

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

THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 1991

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

**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT
Second Report**

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have to inform the House that I have received the second report of the Auditor-General for audits performed for the financial year ended 30 June 1990.

Ordered to be printed.

PAPERS

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

Report of the Public Accountants Registration Board of Queensland for the year ended 31 December 1990.

The following papers were laid on the table—

Orders in Council under—

Mineral Resources Act 1989-1990

Canals Act 1958-1990

Land Act 1962-1990

National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975-1990

Notification under the Canals Act 1958-1990

Regulations under the Public Service Management and Employment Act 1988-1990.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Training and Skills Development Package for the Unemployed

Hon. N. G. WARBURTON (Sandgate—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: I wish to inform honourable members of developments which have occurred in negotiations with the Commonwealth Government over a training and skills development package for unemployed Queenslanders. Members may recall that on 13 March I informed the House that I had written to my Federal counterpart, the Honourable John Dawkins, in December outlining a series of measures which should be taken to alleviate the worsening unemployment situation in Queensland.

A number of the measures that I proposed at that time were included in the Federal Government's industry statement, in which the Prime Minister outlined a package which included \$50m over 15 months to assist the States and Territories to provide vocational training courses through their TAFE networks. The Prime Minister stressed that the availability of this money was contingent on an appropriate State contribution. I am pleased to say that negotiations with the Federal Government are now completed and I am in a position to announce details of a \$11.7m training and skills development program which will assist 1 600 unemployed people throughout the State between now and the end of June next year. The Federal Government will contribute \$8.2m to this program. The State contribution will be \$3.5m, to be funded through a reorganisation

of the existing commitments within my department. The bulk of the money, that is some \$9.45m, will go towards providing an extra 1 200 places in courses that are to be run at the State's 32 TAFE colleges. The mix of courses will include prevocational, pre-apprenticeship, certificate and associate diploma courses ranging in length from six weeks to two years.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

Mr WARBURTON: With due respect to members on the opposite side of the House, yesterday they were screaming about lack of action in respect of training and employment, yet today they do not want to hear what the Government has done. The type of courses offered will be determined by analysis of labour market data, which will identify industry sectors with potential for employment growth as the economy picks up. A total of \$500,000 will be earmarked for measures aimed at ensuring apprenticeship and traineeship numbers are maintained at levels which are deemed appropriate for post-recession industry needs. The sum of \$300,000 out of this allocation will go towards providing short TAFE courses for out-of-trade apprentices and trainees. A further \$200,000 will go towards subsidising the wage costs of State and local government organisations that employ additional apprentices and trainees. A further 400 people will be assisted into numeracy and literacy courses at 21 TAFE colleges at a cost of \$400,000. In addition, the State Government will continue its commitment to fund self-employment ventures mounted by unemployed people under the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme and the Self Employment Venture Scheme at a cost of \$1.35m.

History shows that training and skills development tend to go by the board during times of economic downturn. This was proved to be the case in 1981 and 1982. The effects of this neglect were felt several years later, when demand for skilled labour outstripped supply and placed severe pressure on the centralised wage-fixing system. We do not want to have a repeat of that experience, nor do we want to see the aspirations of Queenslanders, especially our young people, jeopardised by the vagaries of economic cycles. That is why we have worked with the Commonwealth to develop this package, which will place 1 600 unemployed Queenslanders in a better position to find jobs by equipping them with training and skills required by employers of this State.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Review of Rockhampton Hospitals Board

Hon. K. V. McELLIGOTT (Thuringowa—Minister for Health) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: This morning I would like to inform the House of the findings of the review of the Rockhampton Hospitals Board. The report of the review team has highlighted poor public image and low staff morale as key factors affecting the management of the hospital. The review team found that the Rockhampton Hospital has a persisting poor public image, attributable partly to adverse media coverage and ongoing criticism by external agencies. This is compounded by an absence of good corporate planning and a low level of staff morale, brought about by a lack of direction, communication and appropriate leadership.

The tripartite system of management, with its three streams of nursing, medical and administration, has been identified as the cause of poor communication within the hospital and its resultant impact on staff and the community. This system of dysfunctional management has been unable to counter the hospital's public image problems and to introduce the internal efficiencies needed in the operation of a major provincial hospital. Despite this adverse setting, the review team believes that the commitment and professionalism of staff providing clinical care and support services is high and that they have served the Rockhampton community very well.

The report made 46 recommendations which will be forwarded to the hospital's board for comment. They will soon become the responsibility of the Central Regional

Health Authority, and its regional director, Ms Susan Bradshaw, to implement. The significant findings are—

- the development of a corporate plan;
- an increase in the effectiveness of the hospital's quality assurance program;
- the establishment of a working party with representatives of management, staff and the Australian Medical Association to devise a recruitment strategy for senior medical staff;
- improvements to the hospital's budgetary planning process;
- the closure of two wards, 2A and 5C, to meet present workloads more efficiently. This would have no impact on the standard of patient care and would allow the better use of resources;
- development of a plan for delivery of psychiatric services;
- the creation of a position of public relations officer from within the existing staff establishment; and
- the establishment of a hospital foundation.

The other recommendations relate to strategies to achieve internal efficiencies and the better deployment of existing resources.

Mr Speaker, I am confident that these recommendations address the problems evident within the hospital. I believe this process has been justifiably worth while and will be to the long-term benefit of Rockhampton and surrounding districts through a resultant improvement in the quality of patient care.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Criminal Justice Commission Report on Alleged Jury Interference

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—Attorney-General) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: For the information of honourable members, I table a report of the Criminal Justice Commission into alleged jury interference. The report was provided to the Chief Justice, who has forwarded it to me. In November last year, I informed the Criminal Justice Commission of allegations which had come to my attention. These indicated that the process of jury selection for two high-profile trials may have been subject to improper interference. The Criminal Justice Commission then commenced an investigation into these matters to ascertain whether any official misconduct had occurred.

The facts of the matter are that a number of jurors were contacted by a woman who was employed by a firm of private investigators at the behest of a solicitor working for the defence in the trial of George Herscu. The woman identified herself as being from "Morgans" or "the university" and inquired about the political allegiances of the jurors or, in some cases, their family members. The matter came to light when the jurors discussed the matter in the jury room. It was brought to the attention of the sheriff, thence to the attention of the judiciary. To ensure that either current or pending trials would not be prejudiced in any way, action was taken immediately. It was at this time that I referred the matter to the CJC. After conducting public proceedings and hearing evidence in both public and closed session, the commission concluded that the approaches to jurors did not constitute contempt of court, or any breach of the criminal law. The commission recommended that short-term measures be instituted to ensure that jurors inform the sheriff of any approach which causes them concern. The commission also recommended that I establish a committee to consider the need for, and the extent of, reform of the law relating to the distribution of jury lists and the inquiries which can be made in respect of prospective jurors. I will be working closely with my colleague the Minister for Justice in implementing this recommendation. Among the issues which need to be discussed are—

What is the best method by which to obtain an impartial juror?

Should impartiality be achieved by regulation or left to the parties to decide?

I thank the Criminal Justice Commission for its report and also note its commendation of the media for the responsible attitude they took throughout the entire episode. The issue became known to the media at an early stage. However, at the request of the Special Prosecutor and myself, they refrained from publishing until the conclusion of the trials. The conspicuous responsibility of the media in this matter ensured that the relevant trials were not prejudiced. I thank them for that. I am pleased to inform this House that this most serious issue has now been addressed in respect of the two trials and that I have already begun the administrative process of addressing the CJC's recommendations.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Purchase of Racehorses by Woorabinda Aboriginal Council

Hon. A. M. WARNER (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (10.12 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday, the matter of a Queensland Aboriginal council's purchase of racehorses was raised in this House, along with questions about the nature of funds used for the purchase. I advised honourable members then that I had been assured that no Government funds had been used in the purchase and that, in fact, profits from the community's social club had been used. My officers have checked this matter again with officers of the Woorabinda council and have received categorical assurances that no Government funds have been involved in the purchase of racehorses. Let me reiterate that the funds came from profits made through the operation of the Mimosa Social Club, which is the council-controlled liquor outlet on Woorabinda. The Government does not contribute money to the operation of this fund.

I am afraid the honourable member opposite seems to have attempted a great and dangerous leap of logic in assuming that, because a two-year-old Federal Government grant appeared among other income in the council's 1989 financial statement, those particular funds were used to make this purchase. Unless the honourable member has other unrevealed and penetrating evidence, I can only assume his questions spring from a deeply suspicious mind or equally deep prejudices about the indigenous people of this State. Unlike the member for Burnett, however, I am prepared—

Mr SLACK: I rise to a point of order. I find the remark that I have any prejudices whatsoever offensive. What I was referring to in the question was the overall funds in the enterprise account, which totalled \$389,000.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I assure honourable members that a member can seek withdrawal of a comment but is not allowed to rise and debate the issue. The member finds something said by the Minister offensive and he has a right to ask for it to be withdrawn. I ask the Minister to withdraw it. However, the member for Burnett is not allowed to debate the issue. The Minister will withdraw that statement.

Ms WARNER: In deference to you, Mr Speaker, I will withdraw that statement.

However, unlike the member for Burnett, I am prepared to accept the word of an Aboriginal council and accept the right of that council to make decisions in respect of profits that the community itself has generated. As I said yesterday, ministerial intervention in the handling of that money would be tantamount to political interference and paternalism of the type that this State has not seen in the last 16 months. The decision on the purpose to which these funds are applied must rest with the council—unless we are to return to the dark old days and are prepared to make the policy of self-management a complete and utter mockery.

In conclusion, I might add that the Woorabinda council has had unqualified audit reports for about the last three years. There is, therefore, even less reason to doubt the assurances about the source of funds for the racehorse expenditure.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Computer-based Attendant Console

Hon. R. T. McLEAN (Bulimba—Minister for Administrative Services) (10.15 a.m.), by leave: This Government has just signed a historic joint-development agreement with the electronics giant NEC, a local high-tech company ANSA, and CITR—the Centre for Information Technology Research at the University of Queensland. The consortium will develop a personal computer-based attendant console for use with the NEC PABX range. The Government's input is through CITEC—the Centre for Information Technology and Communications. We believe it is the first time such an agreement has been made in Australia.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr McLEAN: The honourable member should wait a little while. The export potential is viewed as substantial. If the National Party runs true to form, it will claim that it lined up this project and all we are doing is taking a bow for its work. In 1987, NEC Japan decided to establish in Australia a software development centre—one of only three in the world. NEC Japan had a strong preference to site the facility in Canberra, but several State Governments vied for this attractive development. On 24 April 1988, the Minister for Industry, Small Business, Communications and Technology gave an undertaking in a press release that the Government would enter into joint-venture research with NEC. The company says that a major reason that it settled on Queensland was that commitment. In April 1989, it opened its development centre at Bowen Hills. But the National Party Government had no joint venture in the offing. In June, Premier Mike Ahern officially opened the development centre, but still the Government had failed to deliver. In fact, when the National Party Government was given the boot in December 1989, there was still no suggestion of any joint-development activity.

The Minister responsible for that con trick was none other than our friend opposite, the poser from paradise—the same man who conned the Queensland public into paying Ansett more than \$150,000 when it leased a plane from Paramount Airways during the pilots strike. The problem there was that the plane spent most of its time elsewhere. I am told that Paramount is an Ansett associate, anyway. It was not until March last year under the Goss Government that CITEC and NEC held a planning meeting from which the joint development evolved. Hopefully, this will have restored any loss of face which Queensland suffered in the eyes of the Japanese company for renegeing on its promise between April 1988 and December 1989.

The joint venture, together with various other initiatives involving CITEC, such as the Digital Software Research Centre, the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club's gaming software centre and the Australian Supercomputing Network sponsored by Boeing, is evidence of a can-do mentality. This Government welcomes business—

Mr Borbidge: You wouldn't know a potato chip from a silicone chip.

Mr McLEAN: The honourable member has proved himself. This imposter from Surfers Paradise has been exposed on many occasions in this House.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw that statement; it is unparliamentary. I would like to hear the answer to the question. I state quite clearly to honourable members that during question-time I will apply Standing Orders. When I ask honourable members to cease interjecting, they will cease, otherwise Standing Orders will be applied.

Mr McLEAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I like interjections from the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. When I took over this job, I remember the sneering looks

and smart remarks that came from him. In common with Mr Gibbs, I am a person who is hurt very easily. We have feelings and it hurts. I visited computer companies both in Australia and overseas and inquired about Mr Borbidge's abilities. I assure him—

Mr Borbidge: You went overseas?

Mr McLEAN: Yes. I assure him that his name does not carry any weight anywhere. People overseas thought that he was the greatest joke that ever represented a Government in this country. If I were him, I would hide under the seat. The Government welcomes businesses which have the ideas and willingness to explore new and mutually beneficial ventures with us, and it pledges to live up to its promises. Recently, at a function to sign the agreement, Graeme Poulton, managing director of NEC Information Systems Australia, said—

"The Government's initiative in participating in this venture is encouraging to us in the commercial world."

He said also—

"Governments can do much to encourage local industry growth by supportive purchasing policies and by joint developments such as this."

I can assure all businesses that this Government is offering exactly that encouragement.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Report on Freedom of Information for Queensland

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (10.20 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the report of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review on freedom of information for Queensland. This is the sixth report that the parliamentary committee has presented to the Legislative Assembly. I lay upon the table of the House also the submissions on this matter received by the committee. I thank all members of the committee for their contributions on this matter—the Deputy Chairman, Mr Mark Stoneman; Dr Lesley Clark; Mr Tony FitzGerald; Mr Robert Quinn; Ms Molly Robson; and Mr Rod Welford. The committee records its thanks for the expert assistance rendered by Mrs Jan Warren of the secretarial staff. The committee records its grateful appreciation to its research director, Ms Janet Ransley, for her diligent and scholarly assistance to the committee. I move that the report be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

LEAVE TO MOVE MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.21 a.m.): In view of substantial job losses at Comalco's Boyne Island smelter, I seek leave to move a motion without notice.

Question—That leave be granted—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 31

NOES, 50

Resolved in the negative.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1.

Goss Downey Carne, Involvement in Land Rights Cases

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

"With reference to his commitment to grant extensive land rights to Aborigines and Islanders, and to the well-known involvement of his previous firm, Goss Downey and Carne with land rights cases, in particular, the Murray Island case now before the High Court —

(1) What was the firm's involvement in these cases, either in its own right, or as town agent for Holding Redlich and Company?

(2) What was his personal involvement?

(3) What payments were made to the firm by the taxpayers of Australia in relation to land rights cases?"

Mr W. K. GOSS: (1 to 3) I must confess that I find it hard to understand the reason for this question, given that these are exactly the same matters that were raised by the member for Flinders last year and answered by me last year. I presume that it is the usual tactical coordination that occurs on the Opposition side that has led to this question being asked again. Furthermore, I would say that these matters are not within my responsibility, and in future I do not propose to answer questions that are not my ministerial responsibility, nor matters of Government responsibility.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I hear an interjection about integrity from the Opposition side.

A Government member: They don't know what it means.

Mr W. K. GOSS: It is amazing that members of the Opposition understand the meaning of the word. If the member for Warrego wants to go on about integrity, then let him have the guts to say what he is really on about.

In response to the first part of the question—though this is not my responsibility or the responsibility of the State Government, I understand from general discussion in the legal profession that the firm acted in the Murray Island case as town agent for Messrs McIntyre and Co, a firm of solicitors from Western Australia, and subsequently Messrs Corser and Corser, solicitors of Western Australia, on behalf of the plaintiffs. In response to the second part of the question—my involvement was nil. In response to the third part of the question—I have no knowledge of the payments to which the honourable member refers having been made to a private firm of which I am no longer a partner. However, it is well known in the legal profession that, when a firm of solicitors acts as town agents, that is a very minor part of the legal work involved. In that particular case, the work is more of an administrative nature and involves assisting the lawyers—wherever they may be; whether they be interstate or in the country—who are in fact handling the substantial body of the legal work.

2.

Mining Reserve Adjacent to Wet Tropics World Heritage Area

Mr PITT asked the Minister for Environment and Heritage —

"With reference to a recent article in the Cairns Post quoting Mr Garth Wolsey of Josephine Falls regarding his proposal to obtain Crown land to develop a camping ground, and to Mr Wolsey's concerns that the area of Crown land is the subject of interest by the Government for National Parks purposes —

What are the Government's and National Park's interests in this area of land?"

Mr COMBEN: I advise that the land in question is an unproclaimed mining purposes reserve. The land, although partly degraded with exotic weeds, is part of the Wet Tropics World Heritage area. The Department of Resource Industries has advised that the remaining mining potential of the reserve is low and that it will not object to the area being added to the Bellenden Ker national park. There is a long-standing Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service proposal to develop the area as a camping ground and day-use area. It is preferable to use such disturbed areas for this purpose rather than destroy pristine natural areas. Following preparation of a report which identified the area as suitable for inclusion in the national park, the Lands Department is considering making the area available as an addition to Bellenden Ker national park, but there are still several competing land-use claims, and I do not expect immediately resolution of these conflicting uses. Mr Wolsey is aware of the competing land uses and the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service plans for the land. In view of this knowledge, his recent comments in the media are surprising.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Ensham Coal Deposit

Mr COOPER: I ask the Premier: can he tell the House what his totally uncalled-for personal intervention in the dispute between the partners in the Ensham coal deposit has achieved for Queensland in the way of job creation, apart from encouraging a massive legal dispute, which simply reveals that his negotiating skills were totally counterproductive? Can the Premier suggest when the jobs will start to flow at Ensham, if ever?

Mr W. K. GOSS: That question shows the hypocrisy of the show ponies opposite. On any other issue, they jump up and down and puff and pant and say that the issue of the day, the issue of urgent priority requiring the attention of this House, is the events at Gladstone. What is the Leader of the Opposition's first question? It is about Ensham, an issue that arose last year as a result of the Government's action.

Mr Cooper: It's on the books, what you've done.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Leader of the Opposition should wait. He has asked the question and he is going to get the answer.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: The hypocrisy of the show ponies is clear. I am not going to say any more about that. But let me say to the Leader of the Opposition: I am here awaiting a question on that matter that the Opposition says is so urgent and so important. Turning now to Ensham——

Mr Cooper: We're talking about Ensham.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: Turning now to Ensham, rather than the issue that the Leader of the Opposition says is the urgent matter of the day—that is a situation where the Government inherited a log jam in terms of the Ensham development. Let me remind the House very briefly of that history. We inherited a log jam because of the incompetent administration of the resource industries of this State by the previous Government. It was incompetent because it put together a consortium of companies for the Ensham project that did not want to be in a consortium and were not compatible. After that, they brawled and argued for years, and they are still brawling and arguing and, at this stage, the matter is still in the courts. The Government acted on the threat of the former National Party Minister Mr Katter. That threat of intervention was endorsed by the Leader of the Opposition, who now criticises that move. He endorsed the threatened intervention by the National Party Minister who had responsibility for resource industries. Of course, they did not do it, but Mr Cooper let it be clearly understood that he personally endorsed the threat of intervention that was made by his Minister to the companies.

The difference between them and us is that they talked about it and we did it. It was the only way that log jam could be broken. If we had not acted in the way that we did, Ensham would never have gone ahead. Ensham would have stayed there for ever. We have given the Ensham project a chance and, because of the positive attitude taken by this Government, we do have companies, including Idemitsu and the Korean partner, who are prepared to proceed. We will be doing all that we can to ensure that that proceeds in the near future. I am confident that it will proceed. But we do not have power to direct the Supreme Court proceedings, as the Leader of the Opposition should well know. The companies that have instituted that action have the legal right to institute that action and to have it determined. But, I say again, Ensham now has a chance because this Government took action to correct the mismanagement and inertia of the National Party, which includes the previous National Party Government under the premiership of Mr Cooper. He talked; we acted and, as a consequence, Ensham has been given a real chance.

Job Losses at Collinsville Coalmine; Coal Rail Freight Concessions

Mr COOPER: I direct a question to the Treasurer. Mount Isa Mines is now giving clear warnings——

Mr W. K. Goss: What about Gladstone?

Mr COOPER: The business paper contains a notice of motion that the Government ducked—it did not have the guts to debate it. Mount Isa Mines is now giving clear warnings that at Collinsville hundreds of jobs are threatened by the State Government's failure to respond to calls for concessions on rail freights and mine rehabilitation concessions. The unions, with variations to work practices, have held up their end of the keep-the-jobs bargain. I ask the Treasurer: what has happened with his coal rail freight review and his consideration of the rehabilitation program? Why, when hundreds of jobs are at stake, is he prevaricating? Is it not a fact that he could not care less about creating or even protecting jobs in Queensland and that he will not provide coal rail

freight concessions because his Government is spending so heavily that it will need all the existing coal freight revenue to try to help stop the Budget going into deficit?

Mr De LACY: No, it is not right that we are spending so heavily. I think it is obvious to anybody who looks at the performance of the Queensland Government that it is the most frugal manager of State finances in Australia. That is widely accepted and acknowledged. The implication in the last part of the honourable member's question is wrong—dead wrong.

In respect of Collinsville—on a number of occasions in this House, I have made statements that negotiations are continuing with Mount Isa Mines. I have always said that, if the others play their part, we are prepared to play our part. That is being done. At the end of the day, it will be for Mount Isa Mines to decide whether or not it continues to keep that mine open. It is a private-sector mine. Mount Isa Mines has to make the decisions and look at its profitability. We are prepared to play our part. However, I am not prepared to negotiate publicly with Mount Isa Mines. We are not negotiating publicly, we are doing it privately. If the honourable member were to speak to Mount Isa Mines, it will admit that we are doing exactly that.

In respect of coal freight rates generally—they are an important part of the Queensland Government's revenue. Members of the Opposition ought to start to recognise that, if the Government does not get money out of coal freight rates, it has to get it out of ordinary taxpayers. It is about time that members opposite started to look after and think about ordinary taxpayers instead of becoming de facto negotiators on behalf of Mount Isa Mines.

Boyne Smelters

Mr PREST: I ask the Premier: can he advise the House of any information he may have on or his opinion of the redundancy of staff by Boyne Smelters, Boyne Island?

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member has just asked the Premier for an opinion. It is my understanding that, under the Standing Orders of this place, Ministers cannot give opinions.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I will answer the part of the question in which the honourable member asked for information.

Mr BORBIDGE: Questions must relate to matters that come within a Minister's ministerial responsibility.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the Premier will not be expressing opinions.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will not be expressing opinions, I will be responding to that part of the question in which the member for Port Curtis asked for information in relation to the announcement that has been made about Boyne Smelters. At least the member for Port Curtis, unlike the show ponies opposite, has the guts to ask the question. The member for Surfers Paradise—

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gympie!

Mr W. K. GOSS: The posturer from Surfers Paradise was prepared to undertake the glib tactic of moving the motion that he did, knowing that the pressure of business, particularly that in relation to the sugar industry legislation, needed to be addressed. He knew that there was no time available, so he moved a motion in the full cowardly knowledge that he would not actually have to participate in the debate.

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gympie will cease interjecting. I warn him under Standing Order 123A. I inform honourable members that, if they are warned and do not take notice of my warnings, I will deal with them under Standing Orders.

