beattie:** We have more constituents than you do. We have more people.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I will accept the honourable member's interjection. He says that city members have more constituents than I do. That is the case, but the Bill that we are now debating will mean that he could in fact have fewer electors at the end of the day than I have now. If the honourable member is in a high-growth area, because of all the toing-and-froing involved in the electoral process, he could very well end up under quota and I could end up over quota.

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

**Mr STONEMAN:** When I say "under quota", there is a tolerance of 10 per cent either side and it could well be that on a State average in a low-growth area such as Burdekin, I could have a few thousand more electors and, because Brisbane Central is a high-growth area, the member—and I am not sure of the figures in his electorate—could have fewer electors. That fact is contained in the Bill and the member should have a look at it.

**Mr Beattie:** It is like the member; very stable.

**Mr STONEMAN:** The honourable member will be middle-of-the-road and will have 22 000 electors, give or take a few. At the end of the day, I will have an even

larger electorate than I have at the moment and Mr Beattie will have one that is basically the same size as he has at present.

**Mr Rowell:** Smaller.

**Mr STONEMAN:** It could well be smaller, that is right, but we will have access to the same facilities, as will the electors.

Time expired.

**Mr BARBER** (Cooroora) (4.14 p.m.): Westminster Parliaments have been refining and reforming the representativeness of parliamentary democracy for centuries and this Bill is another example of an Australian Parliament showing the world how refined that representation can be. I understand Mr Stoneman to have just said that he thinks he believes in democracy, but he is not sure. I trust that his electors will read his speech.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I rise to a point of order. I ask that that statement be retracted. Under no circumstances did I indicate that I thought I believed in democracy. There is no doubt about it and the honourable member is casting a reflection by referring to comments that I did not make.

**Mr BARBER:** I withdraw those comments, Mr Deputy Speaker. Mr Stoneman continued to talk about size in terms of geography during his speech. It seems to me that he was thinking of sheep in paddocks and their representation in Parliament. The National Party organisation and Mr Stoneman cannot conceive of the twentieth century innovation of the representation of people in Parliament. People, and not interests, must be represented in the Parliament. Any tampering with the numbers strikes at the very heart of democracy and, unfortunately, in this State over three decades, that is what the people have experienced. Admittedly, tolerances may be necessary in the interests of practical administration and 10 per cent seems to be the norm that is adopted in Australia these days. I suggest that tolerance should be moving towards 5 per cent and to even less than that in years to come.

In my electorate of Cooroora, I used to be engaged in verbal newspaper battles with Mr John Ahern over the gerrymander and representation of people in Parliament. I used to argue that one vote, one value was the optimum towards which the Queensland Parliament must move. That argument removes the kingdom or fiefdom view of electorates that the National Party has held over many decades, that is, that safe seats were to be created and that they were to be passed down from father to son or from mates to mates over a long period. By virtue of this Bill, seats will swing and electorates will reflect the wishes of the people. Representatives will be tossed out of office and replaced by others, and that is parliamentary democracy. The interests of the people will be represented on the floor of the House instead of being confined to the little kingdoms that were a feature of years gone by.

This refinement in representation contained in the Bill can be traced back to the first Parliaments that existed in medieval Scandinavia where various community people came together at meetings called moots. Following the Norse settlement of England, the tradition of moots was introduced into the UK. These traditional meetings of elders were refined and became meetings summoned by the king and various burgesses, knights and magistrates from the cities. At that time, it was really a representation of power and economics. The meetings were summoned by the king to assist in his decision-making. Over ensuing centuries, this system was refined even more to become elected Parliaments. It was much closer to the norm that people know about today and was more akin to our understanding of representative democracy. Admittedly, the English system had a problem with rotten boroughs and had similar malapportionment and gerrymander problems. However, as I said at the outset, Australia leads the way in showing the Western World how refined the representation of people in Parliament can be.

On the hot July afternoon when the Fitzgerald report was presented, I was driving around the backblocks of the Glasshouse electorate with the person who was at that

time the candidate for Glasshouse, Jon Sullivan, together with Councillor Herman Schwabe. We were inspecting the roads and we turned on the radio because we were interested to see whether, as we had hoped, a plank of the Fitzgerald report would be electoral reform in Queensland. I must say that we were quite impressed and elated when we heard during the radio report that one of the major planks of the Fitzgerald report was electoral reform. That electoral reform was recommended with good reason.

**Mr Katter:** They were the same planks that we had before.

**Mr BARBER:** That may be true. The honourable member for Flinders may be right because they were the planks that were walked down by the members of the National Party. Electoral reform was a part of the Fitzgerald recommendations for a very good reason, which was that representation of the people on the floor of the Parliament is fundamental to representative democracy. At page 127, the Fitzgerald report states—

"A fundamental tenet of the established system of parliamentary democracy is that public opinion is given effect by regular, free, fair elections following open debate.

A Government in our political system which achieves office by means other than free and fair elections lacks legitimate political authority over that system."

Further down the same page, the report states—

"There is a vital need for the existing electoral boundaries to be examined by an open, independent inquiry as a first step in the rehabilitation of social cohesion, public accountability and respect for authority."

Mr Fitzgerald's comments reflect the fact that Queensland's democracy had gone off the rails and he prescribed the investigation of the process by EARC. By virtue of that process, this Bill has been presented to the Parliament. Australia leads the Western World in developing parliamentary democracy. During my newspaper battles with Mr John Ahern, I used to claim that Queensland needed to join the Western World by getting rid of the malapportionment. Quite correctly, he used to remind me—

**Mr Katter:** What country in the world has electorates of equal size? Take an interjection!

**Mr BARBER:** I thank the member for Flinders, because that was the very point I was addressing. More than once, Mr John Ahern referred to his National Party handbook and cited the UK, Canada and Japan as having worse malapportionments and/or gerrymanders than any Australian State. I have to concede to Mr John Ahern and others that I was wrong because we should not have been joining the rest of the world. We should lead the Western World, and that is what the other States in Australia that have adopted one vote, one value with a 10 per cent tolerance have done. Perhaps Mr Katter cannot conceive of little old Australia at the bottom of the globe being a world leader in anything, but I can assure members of the Opposition that Australia does exactly that. History will record that in reforming the malapportionments of the Playford era in South Australia, the Bolte years in Victoria and the Bjelke-Petersen years in Queensland, Australia showed the way to other parliamentary democracies in the Westminster tradition.

Whenever I read comments on gerrymanders in history books or in the press, I find that the common theme is the acknowledgment that the Hanlon Labor Government established Queensland's gerrymander in 1949. They go on to state that Joh Bjelke-Petersen refined and elevated the gerrymander to an art form, which is a fair description of what has occurred in Queensland. Only yesterday, Don Lane confirmed this in his "true confessions". The zonal system was offensive to anyone who made an objective study of it. What major differences existed between my south-east Queensland seat of Cooroora and those seats just up the road? Yet another zone existed just up the road with a different formula for calculating representation on the floor of the House. Anyone involved in groups or committees or community activity knows that the numbers are

the bottom line in decision-making. The National Party struck at the heart of representative government by fiddling the numbers. Representative democracy was tampered with by saying that the tyranny of distance had to be compensated by fiddling the numbers. That argument is simply wrong democratically.

Under this Bill, we move towards my seat of Cooroora being a part of one Queensland, not a four-zonal Queensland. I object that it was ever otherwise, and my electors demand a Bill such as this to return them to their franchise from the weakened and wounded State that it was. It took three times as many electors to return a member for Cooroora as it did a member for Roma, and Cooroora wants to rejoin the rest of Queensland and elect its representative and be heard in this House on an equal basis. Australians love their sport and the rules of the game. They love to sit around the TV set on a Saturday afternoon with their tinnies and watch the game and adjudicate the referee to make sure that his decisions are correct. In fact, chicken wire is often placed around the TV set in case any missiles are hurled at the referee in the heat of the moment. Australians require a fair game and a fair referee. If they had ever been told while they were watching the football what the rules in Queensland were for electing members of Parliament, there would have been uproar; but I think they were prepossessed with the football and were not able to understand the abuses that occurred in this place. However, on 2 December 1989, they voted for fair play, for Fitzgerald reform and for the Goss Labor Government to implement that reform. They voted for electoral reform.

History will record this Bill as a watershed in Queensland. It is part of the English speaking people's tradition of refining and reforming Westminster democracy. I outlined the early forms of Parliament from the Norse people to the Magna Carta, which took more power out of the King's hands and placed it into the hands of the nobility, and then the reform movements whereby the King was thrown out of Parliament and replaced by the Speaker. Australia is now leading the field in reforming and refining just how representative this place is. Australians are fair dinkum about anything to which they set their minds. The Goss Government is fair dinkum about implementing the Fitzgerald reforms. The people in my electorate will take great comfort from the Bill before the House, as will the others in this State who have been disfranchised for decades. I support the Bill before the House.

**Hon. R. C. KATTER** (Flinders) (4.26 p.m.): We have heard a lot of would-be academics telling us all about——

**Mr Beattie:** What do you mean "would-be"?

**Mr KATTER:** I take the interjection. I rather like interjections. Honourable members should not hesitate to indulge themselves. The interjection referred to would-be academics. Government members claim to have some sort of scholarship. It amazes me that they can stand in this Chamber and say things that so patently indicate that they have done no homework or research and have a very scant understanding of history and some of the principles that have evolved down through the ages and which we enjoy in this country and in this State. Unfortunately, some of us do not enjoy those principles quite so much as others enjoy them. The academics who have talked about democracy have made no reference to the Americans and the French, who are attributed with being the founders of modern-day democracy. For the benefit of Government members, I inform them that de Tocqueville devoted a whole section of one of his major books to the issue of the tyranny of the majority—that a democracy should not be a means by which the majority of people take all and the minority become oppressed by that majority.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** Let us enter into debate so that Government members can answer the statements that I am making. The man who was regarded as the father of the American and French Constitutions said that one of the major problems that exist in the creation of a democracy is that it does not become, to use his phrase, the tyranny of the majority. The mechanisms that he envisaged were very much set up to overcome the problem of the tyranny of the majority. In the American system, the Senate has

certain powers and acts as a security mechanism against the Congress. Similarly, the Congress has powers to restrain the Executive arm, which is again separated. The Supreme Court stands as a fourth bulwark. I must correct again the lack of any scholarship by Mr Santoro. He came into this Chamber and claimed that the American Supreme Court had decided against the weightage of electorates because of distance and other interests that are taken into account. Of course, he was incorrect. He had done only half of his homework. In fact, later, the Supreme Court reversed its decision and decided that, for the delivery of real democracy and a real say by people in the Government of the country, in certain circumstances there should be some sort of weightage for people because of geographic isolation. We have talked about the great democracies of the world such as those in the United States and France.

There are very few Parliaments anywhere in the world like ours—unicameral. I heard a lecturer say that there are only three unicameral Parliaments in the world. I think that that may have been somewhat of an exaggeration. However, undoubtedly very few Parliaments in the world do not have an Upper House, which almost invariably protects—as does the Australian Upper House—the interests of people who are geographically isolated from the centre of Government, if you like. Tasmania, which presently has a population of half a million or thereabouts, has 10 or 12 senators. It has the same number of senators as New South Wales does with seven million electors. Does one ever hear members of the ALP squeal about the injustice of the Senate? No, one never hears them squeal about the injustice of the Senate. They have freely and frankly accepted the principle at all times.

If the Government wanted to be consistent, it could introduce an Upper House as an alternative. It is not an alternative that I personally favour. However, the fact is that it could overcome the problems of geographic isolation and distance. It pained me greatly to hear the member for Cook, who represents that mighty part of Queensland—the nation's frontiersmen, if you like—which is so far from the seat of Government, rise in this place and seriously support this legislation and the principle of one vote, one value. He should hang his head in shame. Unfortunately for the member for Cook, Hansard will record that that was how he represented the people of the electorate of Cook. It is a sad day for democracy in this State to see those people so shabbily represented and told so many lies, which they believe, by people of his ilk for whom they continue to vote. It is a great disappointment.

In certain areas there is not only geographic isolation but also other forms of oppression by the majority over minority groups in society. In New Zealand, Maoris are given two or three elected representatives. It is a racial representation. The position is the same in South Africa—which I think few honourable members would agree with; I would hope not, anyway—where there is this principle of racial representation. In Fiji, there is a principle of racial representation. In every one of these countries they have tried to build into their system some way that minority interests can be protected. However, in Australia there is no protection for the rights of a minority group. Those who have got the numbers have got the muscle, and they use it to brutalise the people who are on the receiving end. Having lived all my life at the far end of the railway line, I speak with some bitterness, some hatred and some hostility. I quite genuinely have those feelings when I enter this Chamber and see the sort of unfairness that is going to be foisted upon people in remote areas.

Perhaps there is a State or country somewhere else in the world in which the seat of Government is 1 000 kilometres away from three-quarters of a million of the people who are ruled by that particular Government, but I could not find it. Not even in countries such as Canada and Russia could I find a situation similar to the one in Queensland, with such a vast number of people living so far away from the centre of Government in Brisbane. For the benefit of those who shout, "One vote, one value!", I point out that one vote, one value has not caused a great deal of bloodshed. There have been two or three rebellions and upheavals in history that leap to mind in which one vote, one value was the fighting cry. However, let us examine another principle, that is, the principle of no taxation without representation. Is there any member of this

Parliament who has read a history book who has not read the phrase, "There is no taxation without representation."?

Those honourable members who have read a bit of history may have heard of a person called Oliver Cromwell. He said, "If you are going to impose the ship-building tax on us, then we want a say in how those taxes are spent. If we do not get a say, we will be drawing our swords." Of course, that is what he did, and the bloodbath that followed, which took away one-third of the population of Ireland, was the result of some people thinking that you can charge people taxation and oppress them and that you do not have to give them any say in the government of the country, that you can walk over the top of them. Even though the Oliver Cromwell group was a very small minority group, small minority groups with a lot of fire in their bellies can achieve a great deal.

**Mr Barber:** Like the National Party.

**Mr KATTER:** What the honourable member says is fine by me. Let us reflect upon the position in the United States, where the term was used so much in the War of Independence. One does not have to go far back in history to come across Bangladesh breaking away from Pakistan. Last month there were two deaths in Ireland because a group of people feel that they have never had proper representation in the British Parliament. Six hundred years later, people are still being killed over exactly the same sort of principle. Quite frankly, I agree with the principle of one vote, one value. I will come back to it later. Let us also talk about no taxation without representation and the bloody history that has been foisted upon every country that has been broken up into tiny pieces because it has ignored and believed it could run over the top of people who were geographically isolated or for some other reason—such as their race—could be discriminated against.

I listened to the spurious arguments of the likes of Mr Fenlon, who has an inner-city Brisbane seat. He suggests that country members should be able to travel around in light aircraft. I suppose that they can. If the member for Barron River was in the Chamber, she could verify that five politicians met a very tragic end in a light aircraft.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** The member for Brisbane Central has a pained expression on his face. I regret to say that this is something that must be spoken about. A large number of prominent local authority personalities in Townsville and Ingham suffered a fate similar to that suffered by the people who were killed in that terrible tragedy in Cairns. The safety record of light aircraft is not particularly good, and I regret to say that if a large number of country politicians are going to have to travel in light aircraft, a large number of them will meet the same fate. In one three-year period, five of the seven planes in which I flew went down with all of the occupants but two being killed in each one of those crashes. If one wants to represent a country electorate, that is something that one has to live with, whether one likes it or not. Country members use light aircraft very extensively. I say to honourable members that they are just not simply practical. When one arrives in a town, one has to hunt up a hire car. In Mount Isa, it is almost impossible to rent a hire car. The last time I attempted to hire one, it cost me \$320 to drive 70 miles from Mount Isa to Cloncurry and back.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** That is what hire-car firms charge. They think that they are only catering for big companies that can afford those charges, and that is what they charge.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr KATTER:** The honourable member for Gregory has been a vociferous and effective member of Parliament since he entered this place. The sort of pain that he has inflicted upon Government members over the abolition of rail services is one reason why they would like to see the redistribution pen push him out a window very quickly.

If they do not do that, I am sure that he will be pushing Government members out a window very shortly.

I return to the aeroplane issue. Fine, let us put all the country members of Parliament in light aircraft. The fact that maybe one in 10 of them crashed and killed a significant proportion of the local authority representatives from the Cairns, Townsville, Mareeba and Ingham regions, honourable members should not worry about that. They are expendable. They are only country people. They represent chooks and fowls and cattle and pigs. It may warm the hearts of Government members to know that most of those people who were killed were in fact members of the ALP. Some of them were very excellent representatives of their people. They were a great loss to their local authority areas, to their towns, to this State and to the nation. But, let us shove all of them into light aircraft. That is what Government members have been proposing from the lofty heights of south Brisbane and the various inner-city electorates of Brisbane, with its split highways, freeways and everything else that those honourable members enjoy. They also return home every night. My father was in politics for 22 years. My brother, my sisters and I were brought up without a father. We never saw our father. He represented a large electorate and he believed in servicing it properly. He was hardly ever at home. If Government members were to sit down with them, country members would tell them, with very great bitterness, how they have watched their children grow up virtually without one parent. That is the nature of country representation in this place when one is trying to do the job properly.

I will supply the honourable members representing inner Brisbane with a few statistics so that they might understand the problem. A light aircraft flies at 110 to 120 miles per hour. A motor car travelling at the speed limit does 100 kilometres an hour. Therefore, over 300 to 400 kilometres there might be half an hour to one hour's difference between the two modes of transport. But when one arrives at a country town by air, one has no way of getting around the town. Most country towns do not have hire car agencies and when they do, such as at Mount Isa, they are so exorbitantly expensive that there is no way that anyone who is on private means, such as a member of Parliament, can possibly afford to pay those rates. For those members who say that as Government members they have unlimited resources and just hire a car and take off, that is fine. But one is in Mount Isa and that motor car has to be driven another 100 to 200 miles to get to Cloncurry, Richmond or Julia Creek.

Members opposite spoke about the telephone. That is terrific. With some shame I admit to the House that I can remember being rung on some 11 occasions by people from Julia Creek to be told that the power supply kept breaking down. I was very angry and I got on the phone and made very strong representations. I saw the Minister personally on three or four occasions. It gives me no joy to relate to the House that I was caught in Julia Creek for three days when the power went off. There was no electricity and therefore no air-conditioning in my motel room. I can tell honourable members that the power in Julia Creek was back on within some 15 hours and it was not to go off again. I am trying to convey that there is an immense value in being there. Someone may ring up and say that the bank is going to foreclose. Sadly, all members receive phone calls of that type fairly regularly these days. There is a hell of a difference in dealing with a voice on the telephone from 200 to 300 miles away and sitting in a room with a wife crying her eyes out, as has happened to many honourable members on many occasions. There is a hell of a difference in the emotional impact and the type of reaction that will be evoked from a politician. There is a hell of a difference between a member going into a meeting surrounded by a range of angry faces and receiving a letter from a meeting held at Richmond, Julia Creek or Longreach. There is a value which cannot be gained in any other way except from being there. When one drives over 300 to 400 kilometres of roads that are falling to pieces, one's car has trouble as a result of the conditions of that road and one spends maybe six hours enduring ground temperatures of 170 degrees, then one suddenly has a different attitude to the repairs that should be carried out on the roads. There is a value in being there that can never ever be replaced by the ridiculous frivolity that has been practised by certain members in this House.

I will now look quickly at the record of the ALP in this particular field. Its members are proposing a one vote, one value system. I will not speak about the members of the Liberal Party. Members of the Labor Party and the Liberal Party alternately ruled Western Australia for some 20 years. At the end of those 20 years of alternate Liberal and Labor Governments, about six or seven years ago the Federal ALP Government said it was introducing a one vote, one value system. The seat of Eyre/Murchison in Western Australia had some 3 900 electors and one of the Perth seats comprised approximately 26 000 electors. That was after 20-odd years of Government by those parties that espoused their heartfelt commitment to the principle—the high-flying principle—of one vote, one value. That is how those parties implemented those principles.

The last redistribution carried out in Queensland by members of the party sitting on the Government benches was very interesting. It was not very clever or very subtle or very succinct. It simply redistributed electorates—Charters Towers, Carpentaria, Warrego, Roma, Maranoa, Gregory and Barcoo—averaging approximately 6 000 to 7 000 electors. After the redistribution, there were 12 electorates instead of six with an average of about half the electors of the original electorates; they varied between about 3 500 electors and 4 500 electors. I am acutely aware of that because my own area was part of that redistribution. So where originally there were six representatives, there are now 12.

**Mr Beattie:** It couldn't have been that bad.

**Mr KATTER:** I welcome the interjection. Mr Beattie said that it could not have been that bad. I will tell him how bad it was. There was no bitumen road between Townsville and Mount Isa. We came down to Brisbane and we saw this brand new, you-beaut invention called television. It was terrific. But it was 20 years before the people in the areas from which I come saw television. Coca-Cola was available in Brisbane approximately 25 years before it set foot in my area. I can remember with some bitterness as a child that my Brisbane cousins had Coca-Cola and I did not. On more important matters such as Rugby League football—

Time expired.

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central) (4.46 p.m.): I did not know that Bob Katter was referred to as the "Coca-Cola/television" man. The Electoral Districts Bill, which is being passed through the House today, is probably one of the most significant Bills that will be passed by this Government. I think it is timely that we examine where this process began. At page 127 of his report, Commissioner Fitzgerald said—

"A fundamental tenet of the established system of parliamentary democracy is that public opinion is given effect by regular, free, fair elections following open debate.

A Government in our political system which achieves office by means other than free and fair elections lacks legitimate political authority over that system. This must affect the ability of Parliament to play its proper role in the way referred to in this report. The point has already been made that the institutional culture of public administration risks degeneration if, for any reason, a Government's activities cease to be moderated by concern at the possibility of losing power."

That is a very crucial point to which I will refer later. The report continued—

"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."

That is another important point. The report stated further—

"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."

They are the comments of Commissioner Fitzgerald, who is widely respected by all political parties.

In his report, Mr Fitzgerald not only highlighted the need for the review that was carried out by EARC, which bring us to this legislation today, but also pointed out the failings of the past and the need for independence in relation to the setting of electoral boundaries. I know that, in the early days, one of the commissioners appointed by the National Party to determine the electoral boundaries was in fact a fund-raiser for the National Party. How can that sort of situation be allowed? I will not name the man involved because time has passed and I do not want to denigrate him 7 or 10 years later for what he has done; but I am quite happy to do so if honourable members opposite want me to. I know from my own personal experience when I was secretary of the Labor Party that on one occasion that man was appointed to determine the electoral boundaries of this State and on another occasion he went around soliciting funds for the National Party. To me and to others who believe in fair boundaries, that is untenable and unacceptable.