Mr W. K. GOSS: When given the opportunity in question-time, the prime-time to put questions to Government members and to pin them down on the issue that they say is the issue of the day, members of the Opposition do not ask a question. In fact, in asking his question, the Leader of the Opposition ran to two other issues that have been outstanding for some time. I think that shows the hypocrisy and the lack of a genuine concern by the characters opposite. They have been running around the State knocking, knocking, knocking and being negative about Queensland when other Queenslanders and other people throughout the country are positive about Queensland in terms of its leading the country, in terms of its economic performance, vis-a-vis the other States, and in terms of its capacity to come out of the recession first.

In relation to the relevant information sought by the member for Port Curtis—I can provide the House with information as to the background of this decision, which puts the lie to the false statements made deliberately by members of the Liberal Party and the National Party that somehow this has something to do with the sale of the power station. That shows what economic and business troglodytes they are. The company has made a clear statement about this. I will quote from an embargoed media release made yesterday by the general manager, Mr Ian Beaumont. He said—

Mr Connor interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: As I said, this is a press statement from the general manager of operations at Boyne Smelters. He said that job losses were regrettable but were necessitated by business conditions such as the depressed Australian market and low international metal prices, together with the need for greater work place efficiency. The economic geniuses opposite seem to suggest that this problem can be solved by increasing output. For heaven's sake, if there is a lack of demand, how can it be fixed by increasing output? It is ignorance of the highest order. In addition to the press release, the statement from Mr Ian Beaumont—

Dr Watson interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: Mr Speaker, the honourable member was not really a problem. I do not pay much attention to the biggest squeak in the west. If members opposite have a genuine interest in this matter, they will listen to what Mr Carl Stewart, the managing director of Comalco Smelting, had to say to me recently in a letter about this issue. He said—

"Because of cost pressures facing the smelter there has been a wide-ranging review of all smelter activity, as a result of which a number of employees on the managerial staff and the award work force will be retrenched in the very near future. This work force reduction has no direct connection to any of the power issues save that the reduction would have been larger had it been necessary to shed power."

That puts the lie to the economic troglodytes opposite. I repeat—

"This work force reduction has no direct connection to any of the power issues . . ."

In relation to the issue of the power station—the managing director of Comalco Smelting went on to say—

"More generally, may I say on behalf of Comalco thank you for your continued interest in the Boyne Island smelter. I am sure that with hard work and goodwill on behalf of all parties we can arrive at a power supply arrangement which will allow for the existing smelter to achieve its full potential, and hopefully in due course an arrangement which will permit the expansion of the smelter."

There are the two points: firstly, the reduction in the work force is not due to the power issues, it is due to low international market prices; and, secondly, there is the need to

achieve greater efficiency in the work force. Those statements were made not by the Government but by that company. Furthermore, the company indicates its clear satisfaction with the approach and the continuing discussions between itself and the Government. This Government is not only an honest Government but also a Government that is committed to economic growth and development in this State, and the jobs that go with it. This Government will do that on a basis that is fair and rational to the taxpayers and electricity-consumers of this State. There will be no dud or crooked deals from this Government.

National Inquiry into Racist Violence

Mr PREST: I ask the Premier: has his attention been drawn to the newspaper reports about the report of the national inquiry into racist violence to be released in Canberra today? Can he inform the House of the Queensland Government's response to that report?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yes, I understand that the report will be tabled this afternoon in Federal Parliament. I understand from advice that I have received, and from media reports, that the report is very thorough and comprehensive. In part, it is very disturbing particularly in relation to the sections that refer to Aboriginal and Islander people and the problems associated with racism and racist violence towards various sections of the community. At this stage, I wish to advise the House that the Queensland Government will cooperate in any reasonable way in addressing these problems. I will certainly be forwarding the report to the relevant Ministers—who at this stage I would expect would be the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs and the Minister for Police and Emergency Services—so that they can consider it in the coming months and, in consultation with the Commonwealth Government and other States, give advice in due course as to an appropriate response. I believe that the report should concern the whole community, especially legislators in the various Parliaments. I believe that all members have an obligation to consider it carefully and to avoid exploiting racial issues for short-term political gain. Unfortunately, that is something that we have seen evidence of recently in this place, and which I feel we will see more of in the future. That sort of cynical and base attitude can lead only to further division, racism and violence. That is not in the interests of any section of the Queensland or Australian communities.

Club Med

Mr BEANLAND: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to his comment last Tuesday in this House, namely—

"I can assure the House that the Queensland Government is keen to attract Club Med to Queensland, and that it has been working very closely with this company."

He then indicated that he had made a personal visit on senior representatives of Club Med in Paris. I ask: can the Premier inform the House why a 100 per cent foreign-owned company is allowed to purchase Lindeman Island in contravention of his own party's foreign investment policy?

Mr W. K. GOSS: As I indicated to the House, this Government is strongly committed to economic development and the jobs and benefits that go with that to the people of Queensland.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I hear members of the National Party and the member for Merthyr scoff and squawk. It is the truth. I do not know what their problem is. I believe the problem is that we have moved into their territory, we are now taken seriously by the business community of Queensland, and they are not taken seriously at all. As to the particular issue—I also indicated that in respect of the Club Med proposal there were two benefits for Queensland: firstly, an initial investment of in excess of \$40m in

the first stage. I suggest to the member for Toowong that that will be of great benefit to the Queensland economy. Secondly, I suggested that just as importantly—and perhaps more importantly—the Club Med initiative, which we are hopeful of securing, will bring great benefit to Queensland tourism and the Whitsunday region in particular, because it will involve Queensland and that region in becoming part of the very impressive and comprehensive worldwide marketing operation of Club Med. As for the particular deal—if and when Foreign Investment Review Board approval is forthcoming—and we are certainly hopeful that it will be—details of the proposal—

Mr Coomber: Do you support it?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Of course we support it. I went to Paris to get it, you donkey!

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr W. K. GOSS: Mr Speaker, I withdraw that remark. When the honourable member interjected, that was the first word that sprung into my head. I should have showed greater restraint. Of course, we want it. We went out to get it and we got it, subject to Foreign Investment Review Board approval. When it is finalised, the Treasurer and I will provide details of the deal. In respect of our policy on islands—we are keen to try to attract 50 per cent or Australian partner involvement. To the extent that we can, we will certainly endeavour to do that. We have had discussions with Club Med along those lines. It is quite happy to be involved with an Australian partner. If the honourable member had not noticed, I point out that, at present, there is a recession and a shortage of investment capital in the Australian business community, which means that the Queensland Government must show more imagination and more flexibility than was shown in the past by the former Government and by the Liberal Party to achieve two goals: firstly, to get the investment; and, secondly, to secure Australian involvement in that project. That is what the Government is on track to do.

Club Med

Mr BEANLAND: I ask the Premier: why did the Government agree to the Club Med sale for some \$15m when a contract by an Australian company with an overseas joint venture partner was submitted for \$21m? I table that contract. Did the Premier interfere with the sale of Lindeman Island land so that Club Med received a favourable business advantage?

Mr W. K. GOSS: In relation to the first part—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cunningham! The question has been asked—

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am talking. I warn the member for Cunningham under Standing Order 123A.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am delighted to hear that the member for Cunningham has seen the light and, at last, disowned "Top-level" Ted. It took a long time. As to the first part of the question—I have no knowledge of the contract. Therefore, in relation to the second part of the question—the answer is obviously, "No."

Employment Training Program

Mr PALASZCZUK: I direct a question to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. This morning, the Minister outlined the Government's employment training program as a result of Queensland/Commonwealth Government negotiations. Is the Minister aware

that the Liberal/National Party Opposition at the Commonwealth level does not agree that training is important, and is the Minister aware of the Opposition's abysmal performance in that area when in Government? Therefore, I ask: will the Minister assure the House and the people of Queensland that persons to be trained under the Minister's program will have a real chance of obtaining employment?

Mr WARBURTON: I thank Mr Palaszczuk for that very important question. I want to make the point right from the start that, when a Government does something that is good, that Government deserves a pat on the back. This Government's initiative has been adopted nationwide on employment training programs. By its actions and not by its rhetoric—something that we were used to for years and years from the National Party when it was in Government—this Government will be seen to be acting positively and certainly responsibly in relation to the very serious problems now facing every Australian State—I repeat—every Australian State.

Training is an imperative part of any positive program. We as a Government certainly recognise the importance of training—something that, evidently, the Liberal and National Parties at Commonwealth level do not. I gather that that attitude flows right through to the States. I read a report in the *Melbourne Sunday Age* of 14 April 1991. I have checked out that report, and it is accurate. It states that Senator Alston, who happens to be the Opposition spokesman on employment and training matters, is sceptical of most retraining programs and would cut spending on them. If ever there was a negative and incorrect attitude to be adopted at this stage, it is that one. As the Premier and the Treasurer said yesterday, decisions made by the Government in relation to employment woes that face us will be made in a sensible, responsible way. Responsible economic management is what this Government is all about. As to future employment for Queenslanders who participate in our training programs—I accept that it is my responsibility to ensure that those people have the best job prospects possible. That is why, as I mentioned—it may have been missed—the available courses have been developed around market data that identifies sectors with potential for employment growth as the economy picks up.

I conclude by saying that it is incumbent upon all members of this House to give their support to the measures that I outlined today. Negativity, which was mentioned today by the Premier, is something with which the Opposition is clearly identified. However, it is not a part of this Government's vocabulary. I say to members opposite: it is about time that they shed that cloak of despair and hopelessness that they have worn clearly in this place since their defeat at the last election. I say to members opposite on a personal note: it is about time that they adjusted to being in Opposition, something that they have not been able to do so far. Above all, in this difficult period, it is about time that all members on the other side of the House started to get behind Queensland.

Police Powers

Mr PALASZCZUK: I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: will he inform the House of any progress that has been made to consolidate legislation relating to police powers in Queensland?

Mr MACKENROTH: The Government is looking at the issue of police powers. This is certainly a sensitive issue and one on which my legislation committee has been working. The committee is drawing up a discussion paper. Public comment will be invited on that paper. This discussion paper on a proposed police powers Bill for Queensland is now in final draft form. It has been formulated in consultation with the Criminal Justice Commission. When the draft is finalised, it will be sent back to the CJC for any final comment. The paper will then go to Cabinet and will be released publicly. All organisations, individuals, police, the police union or anyone else who wishes to comment on this proposed legislation for the consolidation of police powers into one Act will be able to do so. At the present time, police powers are spread over a multitude of Acts. Over 100 different Acts in Queensland contain powers that police can use at different times. In the past, the powers that have been given to police in some areas have been insufficient and yet in others areas have gone over the top. For

example, if a police officer investigating a murder wishes to interview a suspect out on the street, under the Criminal Code that officer does not have the power to ask the suspect his or her name and address. If, however, the suspect dropped a piece of paper on the ground whilst standing in the street, under the Litter Act the officer would have the power to ask for that person's name and address. That one ridiculous instance highlights the fact that over the years legislatures have not given the police adequate powers to do their job. This matter needs to be looked at very closely.

A considerable amount of money—that is, over \$10m—has been spent on new facilities and equipment in police stations to enable police to interview people and electronically record those interviews either by means of video or audio taping. This Government is considering a requirement that when police officers go to court the confessions of defendants will only be accepted if they are recorded on video or audio tapes. The police have no powers or rights whatsoever to take any person to a police station. When they do so, that person is usually bluffed into it. Under existing legislation the police have no rights to do that.

A balance needs to be struck between a number of things when a police powers Bill is being drawn up. There certainly needs to be a balance as to the rights of the individual in our society. It must be ensured that under any legislation people are given rights but also that the Police Service, which is being asked to do a job, has the necessary legislative power to enable it to do that job. If we do not want the police to take particular action, that should be included in the legislation. We simply say to the police, "Do not do it and that is the reason why." This is a controversial issue. I am certain that when the discussion paper is released publicly it will cause a fair amount of discussion in the community. Our Government should consider the introduction of such legislation in order to ensure that police can do their job properly and that individuals in society are protected.

Cape York Spaceport

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer the Premier to the extremely delicate negotiations now under way to secure new equity partners for the Cape York spaceport, and I ask: why has the Premier deliberately sought to sabotage these negotiations by publicly questioning the viability of the project, as was reported in the *Townsville Bulletin* of 16 April?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have not seen the newspaper report to which the honourable member refers, but it is not true to say that I have sabotaged, undermined or in any way been anything other than positive about this project.

Mr Borbidge: You said it wasn't viable.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I did not say it was not viable. I have never said that, and if the article says so, then it has not quoted me accurately.

Mr Borbidge: You did.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I would really like to read the full article because the member concerned has shown a breath-taking capacity—

Mr Cooper: You're name-calling again, are you?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I called him "the member opposite". Is that name-calling?

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will cease interjecting. I warn him under Standing Order 123A.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Methinks the Leader of the Opposition is too sensitive by half about his erstwhile deputy. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition has a breath-taking capacity to misrepresent the truth. I will not deal with the article which I have not read. I will deal with the issue in question, which is the spacebase. I have always been positive

about it, and I always will. It is not true to suggest, as the member during his travels up and down the coast through National Party electorates during the break—

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: We know what it is about. It is not true to suggest, as the member does during his travels throughout National Party electorates up and down Queensland, that the former Government wrapped up the spacebase. The fact is that the spacebase is a good project. It was a good project; it still is a good project, but it is lacking one thing and that is somebody from the private sector who is prepared to write the cheque.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Surfers Paradise under Standing Order 123A to cease interjecting. The honourable member has asked a question and there is no need for him to keep on repeating it.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The honourable member knows that it is a private-sector project and the test of viability is when somebody is prepared to put his money down. That is when we will know for sure whether it is viable. My advice is that it has good prospects of being viable, but the position is by no means clear. Ultimately, that decision will not be made by me or any Government; it will be made by the people who are prepared to put the money down. If they do not, then the project is not viable. As for any partners or anyone who is interested, I have seen them all personally. I have seen all the proponents and prospective proponents, the would-bes, the could-bes, the dreamers and the serious people and given them all encouragement. Ultimately, the test of viability is whether somebody is prepared to put the money down.

Mr BORBIDGE: For the benefit of the Premier, I table his remarks.

Criticism of ICI and Minproc by Member for Port Curtis

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development, I refer to criticism of ICI and Minproc by the Government Whip and to claims by that member that such comments enjoy the Minister's support. I ask: in view of Queensland's 10.2 per cent unemployment rate, the prospect of massive job losses at Comalco's Boyne Island smelter and the loss of ICI's titanium facility that was to be constructed at Gladstone, which is now most likely to go to Whyalla in South Australia, does he support the attack on major industrial development projects in the Gladstone region by his colleague the member for Port Curtis?

Mr SMITH: I can only be amused by this question and reinforce the Premier's remarks about the capacity of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to misrepresent. The member for Port Curtis has exercised his undeniable right to point out what he believes to be a concern. The Government is obviously very eager to promote any business or any project in this State that has the capacity to create wealth or employment opportunities. The honourable member should be aware that, before any project is undertaken, a full impact statement is obtained. Recently an impact study was undertaken for the ammonium nitrate plant and it demonstrated that in fact there was no shortage of commercial housing. The honourable member is confused with welfare housing. I have figures showing that as late as 31 March the Housing Commission's priority list for Gladstone showed three applications in priority A—and the member should be familiar with that term. Certainly, there is a greater number of applications in the next category.

The tioxide plant to which the honourable member refers certainly was not lost because of any reason that can be associated with this Government. The member's question clearly demonstrates that he does not know very much about this issue. The tioxide company has preferred Whyalla for a number of reasons, and one of the reasons was the cheaper price of gas, which this Government cannot do anything about, and the weather, which this Government also can do nothing about. The weather conditions

in Whyalla are such that lower evaporation rates allow a much less expensive plant to be built. Obviously, because of the lower cost in Whyalla, it will be much easier for the company to get the project off the ground if it goes to its full size. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition does not realise that although this is the proposal that is being sent from the company to its London board, Queensland is still competing with other sites around the world. If the proposal comes back to a 60 000-tonne plant instead of the larger 180 000-tonne plant, Gladstone could well be considered as a site for the project.

Queensland Economy

Mr SCHWARTEN: I ask the Treasurer: in view of recently published unemployment statistics, what is the basis of the Treasurer's repeated statements that Queensland is weathering the national economic recession better than any other State and that this State will in fact lead Australia out of the recession?

Mr De LACY: I thank the honourable member for the question. At the outset, I make the point that this Government recognises unemployment as a very serious problem. The Government has never walked away from that fact and acknowledges that a rate of 10.2 per cent is very high. I also make the point that, traditionally, unemployment levels in Queensland have been 1 per cent to 1.5 per cent higher than the rest of Australia. However, I reject the line that is being pursued by the Opposition, which suggests that somehow the performance of a State can be measured by pointing to projects that are under way. That is the kind of approach that has been thoroughly discredited in this State; it is the old cranes-on-the-skyline syndrome that a former Premier used to talk about.

The point I made yesterday is that phantom projects do not help anybody because they do not create jobs. What is really important is getting the economy right. If an endeavour is being made to assess Queensland's economic performance, a whole range of economic indicators have to be rationally examined—leading indicators and lagging indicators—and an assessment made on the basis of all the information that is available. It would not hurt members of the Opposition to do exactly that, because they then might be able to start defending this State instead of trying to put it down all the time. I wish to mention a few of the indicators and table a whole list of indicators so that people can make their own assessment about the relative economic performance of this State. It is necessary to look at the total picture in relation to unemployment instead of just looking at the figure of 10.2 per cent. In March, the only State in which unemployment increased was Queensland, and the increase in jobs was 1 500 compared to a national decline of approximately 80 000. Queensland also records the lowest decline in job vacancies of any State and also the lowest increase in the number of unemployed over the past year. Queensland's increase is less than the national average.

I turn now to examine general business conditions. Yesterday, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned a pulse survey that did not paint a rosy picture, but a great deal of other evidence is available which indicates that Queensland is performing better than any other State. For example, the National Australia Bank survey released last week and the latest private investment figures released by the ABS showed an increase in private capital investment expenditure of 5.5 per cent against a national decline of 3.5 per cent. An important leading indicator is housing. Both latest new housing finance and residential approval figures point to an upturn in this important sector. My department regularly pulls together the full range of economic indicators in a single, one-page compendium. I will table that document for the information of honourable members because it reports on 25 monthly and quarterly indicators. It shows that Queensland outperforms the national average in 19 of those 25 indicators—and this Government did not select them—which favour Queensland's economic performance. Apart from that, recently, independent private sector analysts have supported our assessment. Recent projections by the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research based in Melbourne—not in Queensland—forecast that Queensland's rate of economic growth will increase by 1.8 per cent and 2.9 per cent in the current and next financial years. Why are you looking like that, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am just trying to give the Minister a hint.

Mr De LACY: These are important indicators, Mr Speaker. That growth compares with zero and 1.9 per cent respectively for Australia as a whole. County Natwest Australia analysts have forecast that Queensland and, later, New South Wales will be the key supporters of Australia's economic recovery in 1991-92.

An Opposition member: We are going to sleep.

Mr De LACY: I am not surprised that Opposition members are going to sleep. As soon as they hear figures that do not support their doom-and-gloom scenario, they lose interest. I am not surprised by that, but it says more about them than it says about the Queensland economy.

Railway Job Losses in Central and Southern Queensland

Mr SCHWARTEN: I ask the Minister for Transport: with reference to the article in the Rockhampton *Morning Bulletin* dated Monday, 15 April 1991, is the accusation that central and southern Queensland would suffer the bulk of the reported 6 000 job losses true?

Mr HAMILL: I understand the concern expressed by the member for Rockhampton North at what can only be described as the most irresponsible piece of rumour-mongering that I have seen in this State for a long time. Obviously, last weekend, the member for Flinders had a dose of the vapours and decided to tell the newspaper at Rockhampton that, through this Government's restructuring of Queensland Railways, 6 000 railway jobs would go. Furthermore, he went on to expound upon that amazing conspiracy theory of which he has spoken in this House. It has taken about a month for the honourable member to again peddle the same story that he was peddling in this place when the House debated the issue at length on 13 March. The claims that he made in the Rockhampton newspaper on Monday were as false, untruthful and downright malicious as they were when he first made them a month ago.

Let me put the facts on the record for all honourable members of this House, particularly the member for Flinders. There will be no sackings and retrenchments from Queensland Railways through the process of the reform that we have undertaken. Repeatedly, we have made that clear. We have put in place a voluntary early retirement scheme to achieve that end. Where the member for Flinders obviously cannot put reality and fantasy together is over the National Rail Freight Corporation. That magic 6 000 figure that he continually trots out is the figure that has been projected as being possible impacts for the National Rail Freight Corporation on total rail employment throughout Australia. I point out to honourable members that the potential impact of the National Rail Freight Corporation on Queensland could extend to 60 jobs, which Queensland Railways can quite easily accommodate within its own operations. No rail worker in Queensland need fear retrenchment or dislodgment through the National Rail Freight Corporation, quite contrary to the untruths told by the member for Flinders. The article made interesting reading because the Government's achievements in central Queensland for Queensland Railways are very clear. In 1988, the Government of which Mr Katter was a member, put on two apprentices in central Queensland—two apprentices out of a total of five apprentices throughout Queensland. Since coming to office, this Government has upgraded our apprenticeship intake, including that in central Queensland. This year, 123 apprentices were gathered by Queensland Railways across the State, and 25 of them were in central Queensland. Recently at Rockhampton, we opened a \$3.5m driver training centre—another firm statement of our commitment to Queensland Railways in the area.

I have one last point to make. If one has to question any further the credibility of the member for Flinders, I direct the attention of honourable members to the article referred to by the honourable member for Rockhampton North. In that article, the member for Flinders had the gall to claim that he had brought on a special emergency

debate in this Chamber last Friday. Last Friday! I do not know about other honourable members, but I was not here last Friday. Parliament did not sit last Friday. He may have been here. I hope he was. If he was here last Friday, it was because he was not here last Thursday.

Racing Industry Reform

Mr VEIVERS: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the genuine, broad-based concern of all people involved in Queensland's racing industry about the jack-boot approach of the Racing Minister towards his so-called reforms which will see a proud and vital industry fall prey to bureaucratic control, coupled with the severe repercussions that it will have for all involved in the industry. I ask: does the Premier acknowledge that most sections of the racing industry are opposed to the reform package which offers nothing but a hypothetical future? In view of that strong opposition, will he now intervene to ensure that a compromise solution is negotiated with this billion-dollar industry before it is too late?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The short answer is, "No, I will not be intervening." Let me express my confidence in the very difficult task of reform that the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing has been undertaking. It is true that the original proposal, when put forward, caused concern throughout the racing industry. There was a lot of uncertainty, as there always is when any substantial change is proposed. I do not profess to be an expert or even to have any vague understanding of the more detailed workings of the racing industry, but I understand from a range of people in the industry to whom I have spoken, who do understand the industry, that there has been a crying need for reform in the industry for a long time, to give a fairer go to all of those people who are involved in it, particularly those in the lower echelons.

I know that some of those people at the very higher echelons—some of the smoked salmon addicts of our society—have some concern about their position. I can understand that. However, I urge those people to work within a more constructive framework and to adopt a more positive approach, because there is room for compromise. The Minister has indicated his preparedness to compromise. I understand that the outcome of the most recent meeting that he had with leaders of the racing industry was that racing industry leaders across this State and across the various sectors indicated a high degree of preparedness to work towards some sort of compromise solution. There is one individual who will probably never accept that the world is moving on, that 2 December 1989 has come and passed. However, I think that that gentleman has the capacity and the intellect to adopt a more constructive and positive approach. I think that it will be in the best long-term interests of the organisation that he represents and the racing industry that the reforms be given a go.