When I was party secretary, along with many other members of the party I campaigned against the malapportionment and, to a lesser extent, the gerrymander which existed in this State. I remember well the campaign that we ran. It was titled "Sheep shouldn't vote". It was about the principle of people being entitled to an equal vote regardless of where they live, where they carry out their work, their colour, their creed, their religion or whatever. I am committed to the principle of one vote, one value with a 10 per cent tolerance. A little earlier today in this House, Mr Cooper waxed lyrical about members on this side who had this insidious view about electoral boundaries. It is quite to the contrary. I am quite open about it. I do not have any insidious view. That is my view, and I hold it very strongly and very passionately. Let Mr Cooper be under no illusions, I will use what little influence I have as a humble member of this Parliament and a humble member of the Labor Party to do what I can to bring about the principle of one vote, one value with a 10 per cent tolerance. There is no conflict about that. It has been alluded to by members of the Liberal Party. In a minute I will deal at some length with their comments. We on this side of the House found ourselves in the position that a firm commitment had been given by the Premier. It was a commitment given in an environment when people—and, in fact, Commissioner Fitzgerald—were looking for integrity and for an understanding of and a commitment to electoral justice. On behalf of the Labor Party, the Premier gave a commitment to accept the umpire's decision. That is what we are doing with this legislation.

My private view is that I think EARC was wrong. I think EARC made a mistake. I do not retreat from that. I think EARC's support of a two-zonal system is wrong. I think EARC's argument was flawed. I think its logic was flawed. I expected EARC to come down with a better principle. I expected it, on the basis of an independent assessment, to come down with one vote, one value based on a 10 per cent tolerance. But the point was that we on this side gave a commitment to accept the umpire's decision, and that is what we are doing. I make it clear that I do not like that at all, but when a commitment is given, it has to be adhered to. I would have preferred it if EARC had recommended the acceptance of the principle of one vote, one value. But this is the difference between people who attack the Labor Party's position on this issue and those who want to pursue electoral boundary changes for their own advantage.

I am reminded of what happened when the Federal commissioners brought down their first Federal redistribution in 1984. At that time, I was party secretary. That independent body determined Federal electoral boundaries with which I disagreed. The honourable member for Warwick will share this view. One particular Federal seat

commenced just outside Inala and included Warwick. I do not believe that that seat had the necessary community interest. The Labor Party and I totally disagreed with the boundaries for that Federal seat, and we said so. In my view, it was indeed a mistake. I held the very same view about Forde, which included people on higher incomes in the Sherwood district as well as working-class people in Woodridge. The community interest is very narrow indeed. However, those boundaries were determined by an independent commission that was set up to do that job. Although honourable members might not like the outcome, the strength of having an impartial, independent system with integrity means that they must accept the umpire's decision whether they like it or not. Clearly, I do not like the umpire's decision. I do not back away from that. But that is what the umpire determined.

Let me deal with some of the other issues. Members of the National Party have put a lot of humbug before the House on this issue. I remember very clearly the rorts of 1985 when the redistribution was introduced. I was instrumental in formulating the Labor Party's submission. Mr Speaker, I notice that you are smiling. You would remember those rorts whereby it was convenient for Don Lane and others to combine the electorates of Kurilpa and South Brisbane to cause political difficulties for the Labor Party. Mr Speaker, I am delighted that you have returned to this Parliament.

I remind honourable members of what the National Party did in 1985. They should not forget what happened with areas such as Wujal Wujal. Because that Aboriginal reserve voted Labor, by legislation of this House it was included in the seat of Cook because Martin Tenni in Barron River did not want those Labor Party islands in his electorate. One cannot get a bigger rort than that. Let us not have this humbuggery, rorting and false arguments by members of the National Party about where they stand on this issue. It is more than that. Let me go to the fundamental core of what the National Party was all about. Members of the National Party argued that the malapportionment or redistribution was to look after country people. Honourable members have heard that diatribe today. I take up Bob Katter's point. When I was party secretary, I flew around Queensland with the then president of the party, Dr Denis Murphy, visiting local communities and Labor Party branches throughout this State. The rotten burrows or the gerrymandered, malapportioned electorates were not in the far-flung areas of Queensland and were not servicing country people. Where were they? They were within two hours' driving distance of Brisbane. What were the Barambahs and the other seats all about? They were about retaining power for the National Party. It is very important that I make the point very clearly that, if it were not for the malapportionment and, indeed, to a limited extent the gerrymander, which brought about electoral corruption in this State, there would not have been the other corruption that also took place. The contempt and arrogance of the National Party as a result of the dishonest and corrupt electoral boundaries led the National Party to such an arrogant position that it carried on in that dishonest and crooked way.

I turn now to consider the services that people in country areas received in the way of hospitals and roads. I visited and inspected those areas. They were not well served by the gerrymander or the malapportionment. It is simply not true to suggest that the National Party serviced those areas because of the boundaries. It took those people for granted and ignored them, because it assumed that it would automatically get their vote. People in those areas were treated like cattle and treated with contempt. I do not agree with the city slicker attacks from members of the Opposition. I grew up in north Queensland—further away from Brisbane than those areas in which most members of this House grew up, including the member for Burdekin, who waxed lyrical about how unfortunate he was. I am aware of the conditions faced by people who live a long way from Brisbane. The Atherton tableland is almost as far away from this capital city as one can get in Queensland. However, I know that the people who suffer from rorted, corrupt electoral boundaries are those who live in the rorted electorates, because they are taken for granted and ignored. I believe that this Bill goes a long way towards establishing electoral justice in this State. To answer what Mr Cooper said—I make no secret of the fact that I look forward to the day when we will have one vote, one value,

with 10 per cent tolerance across the State. The commitment that was given by the Premier unavoidably, inevitably and from the point of view of principle has brought us to a position that we must support in the interests of integrity.

During the early 1980s, I was co-author with the then president of the Labor Party, Dr Denis Murphy, of a document called *Electoral Reform in Queensland*, which I will table. It talks about parliamentary democracy being based on the principles of equal voting rights for all people, and government by the majority as indicated at fairly conducted elections, and believing that the votes of all electors, no matter what their race, occupation, income or place of residence, should be of equal value. That document contains an interesting graph that really puts paid to the lies that have been expressed in this House. I will refer to some of those graphs. If one looks at the percentage of the primary vote polled by the major parties between 1957 and 1980, one will see two clear things. In 1969, the Labor Party achieved a primary vote of 45 per cent. The combined primary vote of the non-Labor parties—that is adding together the Country/National Party and the Liberal Party—was 44.7 per cent. In 1972, the Labor Party had a primary vote of 46.8 per cent and the non-Labor coalition had 42.2 per cent. In other words, the Labor Party was seriously disadvantaged in those two key years. Indeed, in 1972, the Labor Party should have won.

The other important matter that we should consider in relation to that is that, when one compares the National Party and the Liberal Party vote between those years, one will find that from 1957 through to 1980, with the exception of 1977 and 1980—that is, in 1957, 1960, 1963, 1966, 1969, 1972 and 1974—the Liberal Party outpolled the National Party when it came to the primary vote. I am still stunned that the Liberal Party has not acknowledged that, during that period when there were Liberal Party Justice Ministers, the Liberal Party continued to support that sort of electoral boundaries. I am delighted that it has finally come to support the principle of one vote, one value. However, if the Liberal Party thinks that it is regaining its credibility simply by doing that and without doing more in terms of its old coalition partner, its credibility needs to be further studied.

When I was party secretary in the early 1980s, we had secret discussions with a then Liberal Party Minister in the coalition Government, Terry White. We talked about joining together with the Liberal Party in this House to bring about fair electoral boundaries. As a representative of the party, I met secretly with Terry White to discuss those proposals. Unfortunately, at a later date, those meetings were leaked by one of his staff members, who then defected to the National Party. The Liberal Party has had within its ranks members such as Terry White who have supported electoral reform, but, over a period, other members have decided not to do so. That has been regrettable.

Let me return to the Bill. The Bill establishes the principle of democratic processes in this State. It overcomes the difficulties of the past. If one looks at the two volumes of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission report that was brought down in November, one will notice that they contain matters which disadvantage the changes that are taking place. I make this point because of points that have been made by the conservatives in this House. In Volume 1, on page 122, at 10.25, the commission states—

"Both the United States and Canada have constitutional guarantees relating to equal suffrage. Australia has no such constitutional guarantee. Accordingly there are no Australian legal principles to assist the Commission on this important matter."

That is a very regrettable state of affairs. I will refer to Volume 2 of the report to reiterate some of the difficulties that have brought about this legislation. Members will be aware that on pages 36 and 37 of the EARC document, specific reference is made to the behaviour of people such as Don Lane who, at that time, was a member of the Liberal Party and who went through being a member of both parties. It refers to the processes that the National and Liberal Parties went through to bring about the set of circumstances where Queensland was rorted in terms of its electoral boundaries.

It is regrettable that the legislation does not have the unanimous support of all members of the House. I am mindful of and I deal with the Liberal Party, because its

members sent certain comments in the direction of the Labor Party. For the information of the House, I table some comments that were made in the early 1980s, particularly 1982 and 1983, by the then President of the Labor Party, Dr Denis Murphy, inviting the Liberal Party to join with the Labor Party to bring about electoral reform in this House. At that time, the newspaper cuttings were along the following lines: in the *Sunday Sun* on 9 May 1982, an article headlined "ALP lobbies Libs on votes" stated—

"The ALP State president Dr Denis Murphy yesterday lobbied his Liberal opponents on electoral redistribution.

In a rare display of political generosity, he has circularised Liberal State MPs and senior party officials with a Labor document analysing their prospects under a one-vote, one-value voting system."

The document urged them to support electoral reform. I table a series of press releases that deals with the history of this debate and the lack of spine demonstrated by the Liberal Party. I also table the document entitled *Electoral Reform in Queensland* by Denis Murphy and myself, which deals with an analysis of electoral boundaries at that time, the quotas involved and the votes involved. The conclusion was that the aim of the gerrymander, the malapportionment, was to keep the National Party in office no matter how small its vote became.

When we come to legislation involving electoral reform, we get the most intense debate, because it is fundamental to the way in which people are elected to this place. I believe that the history of electoral justice in this State, starting with the Hanlon Government in 1949 and going through successive Labor Governments until their defeat in 1957, followed by the National/Liberal Party Governments and eventually the National Party Government until its defeat in 1989, has been nothing short of a disgrace. Those Governments were a blemish on the history of this State. The legislation today goes a long way towards removing a major blot on the history of this fine and proud State. In the final analysis, I would hope that we will go one step further in years to come to do even better than we are doing today. We are going a long way towards removing one of the biggest problems, I believe, that conflicts with and impinges upon the reputation of this State.

Time expired.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs) (5.07 p.m.): Before I start, I wish to raise a small matter from a constituent. We are dealing with electoral boundaries today. I would like to read this letter to the Parliament, as it is of very real concern to this constituent of mine. He has asked that I read it in the Parliament as quickly as possible. It is headed "A humble prayer and petition!" and it states—

"I know it is my duty to keep you informed as to my will on any matter that comes before the Parliament, or should come before the Parliament.

Urgent attention must be given to preserve, and safeguard the remnants of native vegetation left undisturbed by machine mining, between the towns of Sapphire and Rubyvale, on the C.H. Gemfields."

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** This matter is of great concern to my constituent, and I wish to read this letter into the record for him. Surely honourable members can pay him that courtesy. The letter continues—

"This is the last pocket of native flora and fauna habitat of a 53ha area, including the Teagardens, which provides a haven for the depleted wildlife. It act as a buffer-zone and corridor—and has become the last refuge and sanctuary for endangered species of wildlife—amongst Bettongs, Hare-wallabies, Koalas, Bats and Birds. 'Protecting these species habitat is a clear conservation priority and ample justification', state the QNPWS and WWF and IUCN, SSC. "

**Mr BEATTIE:** I rise to a point of order. With all due respect, we are debating one of the most important Bills to come before this House. I really think this matter should be relevant to the Bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hollis): Order! I will make the decisions as to what is relevant to the Bill. I ask the honourable member to inform me if this matter is relevant to the Bill.

**Mr LESTER:** I asked the Speaker whether I could read this letter to the House, and he was in favour of my doing so. I do not know why there is such contempt by some members as to the importance of this matter. One of the reasons why I have continued to win my seat is that I have never forgotten about the small people in my electorate who have concerns and want something done about them. When my constituent reads the interjections from members of the ALP—which have not resulted from any baiting from me—he will be very upset with them. The letter continues—

"The remnants of this bushland is also of great importance as a reminder of past landscapes and act as benchmark to encourage the retention and proliferation of natural vegetation to nearby disturbed mining land. 'As a nature reserve',—it can only add values, uniqueness, diversity and fascination to the Gemfields and to the Shire's community; for tourism, recreation and the survival and welfare of our unique wildlife and plants.

The area was available for machine mining the past 17 years, and considered as non-gem bearing—hence the trees are still standing."

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** I ask the honourable member not to distract me.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** I am being maliciously maligned.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the member for Peak Downs whether he will be referring to the Bill in a moment or two.

**Mr LESTER:** In a moment. I have only a little bit to go. I would be very happy to have the remainder of the letter incorporated in *Hansard*, if you would allow me to do so, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Leave granted.

But now, in the panic that follows the near exhaustion of machine mining ground, non-viable ground seems to be better than no ground at all and, on that theory, re-newed survey lines are dozed through this long proposed NATURE RESERVE and, mining leases MLA 2062 and 7305 pegged.

It is not a question of being against the Resource Industries, it is a question of balance and safeguarding the integrity of nature from further degradation and habitats loss caused by un-productive machine mining ventures. It seems logical to assume, that the Hon. Minister for Resource Industries has the power to exempt key natural areas as this from further mining disturbances, as the ground will not produce Sapphires. Left in its still native state, this bushland has far greater value for the present and for future generations—"It is a dream little piece of nature", and the Tea Gardens very existence as tourism venture is in jeopardy . . .

It is My Will, and I respectfully ask the Hon. Member For Peak Downs, to convey my PETITION to the House of the Parliament.

Herbert Leitner,  
'The Tea-Gardens Sanctuary'.  
C/-P.O. Rubyvale 4702. QLD.  
30 March 1991.

Yours faithfully,  
Herbert Leitner.

**Mr LESTER:** The members on the Government side of the House have redeemed themselves by allowing the remainder of this letter to be incorporated in *Hansard*, and that is appreciated. I return now to the redistribution Bill.

**Mr Livingstone:** For the first time.

**Mr LESTER:** That is okay, because part of the Bill concerns the representation of constituents. This is exactly the point I was making. If a constituent living in the bush has a problem and he wants that problem placed before this Parliament, what better time to place it before this Parliament than when we are discussing redistribution, representation and the ability of country members to speak up and have their voices heard? This is a clear example of my being able to speak up in this Parliament and put forward the voice of one of my constituents. He is a poor man and not the most significant person in the area, but he has been able to get his thoughts aired on the floor of this Parliament through his local member. Surely that is democracy at work.

I will return to the Bill. There is a need to safeguard the interests of country people. There is no doubt that country people are being discriminated against in no uncertain terms. In recent times, the hospitals boards in Clermont and Emerald have been taken away. Also, the power of the ambulance boards has been taken away, even though the boards still exist. They are unable to make decisions and they will be turfed out on the street to raise money. The town of Emerald is growing at a devastatingly fast rate and yet the fire services are being cut back. This is not good enough and shows what city numbers can do. It simply means that the people in the bush are being forgotten about even under the present electoral system. If some six or seven country electorates are taken away from the country and plonked into the south-east corner, the country person's vote will be further eroded yet again.

**Mr Dollin:** You're voting for this Bill. You're in favour.

**Mr LESTER:** I do not agree with the Bill, and everyone knows that. The simple fact is that it is here, and all parties have agreed to support it. As members, it is also our role to stand up and be counted as far as our electors are concerned and to voice some of their concerns in Parliament. Members of the National Party represent country people and we can see that their voice in Parliament is being taken away. It is being absolutely obliterated. Let me give honourable members an example. In recent years, an issue concerning school transportation blew up in the city area. The Transport Minister said that he would take certain action which would result in city school students and their parents paying more. All hell broke loose, and very quickly suggestions of that nature were forgotten. A similar situation arose when the registration fees applying to grain transportation meant that producers, who use their trucks for only part of a year, had to pay increased charges. There was no way in the world that the Government would back down on that issue. Why was that the case? The answer is that few people live in country areas and, as far as the big political machine is concerned, the issue does not really matter to the Government. The sheer weight of numbers in relation to the increases in the cost of school transportation meant that when the Transport Minister put forward an idea to gain increased revenue and, in his view, to do the right thing, the proposal was stopped dead. In contrast, and in spite of protests and rallies that were held in country areas, the Minister did not bend in any way in relation to increased registration fees. It was a matter of concern that the Transport Minister even went as far as indicating to people at a meeting in Emerald that he would look into the matter. However, Mr Hamill found that the matter had already been agreed to at Executive Council level on the previous Thursday. This episode showed how much thought he had for the feelings of country people who were not impressed. Their stand in relation to increased costs went down the drain.

All types of rates and charges for country people have been increased, but the same situation does not apply to areas where the majority of people live—the cities. Because of the sheer weight of numbers, the suggestion has been made that certain country areas containing roads that have fewer than 250 traffic movements a day—which applies to

many roads in bush areas—will never again be the subject of funding for new work. Although a little bit of funding for maintenance might be available, there will not be any money for new work. What is Queensland coming to? This position has arisen because the city and other heavily populated areas are having their say. They can do so because of the sheer weight of numbers. Honourable members can imagine what would happen if it was suggested that the Government provide no more money for roadworks in the city! There would be many suburban streets that are funded indirectly by the Government that would not have 250 traffic movements a day, but I would bet that there will be no way in the world that funds for upgrading those roads will be denied. There is one rule for the city people and another rule for people who live in the bush. Country areas will be discriminated against in terms of road-funding because they do not have the numbers. An example is the Clermont-Charters Towers road.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hollis): Order! I draw to the attention of the honourable member the fact that I have been very tolerant. I ask him to come back to the Bill that is being discussed, which is the electoral distribution Bill.

**Mr LESTER:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I was speaking to the electoral distribution Bill and pointing out that the simple facts of life are that a tolerance in country areas is needed and an allowance should be made for large electorates so that country people are given a voice in Parliament. That is what this Bill is all about, and I am providing the Parliament with graphic examples of instances when the voice of country people was not sufficient because it did not have the weight of numbers. Therefore, country people do not count. When a real issue comes to light, country people lose out. Another example of the way in which country people lose out is the shifting of hairdressing courses in TAFE colleges in Warwick, Kingaroy and Emerald to provincial cities where the numbers are. They are either going to Brisbane or to Rockhampton, and that is not education justice for the people of the bush.

I make it abundantly clear that the Labor Party does not really support the type of redistribution that allows even a small weightage in favour of country areas, such as the one contained in the Bill. The member for Brisbane Central, Mr Beattie, has referred to one vote, one value, yet members of the Labor Party have the effrontery to visit country areas and say, "Look fellows, we are with you. We are helping you. We are going to do all types of things to make your life great in the country." The real facts are that this Labor Government is taking away from country people the little that they have left. Right throughout country areas, services are being shut down. Courthouses in Springsure and Moura are being shut down. The mining office is being shifted out of Clermont. However, honourable members would not see any courthouses in the Brisbane metropolitan area being shut down. The reason for this type of action is that the Brisbane area has the greatest number of electors. Recently, suggestions were made about closing down railway sidings in country areas, but one does not read about railway sidings in Brisbane or in the south-east corner of this State being shut down. In fact, railway stations in the metropolitan area are placed very close together. As I understand it, in spite of the fact that the mainline electric train system is losing considerable sums, the project is being expanded. This is another instance in which people who live in the bush are being discriminated against.

I also believe that the Government should make it possible for country members to be more effective. The Government should make sure that a representative of a city area enjoys exactly the same support services as those provided for his or her counterparts in country areas. It should be remembered that the metropolitan member has easy access not only to his or her own electorate secretary but also to all the Government departments and the parliamentary typing pool, whereas country representatives have one secretary only and, in many instances, very, very large electorates to look after. This means that country members have to travel many kilometres, which is dead time. In contrast, it would probably be possible for a metropolitan representative to travel round his or her electorate on a bicycle before breakfast. I would like to see somebody try to ride a

bicycle around the Warrego, the Gregory or, for that matter, the Peak Downs electorate. That would be a tremendously difficult task.

No matter how diligent he is or how hard he tries, it is not possible for a country member of Parliament to attend every function that is conducted in his electorate on a weekend. However, it is possible for a city member to attend four or five functions in a night. He may not be able to attend them all for their full length of time but he is able to arrange his schedule so that he can attend each function for some part of the time to put forward his point of view and conduct a question-time. In the electorate of Peak Downs, if a function commences at 8 o'clock on Saturday night at Comet and another function is being held at Clermont, which is 160 kilometres north, it is not possible to attend both functions and do them justice. The member would not leave the function at Comet until 9.30 p.m. and would have to travel on roads infested with kangaroos, pigs and bullocks to arrive at Clermont at approximately 11 p.m. By that time, the function in Clermont would have finished. Circumstances such as those distress country members very much.

A country member should be provided with at least two staff members and improved travel conditions. As well, methods of communication in the country should be upgraded to enable the members to perform their tasks in a better manner. I firmly believe that two electorate offices should be provided for larger country electorates. When the redistribution is implemented, there will be some astronomically large bush electorates. The community of interest between towns in those electorates will be very much different. Two electorate offices will be needed in those electorates.

I return to the sheer logistics of country members being able to service their electorates. I have been told by city members that they can attend two or three parents and citizens meetings a night. In the Clermont district, I would be flat out attending two or three of those meetings a night. As well, operating costs are much higher in country electorates. I acknowledge that country members are provided with higher allowances, but I assure honourable members that that slight increase in allowance is soon eaten up in fuel bills. There is no comparison between the expenses of country members and those of city members. I ask that every consideration be given to making it easier for country members to represent their constituents in a better manner so that they can voice their opinions in this place. Whether we like it or not, with this redistribution six or seven country seats will be taken from the country and put into the south-east corner of Queensland.

**Mr COOMBER** (Currumbin) (5.27 p.m.): "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." Tom Burns, the Deputy Premier, spoke those great socialist words in March 1975 in this House. He also said—

"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."

That attitude, opinion, high moral ground is typical and hypocritical of the stance that the Deputy Premier, Tom Burns, and the Labor Party are taking today with the legislation before the House. The concept of one vote, one value—the equality of votes—was something to champion in 1989, but in 1991 it is a fundamental principle to dismiss.

"Just give me three years to correct electoral injustice in Queensland" was heard all over Queensland from Wayne Goss. The bell tolls today for Mr Goss, because today he sells out the fundamental tenet of Labor Party principle to every Queenslanders who supported the Labor Party in December 1989—to achieve a one vote, one value voting principle. I will save my comments about the Premier for later.

In common with Tom Burns, the member for Mackay, Mr Casey, is a former Leader of the Opposition to state categorically that fundamental principle of Labor policy—one vote, one value. Mr Casey stated—

"We indicated we were prepared to enter into discussions with the Liberal Party with a view to forming a minority Government to be formed by either party."