Mr VEIVERS: It looks as though, if the Minister has his way, the only racing we are going to have will be at Woorabinda.

Racing Industry Reform

Mr VEIVERS: Bearing in mind the Premier's answer to the last question and, it seems, his continued and short-sighted approach to the racing industry changes, exemplified today by his support for the Racing Minister, and the fact that negotiators appointed by the whole racing industry regard a meeting with the Minister last Monday—which the Premier mentioned—as a total waste of time, I ask: will he now undertake to convene and personally attend at least another meeting with that group to ensure that the industry has one final opportunity for real input into the Minister's grand, hypothetical proposals?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I did see that comment in a newspaper report somewhere. I am advised that it is not an accurate report of the meeting or of the views of the people who attended that meeting. I further understand that at the end of the meeting there

were some tense and terse exchanges between various members of the delegation, with particularly tense and terse remarks being made by one individual who was unhappy about the fact that his colleagues in the racing industry had indicated a preparedness to compromise and to adopt a more constructive approach. I can understand why that gentleman is upset. However, I urge him to reflect calmly on the views of his colleagues, to discuss calmly this matter with other people in the industry and his own organisation who are open to some sort of reform, because out of that we will get a better result.

I have spoken to the Minister about some of the concerns that have been raised with me, about letters that I have received and about comments made to me by people who have spoken to me at various functions. I have taken those expressions of concern to be, by and large, genuine and sincere expressions of concern from people who know something about the industry. I have taken advice on that. I have raised the matters with the Minister, who has indicated his preparedness to compromise and to try to get a reform package that will be understood and acceptable to people in the industry. Obviously, whenever there is reform and change, not everybody will be satisfied. However, what the Minister and the Government are committed to is bringing about reform to give everybody a fair go.

Northern and Rural Task Force

Mr HOLLIS: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the northern and rural task force that he established last year, and I ask: will he inform the House of the work of the task force up to now and of any initiatives that could flow to country Queensland as a result?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The thing that has struck me most about the very valuable work that is being done by the rural and northern task force is the response that I have had from people in rural and northern areas that this is the first time that members of the Government, particularly backbenchers, have taken the trouble to organise in a comprehensive way a specific program for people to come and for members to listen to them. It appears that the previous Government adopted a more ad hoc and random approach whereby its members would come to town and lecture people and hector people. It has been some time since the Labor Party represented a number of those areas in Parliament. I want to indicate very clearly to people in rural and northern areas that this is a Government for all of Queensland, that those people who live in rural and northern areas, particularly isolated areas, are entitled to have their views expressed and heard in this place and within the corridors of Government. Unfortunately for people in rural and northern areas, at present that is not happening.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: All they get is the sort of misrepresentation that honourable members have seen from the member for Flinders—

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Flinders under Standing Order 123A.

Mr W. K. GOSS: All they get is persistent knocking and the negative approach of members of the Opposition.

I express my sincere thanks for the extra work that has been taken on by the member for Mount Isa and the other members of that task force who, in addition to looking after their own electorates and their committee work, have taken on the responsibility of ensuring that the voice of people in rural and northern areas is heard. I receive regular reports from them and regular reports from people in rural and northern areas, who are very pleased with that. I think that next week at Charleville we will see some evidence of those efforts in terms of what is being fed back to the Government, and areas in respect of which the Government believes it can respond will be identified. In the future there will be further trips to western Queensland, but comprehensive trips

and functions have already been organised by the task force. The first of those occurred through the north, from Townsville, Charters Towers, Hughenden, Richmond, Julia Creek, Cloncurry—

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

PRIVILEGE

Ministerial Responsibility for Land Rights Legislation

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (11.30 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. In disclaiming responsibility for land rights legislation, the Premier has clearly misled the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the honourable member seeking leave to make a personal explanation?

Mr HOBBS: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: Is leave granted?

Mr HOBBS: A matter of privilege, Mr Speaker.

Leave granted.

Mr HOBBS: The Premier stated—

"I would say that these matters are not within my responsibility and, in future, I do not propose to answer questions that are not my ministerial responsibility."

Responsibility for this legislation has clearly been with his department for at least the past few weeks, with the prime responsibility resting with the Director-General of the Office of the Cabinet, Mr Kevin Rudd, the Premier's chief political adviser. The detailed work has been and is still being done by the Social Policy Branch, headed by Ms Jacki Byrne.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member should resume his seat. I have heard enough. It is not a matter of privilege.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is not. I am not going to allow the member for Warrego to debate an issue. It is not a matter of privilege.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, if I may just comment on the matter of privilege? There does seem to be some confusion from an answer that the Premier has given in respect of who does have ministerial responsibility for the introduction of land rights legislation. The Premier is on the record as saying that it is the Premier's Department. He has this morning indicated that he will not answer questions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I was here during question-time today.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Flinders will resume his seat.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ministerial Responsibility for Land Rights

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (11.32 am.): I believe that I can, in a very short period of time, deal with the matter of concern that has been raised.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think the Premier could take it on a point of order. The Premier is entitled to enter the debate on a point of order on that matter.

Mr FitzGerald: We'll give you leave.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have been given leave by the member for Lockyer.

The member for Warrego has to learn to distinguish between land rights litigation in the courts, in particular the Mabo case, which is what he asked about, and land rights legislation, which is a completely different matter. As for land rights legislation, that is being coordinated by a Cabinet committee, which includes me and a number of other relevant Ministers, including the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I am sharing in the responsibility for that matter. That has always been plain and that is publicly on the record. I am not, however, and never have been involved in the High Court litigation, which was what the question was about.

PRIVILEGE

Railway Department Staff Reductions

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (11.35 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. I have been misquoted and the House has been misled over statements that I made, and I wish to answer those statements. I have been charged with telling lies.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is actually making a personal explanation.

Mr KATTER: That is correct, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Or is it a matter of privilege?

Mr KATTER: I rise to a matter of privilege to correct—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Leave is granted.

Mr KATTER: This morning, it was alleged in the House by the Minister for Transport that I had said that 6 000 Railway Department jobs were to go. In fact, that is totally incorrect. On each occasion that I have said that, I have quoted Professor Taylor who, in an article in the *Townsville Bulletin*, stated that 6 000 jobs were to go. I quoted an article by Andrew Stewart, a member of Mr Goss' kitchen cabinet, who stated in an interview with Vince O'Rourke that 6 000 jobs in the Railway Department were to go. The tone of the article was that he was quoting the figure of 6 000 jobs.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Flinders will resume his seat. Can I just say that if members are making personal explanations, they can say that they were misrepresented, that they really did not say something, or that they were quoting somebody else. But I am not going to allow a member to debate an issue. In a personal explanation all that a member is entitled to say is that he brings to the attention of the House that a Minister's statement misrepresented. That is all a member can say. The honourable member for Flinders is not allowed to debate the issue.

Mr KATTER: I do not wish in any way to debate the issue. Pat Dunne, the secretary of the ARU, and the *Courier-Mail*—those five authorities have stated 6 000 jobs—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. The member is now debating the issue. I call the Treasurer.

QUEENSLAND INVESTMENT CORPORATION BILL

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.37 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to provide for the constitution, objectives, functions and powers of the Queensland Investment Corporation and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

MR SPEAKER read a message from His Excellency the Governor recommending the necessary appropriation.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.38 a.m.): I move—

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

This Bill creates a new statutory authority, the Queensland Investment Corporation, to assume the investment management activities currently undertaken by the Queensland Treasury Corporation. It replaces the Queensland Treasury Corporation with the Queensland Investment Corporation as the trustee of the Queensland Treasury Corporation Investment Trust. At present, this trust comprises assets totalling approximately \$6,500m.

The Bill bears witness to the Government's commitment to ensuring that the investment of public sector superannuation, workers' compensation and similar trust-type funds is free from political interference; the ongoing reform of the public sector, particularly improvements in financial management; and the corporatisation, where appropriate, of Government-owned enterprises. The Government has committed itself to a policy of corporatising Government-owned enterprises in line with the proposal outlined in the Green Paper that I released last year. A White Paper is now being prepared to form the basis for future legislation to cover the corporatisation process. I expect that the White Paper will be available to Cabinet by the end of this financial year. This legislation has been drafted so that it is consistent with the Green Paper on Government-owned enterprises.

The proposed measures give effect to recommendations made by three organisations which have conducted reviews of the Queensland Treasury Corporation's investment activities during the past year, namely, the Public Sector Management Commission, the rating agency Standard and Poor's Corporation or Australian Ratings and the investment consultancy firm IPAC Securities. They are also in line with the conclusions that I myself reached after taking over the Treasury portfolio.

These groups all confirmed that there is no suggestion of the Goss Government interfering politically in any way in the QTC's investment decisions. However, they agreed that there is a need for the propriety of separation of the Government from the day-to-day activities and investment decision-making of the QTC not only to be understood but also to be clearly seen. The perception, as well as the reality, of independence, is required. The aim is to ensure complete accountability and superior performance by the QIC. As I have outlined previously in this House, the PSMC review of the QTC, and comments by credit-rating agencies, highlighted the fact that the QTC in its current form, with a multiplicity of functions, is not well understood by the markets or the public at large. The QTC, retaining the existing functions as a central borrowing authority and liability manager, needs to be clearly separate from the QIC, which will have the investment management role. The two organisations each need to have clear, specific objectives and focus, with simplified organisation structures. The QIC needs a full-time chief executive officer reporting to an expert, independent board, with the board fully responsible for all functions relating to the investment management role. This Bill delivers on these requirements.

The objective of GOEs generally is to conduct a successful commercial enterprise so as to generate a commercial return on the State's investment in the corporation. In the case of the QIC, this is to be achieved through the efficient provision of professional investment and fund management services and other financial services to the State,

statutory bodies and other persons. In pursuing this objective, as a funds manager, the corporation is to seek to maximise the investment return earned on funds under management, over an appropriate time horizon and having regard to the level of risk appropriate to each client. The corporation's objectives as an investment manager are to be specified in more detail in annual performance contracts with the Treasurer and agreements with individual fund trustees.

Queensland people and businesses benefit from the corporation's activities, with it pursuing solely commercial objectives but without the need for a Queensland bias in its investment decisions. The QIC will be a major financial institution with its headquarters in Queensland and its staff based in Queensland. Spin-offs from this include the business generated for a large range of Queensland stock-broking, accounting, legal and other advisory firms and financial institutions which are able to provide services to the corporation to the required standard and cost; the build-up of financial infrastructure and expertise in the State; and the employment and personal development opportunities generated for Queenslanders. Other side benefits include the fact that senior executives of Australian and international companies and financial institutions visit Queensland to stay in touch with the QTC—a large share-holder—and to take the opportunity to visit other organisations, inspect their own operations here, and generally become more aware of commercial development opportunities in this State. More importantly, Queenslanders benefit greatly through the soundness in the State's finances in the future, resulting from the maximisation of returns on these invested funds. Sound State finances also result from the low cost and efficient operation of the corporation, and investment policies which ensure that the funds grow over time and are definitely available as and when needed to meet the superannuation and other liabilities for which they are set aside.

This legislation gives the new corporation autonomy in its investment decision-making, but contains extensive provisions to ensure that effective scrutiny of its operations and performance is maintained. The Bill prohibits any Minister of the Crown, including the Treasurer, from giving directions to the corporation in relation to any investment decision-making. This provision gives legislative force to the approach this Government has adopted from day one. In addition, any representation made to the corporation by a member of the Legislative Assembly in relation to any asset which is subsequently acquired or sold by the corporation, is required to be made public. These provisions are to ensure that the QIC's investment decisions are independent from the political process. Nobody in his right mind could in any way characterise these provisions as WA Inc or Queensland Inc—though I note that members of the Opposition and the Liberal Party have attempted to do just that. In fact, this Government's approach is exactly the opposite to WA Inc or Qld Inc. The whole thrust of the Bill is to remove politics from investment decisions. The aim is to guarantee that there is no repeat in Queensland of what has occurred in other States.

The economic illiteracy of the members opposite does not end there. At the same time as they are likening the QIC to WA Inc, they are also saying it is a de facto State bank. There is the obvious point to be made that the QIC is not a bank. It does not raise deposits and on-lend them to borrowers. The corporation is an investor of trust moneys, mostly on behalf of public sector superannuation schemes, set aside to meet future obligations under these schemes. This approach of accumulating funds to meet future liabilities, and investing them so that they maintain their real value and grow, is a fundamental element of the Government's financial management strategy for this State. Is the Opposition saying that it disagrees with this? The Opposition must recognise that these funds do exist, and that this is a good thing. While the Opposition apparently sees something sinister in this, I am very pleased to have the "problem" of needing to invest these funds. Perhaps the Liberal Party and National Party spokesmen were trying to make the more subtle point that there is a danger that, as with some southern State banks, we might wake up one morning to find that the Queensland Investment Corporation was in trouble. The people of Queensland can be assured that this will not be the case. While we are determined to keep the politicians at arm's length from investment decision-making, this legislation builds in a range of checks and balances to ensure the continuing

financial soundness of the corporation. As these checks and balances are quite numerous and detailed, I seek leave to have them listed in full in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

"Checks and Balances" on the
Queensland Investment Corporation

1. The Governor in Council has the power to dismiss any or all board members at any time (s. 4.2 (2) (G)).
2. The Under Treasurer (or a deputy appointed by him) is to be a member of the board (s. 4.2, 4.3). The Treasury is also establishing an expert "GOE monitoring unit".
3. Each board member is to have "commercial, industrial, financial or other appropriate skills and aptitude to give commercial direction to the corporation" (s. 4.2 (1) (B)).
4. Subject to the proviso that no Minister may direct the board in relation to its investment decision-making, the Treasurer is to have the reserve power to issue directions to the board concerning any matter of Government policy affecting the corporation (s. 6.6 (3)).
5. The Treasurer may at any time appoint an expert organisation or persons to review any aspect of the operations or activities of the corporation. Such a review is to be conducted by an organisation or persons expert in the workings of the investment management industry and having no vested interest in the outcome or consequences of the review. (S. 6.6 (2)).
6. Further, the board shall furnish to the Treasurer a report on any matter concerning the corporation's operations as and when the Treasurer so requires (s. 6.5 (5)).
7. The corporation shall furnish an annual report to the Treasurer, to be tabled in Parliament, and furnish quarterly and half-yearly reports to the Treasurer. As well as the usual financial statements etc., the annual report is to include measures of performance for the corporation (s. 6.5).
8. Each year a performance contract for the corporation relating to the following year's operations will be negotiated between the corporation and the Treasurer.

This contract will include—

- Financial performance targets for the corporation. These will include such things as the return on the State's investment, proposed dividend payments, financial operating forecasts, etc.
- A strategic plan outlining the proposed activities for the corporation for the year, and any new business areas that the corporation is considering expanding into.
- A requirement that the corporation seek to maximise the investment return earned on funds under management, over an appropriate time horizon, and having regard to the level of risk appropriate to each fund.

As the Treasurer must agree to the content of these contracts, a large degree of awareness of the corporation's activities will exist within the Government (s. 6.1).

9. The corporation will be subject to the public finance standards and will be subject to audit by the Auditor-General (s. 6.5). The corporation's accounts will be subject to an internal audit by the Treasury's internal audit unit. Further, an audit committee of the board will be established.
10. The corporation's power to borrow is very restricted—to fund redemptions, for short term liquidity purposes, or for other purposes approved by the Treasurer. The corporation cannot, for example, borrow to leverage investments (s. 6.2).
11. The corporation is to act on prudent commercial principles (s. 3.3).
12. The provisions relating to disclosures of interest by board members are believed to be more stringent than for any other statutory authority board (they follow the corporations law provisions). (S. 4.8, 4.9).

Further, the board will create a register to detail the interests of all officers of the corporation (and certain related people) except for an interest which is held in a matter in common with members of the public.

13. Each director, the CEO and any other officer involved in the management of the corporation shall act honestly, exercise reasonable care and diligence, not make improper use of information, take advantage of his/her position, or cause detriment to the corporation (s. 4.17).

Directors, the CEO and any other employee may not furnish false or misleading information, (or omit providing any matter or thing, which omission renders the information misleading) and must take reasonable steps to ensure that the information was not false or misleading information (s. 4.18).

The penalties for breaching these provisions are harsh.

Again, these provisions follow the corporations law.

14. Directors (other than innocent directors) may be personally liable for reimbursing the discharge of any liability incurred by the corporation while acting as a trustee, if the corporation does not have the right to be indemnified out of the assets of the trust (s. 4.19).
15. As with all GOE's, the corporation will be subject to the principles of Public Sector Management Commission standards, in particular the need to adhere to principles of merit and equity in personnel decisions.

Mr De LACY: I will at this time summarise the more significant points for honourable members. First, the Treasurer will have a reserve power to direct the QIC on any matter except investment decisions. The Treasurer will also be able to order a special review of all or any part of the operations or activities of the corporation at any time. Further, the corporation must furnish to the Treasurer, when and so often as the Treasurer requires, a report on any matter concerning the corporation's operations as the Treasurer requires. The QIC will be audited by the Auditor-General, and will be required to comply with the public finance standards and to prepare an annual report which will be tabled in Parliament. The board will also establish an audit committee.

The corporation's borrowing powers are very restricted, largely because it is envisaged that the need for it to borrow will rarely, if ever, exist. Borrowings of the corporation—if there are any—will be detailed in the quarterly report to the Treasurer, as well as being made public in the annual report tabled in Parliament. The fact that the corporation adopts extensive diversification and modern portfolio principles will also go a long way to ensuring no repeat of the financial problems produced by Government-owned financial institutions in some other States. Members of the board, who are to be appointed by the Governor in Council, are each to have "commercial, industrial, financial or other appropriate skills and aptitude to give commercial direction to the corporation". Apart from the Under Treasurer, directors will come from the private sector, and all directors will be people of high reputation in the Australian business community, with appropriate experience and expertise.

The board will operate very much along the lines of a public company established under the corporations law. The initial board will essentially be the existing Investments Board of the QTC, headed by Mr Jim Kennedy. The existing board, which is doing a fine job, will continue as the board of the QIC for the full period of its original appointment, which expires in March 1992. Its directors, who clearly meet the required standards of high reputation and so on, will be eligible for reappointment by the Governor in Council at that time. Directors—other than "innocent" directors—may be held personally liable for the discharge of any liability incurred by the corporation while acting as a trustee if the corporation does not have the right to be indemnified out of the assets of the trust. This is a strong incentive to ensure that the corporation is not negligent and operates in good faith in its role as trustee of other people's funds.

Overall, it should be readily apparent to honourable members that the Government will be continually aware of the corporation's activities and has ample power and ability to ensure that the corporation does not go off the rails. As a corporatised GOE, the QIC will be required to earn a profit for its share-holder—the Government—and operate commercially. It is therefore necessary to amend in certain respects the existing trust deed, which sets out the terms under which the QTC, as trustee of the QTC Investment Trust, operates. This involves modest increases in the level of fees charged for investment management and changes to the terms on which funds may be withdrawn from the trust. Under the existing deed, members are charged "cost only", and very large amounts may be withdrawn on little notice. This legislation varies the deed to import more commercial terms to it.

There are extensive measures to ensure that a level playing field applies in assessing the new corporation's performance. The corporation will represent the Crown, subject to certain limitations set out in the Bill. Because of this relationship, parties dealing with the corporation will have recourse to the Government for any obligations that it may be unable to meet. In consultation with the corporation, the Treasurer shall determine a fee to be charged for this general—but, in practice, very limited—credit support provided by the State to the corporation, in addition to any fee charged for the guarantee of any borrowings of the corporation.

The corporation will also be exempt from certain State and Federal taxes and charges due to its relationship with the Crown. However, in line with current practice with Suncorp and QIDC, the Treasurer is to determine a sum to be paid to the State in lieu of such charges. The Opposition has referred to this initiative as a tax grab. It should be clear that the thrust of this Bill has nothing to do with deriving revenue. The purpose of the tax provisions is to ensure that the corporation is subject to competitive performance pressure. I should also make it clear to the Opposition that the corporation will not be paying to the State the equivalent of income tax on its investment earnings. Such tax is payable only on the return earned on the corporation's capital, which is expected to amount to only a few million dollars at the most. Staff of the new organisation will not be public servants. No existing public servant will be required to join the new corporation, although secondment of some staff is possible. It is proposed that the new corporation commence operations from 1 July 1991.

In conclusion, this Bill represents a very important initiative of this Government. It brings about changes to the Queensland Treasury Corporation that are clearly desirable and have been recommended by independent experts. It establishes the new corporation on a basis that will ensure that the important task of maximising returns on those large trust funds continues to be carried out efficiently and with very high standards of accountability. It mitigates against the possibility of political interference in investment decisions, but ensures effective scrutiny of the corporation's activities. Finally, it continues the important process of reform of the public sector which this Government is determined to pursue. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

PRIVILEGE

Misrepresentation by Premier

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (11.53 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. I have been misrepresented by the Premier.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is not a matter of privilege for a member to claim that he has been misrepresented.

Mr HOBBS: I seek leave of the House to make a personal explanation.
Leave granted.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (11.54 a.m.): I have been misrepresented by the Premier, who has misled the House again. I refer to the preamble to my question, which stated—

"With reference to his commitment to grant extensive land rights to Aborigines and Islanders .

."

The Premier ducked the question. He has misled the House in order to avoid answering the whole question, which also related to a payment being made by the taxpayers of Australia to a law firm of which the Premier was a partner.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We have gone through that process. I believe that the issue has been adequately canvassed on both sides of the House. Both sides have had a fair

go. I do not intend to allow the member for Warrego to prosecute a quarrel and take up any further time of the House.

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY AND QUEENSLAND CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC AMALGAMATION AND MISCELLANEOUS AMENDMENTS BILL

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Rockhampton—Minister for Education) (11.53 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amalgamate the Queensland Conservatorium of Music with the Griffith University and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Rockhampton—Minister for Education) (11.54 a.m.): I move—

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

I present to the House a Bill to amalgamate the Queensland Conservatorium of Music with Griffith University. The Bill makes provision for the Conservatorium to cease to be a college of advanced education under the Education Act and for it to become part of Griffith University. In introducing the Queensland University of Technology and Brisbane College of Advanced Education Amalgamation Bill and the Griffith University and Gold Coast College of Advanced Education Amalgamation Bill into the House early last year, I explained the strategy for the long-term development of Australia's higher education system as set by the Honourable Mr Dawkins, Commonwealth Minister for Employment, Education and Training. As the Commonwealth Government's funding policy is central to this amalgamation, I will outline again the changing higher education scene.

Since 1965, the Australian higher education sector has comprised colleges of advanced education and universities. That division is generally known as the binary system. Essential differences between universities and colleges of advanced education were in provisions for research, in procedures and authority for accreditation of courses, in the range and types of courses offered, and in the levels of academic awards. With the passage of time, those distinctions have become less clear-cut. Commonwealth support for growth and reform in higher education now focuses on those institutions which constitute a unified national system in which the binary system distinguishing between colleges and universities is abandoned. That system consists of a range of higher education institutions having specific missions agreed with, and funded by, the Commonwealth Government. Under the new system, the higher education sector comprises fewer and larger institutions than in the past, and more effective coordination will be developed between them on matters such as credit transfer, course provision and disciplinary specialisation. Students benefit through the concentration of resources designed to foster and promote the highest quality of teaching and research.

As a specialist institution with an enrolment under 2 000 students, the Queensland Conservatorium of Music is not eligible to join the unified national system of higher education unless it has a formal organisational link with a university within that system. A memorandum of agreement to amalgamate was entered into in December 1990 between the Council of Griffith University and the Council of the Conservatorium. The terms of that agreement allow for an amalgamation which meets Commonwealth Government requirements and which is satisfactory to both institutions. Griffith University is constituted under the Griffith University Act. The university began its postgraduate program in 1971 and commenced its undergraduate teaching program early in

1975. The university's mission statement sets out its commitment to excellence in teaching and research, and I am sure that the university looks forward with confidence to continuing expansion of its teaching and research activities within the Commonwealth Government's unified national system.

The Queensland Conservatorium of Music was established in 1957 under the control of the then Minister for Public Instruction. In 1971, the Conservatorium attained college of advanced education status with an autonomous governing council constituted in accordance with the provisions of the 1970 amendments to the Education Act. The Conservatorium has achieved a reputation which is not surpassed by any other musical conservatorium in Australia. Its graduates have taken their place in most State and national music performing institutions, including the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and other Australian Broadcasting Corporation orchestras, the Queensland Theatre Orchestra and local opera companies. A significant number of Conservatorium students have established successful careers overseas. Importantly, many have entered the education services, imparting not only musical techniques but also the love and appreciation of music to the younger generation.

In its pursuit of excellence in music performance, the students of the Conservatorium have taken major prizes and have won competitive awards against students in the older music schools and conservatoria in other States. This record reflects the qualifications, inspiration and dedication of the Conservatorium staff, who, in addition, give freely of their artistic talents in community cultural activities outside of the formal teaching programs. The Conservatorium is also a significant provider of concerts and opera performances to the Queensland community. I take this opportunity to record an expression of thanks to the present and past members of the council and staff of the Conservatorium. I thank also the chancellor and members of the university council and the chairman and members of the conservatorium council for the spirit of cooperation surrounding the amalgamation.

The amalgamation will secure the long-term future of music education in Queensland, as it will provide stability for the Conservatorium's 450 students and over 100 staff. By enabling the Conservatorium's entry into the unified national system, it will also allow the Conservatorium to offer expanded opportunities to Queensland students of music. It is envisaged that the Queensland Conservatorium of Music will become part of the university as a university college with its own advisory council. As a university college of Griffith University, the Queensland Conservatorium of Music will be able to maintain its distinctive identity. The current director of the Conservatorium will be the provost and director of the university college and will be responsible to the vice-chancellor of the university. As mentioned earlier, advanced education has now ceased to exist as a distinct sector of higher education. The sole purpose of the Education Act is to provide for the establishment and governance of colleges of advanced education. The Bill makes provision for the repeal of that Act, as the Queensland Conservatorium is the last remaining college of advanced education in this State.

I now wish to draw members' attention to certain features of the Bill. The Bill provides for the discontinuation of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music as an autonomous educational institution under the Education Act and for its amalgamation as part of Griffith University. Upon cessation of the Conservatorium, the chairman and each other member of the Council of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music will go out of office and that council will cease to exist. Also at that time, every employee of the Council of the Conservatorium becomes an employee of the university, with preservation of salary level and accrued leave entitlements. When determining other terms and conditions, the council of the university is required to have regard to the terms and conditions that applied to the employee before the amalgamation. The Bill provides for the Queensland Conservatorium of Music Union to cease to exist upon amalgamation of the conservatorium with the university, whereupon all officers of that union go out of office, and all assets and liabilities of the union transfer to the university.

The rights of students are assured in the Bill. Continuity of enrolment and study is provided for those students enrolled in advanced education courses at the Queensland

Conservatorium of Music. The university is required to provide appropriate courses for such students. Students who have successfully completed subjects at the Conservatorium will be given full credit for those subjects by the university. Moreover, a student who satisfactorily completes a course at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and who has not been granted an academic award of the Conservatorium by the date of its cessation, will be granted an academic award under the common seal of the university.

I move now to the latter parts of the Bill which make provision for legislative amendments not connected with the amalgamation of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music with Griffith University. Part III of the Bill amends the Griffith University Act to put beyond doubt the meaning of certain subsections of that Act relating to the appointment of certain members of the council of the university. This is a machinery provision considered necessary following consultation between the Crown Solicitor and the Parliamentary Counsel. Part IV of the Bill amends the University of Queensland Act to enable the membership of convocation of the university to be extended by statute. The senate of the university intends to admit to membership of convocation graduates of the former Queensland Agricultural College which was amalgamated with the university from the beginning of 1990. The Bill, at Part V, amends the James Cook University of North Queensland Act to provide for membership on the council of the university of the Director-General of Education, or his nominee, in the stead of the Regional Director of Education (Northern Region), as this position no longer exists. This rearrangement brings the profile of the council in this regard in line with governing bodies of other universities and university colleges. Part VI of the Bill amends the Education (General Provisions) Act to omit the words "regional director", as these positions no longer exist, and to substitute the words "executive director" wherever they occur, namely, in clause 3— Interpretation, clause 30, which amends section 24—Suspension from attendance, and clause 31, which amends section 25—Exclusion from attendance. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

GRAIN RESEARCH FOUNDATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.03 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill to amend the Grain Research Foundation Act 1976-1990 in certain particulars."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.04 p.m.): I move—

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

These proposed amendments to the Grain Research Foundation Act 1976-1991 will set in place provisions for the payment of appropriate remuneration to members of the Grain Research Foundation other than those foundation members who are also members of the Queensland public service whose services are provided as part of their employment package. The members of the foundation include representatives of the grain-growing industry nominated by the Queensland Graingrowers Association. Membership of the foundation also includes representatives from the major research institutions undertaking research to improve sustainable productivity in the State's grain industries. Those institutions are the University of Queensland, the CSIRO Division of Tropical Crops and Pastures and my own Department of Primary Industries. The major role of the

foundation is to encourage and assist relevant and appropriate research and development activities to improve the productivity of the State's grain industries consistent with the need to protect the State's natural resources.

Amendments to the Act in 1990 set in place this membership representation. Following the receipt of nominations in accordance with those amendments, three eminent scientists and four prominent grain-growers have recently been appointed by the Governor in Council to be members of the foundation. The proposed amendments are in two parts. Clause 3 of this amendment Bill repeals section 13 and inserts a new section 13 which provides for the payment by the Grain Research Foundation itself of fees and allowances to its members as determined by the Governor in Council. However, members who are public servants are not entitled to the payment of fees for attendance at meetings held during normal working hours. The second part of this amendment Bill amends section 17 by providing that members of an advisory committee established by the foundation are to be paid fees and allowances by the foundation and as determined by the foundation. These fees and allowances, however, are not to exceed those payable to members of the foundation. The amendment to clause 17 also specifically states that any advisory committee members who are Queensland public servants are not entitled to the payment of fees for attendance at meetings held during normal working hours. I commend the Grain Research Foundation Act Amendment Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

SUGAR INDUSTRY BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 17 April (see p. 7384).

Mr SULLIVAN (Glass House) (12.06 p.m.): I am pleased to rise in support of this piece of legislation. Honourable members would realise that my electorate of Glass House is not a major sugar-producing electorate. However, I am comforted by the fact that there are sugar-producers in the area and currently many of the tobacco and pineapple farmers are very seriously considering a change to sugar production. To understand the importance of the sugar industry in Queensland, one need only consider the mountain of words concerning the industry that have been spoken in this House over the years. Since the turn of the century, the prosperity of the State has, in many respects, been contingent upon the well-being of the sugar industry. For coastal Queenslanders from Mossman in the north to Beenleigh in the south sugar is indeed—if honourable members will forgive me a slight lapse—"a natural part of life".

Unlike a group of Singaporean travel agents whom I had the privilege to show around Cairns some years ago, we have long since ceased to be awed by the extent of the sugarcane crop in Queensland. In the process we have possibly also ceased in the main to be consciously aware of the extent of the State's reliance on a healthy sugar industry. Queensland producers account for some 95 per cent of Australia's sugarcane crop, a crop that is worth in the vicinity of \$1.3 billion annually. Approximately 80 per cent of that production is destined for export. In 1989-90, Queensland exported just under 3 million tonnes, while domestic consumption was of the order of 800 000 tonnes. As an exporting nation, Australia ranks third behind the European Community and Brazil, and has established itself firmly in a number of markets. Sugar exports represent 30 per cent of Queensland's rural exports. In order to retain our markets, Queensland's industry must grow. Figures show that world demand increases by approximately 2 per cent each year, and that growth must be mirrored by this State's sugar industry if Queensland is not to relinquish some portion of its world market share. Because it provides for a growth in the size of assignments of 2.5 per cent per annum, this Bill will enable that to happen.

The Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Casey—the father of the House—has contributed greatly to the mountain of words that I mentioned earlier. The Minister

knows that, if the voters of this State had not so eloquently spoken on 2 December 1989, the failure of a succession of conservative Governments from 1957 to 1989 to properly address the enormous changes in the industry would have led ultimately to the asphyxiation of the Queensland sugar industry. It is little wonder that one of the first major steps undertaken by the Minister was the establishment of the Sugar Industry Working Party. The Bill under consideration is largely the result of the excellent work done by that working party. Moreover, as the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, further industry consultation took place and representatives of sections whose interests sometimes conflict were found to be capable of uniting in a process aimed at achieving the best outcome for all concerned. This legislation will provide the industry with the autonomy and flexibility that is so necessary for the ongoing development of the cane-growing industry.

A key feature on the Sugar Industry Bill is the inclusion of a Sugar Industry Policy Council to continue the consultative processes that were begun by the Sugar Industry Working Party and to represent industry views at Government level. The Minister is obliged to maintain this consultative council. Although the Minister has a discretion in relation to membership of the council, his chairmanship of that body and its diverse membership will ensure that the Government will obtain first-hand knowledge of the issues facing the various sectors of the industry. The consultative council will be independent of the proposed Queensland Sugar Corporation. It is therefore the appropriate body to convey the industry's views on the performance of the organisation proposed in this Bill. This kind of arrangement offers the Government an industry overview at the sharp end of the business operation. It is the type of structure that will serve the diverse and influential sugar industry extremely well.

This is the first time in the industry's long history that the process of Government consultation has been formalised. Some people would say that it is ironical that this has been done by a Labor Government rather than by the agrarian socialists who languish so deservingly on the Opposition benches. Industry historians note, however, that such major legislation as the Bill before the House will be brought forward only by Governments of courage that are prepared to pay more than lip-service to the important sugar industry—such Governments as the Ryan Labor Government in 1915 and the Goss Labor Government in 1991. This Government's determination to provide the industry with greater representative input is again shown in the approach to industry-related research in this Bill. While the Sugar Experiment Stations Act is to be repealed by this legislation, the Government recognises that an increasing competition facing the sugar industry necessitates increased efficiency and productivity in research and extension.

The Minister has already flagged his intention to form a research coordination council. This will be done under provisions that allow the Minister to form such committees as he thinks fit which will advise both the Minister and the industry organisations of research priorities or assist in the coordination of research activities relating to the sugar industry. The Bill also retains—albeit in an expanded form—the Sugar Experiment Stations Board, which has been expanded to nine members in accordance with the recommendation of the Sugar Industry Working Party, which was mindful of the need for the BSES to increase the number of members with research or research/management experience. The BSES will retain its current research extension and regulatory functions under the new legislation. Membership of the board will become more representative of the industry rather than being dominated by sectional interests. Changes to the composition of the board should lead to an emphasis on results-oriented research and a more forward-looking organisation. The flexibility that the industry needs to be able to respond to changing circumstances is demonstrated in the cane protection and productivity boards. Members should be aware by now that these boards are the reconstituted form of the cane pests and disease boards. Unlike the previous boards, the new cane protection and productivity boards are to be bodies corporate with all that that term entails, including having the right to lawfully hold properties. In addition to the boards' traditional functions, they will also focus on productivity issues and be able to address specifically the business of sugarcane-farming. The Bill provides that membership

of the productivity boards will be three elected cane-grower representatives, two mill-owner representatives and an officer of the BSES. The boards' independence has been maintained and the link with BSES continues. Owing to the improvements to the BSES, those links assume a greater value. However, if a majority of cane-growers and a majority of mill-owners agree, the Minister will be able to acquiesce to a request to vary the composition of a board insofar as it affects cane-grower and mill-owner members. Similarly, he will be able to agree to the inclusion on a board of representatives of an organisation nominated in a petition presented by cane-growers and mill-owners.

The Council of Agriculture is an umbrella organisation of Queensland's marketing and producer organisations. Its membership is made up of representatives of all major primary industries, except sheep and cattle. The Queensland Cane Growers Council is a member of the Council of Agriculture. In 1988, Mr Lyndsay Hall—a rice and sugar grower from the Burdekin area—was elected as chairman. In anticipation of this legislation, the Council of Agriculture's briefing paper states—

"Deregulation"—

I pause here to state that the Government prefers the terms "rationalisation" and "modernisation"—

"of the Queensland sugar administration will make the 1990s a watershed decade in the evolution of the canegrowing industry."

Thus speaks the Council of Agriculture, which is led by Mr Lyndsay Hall, a sugar-grower from the Burdekin.

When the Premier of Queensland speaks, he speaks on behalf of the Government; similarly, people are entitled to expect that when the Chairman of the Queensland Cane Growers Council speaks, he speaks for the cane-growers. The Queensland Cane Growers Council represents all cane-growers. It is their peak body. As the Minister told the Parliament in his second-reading speech, Mr Bonanno was part of the process of writing the provisions of this Bill. In his press release of 11 April, Mr Bonanno said quite simply and quite clearly—

"The Queensland Canegrowers Organisation is supportive of the Sugar Industry legislation presented to the Queensland Parliament last night."

That was 10 April. If the Bill is good enough for the cane-growers, it is certainly good enough for me. I congratulate the Minister and everyone who worked very hard over 14 months to bring this Bill to the House. I support the Bill.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (12.15 p.m.): As I listened to Government members speak in this debate, I could not help noticing that they were trying to delve back into history and pat themselves on the back for what occurred back in 1914, or whatever year it was. Since that time, they have not contributed greatly to the industry.

Mrs Bird: Where are your representatives from the sugar industry? Where are they?

Mr STEPHAN: The member for Whitsunday, who interjects, claims that she was raised on a cane farm. In her comments, she did not show much support for the cane industry. I could be excused for thinking that she did not learn too much.

Mr Palaszczuk: Where is Jim Randell? He should be listening to you.

Mr STEPHAN: I am not concerned about where Jim Randell is; I am more concerned with Government members and their thinking at present, which leaves quite a bit to be desired. The member for Glass House stated that this deregulation of the sugar industry will be a watershed. Later, I will comment on that matter. As the member for Auburn stated, it will be a watershed for poverty. The Government is deregulating the sugar industry, but it is holding itself at arm's length from it.

I will examine some other comments that were made by Government members in the debate. In his usual form, the member for Isis said that any additional land should be leasehold. However, he is well known for wanting to ensure that people do not

own their properties. He wants to be able to control, control and control. When he interjected, Mr Dollin stated, "If income is so low, then why is so much money paid for the land itself?" The reason that so much money is paid for the land is the same reason that so much money is paid for houses—that is what the market demands. Government members fail to realise that producers must pay those amounts to participate in cane production. It behoves us to realise that that cost must be borne. The interest on money borrowed is considerable. One can project cash-flow schemes on an interest rate of 15 per cent, but, when it increases to between 17 per cent and 21 per cent as it has in the past couple of years, one cannot participate in the industry with confidence. When interest rates rise so rapidly, producers who are making a contribution and attempting to pay their way cannot do so with confidence. When Government members make comments such as those made by Mr Dollin, I become concerned.

Mr Campbell, who is from a sugar area, made the statement that the industry has been leaderless. He has offered an insult to an enormous number of people who have contributed enormously to the industry, at no financial gain to themselves but merely in order to contribute and ensure that the industry is sound and progressive. I challenge any Government member, particularly Mr Campbell, to name any primary industry that has leaders who make a contribution such as those in the sugar industry.

Mr Palaszczuk: You were squirming in your seat when Mr Campbell spoke last night.

Mr STEPHAN: I cannot hear the honourable member. Could he speak up?

Mr Palaszczuk: You were squirming in your seat last night.

Mr STEPHAN: He was a worthy speaker, was he? In other words, the honourable member agrees with everything he said. Members of the House should take note of that. The people of Queensland should beware that sort of attitude.

Mr Harper: He was a wormy speaker. He could have done with a dose of dieldrin.

Mr STEPHAN: That is right. He was a little bit wormy; there is no question about that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! The honourable member for Gympie will continue with his speech.

Mr STEPHAN: I will now raise some concerns that I have about the Bill. As other honourable members pointed out, the Minister and the Minister's control is referred to in the Bill on an extraordinary number of occasions. The Government talks about giving the industry direction and a say in what is occurring. Yet the Minister has the overriding ability in every instance to direct. For example, the corporation replaces the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board and the Sugar Board. However, the Minister may give directions to the corporation and the corporation is to comply with those directions. The industry and I are very concerned about the power that has been given to the Minister. When a Minister—whomever he might be—is remote from the industry and away from the coalface and is making the decisions, he will not understand the problems involved. We could not expect the same dedication to the industry from him as we could expect from the producers. The provisions of the Bill that give the Minister control and the ability to direct are wrong and a backward step. This Bill is a watershed, but not a forward step.

The member for Glass House spoke about deregulation. In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated—

"Assignment of lands to mills has been the most significant production control device in this industry. It has allowed millers to predict the quantity of cane they must crush. It has allowed growers a degree of certainty of return on their capital investment."

These two comments would surely make it obvious that that support cannot be taken away without a lot of damage being done to the industry itself. Some degree of

return on capital investment is necessary. As has been already stated, if primary producers from other industries, for example, the pineapple industry or the vegetable industry, wished to go into cane production, they, too, would be looking for some certainty of some degree of return on their capital investment, even if it is only a return on the amount of interest that they are paying to ensure that they are not going to be taken over by the banks and not going to be told that they have to increase their income if at all possible. The Minister goes on to say—

"Queensland can and must produce as much sugar as possible in order to maximise market opportunities."

The Minister's own Premier contradicted that this morning, when he was talking about Comalco. The Premier said that the return cannot be increased by increasing the output, and that is exactly what the Minister is trying to do.

Mr Casey: Half of the speakers from your side reread my speech. What about making a contribution yourself.

Mr STEPHAN: That demonstrates that members of the Opposition are taking notice of what the Minister said. The Opposition is trying to point out to the Minister that he is wrong. Obviously, he does not want to take any notice, and does not intend to take any notice.

Mr Harper: He's in conflict with his own Premier.

Mr STEPHAN: The Minister is in conflict with his own Premier. He is in conflict with the industry itself. I do not know whether the Minister listened to what the Premier said this morning, when he was trying to justify his stand in the Comalco issue. His comments were completely contradictory to what the Minister had to say in his second-reading speech. The Minister would do well to listen to what his own Premier says and take note of it. One only has to go back a few years to realise what has happened in the sugar industry. One only has to look at what is happening at present in the wool industry to realise what happens when there is an excess of production.

Government members: Oh!

Mr STEPHAN: Government members can say, "Oh!", and not worry about what is happening in other industries. Surely if the Government is looking for a return on capital, if it is looking for stability, it is going to give some indication of wanting to support those who are investing large sums of money in these industries. I note the sneer on the faces of members of the Government. They ridicule and denigrate those who are prepared to put on the line their life-savings for the benefit of the country. The expansion by 2.5 per cent of total assigned areas every year for the next five years, without being able to determine in any way where that product will be sold, will not be of benefit.

In the 1980s, the sugar beet industry was producing enormous volumes of sugar on the world market. That sugar beet is being produced in countries in which the costs are not as high as they are in Australia. The sugar industry faces a big challenge. It is not only the sugarcane-producers but also the sugar beet producers who are contributing to the volume of sugar on the market and the effect that it will have on the ability to sell the product. I am very hesitant to support the provision in the Bill whereby the Minister may assign extra lands at will. Although the Minister does not like to hear his words quoted to him, I will read another passage from his second-reading speech. He said—

"Firstly, the changes in the Bill are as much about a new attitude as they are about structure."

I wonder whether the new attitude to which the Minister refers is a new attitude in the Primary Industries Department itself. The Government has cut down the number of services that are available to the primary producer, and it is charging extra for the water that primary producers use. From time to time, the comment is made, "There will be no new taxes." Why is it, then, that the Government has suddenly found ways to charge

more for the water that primary producers use? New producers who are coming into the industry have to pay \$100 a megalitre up front, along with the present charges for the megalitres used, and those charges have been increased. For example, if one requires 60 megalitres of water a year, it will cost more than \$6,000 up front, and then there is a charge for each megalitre that is used. I see that the member for Archerfield is shaking his head. He goes out in his yard and turns the tap on. He does not worry about where the water comes from, nor where it goes. This is another cost that the primary producer must bear. Members of the Government can laugh at a distance, but I am hesitant about supporting the Minister having control, having the final say, when some backbenchers do not understand, nor do they wish to understand, primary producers, particularly the sugar-producers. I wonder just how far the Minister wants to go and how far along the track he will be able to keep the industry in this State viable.

I also question the productivity boards. The Explanatory Notes state—

"Productivity Boards are given power to do all things necessary or reasonably required to discharge their functions. A special power is conferred which authorizes a Board to provide products, services, subsidies and compensation in relation to the prevention, control or eradication of pest infestations . . ."

They also state—

"The Governor in Council by regulations may levy assessments on sugar cane delivered . . ."

The question arises: just how much of a levy will be imposed by these boards for pest control or any other service? There is nothing to say that if one starts off with a small amount, be it 1 per cent, half a per cent or whatever, one will not find that it continues to rise. I have a genuine fear that it is an open-ended cheque for the Governor in Council to introduce a levy for research, for whatever reason it might be. The sugar industry is concerned about that aspect of the legislation. Those charges are paid first, before the growers receive their money in their hands, before they are able to pay their interest bill and before they are able to pay their accounts for running the farm.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.31 p.m.): All aspects of this legislation are certainly a great disappointment to the sugar industry. In the short period that this legislation has been available for perusal, people from Mossman to the Gold Coast have expressed their concern about many aspects of it. No doubt the Minister will say that there have been working papers, Green Papers, further working papers and more Green Papers but, with respect to the Minister, it is well known how the Labor Party issues these various papers. Of course, when the legislation is introduced, significant differences are found between what is discussed with the industry and community groups and what the Labor Party brings forward. I think it is fair to again say that that is what has happened with this legislation.

Government members interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: Can I just say to those members who are interjecting that they have had plenty of time to speak. We have heard from a long list of speakers. Last night, the ALP tried to ram this legislation through the House, until it got to around midnight, when its members got cold feet and adjourned the debate until today. Honourable members opposite had their chance to speak. They should let other members speak. They have made a muck-up of it. They have fouled up the whole exercise. The sugar industry is furious with the Government.

Government members interjected.

Mr BEANLAND: Never mind about the interjections; let us get on to the serious aspects of the legislation. I have noticed those well-written ministerial speeches from the ministerial minders and delivered by Government members. This House heard them all last night until midnight, repetition after repetition. Let us look at some of the other aspects of the Bill.

Mr BEATTIE: I rise to a point of order. I find those comments offensive. Members who have spoken in this debate have prepared their own material. The member for Toowong is reflecting on the members of this House, and I ask that those comments be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! The member for Brisbane Central was not mentioned. There is no point of order.