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

The electors of Queensland require politicians who are clear and consistent with their principles and policies. In March 1981, Mr Casey promoted a one vote, one value principle; in 1989, he still believed in the one vote, one value principle; but today his credibility—his soul—is sold for the continuance of the electoral gerrymander in Queensland. The unions and the workers are concerned, but the mouthpieces of the unions are being systematically bought with the promise of a lucrative, highly paid position in Government or society, the latest being the position found for Mr Errol Hodder.

In the late 1970s, the parliamentary Labor Party was decimated not by the gerrymander but by a succession of Opposition Leaders who would have been better utilised in the French Foreign Legion. In common with Mr Burns and Mr Casey, Mr Warburton yet again clearly enunciated the principle of one vote, one value. In April 1985, the Leader of the Opposition, Neville Warburton, said in this House—

"Parliamentary democracy is based on the principle of equal voting rights for all people."

Mr Warburton went on to state guidelines of legislation that his party would introduce, if elected. He said—

"The guidelines in the ALP legislation would be—

There should be one quota for the State, no separate zones, and a variation of plus or minus 10 per cent allowed to the electoral commissioners."

Then, in the same speech, he highlighted the following electoral distribution position of the Australian Labor Party—

"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."

In 1989, Mr Warburton also criticised long and loudly the Queensland gerrymander and promoted one vote, one value. Today is the first chance that a Government has had to bring Queensland into line with Federal guidelines supported by the ALP, and he has deserted the ship like a rat.

Like Burns, Casey and Warburton, David Hamill is part of the Goss Ministry. In Opposition, Mr Hamill had plenty to say about the principle of one vote, one value. Mr Hamill is recorded in *Hansard* of 10 April 1985 as saying—

"If parliamentary representation is to be based on hectares or square kilometres, where does that leave the fundamental democratic principle that every citizen, regardless of race, colour, creed, residential address or any other distinguishing features has an inalienable right to an equal voice in the selection of representatives whose task it is to represent the citizens who select them."

On the same day, Mr Hamill said also—

"The violation of democratic principles is not the answer in trying to reach the ideal representation."

In the light of this legislation, the following statement is the most hypocritical of Mr Hamill's political career—

"Those reforms, coupled with improved resources and facilities for members representing country areas, would be the basis of Labor's objective to reform the electoral system to give effect to that fundamental principle of democratic representation—one person, one vote, one value."

That is recorded for posterity in *Hansard* of 10 April 1985 at page 5140. One by one, the hypocrites fall in line. Now David Hamill, the hypocrite from Ipswich—his pocket ruling his principles—is long on rhetoric and short on action. He then further insulted

the intelligence of every Queensland—these words will haunt the Minister—by saying—

"If honourable members on the Government side will not accept the principle that every citizen in the country has the right to one vote, of equal value to another, they deny basic democratic principles that ensure that people will not be prejudiced by race, colour, creed, place of abode, or any other feature associated with their existence."

Just like Burns, Casey, Warburton and Hamill, the member for Rockhampton, Paul Braddy, forms part of the Goss Cabinet. 10 April 1985 was a big day for democracy in Queensland. Like his predecessors, Paul Braddy thought that 10 April 1985 was an opportune time to open his mouth to change feet. At page 5149 of *Hansard* of that day, he is recorded as saying—

"The Labor Party stands squarely on the principle of equal representation—that is, one vote, one value—with a margin of 10 per cent either way, to cater for those areas that are in some way deprived."

He said also—

"Any justification of such malapportionment can definitely be taken care of within the 10 per cent variation that both the Labor and Liberal Parties believe is reasonable and logical in the current situation in Queensland."

The list goes on, but the Premier can wait a little while longer. Like Burns, Casey, Warburton, Hamill and Braddy, Keith De Lacy today prostitutes his position as a parliamentarian. His word to the people of Queensland is worthless. Again, as recorded in *Hansard* on page 5156, on 10 April 1985—a huge day for Labor Party credibility—Mr De Lacy said—

"Everybody's vote should have equal weight. No argument can be put forward that one person's vote should be worth more than the vote of another person."

The only person who has not changed his position since 10 April 1985 is the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development, Mr Smith. He was as far out of touch with the real world then as he is today. In 1985, Mr Smith thought that he was campaigning for the right to vote. For the benefit of Mr Smith, I point out that Don Quixote died years ago. Bob Gibbs also made some irrelevant statements about one vote, one value in 1985. In reality, nearly every Cabinet Minister of this Goss Government has sold out to the people of Queensland. Each and every parliamentary member of the Labor Party has sold out on his or her electorate. Electoral weightage and the gerrymander is alive and well. One vote, one value does not exist in Queensland. The most interesting case of misrepresentation was presented for the people of Queensland by the Premier, Wayne Goss, when in Opposition.

The Fitzgerald report was used by the Labor Party strategists as a Bible for electoral success—not electoral justice but as a means to win an election. It is history now, but the electors of Queensland will remember the dishonesty of the Premier before the election in promoting electoral justice in Queensland and an end to the gerrymander—an end to the zonal system in Queensland—and his statement that Queenslanders would have a one vote, one value system. The hypocritical statements of the now Premier of this State pale with the knowledge that, although promoting a one vote, one value election promise, he was secretly preparing for a two-zonal system in Queensland. He was aware that a one vote, one value, single-zone system in Queensland would be electorally damaging to the ALP. Even before one vote was cast in 1989, Wayne Swan and Wayne Goss were drawing the boundaries for the next election. The funny part of this scenario is that Wayne Goss volunteered this information of a two-zonal system at a family birthday celebration prior to the election. For several days prior to the election, he espoused one vote, one value, knowing full well that a two-zonal system would be forthcoming for Queensland voters.

As a consequence, I question the independence of the commissioners of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. The commissioners were appointed by this Government, not by the parliamentary committee. A two-zonal system was required by Wayne Swan and Wayne Goss. I suggest that the commissioners—sympathetic to the two-zonal concept—were appointed by Premier Goss. He knew the umpire's decision before the match was played. This is the worst case of cronyism that the people of Queensland have seen. The gerrymander was to end under Labor, but all honourable members have seen is a refinement of the electoral system to suit the ALP. Today, the Liberal Party is standing tall as a party of principle and a party people can trust. I can understand election promises involving expenditure of capital funds having to be delayed, deferred or cancelled, but I cannot condone the dereliction of fundamental party policy. The Queensland parliamentary Labor Party promised one vote, one value above all else. Its credibility has been buried. It is a Government of convenience.

The Liberal Party does not agree with several areas of this legislation. The number of electorates has been set at 89. The Liberal Party submission is that the number of electorates should be 82, not 89. It would seem that at least two Goss Ministers would agree. On 10 April 1985, Neville Warburton is recorded in *Hansard* at page 5100 as follows—

"No justification can be put forward for additional politicians. It is my belief that 82 seats are sufficient, and my opinion is shared by the majority of Queenslanders."

On the same day, Geoff Smith stated—

"It is a scandal for the State of Queensland to have 89 seats. It is a disgrace. It is unjustifiable. It is an affront to any reasonable person."

The Liberal Party has always been a clear voice in the community, and in October 1989 Angus Innes stated clearly and concisely—

"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."

He further stated—

"The Liberal Party would not accept any recommendation that left the four zonal system intact."

He went further and stated—

"The Liberal Party supports the Federal system, which is supported by all three major parties."

Honourable members could have believed that Angus Innes was reiterating ALP policy when he said—

"We want the zonal system replaced with a single zone with one quota and a small but tolerable divergence of plus or minus 10 per cent."

There are many reasons why the blank cheque approach, taken in hypocrisy by the Labor Government, should not be accepted. In an effort to give voters in western areas a fairer electoral system, EARC is imposing elements of unfairness on the remaining electors. The Labor Party has removed the four-zonal system and replaced Queensland effectively with seven zones—one zone of 83 seats and six zones with six individual quotas. Why should problems of remoteness be corrected by maintaining an unfair electoral system? The problems of remoteness should be overcome by providing a higher standard of Government service to those areas. Why should western and far-northern zones be entitled to six seats, rather than the four they would receive under the strict single quota system? The answer is simple. The exercise advantages the Labor Party. Those two additional seats would be located in Brisbane and south-east Queensland, without the guaranteed impact for ALP success.

In conclusion, my last comments lie with the EARC Parliamentary Committee. The committee chairman, Mr Foley, obviously has two sets of values—one set for preparliamentary duties and one set for his responsibility as a politician. I say "politician"

because he is a politician first, second and third, and not a parliamentarian. His status as a respected civil libertarian is shot to bits. This issue of equal suffrage for all Queenslanders was dismissed by his committee. The 2 per cent standard for deviation in large electorates was not argued logically. Mr Foley's committee accepted the statement of EARC on page 169, which states—

"One per cent makes little difference . . . a three per cent allowance would over-compensate and produce unfairness."

Where is the logic? Mr Foley has failed and his ALP colleagues have followed like sheep. At least Mr Heath had the decency to live by his principles.

**Mr BOOTH** (Warwick) (5.43 p.m.): In rising to speak on the Electoral Districts Bill, I go along with what the member for Peak Downs said. He said that he did not like the Bill much, but it was better than the alternative, which was to get no weightage whatever. If one looks at it that way, I suppose it is not too bad. Today's *Sun* contains a small article, which states—

"The bill will introduce a one-vote, one-value electoral system with a slight tolerance in remote areas."

That is about all it does. That is the only weightage benefit that is contained within it.

**Mr Nunn** interjected.

**Mr BOOTH:** Don said that the country members were dills and Government members love that sort of thing. Stir up as much hatred as you can between city and country. That is not the sort of thing that I want to do.

**Mr Nunn:** Don't forget he was magnanimous in defeat. He gave Russell a reference.

**Mr BOOTH:** That is not the sort of thing I want to do. It is obvious that Government members want to score—

**Mr Prest:** I bet Don wrote this for you!

**Mr BOOTH:** That is not right. I am opposed to the one vote, one value idea. I listened with interest to the member for Brisbane Central and also the member for Yeronga. Some of the statements made by the member for Brisbane Central were very interesting. He said that he was not hiding the fact that the first chance he gets, he will reverse the legislation and there will not be any weightage. He probably told the truth. He said that he was waiting for the day when he could alter that legislation. He spoke about the two-zonal system, and I guess that is what it is. There are two zones. But many electorates will not be as well represented as they were and that will mean worse roads and less opportunity for children in the country to obtain an education. Everything will be downgraded. I do not think that will do Queensland much good. National Party Governments had a concept of trying to lift the standards of country people and give them the same opportunities, if possible, as those given to people in the cities.

**Mr Nunn:** You will be able to retire in comfort.

**Mr BOOTH:** That is right. I have done a good job there. I will be happy there. I am not worried about that in the least. However, I am disappointed that it appears that the standards in the country will be reduced rather than increased.

The recommendations made by EARC were almost a standard Bill. The first thing EARC recommended was that the four-zonal system be done away with. It then suggested what should be contained in the new Bill. The legislation contains provision for objections to be made. However, if a person lodges an objection against the boundaries, he should not hold his breath. I do not think he will do much good by objecting. However, the opportunity to object exists. If people are not satisfied when they see the new boundaries, I hope they take that opportunity. A fair bit of publicity will have to be given to the way in which people may appeal and the fact that they have only a certain time in which to do so. It is probably in the best interests of all concerned that we try to make

the best of this Bill. I do not think it will do country people much good. However, it is in our interests to try to make it work. It does not matter how much the boundaries are rigged, once a party does not have the support of the people, it will be defeated.

**Mr Dollin** interjected.

**Mr BOOTH:** I am glad that the honourable member mentioned that. I live in the Federal electorate of Rankin.

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr BOOTH:** And so does the honourable member for Archerfield. A while ago, the member for Brisbane Central said that there was no community of interest in that electorate. He was dead right; there is not, or there is very little. The only reason that Inala was plonked into that electorate was simply so the Labor Party could get enough votes to win it. That is what has happened. That is what will happen when many of the Labor-held seats are cut up. We will wait and see how fair it is. I will not hold my breath. It will not be very fair.

**Mr Randell:** The Labor members are saying now how it will be cut up. They are telling you what they are going to get.

**Mr BOOTH:** Yes. They all have their boundaries drawn. So much for EARC! They have their boundaries drawn. That indicates what a rort it is. Some members opposite said that the National Party carried out the last redistribution. It was conducted by a commission, but Labor members were not happy with that.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr BOOTH:** The Labor Party cut the commissioners to ribbons. Mr Andrews had a knife stuck in his back.

**Mr Randell:** He was a respected man.

**Mr BOOTH:** Yes, he was one of the most respected men in Queensland. He was hacked about by Labor Party members. It appears that some members opposite know where the new boundaries will be. It is about time Mr Sherman cleared that up.

**Mr Randell:** I know now that one member has said what part of my electorate he will have.

**Mr BOOTH:** They are telling me that my electorate will be wiped out, so it is a good job that I have come to the end of my political tether.

I want to refer now to the provision of greater facilities in electorates offices and to the statements that no matter how big the electorate is, two electorate offices will be provided or other arrangements will be made. When that happens, the Government is only replacing elected representatives with public servants. The Government does not want to hear the voice of the country. It will live to regret that. I do not think that even the city people will like such an arrangement.

**Mr Prest:** What you are saying is you want an electorate office there?

**Mr BOOTH:** Yes, we want an electorate office. I tried to tell the honourable member. I do not want to be insulting, but if he had been listening, he would have known what I said. I said that extra electorate offices would not clear up the business.

**Mr Prest:** You don't want extra staff?

**Mr BOOTH:** I am not sure that extra staff are needed in the electorates as they are now. If the electorates are made very large, extra staff may be needed.

**Mr Randell:** There is no substitute for the local member.

**Mr BOOTH:** That is right. The local member is able to talk to people directly.

**Mr Prest:** Your last vote didn't show that you were talking to them too well.

**Mr BOOTH:** I do not know about that. In view of the swing against the Government, I was very proud of my last vote. I finished up with nearly 5 000 votes, which I thought was pretty good. In fact, that is one of the things of which I am proud. The honourable member knows that the Government said I was going to be beaten, but I came in pretty well. I will admit that we fought hard. We knocked ourselves up fighting, but that is what it is all about. One has to throw everything into it.

I want to refer to the facilities provided in the country. The old zonal system was responsible for providing decent facilities in the country. It provided decent roads, decent education and——

**Mr Nunn:** Whether they were needed or not.

**Mr BOOTH:** The honourable member says sneeringly, "Whether they were needed or not." I think that they were needed. I do not think that I ever made representations for a road that was not needed. I will not be too biased about this, but I think that some people on the honourable member's side of the House thought they were needed, too, so they did not put on too big a turn about it. Up until now, works in my electorate have gone along fairly well. I have had no quarrels with the Minister for Administrative Services. He has been prepared to talk to me or give me an answer when I asked a question. I am fairly happy about that.

However, there seems to be trouble in relation to roads. If a road does not carry 250 vehicles a day, it will not be maintained. That might not seem very many vehicles, but it is sometimes difficult to get that many vehicles to use a road that is 30 or 40 kilometres long servicing a farming district. That being the case, the road will be converted to gravel. That is a big decision. In New South Wales, the position is not quite as bad. Many roads there are dry weather only or they have been allowed to go revert to gravel. I am not against that practice where it is necessary, but I would not like that to happen in the country areas of this State.

It is all very well for members of the Labor Party to believe that they can knock country people about and that their actions will never come back to haunt them. I believe that they will. Many people in the country have relatives and friends in the cities. I do not believe that they want to see those country people severely disadvantaged. In the light of what has been happening, I would be surprised if the Labor Party does not get a severe reaction from the voters of Nundah. It is great to have a reform program to reform everything. This Bill is only part of the process, and I realise that it cannot be stopped. But I am not saying that I agree with it.

I want to talk about elections in general. I am sure that the Labor Party Whip would agree with me that the first count in elections is undertaken too quickly and that accurate figures are not obtained. That is not right. The member for Nicklin should not have waited 12 or 18 months to have the votes in his electorate correctly counted. That was ridiculous. There is no need for that. In the past, I have been involved in counting votes. We usually counted 10 votes, which we put down one way, and the next 10 we laid across the first ten. We then put a rubber band around each group of 100 votes. In that way not many errors were made. It was unlucky if an error of 10 votes was made. However, many errors are made in counting votes.

**Mr Milliner:** What are the errors?

**Mr BOOTH:** Errors occurred in counting the referendum votes.

**Mr Springborg:** The Electoral Commission has upset them.

**Mr BOOTH:** Yes.

The Minister asked where errors had occurred. They occurred in counting of the Rankin votes. The member for Archerfield knows that a little over six years ago, Mr

Beddall won the seat of Rankin from Mr Jamieson. A number of errors were made in the vote counting, including some in my electorate.

**Mr Mackenroth:** People in your electorate will always think there has been an error when a Labor Party member is elected.

**Mr BOOTH:** I did not catch what the Leader of the House said.

**Mr Mackenroth:** There will always be errors. It is a real problem, isn't it? A number of people in Warwick will always think there is an error when a Labor Party member is elected.

**Mr BOOTH:** No. I am talking about the second count. Errors were found on the recount. That is not right. I believe that we can get away from that. Firmer directions should be given to returning officers. The count would probably take only half an hour longer.

**Mr Milliner:** One of the problems you have got is that you are employing part-time people to do the job.

**Mr BOOTH:** Yes, I am aware of that.

**Mr Milliner:** Human nature being what it is, you are bound to get some errors, but they are always corrected later on.

**Mr BOOTH:** I hope that they are always corrected later on.

**Mr Mackenroth:** With a rubber and pencil.

**Mr BOOTH:** I know that they can be changed with a rubber and pencil. I am surprised that those two Ministers are not listening to me. I thought that they would agree with me on this issue. Vote counts should be as accurate as possible.

**Mr Prest:** Mistakes can be made. We had to bring in retrospective legislation because there were mistakes made on your behalf. We had to keep you in Parliament.

**Mr BOOTH:** That is history. It was not an error. I was wrongly advised. However, I am still here. It would have been a tragedy if I had lost my seat on that occasion.

**Mr Palaszczuk:** In Rankin, you must admit that the error was corrected in favour of David Beddall in the end.

**Mr BOOTH:** Yes, I know that it was. It was corrected. However, there were so many errors that it simply did not seem right. I remember when very few errors were made in counting. I am sure that we could return to that situation. I take on board what the Minister for Justice said about temporary staff. But, if returning officers were told to be careful and to count as accurately as possible, there would be some benefits.

The removal from country areas of hospital boards, fire boards and ambulance boards means that, instead of having fewer politicians representing those districts, there should be more. I am not happy that those people have been downgraded. I suppose that some people might say that south-east Queensland should govern the country areas. Although that might be fine, I do not believe that it is good for the State.

**Mr Randell:** That's what you're doing.

**Mr BOOTH:** That is what the Government is doing. It knows what it is doing. It is trying to govern this State from the metropolitan area. It knows quite well what it is doing. That is the hidden agenda. Everybody knows that there is a hidden agenda to wipe the country people and have all Government decisions made in the metropolitan area.

**Mr Beattie:** You are voting for this Bill.

**Mr BOOTH:** That is right. The member was not here when I commenced my speech. I told the House that the Opposition is in favour of this legislation because it

is better than the alternative of no weightage whatsoever. I also referred to an article that appeared in today's *Sun*, which stated that the Bill will introduce a one vote, one value electoral system with a slight tolerance in remote areas. That is all it does. The 10 per cent tolerance will not have much to do with it. The member for Burdekin pointed out that, if someone were to jiggle around the figures, a person in the country could have only 10 per cent more than someone in the city.

Madam Deputy Speaker, you have been very generous in allowing me to stray a little from the Bill. I appreciate that. I reiterate what the member for Peak Downs said: "I do not like the darned thing, but we are going to vote for it." That is what I am doing.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr ELLIOTT** (Cunningham) (7.30 p.m.): The first thing that I want to say in respect of the EARC Bill is that it is very obvious that, before the last election, many people were lulled into a false sense of security, particularly those who live west of the Great Divide. They were led to believe that they could expect a different sort of deal from this ALP Government led by Wayne Goss and by some of the more infamous members and Ministers, such as the one sitting opposite who is about to dismantle the whole of the racing industry in country areas. It is interesting to listen to those members during this debate and to hear what they really stand for. The old civil libertarian up the back trotted out the usual platitudes. We have become used to that. Every time he gets up, he almost manages to clear the House.

**Mr Foley:** That's unkind.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes, it is probably a little unkind for an after-dinner speech. In all seriousness, we must consider what the outcome has been. Since the last State election, we have seen the principles that drive members on the other side of the House—whether they like it or not—being expressed in the policies and actions of the Government. Whether members of the Government like it or not, it comes down to the fact that they believe only in power residing in those people in the south-east corner of the State. The Government wants to have this ultimate one vote, one value so-called electoral system which has, of course, been responsible in other States of this nation and in the Federal arena for bringing Governments to power with far less than 50 per cent of the vote. If Government members could honestly tell me that that is a democratic process, I would find it pretty hard to wear. Over the years, it has been interesting to hear people on the other side of the House speaking about the Westminster system and various other major democracies of the world. Almost all of those other major democracies espouse and work under a system of weightage. They accept the principle; they use it intelligently; and it ensures some measure of decentralisation.

**Mr Neal:** Even in Great Britain, the home of democracy.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** That is right. It is certainly accepted in what is, from our point of view, the home of democracy, Westminster. Last year, I had the opportunity to partake in an environmental exchange program with the US visitors information program and the US Government. In that program, we moved through most of the United States of America. It really came home to me that, under its system of weightage, the US is a decentralised country. There are many things in the United States of America that we do not want to copy. I do not wish to see some aspects of its society followed blindly in Australia. However, in relation to decentralisation—the United States is not in the ridiculous position where the resources that are either grown or withdrawn from the ground are dragged off to the coast to be turned into something and then dragged back again, with a double amount of freight involved. People in the United States have understood that it is far cheaper and far more efficient to produce goods where they are grown or where they are withdrawn from the ground. I do not know why we in this country are unable to learn that lesson.

It is not only the former National Party Government or the previous coalition National/Liberal Party Government that brought about that philosophy in Queensland with the result that, therefore, we are the most decentralised State in the Commonwealth. It also goes back to the days of Labor people who were genuine Labor people. There are not too many of them left on the other side of the House. This place is filled with a load of academics—solicitors and those sorts of people—who do not know what it is to do a hard day's work. As such, the whole philosophy behind EARC comes from the academics who have nothing in common with those people who work with their hands and truly do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay.

**Mr Livingstone:** You haven't done that for a while.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Like hell! On any Sunday when I have a few spare minutes, I am out there doing some work. What is more, I enjoy it. I enjoy nothing more than doing physical work. It is a pity that the honourable member did not learn to do a bit. Regrettably, that is something from which we have moved away. It is one of the old values that the Labor Party stood for. I certainly had a lot of respect for many of those parliamentarians.

**Mr Schwarten:** Fancy you talking about true Labor values. How would you know anything about true Labor values?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** The honourable member should be the last one to talk about that. I am told that he was flat out filling a sandbag during the flood.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I rise to a point of order. I am well recorded in the local press as being one of the people who ably filled sandbags during the flood. I find it most offensive that the honourable member would capitalise upon the distress that was suffered by people in my electorate during the flood. I ask him to apologise.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell):** Order! The honourable member has made his point and I ask the member for Cunningham to—

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I accept the explanation. Next time we have a flood, we will invite the honourable member. I will hand him 1 000 sandbags and he can fill a few. Perhaps the honourable member would like to come to the brick-carrying competition at the Clifton show and see how he goes. One of the few remaining gentlemen in this House who can still do physical work is sitting across the Chamber from me.

**Mr Gibbs:** You have always liked me.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes, we have been tolerant of each other. I will return to the subject. This philosophy is of great concern. Most people had great respect for this philosophy, but it seems to have gone by the board. Ned Hanlon and the others put the weightage together when implementing the zonal system in Queensland. Some Government members might be cynical and say that they did it merely for their own ends in an attempt to keep themselves in power. However, I suggest that the more genuine people involved in the Government at that time understood the necessity to look after and nurture rural Queensland and ensure that rural Queensland—and the rural towns in particular—survived and prospered. In many instances, the Government encouraged decentralisation along those lines. Unfortunately, this Government will turn the clock back 100 years. If by some miracle the Labor Party wins another election, the real agenda will come out. I am sure that there will be another redistribution based on its own philosophy. The Labor lawyer up at the back will have his way. He will be in there pushing, shoving and coercing people to do what he would like to see done. Unlike their forefathers in this House, who had genuine principles and were concerned about those people who work for a living, the members of the Labor Party are a group of academics. They stand up in this House and make the sorts of speeches that the civil libertarian up at the back is famous for, although he tends to empty the Chamber when he starts.

We on this side of the House have absolutely nothing to apologise for as far as our attitude to weightage is concerned. I, for one, understand it and have seen it working

in other countries. It has a tremendous amount to recommend it, because not only does it ensure that people outside the south-east corner of Queensland at least have some reasonable say in what goes on in Queensland, but also it leads to decisions being made which in turn lead to decentralisation. The minute all power is centred within the south-east corner of this State, all the decisions that are made will reflect that fact. We might as well forget about the rest of Queensland because in their selfish way the members of the Labor Party will ensure that all of the resources, goods and services that Governments can deliver will, with very few exceptions, be delivered to the south-east corner. The people in country electorates might get bits and pieces and perhaps peace offerings will be made to places such as Maryborough.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** As the member for Gympie so rightly says, those members will be gone after the next election and then the Government will forget about such electorates. When the members for Cairns and Barron River are beaten, their electorates will also be forgotten. It will come back to the people whom the Labor Party truly represents, that is, the academics, the socialists and people who are only interested in the big cities.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Government members should listen. I suggest to many of them that they get *Hansard* and read what the members for Maryborough and——

**Mr Nunn:** Isis.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes, those two members in particular. I find those members quite amazing, because when they first came into this place I put them into the category of old-time Labor people. I imagine that they would have done a bit of work in their day, but regrettably they seem to have forgotten. They appear to have a bitter agenda towards anyone who lives in the country or tries to make a living from the land.

If ever there was a time when the members of the Labor Party need to get out and truly understand what is going on outside this south-eastern corner of the State, it is now. The whole State will fall apart. It will come grinding to a halt. If Labor Party members do not think it will affect them, they can wait and see what goes on when the wool cheque fails. Today, I looked at some figures of the average property running approximately 8 000 sheep. If the wool is 24 micron, the income from 8 000 sheep will be approximately \$52,000. That is the best that can be expected. The costs, including freight, handling charges and the commission to sell the wool is \$92,000. When I went to school that was a deficit of \$40,000.

The whole matter is tied up in the philosophy espoused in this Electoral Districts Bill, because the ultimate concentration of power will be in the south-east of Queensland. If the price of wool goes down and the whole wheat industry falls apart—unless the members of the Labor Party have some backbone like their counterparts in Western Australia—then the whole State will grind to a halt. The Labor Government will then discover to its great discomfort that a massive backlash will occur against it. I merely wish to say that I have always accepted the principle of weightage. I still do. I believe that it is absolutely essential. It is interesting to note that the most successful democracies around the world accept it also.

**Mr CONNOR** (Nerang) (7.46 p.m.): The concept of a gerrymander is certainly nothing new. In May 1860, when the first election was held in Queensland, plural voting, as it was called, was allowed. It allowed property-owners to vote in more than one district if they met property requirements. In that period also, the country squire was given an electoral weightage; in other words, the first Queensland gerrymander. The voting franchise was based solely on property holding: no property, no vote. It was not until five years had elapsed in the twentieth century that property restrictions on voting were removed. The beginning of the official gerrymander was commenced in 1949 by the Hanlon Labor Government. At that time, the Act was criticised for creating a

gerrymander because it could provide electoral advantage for the ruling party. In 42 years, times have not changed much.

The arguments in favour of electoral weightage in a gerrymander were: firstly, rural areas are disadvantaged by size and remoteness; secondly, rural areas produce a large percentage of Queensland wealth; thirdly, the interest of rural areas would be dominated by the more heavily populated city areas; fourthly, it allows for a better distribution of political power and promotes decentralisation and balanced development; fifthly, Queensland is the most decentralised State in Queensland, and this is argued as proof for the existence of the zonal system; sixthly, electoral weightage has been accepted in other States of Australia, such as Western Australia, and in other countries such as Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom; and, seventhly, the zonal system does not prevent changes of Government when parties secure the majority of votes. The 1989 election is cited as an example of this argument, so I will now take a closer look at these arguments.

In relation to the first argument—I accept the argument that, all things being equal, members of Parliament and their electors are disadvantaged in large electorates. However, with appropriate facilities, that disadvantage can be overcome. The main disadvantage, of course, is access to the member. If the member is given an additional electoral office, additional staff, a 008 telephone number, a facsimile machine and additional air warrants, those disadvantages can easily be overcome. We are now living in the latter part of the twentieth century. The introduction of advanced telecommunications has overcome this argument.

In relation to the second argument—it is said that rural areas produce a large percentage of wealth and export income; therefore, they deserve greater political representation. The logical extension of that argument should mean that all unproductive sectors of the community—people on the dole and people on sickness benefits or retirees, etc., who do not produce any of Queensland's wealth or export income—do not deserve any political representation. In other words, they would not be able to vote. This is not democracy as we see it. The second argument is plainly rubbish and smacks of the same bigotry as the property restrictions that applied to voting in 1860. Obviously, it is a hangover from the feudal system.

The third argument suggests that the rural sector would be dominated by the south-east corner of the State but that is also a spurious argument which was discredited in 1949 by Premier Hanlon, who stated that "the very life and security of capital cities" depended on "successful development and expansion of country areas".

The fourth argument suggests that a gerrymander allows for better distribution of political power, the promotion of decentralisation and balanced development. Let me examine the first part of that argument, which is a "better distribution of political power". One only has to read the transcripts of Don Lane's evidence given at the Fitzgerald inquiry to understand the previous Government's idea of a "better distribution of political power". Quite obviously, the gerrymander has been used—and has been accepted by all political commentators to have been used—to entrench incumbents. As Don Lane said, the idea was to corral the Labor vote to maximise the National Party electorate. One only has to look at my electorate of Nerang to realise that ordinary common sense could not have been used in the drawing of the boundaries for that electorate. The fact has been established and agreed upon by all political commentators, including EARC, that community of interest is the most important criterion for determining boundaries of electorates. In spite of that, the electorate of Nerang contains an old area beside the Broadwater, rural areas extending to Gilston, new developments around the Carrara and Clearwater estates, and even two local government bodies. Where is the community of interest? The shape of the electorate is most unusual in that it is almost a U-shape, and most of the constituents live in the older areas of Labrador and Southport by the Broadwater. In spite of that, the electorate has been named Nerang and is supposedly a hinterland electorate. Confusion is being caused constantly on the Gold Coast because people who live in Southport and Labrador think that the member

for Southport is their representative. Because Nerang is regarded as a hinterland electorate, people do not expect it to include the suburbs near the Broadwater. Initially, when I made comments on those areas, many people assumed that I was commenting on another member's electorate. I continually have to justify my stand when I make comments on my own electorate.

As honourable members can see, the argument that a gerrymander allows for a better distribution of political power is also quite spurious; the other argument that it promotes decentralisation is also rubbish. If the Minister for Regional Development is doing his job correctly and not pork-barrelling, decentralisation will occur where it is appropriate, as will balanced development. That is hardly an argument for a gerrymander.

The fifth argument is that the fact that Queensland is the most decentralised State in Australia is proof that the gerrymander works. All that proves is that Queensland is the most suitable State for decentralisation. The sixth argument is that electoral weightage has been accepted in other States of Australia such as Western Australia and also overseas, in Canada, the United States and the U.K. When one examines it from another point of view, that argument falls down. Many countries have one-party States. In fact, they are more common than those that have true democracy. Does that mean that we should move in that direction? Just because other States have accepted the second best system does not mean to say that Queensland should.

The last argument—it is probably the most misleading—is that the zonal system does not prevent change of Government when parties secure the majority of votes. The 1989 election is cited as an example. In Queensland, it took 32 years and the Fitzgerald inquiry to change the Government. If honourable members examine the figures, they will find that the Labor Party did outpoll the combined Liberal/National Party vote. For instance, in 1972, the Labor Party polled 47 per cent and the combined Liberal and Country Parties polled 42 per cent of the vote. The Labor Party had a 5 per cent lead, yet it was still in Opposition. In 1969, the Labor Party equalled the combined Liberal and Country Party vote with 45 per cent. It did the same in 1966, with 44 per cent, and a similar event occurred in 1963. Those figures do not even consider the leakage of Liberal and National Party preferences. So the argument that a gerrymander does not hold out a party with a majority of votes is also untrue. The Liberal Party's position is that there is no valid argument for a gerrymander.

Moving on to the method of voting—the Liberal Party is quite consistent in its position on the rights of voters. It believes that voting should not be compulsory; however, if one votes then one should give a full indication of one's preferences. Our position is that the most accurate measure of an electorate is by an exhaustive ballot. Obviously, what happens is that the candidates attracting the smallest number of votes are progressively eliminated until the choice remains between the final two candidates. That system in Queensland would be incredibly expensive and time-consuming. The closest thing to an exhaustive ballot is full preferential voting. Optional preferential voting, taken to its logical extension, becomes first past the post and, as was noted in EARC's final findings, in New South Wales, where an optional preferential system exists, a bigger proportion of the electorate is exercising its choice for optional preferential voting—again, moving further towards a first-past-the-post system. First past the post cannot guarantee that the elected member has the majority support from within his electorate. Full preferential voting is the only system that ensures that the elected member has that majority support. Full preferential voting ensures that all parties and all potential candidates will run in an electorate. With first past the post, quite often candidates with similar political leanings will not run in the election for fear of splitting the vote, whether it be conservative or Labor.

One of the arguments for compulsory voting is that in Queensland and the rest of Australia in the early part of the century the voter turn-out was getting too low for there to be confidence in the community that the Government was truly representing the people. Without doubt, things have changed. Advanced technology and communications have greatly increased constituents' awareness in Queensland and the rest of Australia.

As well, as Governments continue to increase their interference in the everyday life of the voter, so interest in how they are interfering increases. Prior to 1914, when compulsory voting was introduced in Queensland, the participation rate average was 77 per cent, with a high of 84 per cent in 1904. With compulsory voting, it now runs at 92 per cent. Therefore, although the voter turn-out was poor Australiawide, Queensland did have a considerable turn-out.

I will now hark back briefly to what I said when we debated the motion in the most recent sitting week. I said that the parties that lose the next election could find themselves in Opposition for another 32 years. Members on the Government benches say, "Well, that won't be us." However, I ask them to reflect for a moment on the scenario wherein by some strange circumstance after the next election they were to end up on this side of the House. I ask them to reflect on how in years to come they will justify why, when the ball was dropped at their feet, they did not kick it—why they did not get rid of the gerrymander when they had the opportunity. I hope that, in 30 years' time, the circumstance will not arise in which a politician on the Opposition benches, because of the gerrymander of 1991, is in despair of his party's being in Opposition for a whole generation and, on wanting to know why, peruses *Hansard*, sees what the Liberal Party said, and realises that at least one party saw the dangers of continuing the gerrymander in Queensland.

**Mr ELDER** (Manly) (8 p.m.): The report on the review by the EARC into Queensland's zonal system states—

"There have always been suggestions that governing parties of the day have ensured that quotas and intrazonal boundaries favourable to them will result from the zonal structure created by the particular Act."

The manner in which the various zones and quotas were established over the years is obscure, and relatively few official documents exist which cast any light on who determined these matters and what principles, if any, were applied. Although the various Electoral Districts Acts were debated in the Parliament, the processes which preceded the introduction of the legislation are simply not known. How true that was of 1985. Over the years, there has been considerable heated and passionate debate regarding redistributions. But the following is a particular quote that stands out—

"Little do people realise the grave injustice that is silently being inflicted upon them. In a most subtle way their freedom to select a Government they want to represent them is being taken away from them.

In this State, the imposition of full control over the lives of the people is being accomplished by legislation of one kind or another. The people are given the right of voting, admittedly, but the odds are so greatly against them that to achieve the results they desire is impossible. Today, as never before, the press of this State has a great responsibility to save the people from indifference or apathy before it is too late.

In this legislation the people are given the right of voting, admittedly, but the odds are so greatly against them that to achieve the results they desire is impossible because the predetermined zones and the numbers set out will mean nothing but that the majority will be ruled by the minority."

Those damning words were spoken in Parliament against the introduction of Queensland's first zonal electoral system by the Hanlon Labor Government in 1949. The speaker, of course, was Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Bjelke-Petersen, then a little known country backbencher, later went on to become Premier of the State and introduce his own zonal system, known as the "Bjelkemander". That statement is one of the greatest ironies of Queensland history.

It is interesting to note that 31 years ago the late Mr Elgin Reid wrote in the *Courier-Mail* that an ugly reptilian creature was about to be thrown into Queensland's electoral rubbish bin. Mr Reid, one of the most astute and experienced journalists to follow State affairs, was referring, of course, to the gerrymander, which, up until the

election of this Government, had had far too much to do with politics. At the time of his writing, in 1957, the conservative parties had just won power. Mr Reid considered it timely to remind the then Country Party and the Liberal Party of their election-winning commitments. In order to win the Treasury benches, the politicians had promised to give the State a democratic electoral system capable of giving full effect to the people's expressed will. They had undertaken to end the existing zonal system, which at the time they described as the "Machiavellian product of a bunch of cheats". A lot of other colourful descriptions were used at that time such as "out Rafferty's Rafferty". It was said that the gerrymander was created by "Ned Kelly" legislation that would have made even Al Capone blush.

However, these observations on the gerrymander—which I admit Labor had created to protect itself after the 1947 election fight when it retained Government on a minority vote—were all made whilst the Country Party and the Liberal Party were in Opposition. The Country party—now the National Party—and the Liberals saw this deliberate denial of equal electoral suffrage in a different light once they were elected to Government. The principle of one vote, one value suddenly and unexpectedly became a mathematical theory that was quite unworkable. Although the public was told at the time that the electoral interests of country voters had to be preserved, everyone knows now that that was not really the case. The real reason was self-preservation. At that time, of course, the conservatives did not have the courage of their convictions.

Despite Mr Reid's reminder, the Nationals—with the Liberals as their coalition partners—set about refining the ugly animal known as the gerrymander instead of leading it out of the political scene, as they had promised. The result, of course, is that up until the election of this Government, Queensland has enjoyed a classic gerrymander in which the National Party had resorted to the deft drawing of zones and boundaries to ensure survival, while claiming that this was the only way to look after the country voters disadvantaged by distance. As I have said, complaints about the Queensland electoral system are not new. Since Federation, Governments in Queensland have attempted to balance the peculiar demography of this huge State with the political representation afforded to its people. All the Governments that have come and gone have wrestled with this problem and have succumbed to the understandable temptation to improve their own electoral standing.

Queensland has a system of electoral zones which have long been the foundation of the State's electoral system and which I admit have been used by both the Labor and the Country/National and Liberal Parties to further their own political positions. The 1949 electoral zone system was a genuine attempt to find a solution to one of Queensland's oldest problems, that is, how to make proper allowance for the fact that some of the areas most important to the State's economy are also the most sparsely populated. On the other hand, the new system, like all its predecessors, sought positive advantage for the Government that introduced it. These remarks are just as applicable, if not more applicable, to the 1985 redistribution carried out by the Bjelke-Petersen National Party Government as the 1949 redistribution carried out by the Hanlon Labor Government. The principles underlying both of those redistributions are identical. However, the art of refining boundaries was fine-tuned to perfection with the 1985 redistribution.

**Mr Katter:** You're a joke!

**Mr ELDER:** If the honourable member listens, I will enlighten him in particular. The 1985 redistribution increased the unfairness in the system by ensuring that the National Party was in a position to govern alone. It increased its majority while its percentage of the vote dropped. Although the ALP could not have won even on fair boundaries in 1986—the Government admits that—it is likely that the Nationals would have been forced into coalition with the Liberal Party. I have listened to the input by members of the Liberal Party. It never ceases to amaze me that in most redistributions in Queensland, it is the Liberals who have suffered most. These not-so-great protectors of the holy grail, these hyperactive hypocrites, come into this Chamber and preach about reforms. During that whole time, the Liberals preached that they supported

electoral reform, that they supported one vote, one value. They preached that they were supporting the Lucas inquiry, police reform and public service reform, yet when they had the responsibility, under successive Attorneys-General, they capitulated to the National Party. They were no more than a division of the Country/National party in this Parliament. They were gutless and did not do anything about it. They had the opportunity and at no time did they.

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** The electorate will judge them by having utter contempt for them. As I said earlier in a speech to this Parliament about the electoral distribution documents—in other words, when the phoney filing cabinet disappeared—in 1983, the National Party won power in its own right for the first time. It was regarded then as a freak result. Many of the political pundits of the day said that it would never be repeated, but that was before we had all realised that the National Party, as I said at that time, had a big ace up its sleeve, which was, of course, the 1985 redistribution. The purpose behind the National Party's submission for the 1985 redistribution was twofold. The old National Party member and strategist, the now infamous Don Lane, said in his report to that commission that it was twofold. It was to corral the Labor votes into safe Labor districts and to reduce the Liberal Party's chances of increasing its representation. Again the Liberals were being duded and yet they did not realise it. It just amazes me sometimes what they have between the ears.

**Mr Beattie:** Nothing!

**Mr ELDER:** It has got to be intestinal.

**Mr Connor** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** All they ever did when they came into this House was sit on their hands.

**Mrs Edmond:** Transplants.

**Mr ELDER:** And transplants. There was a great quote I heard the other day from a movie.

**Mr Connor:** How can you personally justify voting to continue the gerrymander?

**Mr ELDER:** What amazes me is that for the first time during my period in this House, the honourable member actually has made an interjection. He does not have that many other inputs. I was going to say—

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** If the honourable member listens, I was going to say that the other day I heard a quote which is very applicable to members of the Liberal Party sitting on their hands when it comes to electoral redistributions. When they have walked through the metal detector scanner at the airport, it has always amazed me what went off first—the lead in their backsides or the excreta between their ears.

**Mr CONNOR:** I rise to a point of order. I think that that remark was really quite uncalled for and I think that he should withdraw it. We find it offensive. I find it offensive. I would ask him to withdraw that.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hollis): Order! Would the honourable member withdraw that statement?

**Mr ELDER:** If I got too personal and the honourable member finds the remark is too close to home, I withdraw it. The National Party did not shirk when that redistribution was on at that time. It did not shirk from the use of Government departments to compile a proposal to put to the electoral commission. The south-east redistribution team at that time, which comprised Don Lane, Brian Austin and Jenny Russell, explained

in December 1984, in a letter to Sir Robert Sparkes, as appears in EARC's report, that the findings were as accurate as humanly possible because they had used a computer print-out obtained from the State electoral roll. That roll was not available to any other party at that time, but it was readily available to the National Party. Indeed, the whole strategy for the south-east redistribution team was based on bringing about a reduction in the quota in the south-east zone in order to maximise non-Labor seats that could be won. Of course, history shows that the proposal was successful, as the number of seats was increased from 82 to 89. The classic example is the seat of Brisbane Central now held by Mr Beattie. The seat of Brisbane Central is summed up in the way in which Sparkes and Holm were told by Lane and Austin at the time that it would become the dumping ground of Labor votes in the Brisbane area.

**Mr Beattie:** Very intelligent ones, though.

**Mr ELDER:** Very intelligent Labor voters. Lane worked out that, to produce the largest number of anti-Labor seats in the Brisbane area, it was necessary to increase the number of seats from 47 to 51. Despite that fact, the Nationals felt somewhat cheated by this increase, so to compensate, two seats were added to the country zone and one to the outer zone. At the time, the National Party had it both ways. It corralled the Labor Party and it added seats to the country and western zones. That was an absolute affront to the democratic process.

In 1985, more than 50 submissions were made to the electoral commissioners. Both the Labor and Liberal Parties made their proposals available to the media. At that time what happened to the National Party's submission? I will tell members opposite what happened to it. It was not found because it had gone missing. The National Party's submission at that time ended up in that filing cabinet, along with a lot of other documentation that has gone astray over the years. But, as I said at that time, Don Lane came to the rescue of the National Party, because he said—

"The end production of the electoral commissioners was very close to the National Party's submission."

**Mr Katter** interjected.

**Mr Beattie:** Mr Elder, was he one of the Ministers that Don Lane said used to hide in his office from him?

**Mr ELDER:** In fact, I am sure that he was one of those Ministers. But he is trying to tell us that he was out in the electorate parish pumping. Of course, honourable members know where he was parish pumping. It was always from the telephone in his ministerial office.

Skerman said in the zonal system report at that time that the document has been drawn from information from a variety of sources to piece together a descriptive history of the Queensland zonal electoral system.

**Mr Prest:** Don Lane said Vince Lester was one of the bright boys of the National Party.

**Mr ELDER:** I am sure he was. However, because of the dearth of information that is publicly available about the rationale and processes which established, maintained and modified the system, the detailed information on the system is unfortunately sketchy. Documents from the major political parties and other sources, to the extent that they were made available to EARC, are insufficient to enable a full and detailed investigation of the zonal system. The reasons for it, more importantly, are the closed processes which created and sustained it. Even amongst the Government's own records, there is little archival information dealing with this important aspect of Queensland's political history. EARC's investigation at that time of that system was adversely affected to a significant extent by the lack of recorded information and the non-availability of the material that was placed before previous distribution commissioners. In other words, they could not even find the material that had been placed before those commissioners. It was stated

that the lack of records should be a major reason for concern. The fact of the matter is that this Bill addresses that situation very clearly. Clauses 3.1 and 3.7 implicitly now require accountability in that area. The commissioners themselves must supply the documents. Clause 3.1 (2) states—

"Forthwith after expiry of the period referred to in subsection (1) (a), the Commission is to cause copies of all suggestions lodged with it pursuant to the notice referred to in that subsection to be made available for public perusal at the office of the Commission during ordinary office hours of the Commission . . . "

Also, the Minister must table them in the House. Under this legislation, there will be full disclosure. Nothing will be lost in filing cabinets. There will be no commissioners who have lapses of memory and who do not know what was put before them, as has occurred with redistributions in the past. It was stated in Skerman's report that one submission lost completely.