Mr BEANLAND: The sugar industry itself has had insufficient time to consider this legislation, which affects every aspect of the industry. This legislation is being rushed through this House. Whether the members of the Labor Party want to acknowledge that in this place or not is a matter for them. No doubt they want to get the whole issue out of the way before the by-elections come along. This legislation increases the potential for the Government to become involved in the sugar industry. It increases the regulation and control of the industry. One might have thought that, with this legislation, perhaps there might have been less Government interference within the industry, but that is certainly not what we have seen. Other members have indicated the role which the Minister plays in the legislation. He is certainly all powerful. Previous speakers have amply set out the aspects of the legislation which make the Minister all powerful. It is certainly the overused word in describing the entire Bill.

This legislation has caused a great deal of concern to various groups in the sugar industry. One important aspect is the Sugar Industry Policy Council. I think it is fair to say that the Government had to dangle this aspect of the legislation before the industry to get some sort of acceptance of the Bill. The industry was led to believe that, at the end of the day, the Sugar Industry Policy Council would have some teeth, that reference in the legislation to the Sugar Industry Policy Council would be quite detailed, that it would have quite specific powers and that its role would be clearly spelt out. In fact, that has not occurred at all. The clauses that relate to the Sugar Industry Policy Council do not include reference to the composition of membership. There is no mention of the number of people who will comprise that council, nor is there any detail about how regularly the council should meet. It is obviously going to meet at the behest of the Minister, which might be once every 6 months or 12 months. Who knows! The Minister could easily stack the council with his friends, his cronies, his mates. Honourable members saw that happen with various committees and councils established by the ALP over the last 15 months. There is a whole list of people who have very close association with the Labor Party and who have been appointed to positions.

The powers of the Sugar Industry Policy Council are not defined. Members know that the legislation spells out that the council is to report to the Minister, not to the corporation. Again one has to ask: why is the council not free to give advice to the corporation? Why is it purely the Minister who is to receive all this advice? No doubt it is so that he can sift through it, accept what he likes, toss out the rest and continue on from there. There is nothing to say that any of the council's recommendations may not simply be filed in the wastepaper basket. The Minister can completely ignore those recommendations. I may have mentioned that the legislation contains 11 lines devoted to the Sugar Industry Policy Council. That is hardly significant for what is considered by the industry to be a very important cornerstone of this legislation. People within the industry fought vigorously for this aspect. One could certainly have expected some considerable detail as to the role of this most important policy council for the sugar industry.

It will not be until 1966 that the policy council will have a great deal of say about assignments. It can certainly recommend increases in assignments over the 2.5 per cent per annum contained in the legislation, but if it turns out that, because of world commodity prices or the crushing and milling capabilities of the industry, the industry should not be expanding at 2.5 per cent, then the Sugar Industry Policy Council is powerless. It will not have a role to play at all. It is quite disappointing to see that this particularly important aspect of the legislation has been so downgraded.

One part of the legislation allows the Minister, if he so wishes, to set up a sugar industry research coordination council. The sugar industry working paper considered very important the establishment of such a council. The working paper spelt out that it should be established to assist in research activities in the sugar industry. It recommended that a council be selected from various bodies and that a wide cross-section of people be involved, not only from the Department of Primary Industries but also from the Sugar Experiment Stations Board, the Sugar Research Institute, the tropical crops and pastures division of the CSIRO, the University of Queensland and the Gatton Agricultural College. It said the council should comprise representatives from the growers and the millers and from the Commonwealth Sugar Industry Research Corporation itself. All of that was spelt out and identified in the working paper. The working party believed that sugar industry research in this State needed a considerable boost. Yet when we look at the legislation, we find that anything but that has occurred. In fact, the whole role of research has been downgraded and it receives only a brief reference in relation to committees. Clearly, the working paper indicated that more emphasis needs to be placed on research. However, it has been downgraded in such a manner that it receives but a passing reference in the legislation. That again clearly shows that the legislation is lacking.

Even though the working party concluded that the industry is underinvesting in research and that there should be a contribution from the Queensland Government, the legislation does not refer to any Government funding being provided to sugar experiment stations. Funding is mentioned, but it is to be provided by way of the imposition of a levy on the growers. One needs only to look at the legislation to see which way the Government is going. The Government will put the full cost of the implementation of this legislation onto the growers and expect them to bear any increased burden. Again, that is contrary to what is contained in the working paper. One has to question how much of the working paper was adhered to and whether the Minister and the Government did not in fact file a lot of the working paper in the wastepaper basket. The point I am making is that very important aspects of the working paper and the Green Paper have simply been thrown aside while the Labor Party goes down the path on which it no doubt set out in the first instance.

I refer now to the membership of the Sugar Experiment Stations Board. Of the nine board members, only two will be nominated by the industry—the growers and the millers—whereas the Minister has the power to appoint four members. He also has the power to make appointments to the various statutory positions such as those of the Director-General of the Department of Primary Industries. Again we see that the Minister has complete control of the work that will be done by the Sugar Experiment Stations Board. The industry itself is largely being excluded from the valuable work that needs to be undertaken.

The honourable member for Sherwood mentioned in some detail the matter of the chief executive serving on the board of the Queensland Sugar Corporation. This provision is an example of the Labor Government having two bob each way. Only last year, the Treasurer introduced amendments to the Acts governing the QIDC and Suncorp. Those amendments had the effect of removing the chief executives from the boards of those authorities. I notice that, under this legislation, the chief executive of the corporation will serve on the board as director. There seems to be some disparity between what the Treasurer believes and what the Minister believes should happen in this case. One would have expected that, in setting up this legislation, the Government and the Minister would have followed some policy.

Earlier, I spoke about cane assignments being expanded by 2.5 per cent over the next five years to 1996. The expansion could be greater, not less than that. After 1996, it is a matter for the Minister, who has the ultimate power, to decide where the industry goes. I would have thought that it may have been better to allow the industry to decide in the future where it is travelling instead of inserting in the legislation a mandatory requirement for increases of 2.5 per cent over that period. At the outset, I mentioned that one finds throughout this legislation an extension of industry control by the Labor Party. That relates not only to the growing of cane but also to the derivatives of the

sugar products. This legislation gives the Government the ability to gain greater control in those areas. One has only to look at what will happen to the sugar-mill owners. In their case, the Minister may give to the corporation directions affecting its determinations to decide the extent to which payments may be made to the sugar-mill owners and, in due course, to the growers. The extent of ministerial interference—Government interference—is certainly quite detailed.

In relation to the composition of the Sugar Industry Tribunal, one sees that the Government is determined not to really appoint anybody who has any real knowledge of the sugar industry. The legislation goes to great lengths to set out that people who have a pecuniary interest in the industry—in any aspect of the industry at all—will be precluded from playing a role on the tribunal. If a person with a great deal of sugar industry knowledge is to be appointed to the tribunal, I would contend that it will be somewhat difficult to find someone who has no interest whatsoever in the sugar industry unless it is someone who is getting on in years, who was very much involved in the industry but who is now retired from it. One would expect that, even in that case, that person would still have some type of interest in the industry as a whole.

Clearly, for reasons best known to the Government, this legislation is not receiving from the industry the perusal which I know the industry believed it would receive. The industry believed that for some weeks the Bill would be left to lie on the table of the House so that everyone could peruse the legislation, gain a better knowledge of it and suggest any necessary amendments. Hopefully the Government will make any necessary amendments. However, because this legislation has gone through such a lengthy preparation process, amendments should hardly be necessary. Honourable members now find that the process was a total farce from go to whoa because, at the end of the day, the Minister has done exactly what he wanted to do at the outset, and the industry has been cast aside. This legislation is indeed disappointing. I would have thought that, because this legislation took such a long period to prepare, honourable members would have seen something very worth while coming before this House.

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (12.46 p.m.): I must comment upon the fact that almost all of the speeches that were made by Government members were very near to being identical, most certainly in their lay-out. I find it very difficult to believe that the speeches were not written or prepared by somebody other than the members who delivered them. I accept the word of Mr Beattie. However, it seems to me to be more than chance that each member who has a mill in his or her electorate gave a long, rambling history of that mill. Most members who live in north Queensland know plenty about sugar-mills and do not need to be told about them for half an hour. I do not believe that, if those Government members had written their own speeches, they would have been stupid enough to give the very same description of each mill. Each speech contained a series of platitudes, and was constructed in the very same manner.

One Government speaker deviated from the text of her speech and spoke about the hardships of the cane-cutters. I tend to believe that some of the stories that she told were correct. However, the honourable member delivered them in such a way that they represented an attack upon members on this side of the House. For the edification of the House, I point out that when I first became a member of this House, four of the people who sat at the Cabinet table had at some time cut cane. If the member was paying a tribute to the cane-cutters, the Opposition very gratefully accepts that tribute. For the benefit of those honourable members who do not know much about the cane industry, I point out that almost every cane-farmer or his father in the industry today has at some time cut cane. The industry was built upon the cane-cutters. All that they were given was an axe and a box of matches and told, "Good luck, son." I call those people heroes. Those heroes, of whom I am immensely proud, created an industry that has carried this State on its back for 100 years.

This is a historic moment, because the creation of the sugar industry was a great tribute to the Labor movement of Queensland. I do not hesitate to say that. In fact, on many occasions in this place I have heard Mr Casey say it. The industry wallowed in

misery and hardship until, from 1914 onwards, it became a controlled and protected industry—protected from the ravages that would have been caused by the importation of European beet sugar. On this occasion, honourable members are witnessing an exercise in hypocrisy that is almost without precedent in my 16 years as a member of this House. Members of the Government have been extolling the virtues of this Bill, which is part of the implementation plan to remove the protections that were put in place by successive Labor Governments in this State over a 40 or 50-year period. In the past, Mr Casey spoke with great pride about what the Labor movement achieved for the sugar industry. That a number of seats in sugar-growing areas are still in the hands of the Labor Party today is a tribute to the achievements of the Labor movement of this State. However, let it be understood by the people of Queensland that this Government is now destroying that century of work, risk, courage, intelligence and intellectual achievement by those great heroes. I do not hesitate to mention Forgan Smith, Theodore and the McCormacks, who were responsible for sugar legislation. All of the achievements of the past have been thrown into the toilet, and the button has been pressed by people who are sitting in this House today and implementing legislation that is part of the program for the destruction of the industry.

There is no way in the world that the Queensland sugar industry can stand successfully against dumped beet sugar from Europe. In the same way as that product was introduced to Australia in 1898 and destroyed the local industry, that will happen again during the next three years. The rumours in Mr Casey's own electorate are rife and the story is prominent that very shortly, because of the coming crash in the sugar industry, one-third of all workers in mills in the Mackay area will be left without a job. As Mr Booth put it so eloquently and accurately last night, this legislation has been foisted upon us by the crazy conviction of this Government. Honourable members have heard Government members use buzz words such as "deregulation", "micro-economic reform" and "level playing field". That has already translated into the collapse of the wool industry in this country. The wool industry is responsible for one-tenth of the entire export earnings of this nation. For the past two centuries, this nation was carried by the wool industry. However, in one crazy, two-month period, that industry was destroyed by the wreckers in Canberra today. I thought that Whitlam was a great wrecker, but these people make him look like a rank amateur.

I am talking about the deregulation of the sugar industry. This legislation is part of that deregulation program. I do not believe that anyone who knows anything about the sugar industry would seriously deny that this is part of the deregulation program that is moving forward. The Wool Corporation was abolished, and wool prices were left to the market forces—that was the term that was used last year—in the wool industry. That is exactly what is happening now in the sugar industry. That industry must now compete with countries that pay 20c a day to cane-cutters who operate machinery. That is what plant-operators in South American countries are earning. Our industry must compete with those people. Fine! We can compete with those countries if we are allowed to break down awards. But who in this place would seriously want our awards to drop below their present level? Most certainly not me. I am on record here as saying that. Honourable members must not think that employees—

Mr Fenlon: What about employment agreements?

Mr KATTER: I take the interjection with glee. The honourable member raised the issue of voluntary enterprise agreements. That is what is called collective bargaining. In relation to controlled marketing—all that the Opposition ever asked for was the right to collective bargaining. I do not think that many people would deny that. I have heard even the greatest radical loudmouths in the union movement say, "Allow us to collectively bargain and then just give us legal sanctions protecting that collective bargaining." That is what they have asked for, and that is what is being destroyed here today. Government members are cold-bloodedly participating in that. Just as history passes such a favourable judgment upon those heroes of the Labor movement in the early part of this century, it will pass a harsh judgment upon the wreckers who will pass the legislation in the

House today and who are carrying out the program that is being implemented by Canberra, which has already destroyed the wool, wheat, gold and tourism industries and is now about to destroy the sugar industry of Queensland.

As Mr Booth said last night, when the EC, with 600 million people, decides to dump its surplus sugar on the world market, does anyone seriously consider that this country of 17 million people will be able to compete against that? Every time that the sugar price rises, beet sugar will begin to be produced in Europe and then, as a result of overproduction, it will be dumped onto the world market. Our farmers will never again be able to enjoy the high price that they once received. As overproduction occurs and the EC dumps sugar on the world market, they will most certainly suffer the depressed prices; but they will never be able to, as they have in the past, enjoy the high prices.

In relation to deregulation, free market forces, level playing fields and all of those other great buzz words that we hear from Canberra—what was said at the Boyer lectures must be noted carefully. I recommend strongly that any honourable member who is interested in those matters should listen to the Boyer lectures given the year before last by Mr Tom Fitzgerald, a very noted and active supporter of the ALP in years past. In those lectures, he said, effectively, that the most successful economy in the world is the Japanese economy, where a bewildering array—and I quote verbatim from his commentary—of subsidies, grants and protections are available to industry. We in Australia are launched on the completely opposite tack. The present Government in Canberra is advocating deregulation, micro-economic reform, level playing fields, laissez-faire capitalism—whatever term one likes to use. If that is the proper way to go, honourable members should compare the performance of the economy and how successful the implementation of that program has been under that Government with the performance of the Japanese economy over the same past nine years. They could then tell me which is the successful way to travel. All that we are talking about is the policy of the people on this side of the House, which has constantly been that of controlled marketing—or whatever one likes to call it. To use a trade union term, I suppose that we are talking about collective bargaining. For as long as I have been in this place and been associated with the National Party, that has been the policy on this side of the House.

However, it has not always been the policy of members opposite. There has been a dramatic and radical change in their policies. Their policy has been disastrous for Australia. Half of our entire export earnings come from nine commodities, five of which have been wrecked beyond belief. I will name them once again: wool, gold, wheat, sugar and tourism. Half of those commodities have been wrecked by, almost exclusively, the Federal Government. For the information of those honourable members who claim that there was a world collapse in the price of wheat—I state that I do not deny that. I do not blame the Federal Government for the world collapse in the price of wheat. However, I do blame it for providing no protected price on the home market. There is absolutely no purpose in a wheat-farmer planting wheat when he knows that he will sell that wheat at a loss. That is the situation that exists now. If he had a protected home market, at least he could sell into the home market some of that wheat so that he could receive an average pool price, which is a combination of the world market price and the home market price, and which would give him some ability to produce, if not at a profit, at least at break-even point.

That is not happening here. For the first time in almost 100 years, EC beet sugar can be dumped on the market in Australia, which must, inevitably, be destroyed. Maybe it will be a sad and slow process; maybe it will be a very fast process. The foreign vultures are hovering over Bundaberg. The honourable representative for that area should hang his head in shame for the things that he said and, more importantly, that he did not say last night. I ask the House: how many foreign vultures must fly over the carcasses of the destroyed Australian economy before this place wakes up to reality and comes back to truths that have proved so successful over such a protracted period of time?

Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.30 p.m.

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (2.30 p.m.), in reply: This has been rather a lengthy debate, possibly too lengthy in some respects. Almost without exception, every member has given recognition to the Sugar Industry Working Party report. This working party comprised Mr Noel Fitzpatrick, Don Watson and Fred Soper, and their appointment to this working party was accepted without criticism throughout the industry. The report was handed down at the beginning of May last year and was the result of consultation with every section of the industry and community organisations throughout the sugar-growing areas of Queensland. At the very first round of talks that I had with several sugar industry organisations following the release of the report, I was told without exception that they were prepared to accept the package. There were some matters in the report that they did not like and would prefer to do without, but they were prepared to accept it as a package.

The legislation is based on that report. Some variations and changes have been negotiated with the industry and the Sugar Industry Working Party itself. There has been a constant round of negotiations and the results of all those negotiations have been made public at all times. Nothing has been kept back at any stage. Yet, almost without exception, Opposition members are crying, bleating and weeping because they say that they have only been given a week to look at this Bill. My own backbenchers have been given only a week to look at this Bill. It merely puts the Sugar Industry Working Party report into legal terminology. If the members of the National Party and the Liberal Party have not had time since May last year to read the Sugar Industry Working Party report, I cannot help that, neither can the industry or anyone connected with it. It is absolutely false for them to make the accusation that they have not had time to read the Bill.

Mr RANDELL: I rise to a point of order. We did not say that we did not have time to examine it. We said that the industry did not have time.

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

Mr CASEY: If the honourable member objects, so be it. I do not intend to debate the point. I merely tell Opposition members to check *Hansard*. My recollection—and the recollection of every member in this House—as to what was actually said is quite clear. Mr Randell cannot deny the fact that without exception members opposite said that they had only a week to look at the Bill. That is right, but they have had 14 months to look at what has been happening, together with everyone else. The member for Mirani was able to quote from articles appearing in newspapers which were dated June last year and which contained comments about the various aspects that would be contained in the legislation when it was drafted. The legislation is now completed and everyone is aware of what it contains. The speech made by the Leader of the Liberal Party was the worst because he said that the Bill did not resemble the working party report. I do not know whether he was referring to the actual layout of the Bill or what is actually contained in it, but this legislation is written in legal terms and puts all of the working party recommendations into effect. I feel sorry for the Leader of the Liberal Party if he is unable to read and understand the Bill. The members of the Opposition also gave a clear indication that not too many of them knew what was contained in the old legislation. They referred to the power of the Minister, but they should go back and have a look at the old legislation that will be repealed by this Bill. If they do that, they will find out what types of controls previous National Party Ministers had over the sugar industry.

There is one major matter I wish to highlight as far as the legislation and the sugar industry are concerned. The people in the industry are prepared to accept this legislation, because it has formed part of our discussions. The legislation will provide the opportunity for mutual trust to be developed between millers and growers. There has been mistrust in the industry for the past 100 years because of many of the developments within the industry and the way in which National Party branches endeavoured to interfere with what should or should not happen in the industry. This Bill is not about party politics. Even this week, in certain cane-growing regions in Queensland pressure has been applied on National Party members as to what should happen in this Parliament in regard to

the legislation. The industry has held firm. It has negotiated a satisfactory position with me as Minister, and this is what they want. I am proud to be able to say that a mutual trust exists between me, as a Minister of the Crown and Minister of the Government that is introducing this legislation, and the people with whom I have been negotiating, such as the cane-growers, the millers and the various other groups in the industry. I ask those in the industry to take that example of mutual trust away from this House today and put it into practice in their own areas. Now, they are being given the opportunity to determine their own future and make their own decisions in their own mill areas. Farm-managers are being given the opportunity to decide what they do or do not want as far as their own farms are concerned. Mills can work in mutual trust with them in the future planned expansion of the industry so that the growers know and understand the commitment that has been made. Mill-owners are prepared for a two and a half per cent expansion this year, next year and the year after in their mill capacity. During the first two years of the enactment of this legislation, the people in the industry will work out a fair and proper system of cane payments, which is something that the industry has been ducking for 40 years. This Government has been prepared to include this matter in the legislation so that it can become law. This Bill meets those challenges.

As I said before, this legislation has been developed on mutual trust between industry negotiators and me, and that is the way the legislation will be implemented. The mutual trust was built up over 14 months of negotiations—as all speakers during the debate have recognised—and finally the legislation has been presented to this Parliament. However, what type of conduct has characterised this debate? Yesterday and today, this Parliament was treated to one of the most disgraceful displays I have ever seen of mindless opposition for opposition's sake. Members of both the National Party and the Liberal Party say that they will totally oppose this Bill. The last National Party speaker in the debate even went so far as to say that this Government is destroying the industry. What a load of rubbish! Does he think that the people who have been negotiating with me on behalf of industry organisations want to see the industry destroyed? Certainly not! Bearing in mind that they are the experts in the industry, does he think that they would negotiate on such a basis or, if they had gained that impression, fail to make clear to me what their opinion of such a course would be? Certainly not! They have not done that at all. The accusations made during this debate are the same as the cries that were heard in 1915 when—as speakers on both sides of the Chamber have so rightly mentioned—the House saw the introduction of the last major piece of sugar legislation, which really set the sugar industry on the path that it has followed for decades.

To illustrate the point I am making, I will use a well known Labor colloquialism which is associated with what should happen in the community: "It's time." It is time for this Government to restructure the sugar industry and modernise it, and that is exactly what this legislation is doing. In spite of that, expressions of total opposition to change have been heard from the National Party and the Liberal Party. Why do members of those parties oppose this Bill? I can refer to the comments they have made during this debate and say that they have opposed it not because it is wrong in principle. Not one speaker from the opposition parties indicated what was wrong in principle with the Bill; rather, speaker after speaker rose and spoke about the positive elements of the legislation. Do they oppose the Bill on philosophical grounds? Certainly not! They say they oppose it on the grounds that they do not like the Standing Orders that have given them only seven days to look into the provisions, in spite of the fact that they have had 14 months when they could have followed the trend of the Bill. They also say that, for this Bill, they wanted some different processes applied. I point out to them that this Bill is one of substance, not process. Members of the opposition parties have failed their constituents miserably.

The member for Hinchinbrook rose and complained about all of the provisions he did not know about in the Bill. Only a month or so ago, he was present when I stood before a meeting in his electorate. In attendance at that meeting were 300 cane-growers from the Herbert River district. I explained to them the main thrust of the Bill and offered them the opportunity to ask questions. I offered to answer directly and honestly

any questions that they cared to ask from the floor of the meeting in an effort to inform them of where the Government was going and what was going to happen in relation to this Bill.

Mr Rowell interjected.

Mr CASEY: The proposals that I outlined at that time were acceptable to the growers. However, the National Party groups have stepped up their opposition to this Bill, and that is why the member is talking the way he is talking now. Only last Friday, which was the day after the Bill was presented to this Parliament, I attended a meeting in Proserpine at which I spoke to approximately 200 people who were representing growers and millers from that region and from other regions such as Mackay. I was the keynote speaker at a rural seminar that was being held and I spoke to them personally.

Mr Harper: Did you give them a copy of the Bill?

Mr CASEY: Yes, I did give them a copy of the Bill and the Explanatory Notes. I also spoke personally to the growers and the millers who were in attendance. For the sake of the former Minister for Primary Industries who interjects—and who made an ass of himself again today—I will relate the type of response that I received. I will do so for his benefit. The chairman of directors of the Proserpine mill addressed the meeting after I had spoken and after I had answered all the questions. In front of the growers and millers assembled there, he said, "This is the best thing that has ever happened to the sugar industry in Queensland in my time." Growers stood up and said exactly the same thing. Over that weekend, this legislation was the toast of Proserpine. The honourable member for Whitsunday can confirm what I am saying, because the meeting was held in her electorate and she keeps her ear close to the ground. She knows what the response to the draft legislation was, and that is why she spoke so well of this Bill last night. The people in the sugarcane-growing areas of this State have said, "We accept this legislation. We have authority to conduct ourselves according to our own management programs." However, what was the response from members of the National Party during the debate? They put on a shocking exhibition.