**Mr Randell** interjected.

**Mr ELDER:** I inform the honourable member that it is called accountability, and it will be provided for in the Act. Everyone will have to meet it. As Fitzgerald said, the ultimate check on public maladministration is public opinion, which can only be truly effective if there are structures and systems designed to ensure that the public is properly informed. A Government can use its control of Parliament and public administration to manipulate, exploit and misinform the community, or to hide matters from it. In the past, members opposite did that extensively. Structures and systems designed for the purpose of keeping the public informed must therefore be allowed to operate as intended. Secrecy and propaganda are major impediments to accountability, which is a prerequisite for the proper functioning of the political process. Fitzgerald goes on to say that, worse, they are the hallmarks of a diversion of power from the Parliament. Information is the linchpin of the political process. Knowledge is literally power. If the public is not informed, it cannot take part in the political process with any real effect.

**Mr Veivers:** Who wrote it?

**Mr ELDER:** Fitzgerald wrote it. It is three paragraphs from Fitzgerald's summation about the National Party's own political process at that time. Through this legislation, the public will most certainly be kept fully informed of the due processes.

The editorial in the *Australian* of Monday, 4 December 1989, stated—

"No State election since Federation has aroused such passionate interest throughout Australia as Saturday's poll in Queensland. No State election result has produced such widespread delight as the victory of Mr Wayne Goss and the Labor Party.

This was an unusual battle in which the victors contended against odds far greater than those faced by Oppositions in most parliamentary democracies. There might be an argument as to what extent Queensland has been subjected to a gerrymander but there can be no dispute that there was a conscious malapportionment of electorates designed to favour rural voters at the expense of urban voters in a manner tailor-made for the Nationals' benefit.

Neither accumulated dissatisfaction with 32 years of government by one party nor sharp differences in policy between the parties could have produced a Labor Government unless there had been other reasons for so many Queenslanders to break their long-established voting patterns.

The huge swing to Labor was due to two factors that caused many conservatives to vote Labor for the first time and for thousands of usually non-partisan people to become determined that Labor should win."

**Mr McGrady:** What about Saturday, 23 March?

**Mr ELDER:** That is not a bad date, either. Later on, I might remind members opposite of that. The editorial continued—

"The first was the widespread recognition that Queensland was being governed undemocratically and arbitrarily by politicians who have the kind of arrogance normally found only in . . . dictatorships.

The second was that this power had corrupted those who held it to such an extent that, in the eyes of many voters, they had disqualified themselves from holding office."

The editorial stated that most of those who swung to Labor believed the key promises Mr Goss made—that Labor would legislate so that Queenslanders would have a democratic system, democratic elections and an end to corrupt practices. It continued—

"Mr Goss and his colleagues now have the chance to make their mark as the men and women who restored democracy, decency and honesty to civic life."

That is being done with this legislation.

Time expired.

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (8.20 p.m.): After listening to the previous speaker, it is quite obvious that a reserve has come on with a prepared speech. He was not too sure what he was reading. If he had been on the football field, he would not have known which way to run. In many instances he went round in circles, and that was very, very obvious. By looking at the list of speakers, it is also very obvious that Government members have a complete lack of interest in this legislation.

**Mr Katter:** Would you say that Mr Elder has shortened to 6 to 4 on now in the leadership stakes?

**Mr STEPHAN:** I would say that, at present, Mr Schwarten might be a bit ahead. As I said, from looking at the list of speakers it is obvious that Government members have a complete lack of interest in this legislation. A man had to have his arm twisted to come in late to add to the very small list of Government speakers. That certainly does not indicate that the Government has its heart in this legislation or that it knows where it is going. Some of the comments made by members opposite have been very lightweight indeed.

**A Government member:** You haven't been in the Chamber.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I have been in the Chamber. A lot of the time Mr Beattie was not in the Chamber. I noticed that he spoke and then left the Chamber looking, I guess, for someone to whom to give a press release. But I heard his comment that, under the present electoral boundaries, there was no community of interest. I feel that, in many instances, that would be the case in Brisbane. Many times, the honourable member is at a disadvantage when he finds that he has to say something ridiculous to make an impression or conjure up an image. Unless he does that, he becomes lost in the hierarchy of the Labor Party, the Wayne Swans and everyone else. It is no wonder that he makes some of the comments that he does.

The member for Yeronga, Mr Foley, made the statement that the zonal system was a blight on democracy. They are Mr Foley's words but they are not the words of too many other commentators in this State. I draw the attention of members opposite to a fellow who has gone out of his way to look at the political scene and out of his way to comment from time to time on the situation in Queensland. He said that the so-called Queensland gerrymander was like the Loch Ness monster—it did not exist. Do members opposite know who said that? Do they recognise the terminology? It was Mr Malcolm Mackerras, one of their friends. That Labor Party supporter made the comment that the gerrymander did not exist. Mr Mackerras knows his way around the political scene. He has been around for a long time. He said also that he was critical of the critics and commentators who kept referring to the gerrymander after the release of the Fitzgerald report. Mr Mackerras stated—

"When I express the opinion that the gerrymander does not exist, a critic will ask me whether or not it is a fact that at the 1986 election some 23,000 voters were enrolled in Manly"—and one could add to that some 30 000-odd in Southport, Surfers Paradise or Landsborough and 8 000 in Roma. Mr Mackerras said—

"My answer is yes, that is a fact and the disparities will be even greater at the forthcoming election."

In his report, Mr Fitzgerald referred to malapportionment, and stated—

" . . . the existence of electoral districts which have significant differences in numbers of electors, possibly but not necessarily through the designation of electoral zones. Malapportionment may or may not confer advantage on one party against its rivals."

**Mr Beattie:** That's selective reading, and you know it.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Mr Beattie is making noises. He cannot quite grasp what Mr Fitzgerald stated.

**Mr Beattie:** Keep reading. You were selective. You didn't read the lot of it.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I did not read all of it. I read Mr Fitzgerald's comment about the subject of malapportionment. Does Mr Beattie want me to read the whole report? If he has not read it, I suggest that he do so.

Mr Mackerras said that a gerrymander was more than that and involved the deliberate rigging of boundaries by the party in power to make it exceptionally difficult for voters to throw it out of office. Mr Mackerras stated—

"If as alleged the Queensland National Party ever did so it did a very poor job . . . The truth is that it is not abnormally difficult to kick the Nationals out."

That was shown at the last election. For the first time in 32 years, the Labor Party in this State received more than 50 per cent of the vote and, for the first time in 32 years, it won an election. What is so outrageous about that?

Mr Connor stated that, on one occasion, the Labor Party won 47 per cent of the vote but did not win the election. Why should it under those circumstances? Surely members of the Labor Party would not cry about that, as their friend Mr Hawke has done. Can they tell me what percentage of the votes Mr Hawke received at the last election? He received less than 39 per cent of the vote. That is less than what Mr Whitlam received when Mr Fraser threw him out of office in disgrace. Mr Hawke is running the country with less than 39 per cent of the vote. Government members can shake their heads and look disgusted, but that is a fact. Do they consider that to be a gerrymander or a rigging of boundaries? Or are they holding Mr Hawke out as a fantastic fellow who is doing a wonderful job? Of course they are! If ever there was a gerrymander, that is one. There is no perfect electoral system, there is no perfect set of maps, and there will always be some intentional bias that is easily measured.

As to the rigging of boundaries in other States—Victoria has a 1.4 bias in favour of the Labor Party. Queensland has a 1.5 bias against the Labor Party. The other States have a pro-Labor bias—1.7 for the Commonwealth, 2 for South Australia, 3.5 for New South Wales and 3.6 for Western Australia. What do Government members have to say about that? They claim that the bias does not matter. They are quite in favour of what is going on. However, New South Wales and Western Australia have twice the bias against Labor as does Queensland. Government members claim that Queensland is in a perfect position and that this Government is doing a perfect job. However, at the same time they claim that Queensland has a gerrymander. What hypocrites! Either they cannot tell the truth or they do not understand it.

Mr Mackerras stated further—

"In my opinion, it is plausible to allege that the Western Australian Labor Government gerrymandered its way into office. It won the election . . . notwithstanding the fact that 52 percent of the two party preferred vote was cast in favour of the Liberal and Nationals and only 48 percent for Labor."

That is what this Government is looking for as far as true and honest boundaries are concerned. It wants to win an election with nothing more than 48 per cent of the vote. This Government should let Queensland know if that is its aim and objective.

As to the zonal system, Mr Fitzgerald stated—

"The Queensland Zonal Electoral System has always been the centre of heated debate, fiercely defended by the Government of the day and severely criticised by the opposition parties irrespective of party.

A system of electoral zones first established in 1949 has remained a feature of the Queensland electoral system to the present day. In 1958 the Country Party-Liberal Party Government passed the Electoral Districts Act 1958 which enlarged the Parliament and reduced the number of zones from four to three."

From time to time, a number of zones have been altered. Under the present legislation, we are apparently objecting to electoral weightage. Apparently, Government members have no compulsion about one electorate in Queensland consisting of about half of the total area of Queensland, whereas some members could walk around their electorates before breakfast, if they had the energy and the speed to do so, without any great disruption to their program.

**Mr Beattie:** That's simply not true.

**Mr STEPHAN:** If they could not walk around their electorates, it certainly would not take very long to get on a pushbike and ride around them. There is not a great distance between the two furthest points in the honourable member's electorate. Certainly, he may have a considerable number of voters, but often the number of voters in some of country electorates is greater than that in the centre of Brisbane.

**Mr Beattie:** How many have you got in your electorate?

**Mr STEPHAN:** I have over 17 000 voters in my electorate. I am proud of that. Have a look at Nicklin. That electorate has more than 30 000 voters. What does the honourable member have in his electorate—around 22 000? Some of the electorates that have 8 000 voters would be more difficult to service than the honourable member's electorate, which has 22 000 voters. It is all very well to say that better equipment and telecommunications can be used to contact people in the electorate. However, that is not what the electorate wishes. People in my electorate—and I guess in the honourable member's electorate—want to speak to their member. They do not want to hear him at the end of a telephone. They do not want to hear a voice that says, "Yes, yes, yes. That is very good", and then hangs up and forgets all about it. They want to be able to see the member. They want to be able to contact him face to face. That is the case in most instances in every electorate in this State. If the representatives are really worth their salt, they would want to be able to go around and speak to their electors, to see at first hand what they are doing, to understand some of their problems, to keep in contact with the industries and the development and to be able to understand it. Members cannot do that if they sit on the end of a telephone and say, "Well, we will take care of that if we can get around to it."

Some of the arguments used to justify electoral weightage in the form of zones are quite valid. One example is areas where both members and voters are disadvantaged by the size and remoteness of their electorates. Without zoning, the interests of the rural areas would be dominated by the populous south-eastern corner of the State. That is a very important point. Government members, if they are reasonable, cannot tell me that the majority of funding would not go into the areas from which the majority of electorate representatives come. They cannot tell me that they would direct money for roads, buildings and schools to the remote areas if that was not worth anything to them politically. That is true. We can see it happening very, very slowly. We can see the effect of the increased charges for registration for farm vehicles and for road transport vehicles. If I were Mr Beattie, I would sink back in my seat, too, when I thought about the repercussions. Of course, it will have an effect. Of course, it will make it difficult and

more expensive to live in the country. When that attitude is held, it will make an enormous difference to development in country areas.

Government members can relate that attitude to many of the other areas in which they have been operating. In relation to water resources—on top of the usage charges that will be required each year, the Government has now decided to charge every new applicant \$100 per megalitre for water rights on a river. That is another charge, another tax, another imposition on those who live in the distant areas.

**Mr Beattie:** That's next week's Bill; you've got it wrong.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I do not have it wrong. Does the honourable member say that the Government will not impose that extra charge? Government members have said that there will be no increases above the CPI, but there have been more than 500 increases that are above the CPI and most of them have been in the south-east corner.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mrs Woodgate): Order! I ask the honourable member to get back to the Bill.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker. I will do that. I am pointing out what is happening now and what will happen when representation in other parts of the State is cut down. The Government is putting the emphasis on the south-east corner.

**Mr Beattie:** You're in the south-east corner. What are you on about?

**Mr STEPHAN:** I am right on the edge of the south-east corner. For the information of the honourable member, the south-east corner has 65 per cent of the voting population. The other 35 per cent is in the remainder of Queensland. If the Government has any political nous at all, it will realise that that 65 per cent has a far greater pulling power than the 35 per cent in the rest of the State and, of course, the Government will give a significant preference to people who live in those areas. The reason for Queensland's development is decentralised representation. The decentralisation of the electorates has enabled Queensland to develop as it has. It is quite well recognised that, although Queensland has a long way to go, it is certainly the leading State in respect of decentralisation.

I referred previously to remoteness. It gives me a lot of pleasure to take part in the debate and to point out to the House that we have here the best of the different modes that have been suggested to the House. The representatives of the Labor Party who have spoken have gone out of their way to say that they are working towards one vote, one value. Mr Beattie is nodding his head. The Labor Party will be working towards doing away with the weightage system in those areas of western Queensland where distances are great. A number of Labor Party members would not realise the time, effort and energy that is spent by a country member in getting around his or her electorate and the difficulties that are being experienced by people living in those areas in surviving under the present circumstances. These people are contributing enormously to the State. They have done so in the past and, if they are given encouragement, they will continue to do so in the future.

**Mr PREST** (Port Curtis) (8.38 p.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak to this Electoral Districts Bill. I have been in this House for 15 years and have contested the seat based on Port Curtis at six elections and in four different electorates.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr PREST:** Leo Zussino can have it. I am quite certain that he will be the member for Port Curtis when I retire at the next election. The honourable member can be assured that there will be no preselection. I have been fortunate that I have been able to overcome all the objections and redistributions that Joh Bjelke-Petersen and his cronies put forward. I remember in 1976, when I was first elected with 51.5 per cent of the primary vote, that Joh Bjelke-Petersen carried out a redistribution in Port Curtis and reduced my vote to 46 per cent. No doubt at that time he said that, because of his gerrymander, the

National Party would win Port Curtis. Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen had as a candidate a very high-profile solicitor by the name of Barry Johnson. He is in Cairns at the present time. He is called him the "welcher", because he has never paid. He was just like a wild duck; he would never settle. Despite having that very high-profile solicitor as an opponent, I had no trouble in increasing my vote at the 1977 poll. No doubt the Solicitor-General would do well to look at the practices of that man. In 1977, after Joh's redistribution, I received 58 per cent of the vote, an increase of 12 per cent. The former Premier carried out another redistribution in 1985 for a very talented man by the name of Col Brown, who was commonly referred to as the town drunk. He was another very high-profile person who called himself the "achiever", but the electors saw him as the "deceiver" and voted accordingly. After that redistribution in 1985, I increased my majority again in the 1986 election.

**Mr Borbidge:** You're so modest.

**Mr PREST:** I am not one to boast, but I like saying, "Been there; done that." I am pleased to be able to wipe my feet on those high-profile people at every opportunity. Honourable members could say that this is my valedictory, but I came to this House to represent the electorate of Port Curtis with one thing in mind—never to be friends with a Tory, and I can assure my electors that I will never disappoint them.

One of the matters I wish to raise concerns the wealth from the west. The wool and cattle people contribute a great deal to the wealth of Queensland and they should have a greater say. I have here an article from the *Courier-Mail* of 4 September 1990. Today, the Leader of the National Party quoted Madonna King, but he missed this article. It concerns EARC's request to the Government Statistician to provide it with a population diagram as to where the wealth in Queensland really comes from. Brisbane has 45.4 per cent of Queensland's total population.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr PREST:** I am not going red in the face, though. Brisbane contributes 45.75 per cent of the gross State product.

**Mr Veivers:** You ought to have a look in the mirror.

**Mr PREST:** If I were the honourable member, I would not look in the mirror. Here we have the hot pie king; Billy Smith's mate. Do honourable members know why they were hunted off the radio stations? I had better not tell them here tonight. Billy Smith is well known for it and Mick was his running mate. Moreton contains 15.7 per cent of the population of Queensland and contributes 11.1 per cent of the gross State product.

**Mr Borbidge:** Keep going.

**Mr PREST:** At least I am not full, unlike the honourable member who is the professional bumper from the Gold Coast.

**Mr Borbidge:** Do a bit better.

**Mr PREST:** Yes, I will. The honourable member is known far and wide. The Wide Bay/Burnett area, which has 6.14 per cent of the population, produces some 5.2 per cent of the gross State product. The Darling Downs has 6.8 per cent of the population and contributes 5.8 per cent of the gross State product. The south-west where Mr Hobbs—who is always looking for rebates—comes from produces 1.9 per cent of the gross State product.

Let me turn now to the Fitzroy region, which has 6 per cent of the population and produces 8.4 per cent of the gross State product. The central west—the area in which Mr Johnson's electorate is situated, the so-called rich west—contains 0.5 per cent of the population and produces 0.8 per cent of the State's gross product. The Mackay region contains 3.9 per cent of the population and produces 6.5 per cent of the gross State product.

The northern region contains 6.5 per cent of the population and produces 6.6 per cent of this State's gross product. The far-northern region contains 6.2 per cent of the State's population and produces 5.4 per cent of the State's wealth. The north-western region contains 1.4 per cent of the population and produces 2.5 per cent of the State's wealth. It must be remembered that the north-western region includes Mount Isa, which would account for most of that region's wealth. A great deal has been heard about the western districts where the people want to have so much say in the running of the State in spite of the fact that they produce so little.

A Labor Government is now in office. For the first time in the 15 years since I was elected to Parliament, Queensland will have a fair redistribution. Members of the National Party complain that it is unbelievable that this Government should be doing this to them. They say that because they had been in power for so long and had perpetrated their system upon the people of Queensland for such an extensive period that they came to believe that it was right for them to do so. For too long, they regarded the people of Queensland as dills. I have no doubt that now that a Labor Government is in power, it will ensure that the people of Queensland have the right to choose the parliamentary representatives who deserve to represent them. The people of Queensland will be the ones who elect the State Government and it will not be done in the way that the old system operated, that is, by leaving a brown paper packet on the Premier's table to determine who received endorsement and who did not, and who had most of the say in this State. Queensland now has a Labor Government that has a deep commitment to the people of Queensland that it intends to fulfil. If anyone wishes to engage in a debate with me at any time on the "high achievers" or the people in Port Curtis who have opposed me through the years, I am quite certain that I will be able to produce some of the evidence that I have on them. In fact, if I went into their backgrounds, Don Lane would look like an altar boy compared with some of them.

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.48 p.m.): I rise to speak very briefly on the Electoral Districts Bill, which follows the motion and debate that occurred on 14 March this year. At that time, I and my colleagues undertook a fairly detailed analysis of the implications of EARC's recommendations so I do not intend to reiterate everything that was said during that debate. However, I wish to make one or two points and I again wish to commence by citing Senator Mal Colston's speech in the Senate in November last when he stated unequivocally the way in which the Labor Party regarded Queensland electoral justice. He stated—

"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."

I repeat, "There will be no electoral zones."

Madam Deputy Speaker, Senator Colston is not the only Labor luminary who indicated that he held no expectations of electoral zones being retained. He expected a system of one vote, one value when Labor came into power. Let me cite the comments of a former colleague of mine from the University of Queensland and somebody who is well known within the ranks of the Labor Party, Paul Reynolds. I am sure that Paul is a member of the party and from time to time we discuss these issues.

**Mr Welford:** Your party!

**Dr WATSON:** A member of the ALP.

**Mr Welford:** Oh, come on!

**Dr WATSON:** He is a member of the ALP. Although he and I may disagree on a philosophical basis, I still think he has a good understanding of the ALP's platform. I

wish to cite the final paragraph of his comments that were published recently in an academic journal. He stated—

"Finally, 1989 was, for two reasons, the end of an era in Queensland. The obvious one was the termination of Labor's thirty-two years of continuous opposition in Queensland politics. Few in 1957 would have predicted such a lengthy period in the political wilderness, or that the Nationals would be brought down by a combination of maladministration and malfeasance. The other reason was that EARC was now to subject the zonal electoral system to search and scrutiny. Government policy, however, is unambiguous—one vote: one value and a 10 per cent tolerance either way. Gough Whitlam then was probably correct when he observed, in Brisbane, on 2 September 1989, 'Whatever the outcome of the election, this will be the last Queensland election fought on crook boundaries.'"

**Mr Welford:** He was dead right.

**Dr WATSON:** Whitlam has been wrong previously, and he was wrong again. Paul Reynolds was also wrong again.

As everyone in this Chamber knows, the essence of the proposal is that EARC has proposed a system whereby phantom voters can be added to the actual number of voters in an electorate. The number of phantom voters has been determined as 2 per cent of the area of the electorate where the electorates are greater than 100 000 square kilometres in area.

**Mr Briskey:** I have heard all this before.

**Dr WATSON:** I am sure that the honourable member has read the report and I am sure that he understands the extent to which it deviates from Labor Party principles and policies. This is what EARC recommended, and it is what has been incorporated into the Bill.

In his speech to the Senate, Mal Colston referred to the fact that he found it incredible that the idea had its genesis in a proposal made by a well-known member of the Australian Labor Party in Queensland, Councillor Noel Robertson. Let me cite what he had to say on this matter—

"I have always enjoyed good relations with Councillor Robertson, who is Chairman of the Cloncurry Shire Council, but on this occasion I must totally disagree with him. I cannot accept that he was unaware of Labor policy. He was Labor's candidate for the seat of Flinders at the 1989 election, so he should have had more than a passing knowledge of Labor policy. When I have the opportunity, I shall determine whether he sought permission from his own Party to propose his hare-brained scheme."

Of course, that sums up what many people think of the proposals that have been put forward.

In the next few minutes, I intend to deal with a couple of matters that I did not have a chance to cover in my speech on 14 March. In that speech, I went through in some detail the arbitrariness of the 2 per cent criterion and the arbitrariness of the choice of remoteness as the only criterion on which EARC decided to differentiate electorates. In the time that was available then, I was unable to canvass two other aspects—both of them more or less futuristic aspects—one being the effect on the stability of the electoral system over time and the second being what I believe is the long-term illogical principle embodied in this legislation. I will address the first aspect.