The member for Mirani led the debate on behalf of the Opposition and took 90 minutes to say virtually nothing. He was an embarrassment—an absolute embarrassment—both to his own party and to the cane-growers in his electorate who will read his speech. He rose in this Chamber under parliamentary privilege and actually insulted the cane-growers of Queensland. He and his colleagues claimed that the corporation cannot possibly have what they quaintly refer to as an "industry majority". I point out to them that the selection process for the appointment of the members of the corporation is based on merit. The appointed members will be selected on the grounds of merit. The process is set out in the Bill. The members will not be selected by me as Minister. Who says I will control the selection process? The Bill certainly does not provide for the selection to be done by me as Minister. It will not be done by the bureaucrats in my department or other Government bureaucrats, and it will not be done by representatives of the industry. Members of the Opposition should read the provisions of the Bill because the legislation gives control over the selection process to the industry, and it sets out the procedure for the industry to select the people whom the growers and millers want to become members of the corporation. Those provisions are in accordance with the recommendations contained in the report of the Sugar Industry Working Party. That is not new, because it was known in May last year. There are no hidden agendas associated with this legislation. I say to the member for Mirani, Mr Randell, that if he knows sugarcane-farmers who would be excellent members of the corporation, he should, for goodness' sake, encourage them to seek membership. If they have the required merit, they will win a position. The member for Mirani should not have risen in this Chamber and told the cane-growers that, because of the terms of the Bill, they cannot be selected. That is not true.

Mr Randell: Can Harry Bonanno be a member of the corporation?

Mr CASEY: The member's statements were not strictly true. The people who possess the appropriate skills will be selected, but the member has said that cane-growers do not have the necessary skills. What an insult! The contributions that members of the opposition parties made to this debate ranged widely across many topics, except the Bill itself. The honourable member for Gympie delivered his usual diatribe and focused his attention on financial matters and interest rates.

Mr Randell: He was quite correct, too.

Mr CASEY: I accept that interest rates are a problem in the rural community, but this Bill concerns the sugar industry. It is not a Supply Bill or a Bill that concerns financial issues. When the Sugar Industry Bill was addressed by members of the opposition parties, they did so in an appallingly ignorant way. I will instance the contribution of the honourable member for Auburn, a former Minister for Primary Industries. He poured scorn on the manner in which the Bill was drafted. *Hansard* will reveal that he said that the definition of "crushing capacity" was dreadful drafting. Let me tell the member for Auburn that the definition is word for word from the old Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act. Why? Because it is still relevant and it is therefore retained. In fact, the Bill retains many, if not most, of the features of the existing legislation. If something was working well, it was kept. If something was holding back the industry, if it was irrelevant or counterproductive, out it went—after full consultation with the industry. I am stunned by the apparent ignorance of the old legislation by the member for Auburn. As Minister for Primary Industries, he administered the legislation for a number of years. He amended it on a number of occasions. Most of those alterations provided for more ministerial control. He was known in his own department as being the Minister who wanted to take control of everything at the top. In fact, if one goes to that department, one can still see furrows in the carpet where everybody trooped up to the Minister's office to receive approval for everything. The Minister cannot deny that he, as Minister, introduced into this House legislation relating to the transfer of assignments that was a hindrance to the industry. The industry knew that. People who wanted to transfer assignment between districts had to apply to the Minister for approval before the board could consider it. If that is not absolute autocratic control, nothing is.

Mr Harper: You were critical of that.

Mr CASEY: Of course I was critical of it. It is not in this Bill; it is out of the Bill. That ministerial control has been thrown away, as have many of the other ministerial controls. To my mind, instead of reading the Bill, Opposition members seem to have perused every page of it to find the number of times that the word "Minister" was contained in it. If they were to peruse every Bill that was presented in this Parliament, they would find the same provision. That is why the definition of "Minister" is included at the beginning of all Bills. The honourable member attempted also to point out that the Bill does not address the Sugar Cane Prices Fund. Of course it does not. The disposition of that fund is a matter for the Financial Administration and Audit Act, which governs all Government funds. I have given an undertaking to the industry—the cane-growers and the millers—that, once the carry-on work of the old Central Sugar Cane Prices Board is completed and that fund is no longer required, it will be transferred from Treasury to the corporation to be administered.

I would like to be able to address all the problems raised by all Opposition members who spoke in the debate. However, one can cast a net over the lot of them. They had not read the Bill and they did not understand the Sugar Industry Working Party report. They carried on as they had for the last 32 years with the sugar industry. They carried on with the politics of the National Party instead of the politics of the industry, which has been their problem all along. Consequently, they cannot cop the political side of the matter. That is why they want to divide the House on all these matters. They have not found any flaws in the Bill. They did not like the process by which the Bill was introduced. They did not like the constant consultation that occurred. Industry after industry with which I had discussions in this State told me the same thing. They said to me—and I

will put it in non-parliamentary terms because that is the way they told it—"You couldn't tell that Harper anything. He knew everything and wanted to control our organisations in accordance with his will, not with our will." Industry after industry—not only the sugar industry; various grain industries, the cattle industry, the fruit and vegetable industry—the whole box and dice—said that to me. Harper took his riding instructions from the National Party and did not look after the interests of the industry. I can negotiate with industries, because that is what we are all about in the Labor Party. We look after industries, not just a particular section of growers. During the debate, a Government member put it correctly when he referred to the farm-gate philosophy of the National Party. The Labor Party takes an industry as being an organisation that involves people right along the line, from producers through to consumers. All the people who are involved in the handling, the packaging, the insurance, the transportation, the processing and so on have just as important a part to play in the industry as anybody else. After all, there is a big difference between a stick of sugarcane up in a paddock in the Mackay region and the sweetener in a bottle of Coca Cola in the hand of a young Japanese student. There is a big difference between a bullock on the hoof in far-western Queensland and a hamburger between the teeth of a truckie in the United States. I can name all the other industries that were involved. There are not many food and fibre products that we produce through our primary industries in Australia that finish up going to a consumer in the form in which they are grown.

The member for Burdekin claimed that I was misled by my advisers. Let me again point out that my advisers were the sugar industry people of Queensland and those associated with the industry. Again, he cast insult and aspersions not on me, not on my staff and not on those who prepared the legislation for me, but on the primary producers of this State who grow sugarcane, on the millers who put it into cane sugar and on the refiners who put it into white sugar for the consumer's table. I acknowledge that some of the contributions by the member for Burnett were much better than those of some of his colleagues. However, like the member for Flinders, he referred to the term "deregulation". During the entire 14-month campaign leading up to this Bill, no-one has heard me use the word "deregulation" when referring to the sugar industry. That is because deregulation is simply reregulation. At all times, I have used the terms "modernise" and "rationalise" when referring to the sugar industry, and that is what the Bill does. It gives us legislation that is modern, legislation that is flexible and legislation that will be successful for a long time for the industry. But I forecast that that will not last forever. As time goes on, the legislation will need to be adjusted.

For the first time, the industry has a policy council. The policy council has been criticised in regard to what it will or will not do. It will give all sections of the industry the opportunity of having an input into their own affairs. One had to be involved in the industry to see the sickening way in which the State Government organised things back in the mid-1980s when the industry was in dire trouble because of the international price. It took that Government 18 months, with rounds of meetings all over the countryside, to realise that changes had to take place in the industry, and it was decided that acquisition had to be continued. That is all that that Government came up with. Goodness gracious me, in 1915 the Labor Party came up with that solution as the basis of success for the industry. The industry staggered on. The Sugar Industry Working Party inquiry was necessary because many major decisions had to be made following the Savage report in 1985. It was put aside because prices rose and everybody said, "It is okay. Things are fine again." However, the structures were not right; they were not corrected. That is the purpose of this Bill. That is what it comes down to. That policy council will have majority industry representation. Without going through the whole Bill in detail, I have already indicated to the president of the Queensland Cane Growers Council that I would like to see four representatives of that council on the policy committee, one from each of the recognised sugar regions in Queensland. He acknowledges that that is a good and a fair way to ensure that representation. That will be the case.

I think that all honourable members would agree that the grain industry is not exactly what one would call a great supporter of the Labor Party. I do not know how

many seats the Government has in grain-growing areas. It has a few, particularly in the newer areas. The member for Broadsound, Mr Pearce, and other Labor members represent the grain industry in a much better fashion than did previous National Party members in those areas. Nonetheless, the grain industry is headed in the same direction as the sugar industry. The grain industry is going to be restructured and modernised, but it is doing it quite voluntarily. Representatives of the grain industry said, "Okay, it sounds like a good idea. Will you let us look at it ourselves?" That is taking place. The honourable member for Auburn is shaking his head because he knows that when he was the responsible Minister, he introduced legislation that gave him a stranglehold on the industry so that he could manipulate it in accordance with the way the National Party wanted the industry to be run rather than the way in which the industry itself wanted to run its own affairs. This Government is freeing up that industry.

I suppose I can sum up the attitude of the Opposition as nothing but doom and gloom. Members of the Opposition talk about those "terrible" tariffs and how these "shocking" Labor people are reducing the sugar industry tariff. I invite members of the Opposition to look at what is happening in Canberra at present. Mr Hewson supports the tariff, as do the Federal National Party members. The Federal National Party members of Parliament have adopted the Liberal Opposition's stance regarding tariffs, including the reduction of the sugar industry tariff. The Federal members of the National Party are now going along with it 100 per cent. A few fellows did a bit of bleating and were pulled back into line, and now they are going along with it, too.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr CASEY: The member for Mirani should take a look at what his own Federal Leader is saying. His own Federal Leader is saying that it is in the best interests of the industry.

As Minister for Primary Industries, I get advice from the sugar industry. I am very happy to get that advice, and I get it across-the-board. However, more importantly, in this Parliament many sugar electorates are represented by Labor members who can at all times give me the grassroots feeling of the people involved in the industry, the people who see, know and understand the industry. Last night, and again today, honourable members heard from those good grassroots members who represent sugar electorates. I refer to Mr Dollin, Mr Nunn, Mr Campbell, Mr Pitt, Mr Sullivan—the member for Mulgrave, Mrs Clark, the member for Barron River, Mrs Bird, the member for Whitsunday, and many others.

Mr McGrady: Peter Beattie.

Mr CASEY: Peter Beattie grew up in a sugar-growing area in Queensland, and he knows the sugar industry well. There is no doubt about that. I will add to that the five Cabinet Ministers who represent people involved in the sugar industry in one way or another. I might add that that is the largest number of Queensland Cabinet Ministers from sugar-growing areas of this State since Labor went out of office in 1957. The Government gets its information from the people who are involved in the industry. That is the basis on which this Bill has been framed and presented to the Parliament. This Bill will be greatly beneficial to the sugar industry in this State.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 47

NOES, 28

Resolved in the affirmative.

Committee

Hon. E. D. Casey (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1.1 to 1.4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 1.5—

Mr RANDELL (3.06 p.m.): This is the first of over 100 clauses in the Bill that refer to the Minister either dictating, determining or directing the future policy of the sugar industry. Under this clause, the Sugar Industry Policy Council is a Claytons policy council. This clause gives total power to the Minister. It states—

" . . . on such conditions as the Minister determines . . . "

That gives the Minister power to determine the matter. He is not required to accept the advice of the sugar industry. To me, that puts total power in the hands of the Minister. The Sugar Industry Policy Council has to accept the Minister's directions.

The clause refers to "the aggregate of all assignments". Opposition members have raised their concerns about the assignments of the Queensland sugar industry, and the Minister laughed at those concerns. I cite the article in today's Mackay *Daily Mercury*. The Minister's own home town newspaper refers to the Mackay District Canegrowers Executive. The article, which is headed "Canegrowers wary of move for expansion", states—

"Mackay district canegrowers are unlikely to take up the 3000 hectares proposed for expansion by the new sugar bill."

That article was reported in Mackay, the Minister's own home town. The Minister cannot stand up and tell me that cane-growers are not concerned about this Bill. Of course they are concerned. They are concerned about expansion and the consequences of this Bill. Today's Mackay *Daily Mercury* editorial states—

"Not in the mood for expansion.

Mackay district growers are not in the mood to talk about cane expansion. Understandably, they are approaching with caution an invitation, made under the new sugar bill provisions, to expand considerably."

Of course they are concerned. Cane-growers throughout Queensland are concerned about this Bill. The Minister should believe that, because cane-growers in his own home town are concerned about the provisions of this Bill. The Opposition is so concerned about this legislation that it cannot accept it. Opposition members disagree with the provisions in the Bill. I hark back to the Minister's earlier statements, that he will direct under this clause, that he thinks that growers are not too bright, that they have had their heads in too many scrums, that their brains are muddled and that they cannot handle their own industry. We on this side of the House disagree completely with those statements. Therefore, I have no alternative but to move the following amendment—

"At page 5, line 26, delete—

'as the Minister determines'

and insert—

'as recommended to the Minister by a committee comprising two representatives from each of the Queensland Canegrowers' Council and the Australian Sugar Milling Council Pty Ltd and one representative from the Australian Cane Farmers' Association Limited.'

Mr HARPER: During the second-reading stage, we heard the Minister, in his diatribe, make the point that he thought that this or that would be appropriate for the policy council. He did not have the courage to commit himself by putting in writing in the Bill a provision prescribing membership. If the Minister is genuine in his endeavours to give representation to the industry—and if he wants to convince this Committee that he is genuine—he should be prepared to accept the Opposition's amendment, which simply ensures that he and any of his successors will be required to take advice from a committee comprising representatives of the Queensland Cane Growers Council, the Australian Sugar Milling Council and the Australian Cane Farmers Association in determining the membership of the council.

Mr CASEY: The amendment moved by the Opposition shows how out of date and out of touch it is. The Queensland Cane Growers Council is about to change its name. Even if I accepted the amendment, when the name is changed—which I understand will occur next week—a further amendment will have to be made to the legislation. In addition, members opposite exclude from their considerations of that council bodies such as the research groups and organisations such as the BSES and the Sugar Research Institute. They exclude the fact that the Commonwealth, as well as being responsible for the export of sugar, provides considerable funding for research in the sugar industry. Therefore, a member of the Commonwealth department ought to be represented on the Sugar Industry Policy Council.

Opposition members exclude from their consideration the fact that the work throughout the industry is done by people who are members of trade unions. Those people will have a say on the council's policy matters. All of these things have been negotiated and discussed with the different industry organisations and they have no objection whatsoever to the people whom I will be inviting to join the council. Things will be done in accordance with the legislation, certainly not in the way that is being suggested by the Opposition.

Mr ROWELL: I agree with the member for Auburn. The people who are to be appointed to the policy council should have been nominated in the Bill. Nominations have been made in every other instance, and I refer to the composition of the selection committee and the corporation. Why could not the same have been done in relation to the policy council? Whom will the Minister appoint as representatives? He said something about cane-growers being appointed to the council. What about the milling people, the people who really have equity in the industry? Could the Minister answer that?

Mr Stephan interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Gympie will be quiet while I am on my feet. I remind him of Standing Order 123A.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 47

NOES, 29

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 1.5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 1.6 to 1.8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 1.9—

Mr RANDELL (3.19 p.m.): I seek an explanation from the Minister about this clause, which states—

"This Act binds the Crown in the right of the State and also, so far as the legislative power of the State extends, in all its other capacities, subject to the following:—

- (a) the Crown is not liable to a penalty for a contravention of this Act; and
- (b) an agent of the Crown who contravenes this Act is liable for any penalty prescribed by this Act in relation to such a contravention."

I have no quarrel with subclause (a). I believe that a Minister of the Crown or anyone representing the Crown should have that protection. However, I wonder why the following words are included—

" . . . an agent of the Crown who contravenes this Act is liable for any penalty prescribed by this Act in relation to such a contravention."

Why does the Minister have protection yet his agent has no protection? Why does the Minister let the agent carry the can?

Mr CASEY: There is a simple and easy answer to this question. The Government is introducing this measure into most Acts. Why should the Crown or anybody else be exempt from acts that they commit?

Mr RANDELL: I do not believe that the Minister has provided a satisfactory explanation by saying that it is in the Bill. I notice that the Minister is seeking advice. I ask the Minister: why does an agent not receive the same protection as does a Minister of the Crown? That agent is carrying out the very same functions. Perhaps some of the legal people on the other side of the House might like to explain this.

Mr CASEY: During my second-reading speech, I believe that I said that some Opposition members could not read or understand Bills. Do Opposition members suggest

that if the Government takes on an action, it must do so on behalf of the Crown? That would mean that the Crown would be opposing the Crown. The simple answer is: Government policy.

Clause 1.9, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2.1 to 2.4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.5—

Mr HARPER (3.21 p.m.): I refer particularly to clause 2.5 (2). If one were really suspicious of the Minister, one could imagine that the question that I am about to ask is brought about by a fear that the Minister is going to make politically motivated appointments. I do not suggest that. The matter that I raise relates to a practice that is common to many clauses throughout the Bill. The appointments are all for a term of three years, ending on the same date as that for all members. I appreciate that the following subclause states that an appointed member is eligible for reappointment. However, it seems to me that an assurance of continuity will be lacking in the appointments. In many cases in the past, it was the practice to make some appointments for five years, some for three years and others for two years in order to maintain continuity. I am sure that the Minister would appreciate the advantage of being assured of continuity. I ask the Minister: what is the rationale behind making all appointments for a term of three years?

Mr CASEY: This gives me the opportunity to remind all honourable members that fresh in their memories is the fact that, in recent months, the National Party canvassed the length and breadth of Queensland and advocated no more and no less than three-year parliamentary terms. I think that is a very good example for us. However, as the former Minister would well know, the other example is that all of the primary industry legislation that was passed in the Parliament when he was the relevant Minister also had similar fixed terms.

Clause 2.5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.6—

Mr RANDELL (3.24 p.m.): The Opposition is very concerned about clause 2.6. It is a matter which is of great concern to the industry. The corporation will have a membership of nine, yet, under clause 2.6, only four of those members will be industry representatives. That is not quite good enough. Opposition members have said that in their speeches. Everyone in Queensland is saying the same thing. The industry in Queensland—the cane-growers—provide 62 per cent of the funding. Sixty per cent of the total industry infrastructure is in Queensland—yet it will be dictated to by outsiders, at least three or four of whom will be selected by the Minister at his whim.

Lately, so many corporations in Australia are headed by so-called experts—bureaucrats. One after another, those corporations are going to the wall. This is of vital concern to members of the cane-growing industry, who depend upon their own judgment to make a living. I do not know why the Government will not give them majority representation on the corporation. The Opposition totally rejects it. I now move the following amendments—

"At page 8, line 8, delete—

'two'

and insert—

'three' ";

"At page 8, line 9, after 'cane' insert—

', two being nominees of the Queensland Canegrowers' Council and one a nominee of the Australian Canefarmers' Association Limited.' ";

At page 8, line 11, after 'cane' insert—

'being nominees of the Australian Sugar Milling Council Pty Limited.' "

I ask members of the back bench to consider this seriously. If the House passes the amendment, the whole industry will settle down. The legislation will be more conducive to harmony in the industry, which will be better for the future of the industry in Queensland. By moving those amendments, the Opposition is saying that three members of the corporation should be official representatives of the cane-growing industry in Queensland and that two should be nominated by the millers, not by the Minister. The amendments are the crux of the matter. I urge all honourable members to support the amendments.

Mr CASEY: The amendments are not acceptable, and the member would well know why. In the past 14 months, those points were canvassed throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. The representation is as suggested by the report of the Sugar Industry Working Party. It is accepted as part of the package. Certainly, the Government is not prepared to accept any amendment to clause 2.6.

Mr ROWELL: What the Minister said is not exactly true. People in our part of the world are saying that they are losing control of the industry. By having a minority of four out of the nine people on the corporation reduces the effect of the people who have the equity, the people who back the industry. They should be members of the corporation so that they can determine exactly how the industry operates. I must make the point that there is a prospect that, say, five people who come from the industry could be involved in the corporation. It depends upon the selection committee. Under the clause, two growers and two millers will be members of the corporation. Of course, there are five other members. When the Government drafts legislation such as this, it should give the running of the industry—the industry which pays the bills and which will be affected directly—to those people who really steer that industry. Those people are the millers and the growers. The Opposition proposes to give the corporation a composition that would ensure just that. I would bet that every cane-grower along the north coast of Queensland is right behind this amendment.

Mr KATTER: I would like to make the same observations as the member for Hinchinbrook. I have spoken to a number of the senior members of the cane industry. I have seen very, very great anger over this issue. As more and more of them realise what is happening, the greater the anger will grow. One of the members opposite spoke about the hardships of cane-cutters. Many people in the industry have cut cane and they know the tremendous hardships that they and their forefathers have had to go through. They will not stand by idly and watch the industry be given up. The Opposition spokesman on Primary Industries has cut cane. Over a long period, we have seen the force and vehemence with which he has represented the industry. That demonstrates clearly to the House the sort of anger that will be felt throughout Queensland when people begin to realise, as has Mr Randell over the years in this House, that, when that industry is in jeopardy, they will fight. Of course, if the Government will not give those people a say in the running of the industry, there is only one way to fight. That is a very, very ugly scenario for the State of Queensland.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 40

NOES, 28

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 2.6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.7—

Mr RANDELL (3.36 p.m.): The Opposition does not think that this is a very good clause. This clause bars a leader of a cane-grower organisation or the Australian Cane Farmers Association from being nominated for appointment to this body. There is no reason to bar anyone from being appointed to such an organisation. Such a person would not hold that position if he or she did not have the confidence of the industry and possess some expertise and great knowledge of the industry. Why should a person be barred simply because he or she has been elected to be a leader of an organisation? The Opposition has no alternative but to move the following amendment—

"At page 8, line 45, delete—

'(b) the chairperson, deputy chairperson or chief executive officer of an organisation that recommended the appointment by the Minister to the selection committee of any member of the selection committee.' "

This amendment will allow for people with greater expertise to serve on that body, and this will be widely accepted by people in the sugar industry.

Mr HARPER: It is very difficult to understand the rationale behind the proposal contained in clause 2.7 (4) (b). As the Opposition spokesman has indicated, this will deny service on that corporation to some of the people with the best brains and who have the confidence of their membership to head their industry organisations. They will be denied the opportunity to represent their sector of the industry on the corporation. For the life of me, I cannot understand the rationale behind this provision, unless the Government has some hidden agenda. Perhaps this provision will ensure that only former chairpersons or deputy chairpersons of organisations have the ability to be nominated to a position on the corporation. I look forward to hearing a reasoned explanation from the Minister. The Opposition has a right to expect a reasoned explanation from the Minister and not simply a tirade of abject criticism.

Mr ROWELL: I agree with the member for Auburn. Industry leaders are selected by their peers to represent them on their industry organisations and these people should not be barred from this corporation. It is sad that people of such calibre will not be allowed to serve on a corporation that controls the industry. After all, the members of those organisations, such as cane-growers and millers, are elected because of their

particular abilities. It is very unfair that they will be denied the opportunity to serve on that corporation.

Mr CASEY: I suppose I could allude to the experience of the member for Auburn in explaining the reason for this clause. In council meetings of the National Party, he put similar reasons for opposing the replacement of Vic Sullivan as the member for Condamine by Sir Robert Sparkes. He did not want the president of the National Party organisation involved in parliamentary representation.