Once we decide under this system to create a set of electorates which have phantom voters, we will essentially get two classes of electorates. In the first class of electorate we will probably have six individual electorates, each with a unique set of electors, and then we will have another class in which we will have 83 electorates with a technically common average. The interesting point is that, if we take the 1989 voting figures for this State and work out what the average number of electors should be in every electorate

of 89, it works out to something like 20 250 voters. However, if we take away six electorates with the particular weightage that has been proposed by EARC and in the other 83 electorates allocate the remaining electors, we find in those 83 electorates something like an average of 20 750—about 500 additional voters in the 83 electorates. Essentially, that reduces the margin that is available to the commissioners in drawing boundaries in the 83 electorates because, under a single zone in which the same average number of electors are in every electorate, we would have a margin of 10 per cent on the 20 250, or a plus or minus 2 025. We would have something like an upper limit of 22 275. However, once we give some electorates—six in particular—a lower value and we have an average of 20 750 in the remaining 83 electorates, on average they have to be closer to the upper limit, which would be determined by the 10 per cent tolerance above the average of 20 250. That means that for those 83 electorates the commissioners will have less discretion in how they place the boundaries to take account of growth which is occurring in those areas. Because all the demographers tell us that the growth will occur in the south-east corner of Queensland, the Whitsundays and Cairns, that matter is particularly important. In those areas, the commissioners will end up having to decide boundaries to allow for as much growth as possible, but they will be deciding those boundaries with one hand tied behind their back. They will be restricted in the amount of leeway they can allow in those electoral districts. It also means that, in those rapidly expanding areas, we will have electorates reaching the maximum tolerance—10 per cent above the average of the electorates of the State—much more quickly than they would under a system which had one zone and an average enrolment which was the same in all electorates. By implication, that must lead to reaching the formula for redistributions more quickly than would occur under a one-zone system.

In essence, because of the disproportionate growth in the south-east corner of Queensland, the Whitsundays and Cairns, the system which is being proposed will engender increased instability in electoral boundaries. It seems ironic that we would develop a system that will create increased political instability for the future. There is something wrong at a theoretical level when we deliberately adopt a system which is likely to lead to more boundary changes, more redistributions, more uncertainty on behalf of members of Parliament and of Governments, and more uncertainty on the part of the people in the community.

The second aspect which I said I would mention relates to another basic principle, that is, the illogical issue of what will occur in the high-growth areas of the State. EARC has proposed a system under which, because of the differential rates of growth in the south-east corner when compared to those in other parts of the State, the electors in the south-east corner will be more disadvantaged relative to the one vote, one value principle as we progress over time. Again, it seems to me somewhat illogical and ironic that we are going to adopt a system which is unfair to electorates in a high-growth area vis-a-vis electorates in low-growth areas in terms of population. We are going to adopt a system which tends to expand that inequity over time. In other words, we are going to adopt a system in which that inequity will get bigger as the difference in the population growths affects the south-east corner vis-a-vis the other areas of the State.

I think that the proposals are flawed in those two fundamental areas. This will introduce increased instability in the electorates over time and it will also take that inequity and put it permanently into the system. As has been indicated by previous speakers, the Liberal Party will not be supporting this Bill.

**Hon. N. J. HARPER** (Auburn) (9.01 p.m.): As has been said by other speakers, the Opposition supports this Bill, although in its opinion it clearly requires amendment to provide a legal basis for future redistributions and also to ensure that this waning Labor Government does not merely pay——

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr HARPER:** It is nice to see members of the Government coming to life. I repeat that an amendment is necessary to ensure that this waning Labor Government does not

merely pay lip-service to the principles that it espoused in order to win popular support before the last election. At least this Bill does acknowledge a principle accepted by all western democracies as fundamental, that is, electoral weightage. Let not my Liberal friends forget that prior to the 1980 election, their parliamentary leader, the then Dr Llew Edwards, acknowledged publicly that it was impossible to apply one vote, one value in Queensland because of its area. Those were the words of the then Deputy Premier and Leader of the Liberal Party in this Parliament.

The provision within this Bill which enables the commission to depart from the quota determined under clause 3.2 if a proposed electoral district is at least 100 000 square kilometres in area is supported and justified, as has been said, but it really does not recognise that there are many large country electorates, such as mine. I am proud and privileged to represent the electorate of Auburn, which is some 60 000 square kilometres in area, with 14 major centres, including 11 reasonably large towns. Blackwater, in the north west of the electorate, is further by road from my electorate office in Wandoan than is Brisbane. Members on the Government benches and members of the Liberal Party would do well to ponder that fact. They really do not think about it and they really do not understand. My electorate office is actually closer to Brisbane than it is to the most north-western town in my electorate.

At times I am inclined to agree with the statement that was made by Dr Colin Hughes not so very long ago—I think it was in 1980 or 1982—that he would put Auburn into a permanent western and far-western zone. It would do all honourable members well to ponder that. I invite honourable members to compare my electorate of 60 000 square kilometres with the metropolitan electorates in which members can ride a pushbike around before breakfast on a Saturday morning. I invite honourable members to compare the electorate of Nundah—which has been in the news recently—or Merthyr, which is 13 square kilometres in area, with my electorate of 60 000 square kilometres.

Although the Opposition is tonight honouring its commitment to accept the principles determined by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission, let that not be misinterpreted as an acceptance on the part of the Opposition—or on my part—of the media-led hysteria in regard to the so-called gerrymander. The Labor victory—and it was a victory—at the last election proved conclusively that those critics who claimed that the National Party remained in power by virtue of the so-called gerrymander spoke arrant nonsense. The so-called gerrymander was proven to be a myth—a fact that the National Party had known and claimed for years. However, the present Labor Government proved that all that nonsense, all that hogwash, peddled so prominently by the media was, indeed, a myth.

Years ago—perhaps not so many years ago—the former State Labor Opposition Leader, Ed Casey, now the Honourable Minister for Primary Industries, went on the public record and conceded that the ALP should quit blaming the electoral system for its losses and come up with policies to win votes and to win elections. I am pleased to see that the Minister is in the Chamber tonight. He would probably like to forget those days because that was when he was in the political wilderness. Some Government members would recall that Mr Casey went out into the wilderness for a while. He made that statement before he returned to the Labor leadership. Of course, I am sure that he recollects with sadness that after he returned to the Labor leadership, he was yet again dumped. However, the fact is that in those days of oblivion as an Independent in this Parliament, the Honourable Ed Casey did go on the public record and concede that the ALP should quit blaming the electoral system for its losses and come up with policies to win votes and to win elections.

**Mr Casey:** I was right, and that's why you are over there now.

**Mr HARPER:** It was also the same Mr Casey, the member for Mackay, who, in 1979, made redistribution proposals which embodied a zoning system. Honourable members would well remember that, in 1979, Edmund Casey led his Labor Party in this House by proposing a redistribution which embodied a zonal system. I applaud him

for that because it showed that he understood then, and I am sure he still understands, that the proposal is valid and is warranted in Queensland.

We live in the decentralised areas, and the member for Mackay knows full well that his people are entitled to some concessions because of the relative remoteness of the city and because of the decentralised nature of those areas. I am sure that was the only reason that he understood. As I say, in 1979, he proposed a redistribution which embodied a zonal system. But those who live in the decentralised areas of this State believe that they are entitled to equality of representation. How can anyone claim that one member can afford the same equality of representation to constituents scattered over 60 000 square kilometres as does a member whose constituents are confined within a 12 or 13 square kilometre area?

Honourable members should cast their minds back to the words written by Professor Colin Hughes, who, from 1965 to 1974, was foundation Professor of Political Science at the University of Queensland and so has a very clear, personal and accurate understanding of political science in this State. More recently, from 1975 to 1984, Professor Hughes was the Professorial Fellow in Political Science at the Institute of Advanced Studies at the Australian National University in Canberra and, even more recently, a member of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission. In his book entitled *The Government of Queensland*, Professor Hughes stated—

"Few aspects of Queensland politics have attracted more attention and more hostile criticism than the State's electoral system, yet in the main it differs little from that of the four other mainland States."

I would like to repeat those words—

". . . yet in the main it differs little from that of the four other mainland States."

And later, in the same book, he makes this simple, objective observation—

"It might be well to record the writer's considered opinion that there is much less inequality and unfairness in the State's electoral system than most writers on the subject have claimed to see."

Those comments were made by Professor Colin Hughes when writing in his book *The Government of Queensland*.

It is interesting that Labor members, such as the member for Manly, not many minutes ago, indicated that he understood that Labor leaders, and might I say true Labor leaders, the old-style Labor leaders, such as Ned Hanlon, who Tommy Burns would have admired—I thought it might get the Minister's attention, even for a second— were responsible for introducing the zonal system that Ed Casey supports and for developing their own forms of gerrymandering. They were the masters of the gerrymander, the Ned Hanlons of bygone years. As I said, it was the Hanlon Labor Government that introduced the concept of zoning in Queensland.

**Mr Perrett:** They are as silent as mice.

**Mr HARPER:** As the honourable member said, they are as silent as mice. Why wonder, because today the Labor Party is not the Labor Party of Ned Hanlon's era. What would Ned Hanlon have said to decriminalising homosexuality and to all the other issues that this Labor Party of today, this party of academics who think so little of public servants, of the people of Queensland and of their fellow academics in Queensland that they have to import them from Victoria, South Australia and everywhere, and give academics from everywhere else but Queensland a which? What would Ned Hanlon think today? I am sure that he would be turning over in his grave like I know not what.

In 1949, the Labor Premier of the day, in introducing the Electoral Districts Bill, said—

". . . it has been found that in a country such as this there is some need for a variation in the number of people a member represents . . . in all parts of the State, even the isolated parts people are living."

I am quoting Ned Hanlon, a person still respected by the true Labor idealists of this era. He went on to say—

"Those people are entitled to at least the same services as those in the metropolitan area get; as a matter of fact, if there is to be any balance in favour of any section in this respect, it should be in favour of the people developing the outback parts of this great state."

Let the members on the Government side of this House dwell on and think of the contributions that they have made during this debate and ask themselves whether they represent Labor as no-one can deny Ned Hanlon did. Let them ask themselves whether they understand what this doyen of the Labor Party, a man still respected by all political parties in Queensland, had to say. The final few lines of the quotation made when Ned Hanlon introduced that Bill bear repeating. They are—

". . . as a matter of fact, if there is to be any balance in favour of any section in this respect, it should be in favour of the people developing the outback parts of this great State".

Of course, it was the Hanlon redistribution which moved away from complete equality of enrolment and achieved at the 1953 State election what has been calculated as being more than a 10 per cent bias in favour of the Australian Labor Party. But, of course, we did not hear anyone on the Government benches referring to that. It was Labor also that decided to introduce first-past-the-post voting as yet another method to manipulate the system to ensure that it never went out of office. Labor failed only because of internal power struggles—between its faceless men, of course.

**Mr Dollin:** Where did you fail? Why did you get tossed off the front bench?

**Mr HARPER:** I will take that interjection because it gives me an opportunity to accept the principle that the member is putting forward. I hope that those on the conservative side of Government—and I do not think the honourable member is too far away from it—will understand the self-destruct mechanism. It reminds me of a very good cartoon that appeared in the *Courier-Mail*, which a few years ago used to have some fair writers and artists. I recall very well a cartoon that appeared in that paper when the coalition broke because of internal fighting. The cartoon depicted the member for Redcliffe, Terry White, who was then the Leader of the Liberal Party, leading a wing of Liberal members fluttering down from the top of the Executive Building one after the other. As he went past the Premier's window, Terry poked his tongue out and said, "That'll teach you." So I take the member's interjection and suggest that Liberal members today might very well heed the same message because unfortunately there is within that party today an element that still has the Terry White mentality that they can dive off the top of the Executive Building and poke their tongues out on the way down to the ground and tell the National Party, "That'll teach you."

As I was saying, though, it was Labor also that decided to introduce first-past-the-post voting as yet another method to manipulate the system to ensure that it never went out of office. It failed only because of that internal power struggle, that feuding within itself between its faceless men. Let not anyone delude himself, when a move is made to introduce optional preferential voting we are very close to that old trick of first-past-the-post voting. In particular, I suggest that the Liberal members of this House realise that we are very close to that pitfall that was thought up by previous Labor Governments to manipulate the system. Preferential voting is the only true, practical democratic system to allow everyone to exercise that right to participate in the selection of a winner.

As has been said, and as I said at the beginning of my contribution to the debate, we in the Opposition support the Bill before the House. We believe, however, that there is a valid need for some amendment to cover what we have found to be lacking in the Bill. The Leader of the Opposition has clearly indicated that we support the principles and that we uphold the pledge that we made that we would abide by the umpire's decision. But we do it not as a matter of lip-service. That is where time will prove that the National Party differs from the Labor Party, because the Labor Party is putting the

Bill through merely as a matter of lip-service with the intention in no time flat of going back, throwing out the umpire's decision and changing the rules yet again. We will not be party to that type of action.

**Mr QUINN** (South Coast) (9.21 p.m.): On 8 March 42 years ago, a debate similar to the one now occurring in this House was in progress. The Electoral Districts Bill under debate that day introduced the forerunner to the present zonal system in Queensland. From the moment that legislation was enacted until the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission was established to review the State's electoral processes, it was altered and amended to suit the political purposes of the Government of the day. With successive changes, the principle of equal suffrage was further diluted. The rationale used to determine electoral representation was based on arguments of circumstances of the electors and the degree of variation in voter numbers between different electorates.

Over 40 years these two factors were subjected to alteration according to political convenience. This malapportionment, combined with gerrymandering of the electorate boundaries and increasing the number of seats, produced a system which often frustrated the voters' true intention. It was a system that served the Government of the day, not the people. The results of this politically manipulated system often produced results so perverse that many questioned whether or not the Queensland Government actually represented the popular will of the people.

For a Governments of whatever political colour, the concept of democracy was viewed as being of secondary importance to its own survival. Therefore, it behoves this House to take every step possible to ensure that history cannot repeat itself and that never again will any political party be able to manipulate the electoral system and bring into disrepute the democratic processes of this State. In large measure, the EARC recommendations on the Queensland electoral system achieve that goal. By throwing open to public scrutiny the redistribution process, past suspicions about the fairness of the electoral system will be eliminated. Public submissions and comments will be sought, and if illegalities are thought to have occurred then the resultant boundaries will be open to challenge through the courts.

The matter of appointment of a truly independent electoral commission remains to be judged. If those persons are not perceived by all parties as being politically independent, the precedent will be set for future Governments to behave accordingly. However, reform of our redistribution process is only one part of the solution to the problems that have plagued this State's electoral processes. The matter of abolishing malapportionment remains to be addressed. By failing to accept the principle of one vote, one value for all electorates, the Labor Party has left the way open for the possibility of electoral manipulation at some future time. That is despite the fact that the parliamentary committee monitoring the EARC's reports found clearly that electoral weightage was not justified under any circumstances. The argument that the deviation from the principle of equal suffrage is so slight as to make no difference to the outcome of elections is deceptive and false; yet that was the argument used by the Premier in selling Labor's decision to support weightage to the people of Queensland. In reality, because one of the principles of a fair and democratic electoral system is based on the concept of fairness between political parties, the weightages as proposed by EARC will have far-reaching effects.

As to fairness between political parties—on page 6 of its report on the electoral system, EARC stated—

"When they vote at elections, voters are primarily choosing between alternative political parties. In the interests of fairness and equality, therefore, the number of seats gained by a political party should be proportional to the number of voters who support that party."

Under the weightage formulae, up to six electorates in the west and north of Queensland will have fewer voters than the other 83 electorates. That means that two additional electorates will be created in areas that only the National or Labor Parties can win.

It is significant that the Citizens for Democracy identified the inherent dangers in that and made a submission to the parliamentary committee. I will read that submission, because it really encapsulates in a few words the real problem with the weightage proposal. The submission of the Citizens for Democracy stated—

"The proposed electoral weightage can, in close elections, prejudice the results. Put brutally, the National Party is electorally advantaged by these proposals, and the other two parties, especially the Liberal Party, are disadvantaged. In a close election, the conservative side of politics would retain an edge over the ALP because of this weightage. In addition, on the conservative side, the National Party would retain an edge over the Liberals, despite a deficit in votes, because of the weightage. Thus, because of this departure from electoral equality, it would be possible for the National Party to come third in the popular vote, yet end up dominating a conservative coalition, providing the Premier and most influential positions in the Cabinet. We believe that this would be a travesty, negating virtually all reform which has been achieved in this state."

That submission clearly identified the major problem inherent in the weightage proposal. The effect of that weightage on the outcome of elections is exactly the same as that of the present zonal system. One party remains disadvantaged, and that disadvantage will distort the intention of the electorate. Having recognised the pitfalls and inadequacies of past electoral systems which contained zones or weightage, it is now an obscenity that honourable members should be even contemplating, let alone actually debating, the introduction of legislation such as this. How does the Labor Party rationalise this? It does so by claiming to fulfil an election promise. I will grant that it did make a promise to implement EARC's recommendations on electoral reform. But it did so at the same time as having a policy of one vote, one value. Tonight, the Labor Party is choosing between the two commitments. If anyone has any doubt about what is actually happening, he or she should ask this question: which commitment would the Labor Party be implementing if EARC had recommended the retention of the four-zonal system? There can be no doubt about the answer. This Bill would contain provision for one vote, one value with no weightage. Members of the Labor Party want weightage, because they hold seats in areas where weightage will occur. Their actions brand them as political opportunists.

What about the legal assertion of the member for Yeronga that members of the Labor Party are bound by a duty of honour to introduce this legislation? Given that the majority of members of this House believe that weightage is not justified under any circumstances, they should ask themselves: does a Government that knowingly and deliberately acts against the best interests of the people whom it governs deserve to be in a position of power and authority? I think not. What strange code of honour enables members to act against the interests of their own citizens? These are the key questions that the member for Yeronga deliberately sidestepped. Members who act in that manner are not parliamentarians, but merely members of a political party sitting in the people's Chamber. Clearly, Labor Party members put their party first and the people second. They should have the decency to put after their names the letters "ALP" and then "MLA", because party before people is the creed by which they survive.

In my earlier remarks, I said that the Bill goes a long way towards rectifying mistakes of the past, and so it does. But it pulls up short of the only answer that is acceptable to the majority of Queenslanders. Until all the answers are contained in this Bill, it does not deserve support.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory) (9.30 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Electoral Districts Bill, I point out that we should remember that we are about electoral justice. No doubt, this afternoon and this evening, many people have spoken in this House about electoral justice, but the people on the Government side of the House tend to be wavering a little bit. I understand that, after the next election, they will look at a one vote, one value system that will throw the Fitzgerald inquiry right out the back door. However, I find that the commitment by the Government is not fair dinkum and that we will probably

see the one vote, one value system introduced. When we talk about one vote, one value, I want to place some emphasis on the disadvantages of trying to look after a large western or northern seat, such as mine, the seat of Gregory. My electorate takes in a vast area of 443 000 square kilometres. No doubt, many people in this House do not and cannot comprehend just how large an area that is. When one leaves a town such as Winton to go to Boulia, one thinks that it is just down the road, but it is 360 kilometres down the road. That is a fair distance in anyone's language.

I am not whingeing about the size of my electorate, but I am saying that we are about representing people. Do not let us forget that for one half of one minute. We are here looking after people. Each and every one of us in this House represents people. Forget about the politics; think about democracy. What is democracy? It is people. I believe that many people have lost sight of that fact. As I said, the Gregory electorate is not easy to look after. That vast area contains 12 local authorities; three police districts; two regional education offices, one in Mount Isa and one in Roma; three administration services offices, one at Roma, one at Barcaldine and one at Mount Isa; four transport and roads sections, one at Roma, one at Barcaldine, one at Emerald and one at Cloncurry; and three electricity regions, one at Townsville, one at Barcaldine and one at Dalby. If people think that they can just drive down the road to police an area such as that, they are sadly mistaken. Last year, I drove some 80 000 kilometres in a vehicle to cover that electorate and I also travelled by air and used numerous other modes of transport.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The honourable member might say that I need a medal, but the people who live in the western areas deserve representation, too. Again tonight, the honourable member for Port Curtis was taking a rise out of the people in the bush. It never ceases to amaze me what makes the honourable member tick. He really has me wondering. The honourable member for Port Curtis has worked in the western areas of this State in shearing sheds and in other places.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** We listened to Government members, so they should listen to me for a minute. The honourable member is an absolute hypocrite. He knows as well as I do the difficulties confronting people in western areas.

**Mr Prest:** People used to work in those days, not like you people.

**Mr JOHNSON:** They worked, all right. I work, too. Those people who live in western areas still work. We are about fair representation. The weightage proposed by the Fitzgerald report and the EARC is a very fair way of trying to administer those vast electorates such as Cook in the north, Flinders, Gregory and Warrego. If Government members went out there and saw what the people are about, they would agree with that term.

In seats such as Gregory, Flinders and Warrego, there are a lot of people whom the members never see. This afternoon, the member for Greenslopes mentioned that it would be easy for those members to fly. Fair enough, it would be very good if members could fly all the time. However, by flying, members miss their people, for example, those on a railway camp, on a road gang or in a little village. It would be very nice if members could fly, but they cannot. Members would not see, for example, the isolated country homesteads. Most times, a woman would be there teaching the children, because she does not have the facilities that most people have to educate their children. Ringers in mustering camps in places such as Araby and Coorabulka never see their local members unless the members visit those places. If the members go to the towns, it is a fluke if they see those people. Those people also deserve representation. When we discuss sizes of and weightage in western electorates, we must remember those people.

In relation to equality of education—in the isolated areas, most children go to boarding school. People do not want to send their children to boarding school. As my colleague the Honourable Bob Katter said this afternoon, people do not realise how

difficult it is to administer and service electorates as vast as some of those remote areas. Members are never home at night and very rarely see their families. I fully appreciate what the wives and husbands of members go through. The isolated families who send their children away to boarding school never see their kids from one holiday to the next. City members have those facilities at their fingertips, which is great. I do not begrudge them that. The electoral weightage is a great idea. We must spare a thought for the people who live under a geographical disadvantage, and this is a fair way of sparing a thought. City members have power at their fingertips. Not all people in the bush have power at their fingertips. Out there, they pay 3.6c per unit for their electricity compared with 2.78c per unit here in the city. Many of those people do not even have the opportunity to flick an electric-light switch.

A survey conducted by the Teachers Union and the James Cook University in Townsville showed that the cost of living in remote rural areas is 26 per cent more expensive than it is in city areas or coastal urban areas. That is a great disadvantage in anyone's language. It must be remembered that the people who live in those adverse and harsh conditions are the providers in more ways than one. I again remind the honourable member for Port Curtis that the people in these areas are the providers. It is the same old story: the minority provides for the majority. The honourable member is returning to his seat. He has got the point and I hope he does not forget it.

**Mr Prest:** The Government Statistician; is he wrong?

**Mr JOHNSON:** The honourable member has got the figures because I just gave them to him. He would not take my interjection a moment ago. He wants to take all the people from the bush and put them on the coast. In most cases the people in the bush put the clothes on the honourable member's back and tucker in his tummy. Where else does it come from? Does the honourable member think that he can go to the supermarket and buy it? He should wake up. I hope the next member for Port Curtis does a little better than this.

The EARC commissioners told me to remember that the seat of Gregory is only one fifth the size of the seat of Kalgoorlie. That might be so, but the seat of Gregory has settlements in every corner of it. It is spread over a vast area, whereas the seat of Kalgoorlie has its population centred in two places that are not very far apart, that is, Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. That makes it much easier to manage in more ways than one. The seats of Warrego, Cook and Flinders have much the same problem. This afternoon the member for Cook pointed out the problems he has servicing his electorate. Because of the islands and rivers it contains, that electorate might be even more difficult to service than Gregory.

A legal basis for any further distributions in the future is not catered for in this Bill. If the Labor Party is against gerrymanders, it ought to make sure that that avenue is catered for so that in future the Labor Party does not find itself in the predicament of having a gerrymander. If such a clause is not included in the legislation, the next Government—whichever party it may be—can change the rules again. That is what it is all about. The Labor Party said after the last election that it would have one vote, one value, but it might as well leave the boundaries as they are, because it will create a gerrymander again. The Labor Party won the last election on the same electoral boundaries which have existed for 32 years and under which the National Party held Government. The Labor Party cannot say that there is anything wrong with those boundaries. As my colleague the Honourable Bob Katter said this afternoon, seats like Murchison-Eyre in Western Australia have only one representative for 4 000 electors. Those seats are in Labor-held States, yet there has been no mention of gerrymanders there.

When the rural task force progresses around the State, some of its members will realise the problems confronting people in remote electorates. No doubt Mr McGrady, who is the chairman of the task force, will understand, but it is possible that some of the other members of that committee do not understand the vast areas we are talking about and the problems that confront the people in those regions. The National Party

is concerned about democracy. Weightage is a fair system and the people in the bush deserve a fair go. If there was no mining, rural agriculture and the other commodities that come from the bush, the honourable member would not have his port in Gladstone and he would not be the member for Port Curtis.

**Mr Prest:** Cut it out.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The honourable member simply cannot cop it. He knows the basic facts. One cannot exist without the other. Some of those regions are faced with very difficult problems and the Government must bear in mind what National Party members are trying to do. We are trying to get a fair go for all people, and a democratic go is not one vote, one value. I believe that this weightage system is a fair go. The National Party and I will support the weightage system; however, a clause must be inserted in the legislation to provide a legal basis for future redistributions. The National Party will be opposing the Bill in that regard, but it supports the Bill in general.

**Mr ROWELL** (Hinchinbrook) (9.43 p.m.): The recommendations put forward in the EARC report impair the ability of country members to give full representation to many of their people. This legislation will mean an increase in the size of the electorates, and in some cases this will be of the order of 50 per cent. In the Hinchinbrook electorate I have to travel between the two principal towns of Tully and Ingham. Tully, which is some 100 kilometres away, is where most of the work is done. My electorate measures 250 kilometres by 300 kilometres. I have to service my electorate as best I can. Because some of the western regions are difficult to access travelling to them takes time. During wet conditions I need a four-wheel drive to reach some areas.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr ROWELL:** The honourable member does not know what he is talking about. Country people are entitled to the same representation as city people. The problems do not relate merely to deputations. As a country member, I have to attend functions in the towns of Tully and Ingham, outside the towns themselves and in the western districts. Sometimes it takes an hour, an hour and a half or even two hours travelling time. Very often this travelling is done at night. Because of kangaroos on the road, sometimes this is fairly hazardous. After heavy rains creeks flood, so one has to be very aware of the risks involved. The 50 per cent increase in the Hinchinbrook electorate that will be required under this legislation will mean that an extra community will be brought into the electorate. We must consider whether that community will be compatible with the existing communities in the Hinchinbrook electorate. However, so that the areas meet the quotas that are required in terms of the report's recommendation, it will probably be necessary to include in electorates some areas that will not be entirely compatible with the core of the electorate. I am sure that that will create some difficulty for anyone who has to represent the people who live there.

Generally, city dwellers produce goods for a domestic market. The markets that they look to are really entirely within the Australian economy. It is a different situation for rural producers, because most of the goods they produce are destined for export markets. If mining is taken into consideration, rural people are producing approximately 80 per cent of goods that have export potential in this State, which is a very significant proportion. To some degree, I think that city people are protected by the Australian economy because fairly high tariffs apply to items such as shoes, cars, textiles and other manufactured commodities. However, a great diminution in tariffs applying to rural products has occurred. Although that may be a Federal issue, the whole matter really gets back to the state of the economy within the electorates in Queensland.

Tonight, this Parliament is discussing a gerrymander. Back in 1957, Labor had a gerrymander. It was very effective as far as the Labor Party was concerned. I heard the member for Auburn talk about the problems that were associated with the gerrymander presided over by the Labor Party. I suggest that the reason that Labor Government came unstuck was the degree of internal bickering. A split occurred in the party, and it

was not really a matter of the National Party winning Government; it was more a case of the Labor Party losing the election.

**Mr Livingstone:** What happened to your mob?

**Mr ROWELL:** It just goes to show that any party can win under conditions that have been referred to as a gerrymander. The Labor Party won in 1989 and the National Party won in 1957, which proves that it is achievable. I believe that anybody—provided that he gives the right representation and has the right policies—can win Government under most conditions.

The one vote, one value system that applies in the Federal sphere permitted the Hawke Government to win office with 39 per cent of the primary vote, yet when the National Party won Government in its own right in 1986, a hell of a hue and cry was raised about the gerrymander in Queensland. What the heck is the difference between the 39 per cent that was achieved in the Federal arena and the 39 per cent that was achieved in Queensland in 1986? Members of the Labor Party can say what they please about gerrymanders because a gerrymander is possible under a system of one vote, one value. I think the problem caused by the redistribution of boundaries is that representatives of the south-east corner—irrespective of the Government's intentions—will have a great deal of difficulty extending their representation to parts of the western and northern areas of Queensland. As I said earlier, the western and northern areas are probably the life-blood of this State's export capability and are producing a heck of a lot of goods upon which Queensland relies very heavily to assist in balancing the trade deficit that presently exists. If services such as road, rail, fire services, ambulance services, etc., are going to be reduced in some manner and are to be centralised in a bureaucracy administered by people who hold the greatest portion of voting power in the south-east corner of this State where the concentration of population exists and where the largest number of electorates will be located—the situation can only become worse when representation of the south-east corner increases by four to five electorates, depending on the outcome of the changing of the boundaries. I do not know what will happen as a consequence.

The people who live in the bush have struggled pretty hard. Earlier, I heard my colleague the member for Gregory refer to the immense problems confronting him in relation to travelling. I do not travel anywhere near the number of kilometres that he covers. I would probably only travel 60 000 kilometres in a year. However, if the outcome means that I will have to represent an area that is bigger than the one I represent now, that will detract from my ability to get around the electorate and see all the people who will live in the new electorate of Hinchinbrook or whatever it might be named. An example of one vote, one value in the Federal sphere is the Kennedy electorate, which covers approximately 40 per cent of the area of the State. The member has an impossible task in trying to provide a service for the people of his electorate.

**Mr McGrady:** He's doing a good job.

**Mr ROWELL:** He might be doing a good job, but I am constantly doing DSS work, immigration work and Austudy work for him—a whole range of work that really does not concern the State sphere. Because people want to see a member of Parliament, they have a tendency to visit whichever representative is the closest. That is the key to the point I am making.

**Mr Mackenroth:** That happens in Brisbane, you know.

**Mr ROWELL:** Yes, but it is a little bit easier to shuffle the people off to the Federal member in Brisbane than it is for me to do so because my nearest Federal member is approximately 900 kilometres away. It is difficult for people to contact a representative who is so far away. Even if it is only a matter of a phone call, that is costly for them and if the person involved has to resort to sending a fax, it makes contact really impersonal. When people approach a representative in relation to personal matters, they like to discuss it eyeball to eyeball. They do not want to just ring somebody up and

hope that the person on the other end of the line will do the right thing by them. In addition, when it is necessary to deal with documents, it is very difficult to relate over the telephone exactly what the documents mean. Sometimes it is necessary to go through the process of telephoning departments while the people are in the electorate office so that the best possible access to information is obtained for them.

I will conclude my remarks by saying that while the intention is to include some weightage in the EARC scheme that this Parliament is examining, I noticed in an article published in the *Sun* that the Premier mentioned that the aim of this Labor Government was still to achieve one vote, one value. The article states—

"The Goss Government plans to wipe out the special provisions for remote electorates after the next election and introduce a simple one-vote, one-value system."

Is there a hidden agenda? Members of the National Party had hoped that they would be able to look at the umpire's decision and abide by it, but it seems that while it is not the present intention of the Labor Party to introduce a system of one vote, one value, that will be its constant aim, irrespective of all the commitments that it has made over a period.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Condamine) (9.53 p.m.): From listening to the debate on the Electoral Districts Bill, it has become obvious that the agenda of the ALP and the Liberal Party is still one vote, one value. Although I believed that this Bill would entrench the recommendations of EARC, I can see that this Bill is merely a hurdle that the Government will find a way over. It has been signalled already by the Premier that, come the next election, he will be seeking a mandate of one vote, one value. This Bill is merely a hurdle. The Leader of the Opposition has expressed some doubts as to the limitations of the Bill. However, I pay a big tribute to the EARC people who listened to the recommendations from people all over the State, and I also pay a tribute to the people who put together the National Party case in spite of the huge propaganda case that has been going on for years about having one vote, one value implemented throughout Australia. Despite all that hype, aided and abetted by some members of the press, the people in EARC were still able to understand the validity of the case put forward by the National Party and to make their recommendation.

I respect that people on the other side of the House do not agree with the recommendation. I hope that they respect me when I say that I believe that the recommendation of weightage is right but I do not believe that the degree of weightage is accurate; it should be varied. Irrespective of that matter, we should recognise the part played by EARC, the National Party and other people who put in submissions claiming that the idea of weightage was not undemocratic but would attempt to ensure equality of representation. When the recommendations were brought down, they created some pressure for the Premier. He had given a promise to the people of Queensland—part of a tripartite promise—that he would implement the recommendations, and he was saddled with weightage. Although his backbenchers have tried to push him around, he has remained firm and introduced this Bill.

**Mr Livingstone:** And we supported him.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Surely Labor Party members would not leak out of the party room. The Premier is also on record as saying that the next time round he will be seeking a mandate of one vote, one value. I return to my claim that this is merely a hurdle that will be overcome in the overall agenda of the ALP seeking one vote, one value.

The next matter I raise relates to the results that have been achieved in other parts of Australia where one vote, one value has been implemented. Earlier in the debate, it was stated that federally we consistently obtain results whereby we end up with a Government in power that does not receive more than 50 per cent of the total vote. A similar position exists in Western Australia and Tasmania. Government members cannot tell me that the one vote, one value system has not got flaws. In fact, it has many more flaws than those that may have been in the zonal system that existed in the past. It has

also been pointed out today that, under the zonal system in Queensland, no Government has ever been put into power without winning more than 50 per cent of the two-party preferred vote. That being the case, I believe that the EARC people must look very closely at their recommendations and not be swayed. The people of Queensland will be well served if they take note of the amendments that will be proposed by the Leader of the Opposition, which will safeguard future redistributions. We believe that that aspect is not safeguarded in the legislation. That proposal will provide a trigger mechanism for producing redistributions when a minority Government is returned.

The one vote, one value idea also had to be tried in another arena. We have recently witnessed one vote, one value being foisted upon the people of Queensland by the Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government. Before we reached the stage of having legislation debated in this House, people made submissions. I am still angered by a statement made by Wayne Swan, the guru of the ALP, who submitted that the country councils were corrupt.

**Mr Dollin:** Who?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Wayne Swan. As well, assertions were being made that the people in the country towns and shires were being denied democracy. The Deputy Premier also stated in this House that country shire councils are just branches of the National Party. I wish to alert the House to the results of the Chinchilla Shire Council election. It was one of the 50-odd councils that were mentioned as being malapportioned.

**Mr Livingstone:** Tell us about the others.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I will just tell the House about Chinchilla, because it is a pretty good example. Other members will tell the honourable member about the other shires. Chinchilla was supposed to be malapportioned. The legislation passed by this House gave the Chinchilla Shire Council two options to elect its 10 councillors. It either had to withdraw its divisional lines to make sure the population was right and disregard the length of road and the funding that comes from the divisions or have the election on the whole of the shire basis. The Chinchilla Shire Council decided to have its election on the whole of the shire basis to elect 10 councillors. EARC's recommendation was that there should be six councillors from the town division and four from the country areas. Nominations were received from people all over the shire. About five or six nominations were received from the people of Chinchilla and the rest were received from people who normally represented country districts. Would honourable members believe that, when the people of Chinchilla who, according to Wayne Swan and Tom Burns, were supposed to be oppressed and missing out on democracy, voted at the election, they elected all but one of the existing councillors back into office. Only one person who purports to represent the town of Chinchilla was elected by the people of the Chinchilla Shire onto the council, because they were happy with the council they had. Those councillors come from throughout the shire.

Chinchilla Shire councillors all make a contribution. There is a cross subsidisation from all the divisions towards the facilities in Chinchilla. We all contribute for the overall good of the shire. It does not matter whether a person works on the railway in town or in the country, nobody is trodden down. Everyone is a part of the community. If a person makes a worthwhile contribution to the community, he is accepted. The people of Chinchilla voted for the people whom they believed would do the best job for the shire and put a hell of a hole in the argument put forward by the Deputy Premier and the EARC recommendation that six people had to be appointed to the council from the town of Chinchilla. Now the shire chairman confides in me and says, "Brian, we have got one hell of a problem. If I have to go back to divisions again, how can I start drawing these divisions up?" The Government has created a huge problem for local shire councils simply because it believes in one vote, one value, and it has completely disregarded all other principles—

**Mr Ardill:** No, we haven't.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Members of the Government have been shouting it from the rafters for years. In other parts of the enlightened world where democracy has got a foothold—places like Great Britain, Canada and Japan—they do not even worry about redistributions because of one vote, one value. They realise that the quality of representation and the equality of representation is more important. It is only something that has been thought up in Australia. I have done a lot of thinking. Why is it pushed so hard in Queensland when it was first brought in by the ALP so many years ago? I believe the reason is that the ALP has seen repeatedly during my adult life-time that virtually all the rural seats of Queensland have been held by the National Party. The Liberal Party and the Labor Party have had a bit of a go and have tried to attract votes from people who live in rural parts of Queensland. However, they have not been very successful. The ALP has adopted the old strategy of, "If we cannot win that way, we must find another way to win. What will we do? We will reduce the number of seats in rural areas. What sort of argument can we come up with to justify reducing the number of seats? One vote, one value will do. It is not a worldwide practice in other democracies but it is something on which we can base an argument." The ALP has done that for years. It has been consistent; I will give it that. But that argument is flawed.

After the council elections I wrote to Tom Sherman and pointed out that his report on councils is flawed, and I think the Government will find that this legislation is flawed. Queensland will probably get the same sorts of results as they are getting in Western Australia, the Commonwealth and in Tasmania. The party governing Queensland will get less than 50 per cent of the total vote. I appeal to all members of this Parliament to take note of the amendments that will be moved by the Leader of the Opposition to enable the triggering of redistributions when the stage is reached at which a minority Government can be in power in Queensland under this system. Last Sunday night I received a telephone call from one of my constituents. He is a farmer, and he is also a member of the National Party. Nearly all farmers are members of the National Party, so Government members need not throw that one in. This man sees that what the Federal Labor Government and the Queensland Labor Government are doing is diabolical and is hurting people. He compared the treatment of the rural sector of Australia by the Federal and Queensland Governments with Saddam Hussein's treatment of the Kurds in Iraq. It is very similar. He said to me—

"Maybe it is not quite as inhuman but it is just a much slower death."

This Government is putting another plank in its policy of reducing the level of representation of the people in the bush. This man feels so strongly that he went to the trouble of telephoning me. His comments epitomise the views of the people in the bush.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Those people do not feel any guilt. They never felt any guilt about the zonal system under which this State has operated. They never thought that they were taking unfair advantage of city people. They are decent people.

**Mrs Bird:** Are you going to vote for this?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** What does the honourable member mean?

**Mrs Bird:** Did you tell that man how you were going to vote tonight?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** He knows where I stand.

**Mr Mackenroth:** He is the only person in Queensland who does.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** At least I do not lose my mail. I urge honourable members to take note of the amendments being proposed by the Leader of the Opposition because the legislation, as it is, is flawed. I fear that this legislation will only ensure a redistribution on a proper basis this time around and that from then on all hell could break loose.

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.04 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. It has been necessarily a bit repetitive because, of

course, honourable members had a chance to speak about the matter in the debate on the motion some time ago. However, I am pleased to see that there is such strong and continuing interest in this issue that so many members thought it appropriate to speak. I again thank all honourable members for their contributions.

I will single out only one member for what I thought was the outstanding contribution to the debate. I refer to the member for Peak Downs, who managed to make gemstone mining relevant to this debate. I thought that that showed an outstanding capacity in terms of imagination. He established the most tenuous link that I have ever heard between a subject and a Bill before the House.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 74

NOES, 9

Resolved in the affirmative.

### Committee

Hon. W. K. Goss (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1.1 to 3.1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3.2—

**Mr BEANLAND** (10.14 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 5, omit all words comprising lines 9 to 12 and insert—

'(3) for the purpose of determining the quota, the existing roll is to be used for ascertaining the number of electors enrolled for the State.' "

The purpose of this amendment is quite clear. It is to retain the current Queensland electoral roll and not replace it with the Commonwealth roll. One cannot help but notice in the submissions that have been put forward in support of a joint State/Federal electoral roll that there has been no indication and no guarantee given that adequate funding will be made available by the Federal authorities to maintain accurate rolls. In fact, this is a very important question.

In the past, honourable members have seen problems with the Commonwealth electoral rolls. In the past, the Australian Electoral Commission itself has experienced numerous problems at election-time. One only has to look back at the roll position and ask the question: what happens if the Federal Treasury cuts back on funds, as has happened in the last few years with cut-backs by the Federal Government in other areas? Those cut-backs could certainly affect the adequacy of funding and the ability of the Australian Electoral Commission to keep up-to-date rolls. If the Queensland Government controls the rolls itself, then the State has the say over the funding. But, if they are joint rolls, then it is a matter for the Federal Government. I think the position is quite clear: if we are going to maintain adequate and accurate rolls for this State, then the Queensland Government, no matter which party is in power, must be responsible for maintaining those rolls.

The question also arises about one month residency in the Commonwealth against the current three months residency in Queensland. No indication has been given as to the benefits of one month's residency. In fact, the only thing that I can think of is that if one goes on holidays and remains there long enough, say for a month, one could claim that one was a permanent resident of the place and start changing the rolls around and rorting the system. I think that simply is a distortion of the rolls. It does not lead to accurate rolls, and I am sure that it probably happens from time to time in the Federal arena.

I notice that the honourable member for South Coast, Mr Quinn, who is a member of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, presented an excellent dissenting report, which sets out in lucid terms very sound reasons for maintaining separate rolls and why the Queensland Government should continue to be responsible for its own rolls. In relation to the situation in regard to Commonwealth electoral rolls, one has only to recall the expressions of doubt by the Western Australian and New South Wales Governments about the efficiency of their joint rolls with the Commonwealth, which is something that I think ought to be taken into account. In the latter case it was recorded—

"With all the best will in the world the Australian Electoral Commission is unable to make available to the State Electoral Office the facilities and information it needs in order to play an active part in the roll maintenance process."

That comment resulted from an inquiry in February 1989, which is not very long ago, into the operation and processes of the conduct of State elections. So there are inadequacies in relation to the Australian Electoral Commission looking after the Commonwealth rolls. The last Federal election was probably the worst run election in the history of this nation. For a large part of the day, at most polling booths in the city and in large parts of the State there were queues of people 100 deep. No-one can deny that. The Australian Electoral Commission does not even have the courage—the fortitude—to reply to the many people who wrote to it complaining about the problems. Instead, the commission simply says, "Oh, well, there is a cut-back in Federal Government funding." That is not good enough at all. Therefore, I believe it is terribly important that separate State electoral rolls should be kept. In order for this Government or any future Government to maintain its credibility, it needs to maintain the accuracy of the rolls and suitable funding for them.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The Government does not accept the amendment. EARC's recommendation is clear. That recommendation is being accepted. As I recall it, the recommendation was for a Commonwealth roll to be used. However, I understand that the commission would in fact prefer to have the joint roll if in fact that was arranged.

The actual recommendation refers to a Commonwealth roll. That is available. We are happy to comply with EARC's request in that regard. The honourable member will recall that the joint roll arrangements are also a recommendation of EARC, with which we propose to comply because there will be considerable savings for the Queensland taxpayer by going down that road, as well as eliminating the confusion of the dual registration requirements that have previously operated. But if that joint roll can be brought into being in accordance with our agreement to abide by EARC's recommendation in that regard, the joint roll will be used. However, we are certainly not going to go back to the past, which would be the result of this amendment.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I have one more point. I ask the Premier: are there some guarantees in relation to the adequacy of funding to ensure that the joint rolls will be maintained adequately and not get into the problems that we have seen in recent times with the Commonwealth rolls and the running generally of the Australian Electoral Commission?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** That is an interesting point to be raised by a Liberal member of Parliament, given that for many, many years the Liberals had responsibility for the electoral rolls in this State and they were maintained knowingly in an appalling state. The Liberals' track record—

**Mr Beanland:** At least they could run a decent election—not like your mob.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** With respect, Mr Chairman, they could not run a decent election and they did not run a decent election, and they did not run a decent roll. I give an assurance that we will run a decent joint roll in accordance with the EARC recommendation by which we intend to abide, irrespective of the Liberals' position.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 73

NOES, 9

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 3.2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3.3—

**Mr BEANLAND** (10.28 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 5, lines 19 and 20, omit—

' , except as permitted by subsection (3), '."

This amendment removes reference to the weightage. Mr Chairman, are these clauses to be dealt with together?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I shall put the clauses together, because if the first amendment is not agreed to, that will make nonsense of the other amendments.

**Mr BEANLAND** (10.29 p.m.): I move the following amendments—

"At page 5, omit lines 22 to 33.";

"At page 5, line 35, omit—

'subsections (2) and (3)'

and substitute—

'subsection (2)'.';

"At page 6, omit lines 1 to 15 and substitute—

'(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 law.' "

The purpose of these amendments is quite clear, namely, to abolish the weightage proposal that has been included in this legislation and to return to the principle of one vote, one value.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is too much audible noise in the Chamber. Members will return to their seats.

**Mr BEANLAND:** In recent days, honourable members have heard a lot of rhetoric from the Premier about various commitments that have been given. That does not get away from the fact that this legislation does not adhere to the principle of one vote, one value. I believe that the Premier is now promising to introduce the principle of one vote, one value after the next election. I am sure that the majority of Queenslanders believe that that is what the Labor Party promised before the last election. Queenslanders are getting a bit tired of the promises, commitments and undertakings. Now is the time for the Premier to fulfil his obligations. No amount of abuse or rhetoric will get away from the fact that the Premier is not fulfilling those obligations.

These amendments allow for the abolition of the weightage proposal. Even the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review did not support that proposal.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is too much audible noise on both sides of the Chamber.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Even though Government members have indicated in the past that they do not support the EARC recommendations, they are supporting them on this occasion. That shows what a sham the parliamentary committee has been in this exercise. The chairman's remarks in the report highlight the fact that there is no independence amongst the ALP members of the parliamentary committee. They cannot make the hard decisions.