Mr Harper: How do you know what I said?

Mr CASEY: Oh, a lot of stories come out of the National Party that the member for Auburn does not know about.

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is obviously trying to put on the record of this Parliament matters of a purely political nature of which he has no understanding and of which he has no first-hand knowledge. Those suggestions are made in error, and I find them offensive. I ask that they be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Minister to withdraw the remarks.

Mr CASEY: I will withdraw them if the member feels that way, but it is obvious from his response that the honourable member for Condamine would be very interested in those remarks. The answer to the queries raised by the honourable member is, again, the answer that was given in relation to so many issues that have been raised by the Opposition. I think the members of the Opposition must have a hidden agenda. They are trying to keep the Parliament sitting by rehashing and reiterating points that have been made time and time again. The recommendations made by the Sugar Industry Working Party are reflected in this clause. The Government adopted the working party's recommendations as a package and have followed through in accordance with the discussions that have been held with the industry. The provisions of this clause have been resolved by the industry and have been determined by it as satisfactory. That being the case, the Government intends to stick to this legislation.

Mr RANDELL: I find quite strange the Minister's claim that he is persisting with this clause because he says he is implementing the recommendations of the Sugar Industry Working Party. He should not try to tell me that he has taken on board every single recommendation made by the working party.

Mr Casey: Read the recommendations.

Mr RANDELL: He has singled out this recommendation. If he wants an instance of recommendations that have not been implemented, I ask him what he has done about funding for the pest boards and BSES? That recommendation is not reflected in the clauses. The Minister has singled out a recommendation and is using it as an excuse for including this clause in the legislation. The effect of this clause will be that good men in the industry will be excluded from the corporation. I do not accept the Minister's explanation.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 40

NOES, 28

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 2.7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.8—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I call the member for Mirani.

Mr ROWELL: Just a moment, Mr Chairman. I was on my feet before you called clause 2.8.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member is out of order. We are dealing with clause 2.8.

Mr ROWELL: Who said "2.8"?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We have voted on the question "That clause 2.7, as read, stand part of the Bill."

Mr ROWELL: Mr Chairman, we voted on an amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Well, I did not see the honourable member and we are now on clause 2.8.

Mr ROWELL: I would like to speak on clause 2.7. I have been unfairly treated.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! We have already dealt with clause 2.7 and taken a vote. I am sorry. I did not see the honourable member. We are now on clause 2.8. I call the member for Mirani.

Mr RANDELL (3.48 p.m.): This is another clause by which the Minister is taking complete control. If a member is appointed to the board of the corporation and the Minister does not like that person, he can sack him and that person has no right of appeal. I do not believe the present Minister would do that, but a future Minister might. There is no provision of a tribunal to which a member who has been sacked for no reason can appeal. It is not justice and it is not fair. I invite Mr Foley and other members of the Socialist Left to examine the clause, which provides—

"The Governor in Council at any time, upon the recommendation of the Minister, may remove a person from office as an appointed member of the Corporation."

If a member of the Socialist Left were sacked without good reason, would members opposite accept that? Where are the civil libertarians now? Let the members representing unions stand up today and support this clause. In a moment, we will vote on the clause and we will see whether Mr Foley stands up for his civil liberties.

Government members interjected.

Mr RANDELL: He is not worth two bob. When he comes into the Chamber, he is a turncoat.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr RANDELL: I am sorry, Mr Chairman. They are provoking me.

Mr FOLEY: I rise to a point of order. I find the remark offensive and I ask that it be withdrawn.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will withdraw the remark.

Mr RANDELL: What remark?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The term "turncoat".

Mr RANDELL: In deference to the Chair, I will withdraw that remark. However, when the vote is taken on this clause, we will see how good the honourable member is. Has not an individual in this State got any rights at all? A person can be appointed to a position on the board and, without any reason—because he may offend a future Minister—he can be sacked and has nowhere to lodge an appeal. Every public servant in the State has that right, yet it is not included in the Bill. The Opposition will be opposing this clause.

Mr ROWELL: I support the member for Mirani. It is ludicrous that a Minister can simply sack a person from the corporation. I hark back to clause 2.7, in which a similar situation occurs. The Minister can remove a person from the selection committee. The Minister has an enormous amount of power.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr FOLEY: It is an extraordinary thing in this Chamber to hear the words "civil liberties" and "individual rights" fall from the lips of honourable members opposite. It is a wonder that they do not scald their mouths. Let me remind honourable members that the power conferred under clause 2.8 is a power to be exercised in accordance with law. If, for example, a Minister or the Governor in Council were to exercise that power in bad faith, for an improper purpose or having taken into account an irrelevant consideration, let me assure honourable members that the law of the land would entitle a person who was the victim of such an adverse exercise of power to seek relief in the Supreme Court of Queensland.

I will tell members of the Opposition something else: as a result of the archaic residue of administrative law left by the National Party Government, the citizens of Queensland would be hard-pressed to exercise those rights. Thank goodness this Government is doing something to reform administrative law by way of the proposed new judicial review Bill, which will at long last sweep away the medieval restrictions that the National Party Government allowed to remain in the area of administrative law, so that persons who are adversely affected may, in the not too distant future, get a judicial review piece of legislation which will enable them to approach the courts to cure the very sorts of defects to which the honourable member refers. It is precisely those sorts of abuses that need to be cured, and it was precisely those sorts of abuses that, under the National Party Government, led to the demise of Queensland's reputation in the civilised world. The member for Mirani should be ashamed of himself for making such an absurd and trivial attack upon this legislation. I look forward to the honourable member's support when legislation is introduced for the reform of judicial review.

Mr RANDELL: I suppose I can reply to that tirade. I would like the honourable member to come down out of fairyland and find out the cold, hard facts about life in this land. I would like to see him get a bit of dirt under his fingernails. On many occasions before he became a member of this Parliament, the member for Yeronga defied the laws of this land and the laws of Queensland. He openly advocated the breaking of those laws. Today, he has an opportunity to stand up for the rights of the individual——

Mr FOLEY: I rise to a point of order. I find the remark that I advocated the breaking of the laws offensive and untrue, and I ask the member to withdraw it.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the honourable member withdraw the remark?

Mr RANDELL: The member for Yeronga is very touchy. I would like to play Rugby League against him——

Government members: Withdraw!

Mr RANDELL: I will withdraw those words. What I in fact said was that the media reported that the member for Yeronga did break the laws of the land in relation to street marches, and so on. It was reported openly in the media. Today, the honourable member has an opportunity to talk about the rights of the individual, yet he is sitting in his place like a stunned mullet. Let us look at this matter in perspective. This involves the rights of an individual who is chosen to do a job—a very, very important job—for a corporation. There is one person in this land who can kick that person out because he does not like him, because he has heard something about him. He can just throw that bloke out the door for political expediency. That person is the Minister. I do not say that this Minister would do it. However, the Minister can throw that bloke out the door and take away his livelihood. If the member for Yeronga does not call that a breach of civil liberties, then he is not worthy to be a member of this Parliament. I say that the honourable member should be standing up for the rights of the individual. I am hoping that the Liberals will support me in this stand. The rights of the individual are of paramount importance. I accept what the Minister says, but I cannot tolerate the hypocritical statements coming from the Government back bench.

Mr HARPER: Mr Chairman——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister wishes to reply to the member for Mirani. Other members can speak later, if they wish to do so. I call the Minister to reply to the member for Mirani.

Mr CASEY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. If ever we saw the reason why those wise people who designed the Standing Orders of this Parliament in the first instance provided for a gag to be applied, we are certainly seeing it today. I must apologise sincerely to my own Government members for the fact that we have to go through simple explanations of what is in the legislation of this State.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr CASEY: The member for Mirani should not have to ask these questions. He is a former Minister of the Crown who administered a considerable number of Acts himself in this Parliament—admittedly only for a relatively short time—and he should know that this provision is contained throughout the legislative Acts of the State of Queensland. He ought to consult the acting Leader of Opposition Business, who sits on his right, before he makes such stupid assertions. It is contained in various Acts. Where there is a right for somebody to appoint, there must be an equal right for somebody to remove. The same person who appoints has the right to remove. I invite members of the Opposition to relate that to their own farms or the businesses they conducted before they came into this place. It is the right to hire and fire. It is a very simple measure that is put into the legislation of this State. It is confirmed in many different Acts. It is confirmed in the Acts Interpretation Act of this State, which governs virtually everything.

All the honourable member for Mirani is doing is displaying an abysmal ignorance of the legislation of this State.

Mr HARPER: I am tempted to describe the utterances of the member for Yeronga as sanctimonious diatribe, but I know that in his heart he is genuine. The difficulty is that he has not got his feet on the ground and he has not been observing what his own Government has been doing over the last 18 months. If he cares to go out and talk to people in the railways—in fact, in all areas of the public sector—who have been dismissed by his own Government without explanation, without reason, he may understand—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have been very lenient.

Mr HARPER: I will refer to the Bill now. Honourable members should understand why the Opposition objects to this provision, which gives the Minister power to simply dismiss, by recommendation to the Governor in Council, an appointee to the corporation. The member for Mirani has put forward a genuine reason. Unlike the diatribe from the Minister, I appreciate the reasoning behind the member for Yeronga's thinking, but suggest that he should place his feet back on the ground.

Mr KATTER: I believe that this clause contains some important issues. I am staggered by the colossal ignorance of the member for Yeronga and the Minister.

Government members interjected.

Mr KATTER: If Government members will stop giggling like a flock of galahs, they might learn about some of the important matters that they should understand in this place. Up until a few years ago, there existed a Public Service Board. I admit that when in Government we abolished it; I believe that that was a mistake. However, when in Government we honoured the principles that were established by the Public Service Board. There was a Cabinet direction that, before a Minister could sack or appoint anyone, the process had to go through an internal review tribunal. I freely and frankly admit that that was not a good system. I believe that we should have moved back to the Public Service Board arrangement, or something similar to it. What has happened now is that not only has the Public Service Board and those principles been utterly abandoned, but also all the upper echelons of the public service have been totally politicised by the mass sacking of some 1 000 employees.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member is really getting off the clause. I ask him to return to the clause.

Mr KATTER: I will. I abide by the judgment of the Chairman, but this is relevant to the particular concept that Opposition members are putting forward today, that once again this Chamber is affirming in legislation the absolute right to hire and fire public servants. That has never been the philosophy or the principle of the National Party and, quite frankly, has been a million miles away from the principles and philosophies of members sitting opposite. Today, that philosophy is being abandoned in complete contravention of ALP principles, and also the principles of members on this side of the Chamber. It is an appalling state of affairs to see a so-called civil libertarian defending this action. The member for Yeronga stated that legislation is needed to cover those principles. Obviously, until that legislation is introduced, we must back the principle put forward by the honourable member for Mirani. If the member for Yeronga is genuine and fair dinkum, Opposition members would expect him to cross the floor and vote in support of the concept put forward by the member for Mirani.

Mr Foley: Rubbish!

Mr KATTER: Well, be consistent.

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

AYES, 41

NOES, 27

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 2.9 to 2.11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.12—

Mr RANDELL (4.08 p.m.): Without any malice or intention to prolong the debate, I refer to clause 2.12 (2) (e), which states—

"seek and accept voluntary contributions from any person to assist it in the discharge of its functions. . . "

I seek from the Minister an explanation as to why he would want voluntary contributions. With what has happened in relation to WA Inc and so on, why does he want voluntary contributions?

Mr CASEY: There is quite a simple explanation. The honourable member would well know that one of the terms of reference of the Sugar Industry Working Party related to value-adding of sugar products. In its report, the working party gave an indication that the Sugar Corporation might be given the power to strike a levy on sections of the industry that may want to be involved in value-adding. During the negotiations that occurred in framing the legislation, the compulsory levy was struck out and provision was made instead for voluntary contributions to be made. For argument's sake, if the growers in the Plane Creek mill area decided to involve themselves further in ethanol production or something like that, they could make voluntary contributions. If there was a decision on further refining capacity somewhere within the industry—and perhaps this is the more succinct point—organisations such as CSR and Bundaberg Sugar, the current refiners in the industry, would not want imposed on their mills, their growers or, for that matter, themselves a compulsory levy which would enable a competitor to set up against them. It would be done voluntarily. If Mackay Sugar wanted to go into the business of refining with some other partner—even with the Sugar Corporation—it could do that, but it would be on a voluntary basis.

Clause 2.12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.13—

Mr RANDELL (4.10 p.m.): Clause 2.13 states—

"Corporation's duty to report concerning distribution of proceeds of vested sugar. (1) It is the duty of the Corporation, within 2 years of the date of commencement of this section or such greater period as may be approved by the Minister at any time . . ."

The Minister knows of the great controversy that has existed over many years between the millers and the growers in relation to the splitting of sugar moneys. The Opposition does not want it to continue any longer than it has to. We on this side think that two years is probably enough time. I do not want to speak at great length on this. I move the following amendment—

"At page 11, line 33, delete—

'or such greater period as may be approved by the Minister at any time'."

That will ensure that the responsible Minister receives a report back within two years. I ask the Minister to give earnest consideration to the amendment. There is nothing political in it. We merely ask that a deadline be set. The Minister may be able to do something later on. He should make it plain to the people involved that he wants the report within two years.

Mr CASEY: I do not want to create anger at this late stage of the afternoon when we are desperately trying to get this Bill out of the road so that the House can get on with its other business. The Opposition spokesman on sugar matters has an absolute hide to even suggest that amendment. He has an absolute hide to say that members on his side do not want it to go on for more than two years. When they were in Government, they let it go on for 32 years. For 32 years they sat in the Parliament and, despite the efforts of every sector of the industry to have this measure addressed, they ignored it. Wherever one went within the industry, the major controversy that existed was between growers and millers over the division of sugar moneys.

As I said earlier, we are trying to put a bit of mutual trust back into the sugar industry. This is included in the Bill. It is not a direction by the Minister and it is not a request to the various sugar groups; it is in the legislation, and it is to be done. But if for some reason or other at the end of the two-year period the matter is almost resolved and for the sake of another week, another month or another three months the whole thing can be wrapped up, will the National Party want it all thrown down the drain? Certainly not! Nor will I! Therefore, that provision is kept as a reserve power, so to speak, whereby it can be extended, if it is absolutely necessary, at the end of that two years. I reiterate that Government members can go out into their sugar electorates and say proudly, "We have addressed this major problem. We have taken it by the ears and thrown it into the ring so that it can be done. It can be carried out and it will be carried out."

Mr ROWELL: As the Minister has raised the issue of the division of sugar moneys, I think he should have imposed a time limit. I think the two-year time limit was quite adequate.

Mr Casey: You had 32 years and that's enough.

Mr ROWELL: Never mind about that. I was not in Parliament then. The Minister can talk about whatever he likes. The Minister has now raised the issue and there is every reason why a time limit should be imposed. He made a suggestion, but he will not put a time limit on it. Depending on the pressures that are put on him, it could run on forever.

Mr HARPER: During the course of this debate, the Minister has been totally in error in a number of his statements about attitudes that I may or may not have held when I was the Minister for Primary Industries. In this instance, though, I certainly agree with the intention of the Bill. If the Minister has consulted his advisers in relation to this issue, he will understand that I was on the path to doing exactly what he is proposing to do. I certainly agree with the intention of this clause. However, in common with all Opposition members, I strongly disagree with any suggestion that the time-frame should be extended beyond two years.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 41

NOES, 25

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 2.13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.15—

Mr HARPER (4.21 p.m.): I direct the attention of the Minister to the Opposition's concern about this clause. It does not matter what has happened in the past, it is what will happen in the future that is important. The provisions of this clause reek of Gestapo powers. It must be understood that the corporation is not like the National Crime Authority or the Criminal Justice Commission. Although the Opposition is not seeking to move amendments at the present time, I suggest that the Minister give serious consideration to granting such very wide powers. As I said, it does not really matter what happened in the past, what is happening now and what will happen in the future is what counts.

Mr CASEY: If the honourable member for Auburn has a very close look at the provisions of the clause, he will find that they are very restrictive and relate only to issues such as assignments, boundaries, measures and distribution of payments about which the Sugar Corporation should know. I am sure that the honourable member would agree that this follows what I was referring to earlier in relation to the distribution of sugar moneys. The people conducting the inquiry on behalf of the corporation will need to have those figures. The honourable member would well know that, in the past, when he sought to obtain information from a particular organisation about the distribution of sugar moneys and costs, particularly as to refining, getting that information was very difficult. Self-incrimination is expressly excluded from these most necessary measures. The Government will keep an eye on this and review it from time to time. The Minister has overall direction over the corporation. If the power looks like being abused, I could certainly take a stand on that.

Clause 2.15, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2.16 and 2.17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.18—

Mr HARPER (4.23 p.m.): Again I place on record the Opposition's concerns about the provisions of this clause, whereby the Minister has the power to direct the corporation. On many occasions, the member for Mirani expressed concern about the Minister's power to direct the corporation. Of course, the corporation must comply with those directions. However, in this clause that direction is not for the benefit of the industry,

it is purely for the benefit of Government policies. If the Minister is not satisfied with the corporation's discharge of its functions, if he believes that, in the discharge of those functions, the corporation is not complying with major Government policies, he has the power to make a direction. We in the Opposition have concern that if the corporation should act in the interests of the industry, which may not necessarily always fall into line with major Government policies. A typical example of that is the lifting of the sugar embargo and the tariff nonsense that is happening now at Federal level.

Mr CASEY: I am very, very pleased to hear those comments from the honourable member for Auburn, because the opinion now being expressed by him is exactly the reverse of that which he expressed in the Parliament a few years ago when he introduced the Dairy Industry Act. He gave himself extraordinarily draconian powers—unreserved powers—over the dairy industry. I must try to live with those powers now. In relation to that matter—I am very pleased that the member has had a change of mind.

The powers are in line with the new model that is being adopted as Government policy on the recommendations contained in the Davis report on statutory marketing authorities throughout Australia. The recommendations make good sense to us. They provide for a legislative format and control in relation to the industry. As the former Minister will also see from the Bill, powers of direction that will be given to an authority such as this corporation must be tabled within the Parliament, which is quite different from the position that obtained when he was a Minister. That will give members in all of the 89 seats in Queensland the opportunity to object to the powers, to move against them or to do whatever they wish. The power of direction is also given in consultation with the industry. If members had read the Bill properly, they would have recognised and realised that this is the way in which the Sugar Industry Policy Council will work. That policy council will make a determination and, through the Minister, the direction will be given to the corporation or to other sections of the industry.

Clause 2.18, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2.19 to 2.22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.23—

Mr ROWELL (4.27 p.m.): I wish to raise the matter of the testing of sugarcane, particularly in relation to clause 2.23 (4) (b). The intent of the legislation is not clear. The Bill lacks a definition of the testing of sugarcane, which is a very important matter for the industry. The formula is based on tonnes by sugar content, on which both the millers and the growers are paid. The intent of clause 2.23 (4) (b) is not clear. The testing procedure should be more clearly defined to allow for interpretation. I would be very pleased if the Minister would comment on that. Will the definition of testing be included in the regulations? Is the Minister seeking advice? I do not know whether he is listening to what I am saying. However, testing is a very important part of the industry, and it is carried out during the milling process. An adequate testing program for sugar content is needed. It would be absolutely ludicrous if we were to accept that very simple explanation in clause 2.23 of such a very important part of the sugar industry. I ask the Minister to comment on that?

Mr CASEY: I will certainly reply to that. As the honourable member would well know, most of the provisions in relation to the testing services, the methodology and the registration of people qualified, etc., are made by way of regulations. The Bill provides for that. Clause 2.23 ought to be read in conjunction with clause 2.24. They both refer to the testing service. Specifically, clause 2.23 relates to the audit provisions, whereby the corporation must have the right to audit the information that is being given to it by mills. That is part of the basic framework of the legislation. Previously, I referred to mutual trust and understanding, and this is the basis of the testing service. It is the basis of the payment by the mill to the growers. The mill takes a record as the growers' cane goes through. Consequently, it is necessary to carry out an audit, and that is the reason for the inclusion of this provision in the Bill. There will be further regulations concerning the testing service.

Clause 2.23, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.24—

Mr HARPER (4.31 p.m.): Clause 2.24 (3) states—

"The costs associated with the operation of the programme instituted at the request of a mill owner or mill suppliers' committee are to be shared equally between the owner of the mill and the mill suppliers' committee constituted for the mill."

That appears to me to be rather iniquitous because, irrespective of whether or not one party wants that program, both parties will be required to share the cost equally. I would like to hear an explanation from the Minister.

Mr CASEY: It is quite simple. The cost burden is being shared in that way because that is what was agreed to between the two industry organisations and the Sugar Industry Working Party. The honourable member will recall that I mentioned earlier that, after it presented its report, the Sugar Industry Working Party carried out a further round of discussions with the various groups and industry organisations. That is how agreement was reached concerning the necessary check-testing service. It was also agreed that they would share costs in that way.

Mr HARPER: Clause 2.24 (5) states—

"This section does not derogate from the power of the Corporation to institute a programme under section 2.23."

There is no indication in that as to who bears the cost. Therefore I assume that the cost will be borne by the corporation. Is that correct?

Mr CASEY: No. The reference to "section 2.23" in this clause concerns the audit programs that I spoke about when answering the honourable member for Hinchinbrook. That allows the corporation to institute that audit program, and the corporation would meet the costs of that audit program.

Clause 2.24, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2.25 to 3.2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3.3—

Mr ROWELL (4.33 p.m.): I raise a question about the chairperson on the boards. Clause 3.3 (1) (a) states—

"one is to be appointed upon the recommendation of the Minister after consultation with the Corporation . . ."

Would it be normal to consider a person who has been involved in the judiciary for this appointment? It is just a suggestion. I do not raise the matter for any other reason.

Mr CASEY: Until this point in time the chairperson of the local board has always been nominated by the Minister. In most areas of Queensland it has been the practice for that person to be either the local clerk of the court, the local stipendiary magistrate or someone from the clerk of the court's office who is legally qualified. The complaints that I have had over the years, and which were discussed with the working party and the industry, were that on numerous occasions many of those people had no knowledge whatsoever of, or experience or background in, the sugar industry. As a result, there was not much point in having them on those boards. This provision gives the opportunity of expanding the board so that the board can contain a person with judicial knowledge—but it should be someone familiar with the local scene as well, such as a public servant. It would not mean that someone from Brisbane would be the chairperson of every local board throughout Queensland. We would be looking for someone who has knowledge of the industry. This is where the real work under this new Bill will be done. I said it before and I will say it again: this is one of the great things about this Bill. With the establishment of these local boards, we are putting the thrust out into local areas. The

local people can sit down and work out their own problems together in a feeling of mutual trust rather than the system that previously existed. With due respect to my colleague, the member for Yeronga, under the previous system the Dracula QCs and barristers of this State drank the blood of the industry.

Mr ROWELL: The reason why I mention it is that this person was totally impartial. Representatives from both sides, that is, from the millers and the growers, were on the boards and this person had no personal interest but had the capacity to understand issues. After a period of time serving on the local boards, many magistrates had a great deal of knowledge about the industry and acted impartially in their decision-making. They held the balance of power in many cases, as they do in this instance.

Clause 3.3, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3.4 to 4.3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4.4—

Mr RANDELL (4.37 p.m.): This is another clause—

Mr Hamill: Will the real Minister for Police stand up?