It is quite clear that these amendments give the ALP the opportunity to carry out the wishes of the vast majority of the people of this State—its followers and supporters.

In recent weeks, many ALP supporters have stated that they believe that the Premier has deserted them, let them down and deceived them. No amount of rhetoric on his part will get away from that perception that has been created by the ALP. The ALP has the chance to show that it will do away with the weightage proposal and support the principle of one vote, one value.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** This has been debated at length on a previous occasion. We intend to keep to our commitment to abide by the umpire's decision.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 73

NOES, 9

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 3.3, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3.4 to 3.9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3.10—

**Mr COOPER** (10.40 p.m.): I had intended to move to clause 3.10 the amendment that has been circulated by the Opposition, which relates to subsequent distributions and a new part in the legislation. I have spoken to the Premier and he has assured me that tomorrow he will give notice of a motion relating to the remaining factors contained in the EARC report, and they will include subsequent distributions. The motion will be debated on Thursday. Because of the assurances that I have received from the Premier, I will not proceed with this amendment at this time.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I give an assurance to the Leader of the Opposition and to the House in this regard. A short time ago, I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition

privately that his point in relation to future distributions was quite correct. The matter was not included. I remind honourable members that at the time I introduced the original motion, I foreshadowed the introduction of a further motion. The Government accepts its obligation to bring in the further motion, which deals with the balance of the recommendations in relation to electoral reform made in the EARC report and includes future distributions. I expect to be in a position to give notice of that motion tomorrow. It deals with the balance of those matters, including future distributions and, hopefully, this House can debate the matter on Thursday.

Clause 3.10, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4.1 to 4.5, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### **Third Reading**

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.42 p.m.): I move—

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

Question put; and the House divided—

AYES, 74

NOES, 9

Resolved in the affirmative.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH** (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.47 p.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

**Lord Mayor of Brisbane**

**Mr VEIVERS** (Southport) (10.47 p.m.): Members of the Australian Labor Party are running around patting themselves on the back about the election of the new Lord Mayor of Brisbane. Jim Soorley is Labor's white knight, but I reckon the bookies might have another name for him. I believe the member for Port Curtis, who is unfortunately not in the House and who is the principal of the ALP's charm school, this evening said something about a welcher and a duck that never settled. I see he has re-entered the Chamber. I reckon that people might be referring to Mr Soorley as the albatross because he does not settle, either. For a while, the dogs have been barking the story of his gambling habits. The *Sunday Mail* even ran the story some of the time, and what an outraged reaction it received from Mr Soorley and the Labor Party. What a false outrage! There is no doubt about it: if the member for Port Curtis keeps making those types of comments, he will be able to act in *Return of the Jedi* as Jabba the Hutt.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Campbell): Order!

**Mr VEIVERS:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I was provoked, and I beg your pardon. As I was saying, what a false outrage it was! Members of the Labor Party must have hoped that, if they shut their eyes, certain matters would just go away—matters such as a summons issued by the Magistrates Court in Brisbane from a bookie seeking recovery of money laid with him in bets on the nod. Everybody has heard of nod bets and there are probably members of this Parliament who have bet in that manner, but they have probably paid up. Apparently Jim Soorley has not always done that.

**Mr Turner:** Is that "honest" Jim?

**Mr VEIVERS:** Yes, I believe that is right.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Nicklin will interject only from his correct seat.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The plaint to which I refer was filed in the Magistrates Court on 31 October 1988. It states that the plaint is between Edward James Werchon of Alexandra Headland and James Soorley of Kangaroo Point. It alleges a debt of \$1,750. I wish to cite part of the statement of particulars, which read as follows—

"The plaintiff is an on course bookmaker licensed under the provisions of The Racing and Betting Act 1980. Between the 9th April 1988 and the 23rd April 1988 at Brisbane the defendant laid certain credit bets with the plaintiff totalling \$5,325.00. Between the 25th April 1988 and the 30th April 1988 the defendant paid to the plaintiff the sum of \$3,575.00. There is now due and owing to the plaintiff by the defendant the sum of \$1,750.00 full particulars whereof were supplied before proceedings commenced."

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Yes, he should have. He probably would need that extra \$60,000.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Condamine!

**Mr VEIVERS:** A summons was subsequently issued on 1 November 1988. This is the man who was so outraged that questions were raised about him. This is the man who was so vigorously defended by Wayne Swan when he was approached by a reporter from the *Sunday Mail*. I will refresh the memories of honourable members about that *Sunday Mail* story. The headline stated "Smear. Punting pollie denies debt claim". The first paragraph stated—

"Brisbane's likely Lord Mayor, Jim Soorley, yesterday slammed allegations he owed big gambling debts to bookmakers as 'malicious and false'.

And his campaign director and mentor, Labor's Wayne Swan, attacked what he described as vicious Liberal smear campaigns about Mr. Soorley's gambling, financial affairs and sexual preferences.

Mr. Soorley denied owing four-figure sums to bookies. The claims were untrue and he had nothing to hide."

Nothing to hide! The man has just been elected Lord Mayor of Brisbane. In a couple of days, he will control a budget that is bigger than that of Tasmania, and he does not think that dudding a bookie is something to hide.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Terry Hampson got in on the act, too, and he is the ALP's State secretary. He did not hold the line as well as Mr Soorley or Mr Swan. He let the cat out of the bag a bit when he said that, yes, the albatross had owed money to book-makers, but it had never really been a problem. Not for the albatross, sure! However, it was a big enough problem for Jim Werchon who thought he had to sue to get his money, and it was a pretty big problem for the ALP because it is stuck with a bloke it never thought would be elected. Members of the Labor Party did not think that they would have to clean up after Soorley.

I do not know whether Soorley finally got around to settling with Jim Werchon, but I am told that very recently members of the ALP have been running around handing out money to bookies and others that they thought might embarrass their new man. Even the debts have been paid.

Time expired.

### **Sexual Offenders Program**

**Ms ROBSON** (Springwood) (10.52 p.m.): I wish to talk further on a matter to which I alluded this morning in question-time, that is, the sexual offenders program that has been under way at Moreton Correctional Centre. Recently, I had the pleasure to take part in a four-day conference that was held at that centre in which the various strategies for the treatment of sexual offenders in our prisons was addressed. This is a very serious problem. I do not believe that people understand exactly how serious it is. Of the prison population, approximately 87 per cent are males, and, of those, more than 27 per cent are sexual offenders. As I have mentioned in this House previously, that indicates that we have a major problem in this State with male prisoners. We have a major problem with people who end up in gaol. We must ask the question why there is such a high rate of sexual offences against women and children in this State and a correspondingly high population of offenders in prison.

I am pleased to know that the Minister has undertaken this particularly important issue and has put together a conference with the very able assistance of Mr Keith Hamburger. This conference drew together a whole series of specialists from around Australia and from overseas. I was interested to hear about some of the programs that are in place in other countries and in other States. It is largely recognised that not terribly much has been done to address this problem and that we need to set up an intensive intervention unit in Queensland. This is being worked towards in terms of programs in the Moreton Correctional Centre. The idea of that unit is that the staff design programs which will help those offenders to actually rehabilitate themselves in the sense of undertaking responsibility, in the same way as alcoholics undertake a responsibility for rehabilitation. They have to admit that there is a major problem and that they cannot just stay in prison for a given period of time and then go back out into the community and expect to be rehabilitated. Those people have problems. In a large number of cases, the documentation with which we were presented indicated that those problems very largely related to childhood experiences. At the conference I was interested to discover that the number of young men and males generally who were offended against as children was large and that they translate that into a life of violence, particularly a life of violence of a sexual nature against women and children.

**Mr Foley:** It is good to see the violence cycle being broken.

**Ms ROBSON:** That is true. Of course, we are addressing the violence cycle. It is a very important issue that the Minister and I feel very strongly about, because we need

to do more to recognise that our women and children in society need that form of protection.

Very often, the male participants in the conference indicated that they wanted help but there were no programs in place to help them prior to this. They have welcomed this program in the prison system. The prisoners themselves have very enthusiastically participated in the program. They clearly want to have some sort of strategy and program available for them to rehabilitate themselves and go back into the community as useful citizens. That has been missing in the past. It was the old lock them up and throw away the key mentality.

**Mr Swarten** interjected.

**Ms ROBSON:** Absolutely, with us paying. Of course, recidivism is the major problem. Those people end up back in gaol. As we have witnessed recently, they come out of gaol, commit horrific crimes against other human beings and end up back in gaol. Very often they commit a crime of murder or some crime that is irreversible. Even rape or attacks on small children leave scars on those persons for the rest of their lives.

I am delighted to have been part of this conference. I intend to remain involved. The conference was highly successful. The program recommendations that have come out of the conference are being implemented. There is a very positive approach by the Corrective Services Commission toward addressing the problems that were alluded to. I must say that much can be done in terms of the input from various members of Parliament into feeding information into that particular program. I repeat what I said this morning in supporting the Minister and his staff in putting these programs together. I hope that there is continuing success.

### Health Services

**Mrs SHELDON** (Landsborough) (10.57 p.m.): This Government has stated through its Health Minister, Mr McElligott, that through regionalisation it will provide to the community the best possible public health service. In order for regionalisation to happen, the public health system will need to be reorganised. However, this change must occur efficiently, fairly and with due concern for the well-being of the people currently staffing this health system. The questions have to be asked: is it efficiency to reduce the size of a service which is currently acknowledged as being underresourced? Why should the five most senior positions in the department go to public servants from other States? There would seem to be a definite prejudice against Queenslanders. The sign in one of the lifts at the Queensland Health Department reads "Welcome to the Queensland branch of the New South Wales Health Department". Indeed, it would seem that any other State's Health Department will do, just so long as it is not Queensland's.

It would seem reasonable to call on EARC to investigate whether Queensland health workers have been treated prejudicially in recent appointments and to ensure that persons protesting against maladministration are not punished. This Government has so politicised the wheels of Government agencies that there is no other independent body to which to turn.

It would appear that the Queensland community is largely unaware of the Goss Government's current reorganisation of public sector health services, principally under the auspices of the Public Sector Management Commission. One of its functions is "to ensure that public sector employees obtain fair and equitable treatment". The commission has further stated—

" . . . it is in the public interest to have a public sector free of cronyism and patronage. Appointment on the basis of mateship is clearly unacceptable for public employment . . . "

At page 131, the Fitzgerald report stated—

"Cabinet Ministers should not be concerned with public service appointments, promotions etc. . . . it would be wrong for those who know politicians and senior

bureaucrats to be preferred while a pool of talent is ignored or disqualified for no good reason. Inappropriate appointments, particularly to important positions, are very disruptive of public administration, and increase the exposure of the decision-making process to risk of improper influences."

Consider then the recent most senior appointments to the Department of Health—

Dr Peter Stanley, under secretary and chief executive. He did graduate in Queensland but has worked with the New South Wales Health Department and has known links with the ALP;

Mr Peter Read, executive director policy and planning—formerly head of the Hawke Government's main policy branch within community services and health;

Ms Ann Kern, executive director corporate services—formerly deputy secretary to the Hawke Government's Department of Health and a Hawke appointee to WHO in Geneva—

and probably the best example of cronyism and patronage—

Mr David Butt, director executive support services—formerly chief policy adviser to the Federal Government Minister for Community Services and Health and now chief of staff and chief policy adviser to the Queensland Minister for Health.

Does this augur well for future health service management in Queensland? So much for the Public Sector Management Commission! So much for the Goss Government's much publicised "no more cronyism after Joh"! The Queensland public in general and public sector health employees in particular can afford to be cynical. Are these jobs for the boys and girls part of the political plunder by the Goss Government? Reforms need to be implemented, but not to the detriment and victimisation of any individual.

The Queensland Directors of Nursing Conference Executive Committee has stated that patient care is in jeopardy owing to the fact that, in its reshuffling, the Queensland Government has axed important nursing positions. That committee has asked that the Minister for Health address as a matter of urgency the fact that there is now no chief nursing officer position; no nursing services division for policy and planning; no full-time regional director of nursing position; and no nursing representation on the Queensland Health Council.

The public of Queensland has the right to ask what direct effect these nursing issues will have on the future provision of patient care in Queensland. Recently, in Parliament, the Minister for Health announced with great fanfare an investigation into the Royal Brisbane Hospital. One could well say, "Ho, hum!" This is approximately the seventh investigation into the Royal Brisbane Hospital. None of the recommendations that have been made as a result of these investigations have been acted on in any substantial way. The last report, towards the end of 1990, stated that \$400m needed to be spent on capital works to bring that hospital up to the standard of its counterparts in other Australian States. That recommendation has not been acted upon. The question should be asked of the Minister: what is the cost to the Queensland taxpayer of this investigation? The Minister should also be asked whether it is reasonable to fund such an investigation from the Health budget when it is a known fact that, as of 31 March 1991, the Royal Brisbane Hospital had overrun its inadequate annual budget to the tune of \$2m and still has three months in which to operate before the end of June. Because of this shortfall in funds, every eighth operating list has been cancelled, regardless of what the operation may be. All operations, including prosthesis operations, such as knee and hip replacements, have been cancelled indefinitely. As a result of—

Time expired.

#### **Comments by Mr E. Day about Member for Rockhampton North**

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton North) (11.02 p.m.): I am privileged indeed to follow the Lone Ranger from the last bastion of Liberalism in Queensland lurking up in the far corner of the Chamber, who spoke without one shred of support from her

colleagues. In this debate I wish to reply to the scurrilous attack made upon me in this place during the last sitting week by the member for Gympie, who took it upon himself to represent the resident madman from Mackay, one Ted Day. Mr Day of the Firearm Owners Association, which holds its annual meeting in a telephone booth in Mackay, has now taken it upon himself to write dubious letters about my good self and various other members of the Labor Party. He continues to crawl under his bed searching out communists and——

**Mr Livingstone:** Playing with his mutton gun.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** Yes, playing with his gun. I am not familiar with that particular weapon.

**Mr Livingstone:** Listening to the debate today, I think a lot of members of the Opposition play with their mutton guns every day.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** That may well be the case. I reiterate that I am not familiar with that particular weapon, but if Mr Day has such a weapon, I am sure that he plays with it.

**Mr Prest** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I take that interjection from the honourable member for Port Curtis. This gentleman took the trouble to deride my own father's effort in the Second World War and spoke very highly of his own particular war effort. I am not sure whether he was in the Australian army, but he does say in various letters that he has sent around the State deriding me that he was threatened by a Russian commissar during the Second World War. I thought that during the Second World War Australia was an ally of Russia. If Mr Day was in fact threatened by a Russian commissar, then I wonder whether he was an ally of this country. I suppose I will have to leave that to him. It has been suggested to me that Mr Day has changed his name since he came to Australia, and so on. However, one thing I will say about Mr Day is that he is persistent in his ratbagery——

**Mr Prest:** It sounds like he is a member of the League of Rights.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** The League of Rights certainly springs to mind when one considers the sort of nonsense that Mr Day has spread around the State. Mr Day is one of those people who subscribes to the theory that if home arms are taken away, there will be a purge of Queensland citizens by some unknown force. All I can say is Heaven help us if we have to depend upon Mr Day to defend this country. I have looked at his photograph and read the lunatic statements that he makes. Perish the thought that this man would be in control of a gun.

Mr Day took a great deal of exception to the fact that, having written the most abusive letters to me over a period of time, I wrote back to him to try to put an end to this abuse. I pointed out to him that I was considering making those letters known to the Police Department. Apparently he had something to fear in that regard. I have not done that. However, if Mr Day persists with this madness, then one would have to cast a shadow of doubt over his suitability to hold a firearm in the State of Queensland. I believe that the gun laws in Queensland are totally suitable for modern-day society. Mr Day cannot, or will not, accept that. As a firearm-owner myself, I accept it. I wonder for the life of me why he cannot come to grips with it. I urge Mr Day to stop searching under his bed for various things that he thinks are under there and to come back to reality and consider the fact that perhaps he is not a suitable person to have a firearm in Queensland.

**Mr Prest:** Maybe he should have a medical certificate.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** The legislation does not provide for that——

Time expired.

**Establishment of TAFE College at Dalby**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Condamine) (11.07 p.m.): Tonight, I want to talk about the actions of the Honourable Nev Warburton, the Minister responsible for TAFE. I refer especially to a deputation that he received from the Dalby Town Council on Wednesday, 20 February 1991. I cannot quote his words verbatim, but when the Minister was asked about a future TAFE college at Dalby, he said words to the effect, "Nowhere have I personally seen a record of Dalby ever being included on any future works program for a TAFE college." I was rather taken aback when I heard that statement by the Minister. I went back to my own records and pulled out some correspondence that I had received over the years from various Ministers responsible for TAFE. The first one I found was dated 12 June 1986.

**Mr Livingstone:** Not pork-barrelling!

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Dalby would be one of the few areas in Queensland with 10 000 people in the town itself, and 16 000 in the district, that has not got a TAFE college. So that is not pork-barrelling, old chap, that is fulfilling a need, something to which the people are entitled.

A letter of 12 June 1986, signed by Lin Powell, who was then the Minister for Education and responsible for TAFE, stated—

" . . . as part of a ten-year program for capital works. The project will depend on Commonwealth funding, and at this stage construction is not foreseen to commence prior to 1993."

That is the first piece of evidence.

**Mr Livingstone:** Who wrote that?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Lin Powell. It is on record at TAFE.

The second piece of evidence I sent to Mr Warburton is a letter also signed by Lin Powell, who was then Minister for Education. The letter, dated 5 September 1986, stated—

"As Mr. Warburton promised, my Department has included a proposal for a College at Dalby in documentation to the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission, with construction planned for 1992."

The third piece of evidence that I sent to Mr Warburton is a letter dated 27 August 1987. This letter was once again signed by Lin Powell and stated—

"You may be reassured that the post-compulsory needs of the Dalby area have not been overlooked. Dalby already has a Rural Training Scheme and a TAFE College is proposed for construction in the early 1990's from Commonwealth funds."

The fourth letter I sent to the Minister is dated 13 January 1988. The response I received from Mr Lester stated—

"I acknowledge your letter of 26 October, 1987 to the former Minister for Education, the Honourable Lin Powell, regarding the provision of land to be used for the construction of a TAFE facility in Dalby."

The next piece of paper is a letter from Vince Lester of 14 October 1988, which stated—

"Following an investigation by officers of the Department of Works, it has been decided to proceed with the purchase of 16.2 ha of land on the Warrego Highway. The site, which is located approximately 2.5 kilometres west of the township of Dalby, is described as Lot 257 which is part of RP147116."

The next piece of evidence I sent to the Minister was dated Friday, 13 October 1989. It is a print-out from the TAFE Administration and Finance Branch, a briefing paper headed "Dalby College of TAFE". It stated—

"Dalby is included in the current 5 year rolling program for Commonwealth Capital Works with planning to commence in 1991/92 and construction over the following two years."

I sent all that evidence to Mr Warburton because he said that nowhere had he seen any record that Dalby was ever on a works program. I wrote to the Minister and he wrote back. His letter stated—

"A letter has been forwarded to Alderman Warwick Geisel informing him that the construction of a TAFE College at Dalby is not included in the Capital Works Program . . ."

The interesting thing is that, after Mr Warburton became a Minister, a document headed "Major building projects proposed for 1990-94" for TAFE Queensland produced in May 1990 came into my possession. This document lists Dalby with a new college at a price of \$5m. The allegation is that the Minister is either incompetent and does not know what is in the records of his own department, even under his administration, or that he misled the deputation from the Dalby town council. I believe that the Minister deserves the censorship of this House because he looked straight across the table at the Mayor of Dalby and told him that nowhere had he ever seen any record that Dalby was ever included on a TAFE works program. I have sent that evidence to the Minister. He would not accept that, yet now he has documentation from his own administration and he denies having it, either. It is a disgraceful piece of behaviour by a Minister of the Crown.

### Queensland Education

**Mr DOLLIN** (Maryborough) (11.12 p.m.): I rise tonight to speak in the Adjournment debate to bring to the notice of this House the great leap forward that has been accomplished in the area of education in Queensland and, in particular, in my electorate of Maryborough since the election of this Government. There have been many changes in the field of education in the last 14 months, all for the betterment of Queensland's students, p. and c. associations and teachers.

A total of 11 800 new teachers have been appointed throughout the State and \$223m injected into what were run down, politically connived and rorted allocations to schools. As I mentioned, during the first 12 months of the Goss Labor Government, the Education budget was increased by \$223m. Maryborough has enjoyed the flow-on benefits of that increase. Of notable mention are large projects such as the Maryborough State High School, with a new teaching block worth \$850,000, which was opened by the Minister for Education on 7 March, and a multi-purpose shelter consisting of a 737 square metre shelter, staff rooms, two storerooms, a casualty room and a toilet and shower block. A total of \$430,000 will be spent by the completion of that project. In addition, a new teaching block at Bauple, a long overdue and welcome addition, was constructed at a cost of approximately \$300,000. A new toilet block costing \$30,000 was completed recently. Honourable members have probably heard quite a bit about the Bauple school. Funding for those projects was promised by the previous National Party Government to the people of Bauple in 1983, in 1986 and in 1989, but it was never provided.

Mungar school is soon to benefit from a new half teaching block costing over a quarter of a million dollars, with additional work costing in the vicinity of \$25,000 already completed. Again, that work was promised for two years running but never included in a works program and never provided. Actually, the people of Bauple and Mungar are absolutely amazed that they received that funding. A replacement library block at the Maryborough Central State School has cost \$325,000, with incidental work of \$60,000 being carried out. A further half a million dollars has been allocated for the Aldridge State High School for a new science/general learning area block, which is also being constructed. Granville school is looking forward to a new teaching block costing \$290,000, with \$40,000 in incidental work already commenced. This is a very long list indeed. In addition, minor capital works projects have added thousands of dollars to the total. Those projects that I have outlined this financial year will cost the Government \$3.2m. This injection of funds will make a huge difference to the local economy and work force, and with it Maryborough's confidence. However, the benefit to our children's education is immeasurable. Of note also is the 2 300 extra university places funded by

the State. Incidentally, Queensland is the only State in Australia, other than Victoria, that funds university places.

I believe another improvement worthy of mention and of great importance to principals, teachers and parents alike is the huge increase in school grants. For far too long, p. and c. groups have had to provide to schools too many of the basics instead of the extras. I am pleased that the burdens on parents have been relieved and that the money raised through their hard work can now be used to purchase extras for their children's education.

In 1991, schools in the Maryborough electorate will receive in school grants nearly \$1m, a substantial increase which will improve our children's environment in a positive, practical way. I believe that the physical environment in which our children learn is vitally important. The problems caused by hot, overcrowded, poorly designed schools are being addressed. Naturally, comfortable staff make for comfortable students. Some 1 800 new teachers and smaller classes are part of that commitment. There are no magic wands or quick cures for all of our problems. However, I am extremely pleased at the progress that our Labor Government has made in the past 15 months. I am proud to be associated with those changes. I thank the Minister for Education and the Minister for Administrative Services for their support. I am confident that Maryborough children can look forward to continued improvements based on need, not on political bias, as was the order of the day under the Nationals.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.17 p.m.