Mr RANDELL: Would the Minister please shut up? This clause once again shows the power of the Minister under this Bill. The Sugar Experiment Stations Board is to consist of nine members. This board is vital to the sugar industry. The Opposition is the first to acknowledge the sort of expertise that is required on this board. In this instance, the Minister is appointing four members to that board. Of the other five, only two are industry representatives. Out of nine members, there are only two industry representatives on that board. The Opposition recognises that a wide range of expertise is required and is prepared to relent a little by not urging a majority of grower representatives on the board. However, as it is framed the clause gives the Opposition no alternative but to move the following amendment—

"At page 24, line 25, delete—

'one'

and insert—

'two'";

"At page 24, line 27, delete—

'one'

and insert—

'two'";

"At page 24, line 29, delete—

'4'

and insert—

'two'."

The effect of the amendment will be that the provision relating to two members with special expertise will be removed to allow for two additional industry representatives to be members of the board. I think that is fair enough. The end result will be that there will be four industry representatives and five representatives from outside the industry. The Opposition recognises the range of expertise that is required by the board.

Mr CASEY: I must say that I am glad the Opposition has drawn attention to the provision. Once again, members of the Opposition are showing that they have not read the Bill properly. One of the major criticisms levelled at the Government at every available opportunity during the debate on the second reading concerned the powers that the Minister is giving himself and the way that the Minister is taking control of the industry. Under the terms of the legislation and the previous Government's administration, each former Minister for Primary Industry—the member for Auburn, Mr

Harper, and the member for Warrego, Mr Turner, and perhaps a few others—was actually appointed as chairperson of the board. I have removed the requirement for the Minister to be chairperson of the board because, in common with those former Ministers for Primary Industry, I have found it virtually impossible to attend every BSES meeting in Queensland while at the same time carrying out my duties as a Minister of this Government. Consequently, I have added a clause that provides for the director-general and/or his nominee to be the chairman of the board because, ever since I have been Minister and prior to that, that has been the case.

Again, I draw attention to the way in which the recommendation is being implemented. The procedure is exactly the same as the one recommended by the Sugar Industry Working Party. However, one further adjunct which was discussed with the industry was one with which the industry agreed. I was quite open about this provision at all stages in the preparation of this legislation. I do not believe there is any need whatsoever for this amendment to be moved by the honourable member. I will give him the assurance in this Chamber—bearing in mind that I have already given the same assurance to representatives of the industry throughout the negotiations and have already stated this undertaking publicly—that the four industry representatives, that is, the two growers and the two millers who are appointed by industry organisations, will be the first four members appointed to the board. I give the honourable member for Mirani an assurance and an undertaking that those four members will be placed straight onto the board. There will be only one exception that has been brought about by tragic circumstances, and this was referred to during the debate on the second reading. Quite recently, the industry lost a very good and longstanding member of the board, Mr Joe Bugeja. At its meeting next week, the Queensland Cane Growers Council will be forwarding to me, at my request, the name of a replacement for Mr Bugeja. Whoever is selected for that position will become a member of the board as soon as it is established.

Mr ROWELL: I wish to comment on the composition of the BSES board. I believe that a better standard of representation of growers and millers should have been provided. All that the Minister is prepared to do is allow one representative each for the growers and the millers, which amounts to a total of two out of nine. I believe that a board that will control a great deal of research work that will be utilised by the growers should comprise a greater representation of growers because representation will have a bearing on the types of programs that are considered necessary and the extension work that is required. Simply having a board comprised of experts is not good enough. I think it would be better to have people who are directly involved in the industry as members of the board. The clause lacks that depth of grower representation.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 4.4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4.5 to 4.9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4.10—

Mr HARPER (4.43 p.m.): I wish to draw attention to subparagraph (i), which relates to the functions of the board. It reads—

"to preserve and enhance the ability of land to sustain crops of sugar cane."

I ask the Minister to inform the Committee how the board will go about preserving and enhancing the ability of land to sustain crops of sugarcane. In particular, I ask him to consider the effect of clause 4.11, which states—

"Subject to this Act, the Board may do all things necessary or reasonably required to be done in connection with, or incidental to, the discharge of its functions."

When consideration is given to both clauses of the Bill, it can be seen that there is a possibility of heavy-handed action being taken. Power is being given to the board to use strong-arm tactics. This is a matter that certainly concerns me because members of the

National Party believe in private enterprise. We believe that a land-owner should not be stood over and told how to carry out his farming. There is no question that, if this clause is interpreted incorrectly, some board officers could attempt to be very heavy-handed and that could lead to a situation in which farmers will be directed how to carry out their farming enterprise.

Mr CASEY: There is a simple explanation for this, as you would well know, Mr Chairman, having witnessed tremendous problems in the seventies and early eighties in the Bundaberg area with Fiji disease. I am surprised that the honourable member has asked this question. If he had asked his colleague the member for Mirani, he would have been told that Fiji disease was a serious problem in the Mackay area. There was strong opposition from growers to the measures that had to be taken. However, those things had to be done. In the Mackay district, under its functions, the BSES was able to ensure that top varieties such as the NCo 310 were stamped out and totally replanted. That caused an economic loss to many people in the industry, because it was an excellent variety for that locality. However, it was susceptible to Fiji disease, which would have spread throughout the State. After inspections and recommendations by BSES officers, with the powers that were delegated to them by the board they were able to carry out that function. It is most necessary for them to have those strong powers and functions.

I doubt that any member of this Chamber would complain about the service that the BSES officers provide. Over the years, the BSES has been an excellent organisation. Its officers have carried out their work well in accordance with their qualifications and they have cooperated greatly with the sugar industry. They have not been unreasonable. In all my years of contact with the sugar industry, I have never had a complaint about an officer of the BSES being heavy-handed in the manner in which he carried out his work. Rather, it has been the opposite: all I have received from cane-growers is the highest of compliments for the way in which those officers have gone about their work.

Clause 4.10, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4.11 and 4.12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4.13—

Mr HARPER (4.47 p.m.): I simply place on record the Opposition's concern and express the view that the Sugar Experiment Stations Board should not be a judicial authority. Under this clause, obviously it has judicial powers. I suppose that the Minister will make comments similar to those which he has just made. However, I place on record my unease at the Sugar Experiment Stations Board being given judicial powers.

Mr CASEY: The simple answer is that they are not judicial powers; they are administrative powers.

Mr HARPER: My advice to the Minister would be to take other legal advice in the matter, because the comments I have made have been based directly on concern expressed to me by a legal source.

Mr CASEY: I accept the honourable member's learned advice.

Clause 4.13, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4.14 to 6.10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6.11—

Mr HARPER (4.49 p.m.): I simply invite the Minister's attention to this clause, which relates to a prohibition on political activity. Some of his colleagues could well take note of this clause. I remind the Minister that, in other legislation, sections have been removed to enable political donations to be made by trade unions and ALP affiliates. Although I am not antagonistic to the prohibition in this Bill, I see a degree of inconsistency in the principles and policy of his Government.

Mr CASEY: The simple answer to the point raised by the honourable member is this: the provision is written into the legislation because it is the policy of the Government

to maintain accountability. The Bill establishes the Queensland Sugar Corporation. We do not want to see Queensland Sugar Inc. develop.

Clause 6.11, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6.12 to 7.5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7.6—

Mr ROWELL (4.51 p.m.): I ask the Minister to clarify on what the payment for sugar will be based? It is not clear. I do not know whether it will be included in the regulations. Will it be based on 94 net titre or a 76 degree pole, or will we use the normal calculation of tonnes to actual sugar price for the payment to growers?

Mr CASEY: The honourable member would well know that at this time I am not capable of giving the exact price.

Mr ROWELL: I am not asking for the price.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! While the Minister is answering, the honourable member must remain seated.

Mr CASEY: This clause simply places in this Act what was in the previous Act, and it will be followed up with regulations in the normal way, as it was in the previous Act, as to the way in which the payments will be made. Again, I stress that it is in accordance with the agreement between the millers and growers in the industry.

Clause 7.6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7.7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7.8—

Mr ROWELL (4.52 p.m.): I would just like a bit of clarification on this clause. It is not absolutely clear what is going to happen after 1996.

Mr Hayward: To most people it is.

Mr ROWELL: I wonder whether the honourable member can tell me. He would not have a clue. Clause 7.8 (4) has to be read in conjunction with clause 7.10. Could the Minister clarify just what will happen after 1996 regarding payment for the cane?

Mr CASEY: That is a matter that will be negotiated with the industry. Quite clearly, that five-year period has been included at the industry's request—particularly at the request of the cane-growers—so that the division of moneys between No. 1 pool and No. 2 pool will stay as is until at least 1996. From that time, negotiations will take place over the next sequence of crop period in order to see what changes, if any, may need to be made.

Clause 7.8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7.9 to 8.4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8.5—

Mr ROWELL (4.54 p.m.): I just have a question in regard to clause 8.5 (6) (b), which states—

"unless the award provides for payment within a lesser period of time—that the payment is to be made within 30 days after the end of the month to which it applies;"

I think that with modern technology, computers and so on, a lesser time than 30 days could have been stipulated. Would the Minister care to comment on that?

Mr CASEY: Again, I draw the attention of the honourable member to the fact that this was the negotiated time that was discussed with the industry. It varies in accordance with whatever award is agreed to in the different areas. It varies in accordance with a

system that is negotiated between the mill-owner and the growers in different mill areas. It does vary all over the State. Some mills, particularly the cooperative mills in the Mackay area, pay up very quickly.

Mr ROWELL: The point that I am trying to make is that it could be used as a bargaining point in the negotiations for the local award. I think that a lesser time would have been quite possible.

Mr CASEY: Have I got to spell it out again? The awards are set out. The people in the local area can come to an agreement on what they want to do, but it has to be done within 30 days. There are some areas where it is done within five days. I have said it before; I say it again; and I do not intend to say it yet again and thump it into the member's ear.

Clause 8.5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8.6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8.7—

Mr HARPER (4.56 p.m.): Despite all the ranting of the Minister when addressing the Committee in answer to the last question by the member for Hinchinbrook and his verbosity in regard to the autonomy of local boards, it must be recorded, and note must be taken that clause 8.7 relates to guidelines concerning awards. Despite all that the Minister has said regarding the autonomy of local boards, that clause states that the corporation may make guidelines regulating the form of an award in any respect—I emphasise "in any respect". Of course, the guidelines are binding on local boards. Let not the concerns of the member for Hinchinbrook be dismissed lightly by the Minister. Let not the concerns that are going to be expressed by cane-growers, once they become aware of these facts, be dismissed in a similar fashion. The total autonomy of local boards just is not a fact of life, and will not be a fact of life.

Mr CASEY: I did say earlier, and I will repeat, that it is quite obvious that members opposite have not read some of the old Acts on this subject. The Bill is designed to ensure that the awards do cover all aspects of what is required. As I said, those awards will be determined in the proper way, in accordance with the Bill. As the honourable member for Auburn, the honourable member for Hinchinbrook and certainly the honourable member for Mirani would well know, these awards are set in regulations. Those regulations are tabled in this Parliament and every member of this Parliament has the opportunity of moving to have those regulations disallowed. Those regulations are designed to provide a format of awards which is fairly standard across the State instead of having them all over the place like Brown's cows, as is the case at present.

Clause 8.7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8.8 to 8.11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8.12—

Mr HARPER (4.59 p.m.): Clause 8.12 is headed "Mill owner may harvest sugar cane". I ask the Minister whether he would consider also clause 9.21 (c). I believe that there is a conflict between clause 8.12 and clause 9.21 (c). I ask the Minister a very simple question: which clause prevails?

Mr CASEY: In actual fact, there is no connection between the two clauses. Clause 8.12 refers to cane that may be required to be harvested by a mill. A similar clause was contained in previous legislation. It has not been used for some decades, but there was a request that it be retained. So far as I can make out, clause 9.2 (1) relates to cane that is not required to be delivered by the assignment-holder at all. Sometimes there is a need for the destruction of cane that may be diseased. That has been the case in the past and certainly will be the case in the future.

Mr HARPER: The fact of the matter is that the two clauses certainly do conflict. Clause 8.12 gives the mill-owner a power to harvest cane from assigned land. Clause

9.2 (1) (c) gives the assignment-holder, on reasonable grounds, the right to not deliver cane. There is a very definite conflict between the two clauses. If the Minister is unsure of which clause would prevail, I would be prepared to accept an offer from him to provide an answer in writing, but it is an important legal point and it is one that certainly has to be clarified, in writing, if not now, then in the near future.

Mr CASEY: There is no need to give it in writing. I will clarify again the explanation that I have already given. Clause 8.12 refers to the need, if necessary, for the mill to remove the cane if the owner is not meeting his responsibilities. The other clause really means that, where the cane may be diseased or have an extremely low c.c.s., the other clause applies.

Mr RANDELL: I believe that the Minister is missing the point. At clause 8.12, the assignment-holder or the owner of that land may not wish to harvest the cane because he would have to go into debt. Why has he not got the right to withhold his product if not to do so will put him further into debt? The member for Auburn has made a very good point.

Mr Casey: The mill-owner is not going to take it if that is the case, is he?

Mr RANDELL: The mill-owner can take it. The Minister is not so naive about the sugar industry. He knows that the mill-owner gets paid for the first four points. The cane at 5 c.c.s. can make a profit for the mill; cane at 8 c.c.s. will not make a profit for the mill or the cane-farmer. There is a conflict there. I believe that the Minister is removing the right of the farmer to withhold a product the harvesting of which would be detrimental to his income.

Mr ROWELL: I mention the fact that, under very difficult harvesting conditions at the end of the year, it might be prudent for the grower not to harvest that cane because to do so would absolutely wreck the opportunity and potential for ratooning that cane. A very valid point has been raised. It is a matter that needs to be looked at. If for whatever reason the mill decides to harvest that cane, on whom does the onus lie, and who is responsible for the potential damage to the crop next season?

Mr RANDELL: The Minister does not want to reply. In all fairness, I ask him to reconsider his reply and give Opposition members an assurance that he will look further into this matter. After reviewing the reasons put forward by the Opposition, will he reconsider this matter in the future?

Mr CASEY: I had decided not to bother with this any more. I will simply say again that I refer those honourable members who have queries about this matter to the existing legislation. This clause has been taken straight out of the existing legislation and placed into this Bill. During the course of this debate particularly in my reply, on a number of occasions I have stated that those clauses that the sugar industry felt should remain in place have remained; those clauses that were old, antiquated or out-of-date have been changed. The industry felt that there was a need to keep this clause in the legislation. These two clauses were negotiated with the industry; that decision will stand.

Mr HARPER: Could I simply endorse the request made by the member for Mirani and suggest to the Minister that he take some of the legal advice which is available to him; his eyes may be opened.

Clause 8.12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8.13 to 8.15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8.16—

Mr ROWELL (5.06 p.m.): I want to raise the issue of the 85 per cent that of assignment-holders that are required to validate mill supply contracts. This clause is inconsistent with the percentage requirement for the amalgamation of boards, which is 60 per cent. It would be very difficult to get an 85 per cent consensus of growers. A better alternative would be for those mill supply committees to ratify that with their growers.

I put that up as a suggestion, rather than using that clause with the figure of 85 per cent. Allow the mill supply committees to negotiate the conditions and so on over the length of the season with the mill-owners and then ratify it with the growers in the area.

Mr CASEY: Again, this clause has been taken straight out of the Act. The point that is raised by the honourable member is in accordance with the Act whereby, if 85 per cent of the suppliers so decide, as he suggests, the contract is validated.

Mr ROWELL: With the passage of this legislation, a slightly different situation will exist. A section in the existing legislation relates to the peak supply to mills. Now that the peaks will be frozen, that section will not be very valid. In my electorate, approximately 100 per cent over peak is being produced. The existing legislation enables the growers to negotiate a contract with the miller to enable them to remove their crops. I think it is absolutely vital that the conditions of that contract be of such a nature to allow a reasonable percentage of people to make a decision. I think 85 per cent is far too high.

Mr CASEY: This is the first time during the debate that peaks have been discussed. I remind the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, as I would remind the rest of the Chamber, that it was in 1988, under a National Party Government, that peaks were frozen. The decision of the industry at present is that they remain so frozen. The point that the honourable member is trying to make relates to a difficulty that is perhaps caused by people growing over peaks. We will leave the negotiating position as the industry decided.

Clause 8.16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 8.17 and 8.18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9.1—

Mr HARPER (5.09 p.m.): Clause 9.1 (2) refers to an assignment. I make the point that an assignment is an assignment of land. It always has been and I guess it always will be. Subclause (2) states—

"An assignment confers upon the holder an entitlement, subject to this Act, to deliver to a mill for payment . . ."

Subclause (6) provides—

"A disposal of an assignment's land does not effect a disposal of the assignment."

I ask the Minister to explain how the disposal of an assignment's land—considering that an assignment is in fact an assignment of land—does not effect a disposal of the assignment.

Mr CASEY: For starters, if we can get our definitions right, an assignment is actually an ability to deliver to a mill cane that has been grown on land. If the member has a proper look at all the definitions in the Bill he will be able to answer his own question.

Clause 9.1, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9.2 to 9.12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9.13—

Mr ROWELL (5.11 p.m.): This clause is headed "Application to Corporation for transfer of assignment to another mill". It gives no consideration to the mill receiving the cane. As was discussed under clause 8.16, the mill suppliers' committee, in consultation with the miller, is responsible for removing the crop. If there is to be a transfer of assignment from one mill area to another, I think it is only reasonable that the mill suppliers' committee in that mill be informed of the quantity of cane that is coming in so that it can negotiate with the miller—which is a part of the mill supply contracts—for the crushing of that cane.

Mr CASEY: If the honourable member reads the Bill in its entirety, he will understand that there is a body called the local board and that there are bodies called

mill suppliers' committees, which have as members two members of the local board. The whole idea of the new provisions that are being put in place is to allow negotiations to be carried on in the particular area in respect of which they take place. This legislation is designed to help those growers in land-locked areas who may want to transfer their assignment over to areas in which there is plenty of space. I believe the honourable member ought to be fairly pleased about this provision, because it will provide an opportunity for his own mill area, which is one of the areas that can expand, to expand. I am sorry that I have to bore members on my side of the Chamber in talking about the way in which the Chamber ought to be operated, but I wish that members of the Opposition would get their act together and go to one person—and the person nominated was Mr Harper, the acting Leader of Opposition Business in the House—to arrange the way in which things are done. At the moment, we are all over the place like a pakapoo ticket.

Clause 9.13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9.14—

Mr ROWELL (5.14 p.m.): This clause deals with the 2.5 per cent expansion. I do not believe that this is a very wise move.

Mr Casey: You will apply for it the same as you did for the last one.

Mr ROWELL: If the Minister were in my shoes, would he be applying for it? The fact is that there is a predetermined expansion. We do not know what will happen down the track. A mechanism has been put in place with the policy council to consider mill expansions and sugar expansions in the future. Yet the Minister is going ahead with a 2.5 per cent expansion for the next five years. It is predetermined, and the growers or the policy council will have no input. The Minister will be dictating it. That is the way that it will go.

Mr CASEY: I have noted the honourable member's comments and his objection to the 2.5 per cent expansion. In the future, that might give me the opportunity of carrying out my duties in respect of the Bill and notifying the Sugar Corporation that the honourable member is not very interested in a 2.5 per cent expansion.

Clause 9.14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9.15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9.16—

Mr RANDELL (5.16 p.m.): This clause relates to "the purpose of enabling the Crown or a Crown instrumentality to sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land together with an assignment". The purpose of that is to make money for the Crown. A piece of land that is worth a particular amount is worth a lot more if an assignment is put on it. The crux of this clause is that the Minister may give directions to the corporation. He can tell them to do it. The Opposition believes that the Minister should confer with the request from the Sugar Industry Policy Council. Therefore, I move the following amendment—

"At page 60, line 37, after 'assignment,' insert—

'after considering a report which the Minister is to request from the Sugar Industry Policy Council'."

Once again, the Opposition believes that the Minister has the power. It requests him to obtain a report from the Sugar Industry Policy Council and then make his decision on that. I believe that the Opposition is being fairly liberal by doing that.

Mr CASEY: The taxpayers of Queensland and Australia contribute enormous amounts of money towards irrigation projects and things of that nature. I am not introducing this measure by going in by the back door. I am doing this truthfully and honestly in this Chamber. This measure is designed to obtain a better return for the taxpayers of this nation. If water resources are in place on a particular piece of land, that allows

much greater amounts of cane to be grown there. Under this clause, when people purchase such land at auction, they must pay a bit more for the privilege of being able to grow greater amounts of cane. People are paying a bit more for some land in western Queensland that has water resources provided, because they realise that they might obtain a better, more stable income, and a sustainable agriculture for themselves and their families in the future. If that is the way that the National Party wants to treat the future cane-growers of Queensland—if it wants to put them in there with a leaky waterbag and the backside out of their strides—let it do so.

Mr ROWELL: If the land is available and water is available, it can be put up for auction. It is not necessary to include the assignment.

Mr HARPER: I certainly appreciate the response that the member for Mirani was able to obtain from the Minister. I am sure that cane-growers throughout most of Queensland, particularly in the Mackay region and those seven mill areas that have the opportunity to expand because they are not land locked, will also appreciate the Minister's response. The Minister has clearly indicated that the hidden agenda is to divert cane production to the Burdekin. It is about time that the Minister put on record that that is what it is all about.

The Opposition is saying that before the Crown can require assignment to be given to Crown land so that it can be sold—and I ask honourable members to remember that never before has assignment been sold—the Minister must consider a report to be presented to him by the Sugar Industry Policy Council. During this debate, the Minister has gone on with a lot of nonsense about wanting to consult and take advice. Surely it is not unreasonable that the Minister should accede to the necessity for that policy council to provide him with a report before he requires assignment to be given to the Crown by the industry. It is not the Crown's industry. The industry owns the sugar industry. Before the Minister requires that to happen, he should at least take advice from the policy council, which the Minister himself has put in place.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 9.16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9.17 to 9.40, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10.1—

Mr HARPER (5.22 p.m.): This clause brings about a quasi fade-out of assignments, because it enables the Minister, for example, to say that a farmer can harvest 140 per cent of his assignment. This is the foot in the door. It is the beginning of the end for the assignments. It is important that this be placed on record so that the industry—the people out in the field—can understand that this is the foot in the door.

Mr ROWELL: This is the thin end of the wedge for the industry. As the member for Auburn said, the clause allows the Minister to virtually hive off whatever area he decides. About 12 months ago, he had a crack at it but was not very successful. He gave a guarantee to the industry that he would not do this type of thing again. However, it is quite clear that he has done so.

Mr CASEY: Although I should not, I am getting a bit cranky about this. I again ask the members for Auburn and Hinchinbrook if they would look at the measures in the Bill. As it is pointed out in clause 10.1 (3), in order to determine the maximum area to be over 100 per cent, I must take the matter to the Sugar Industry Policy Council. Is it something that the Opposition wants?

Mr HARPER: It should be placed on record that the Minister has made it very clear that he does not have to take the advice of that policy council. To suggest that it cannot happen unless the policy council says that it can is misleading the cane-growers of Queensland. Of course it can happen, whether the Sugar Industry Policy Council says so or not.

Clause 10.1, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 10.2 to 11.13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12.1—

Mr RANDELL (5.24 p.m.): In the interests of honourable members who want to rise for dinner tonight, I will be as brief as I can. The Sugar Industry Tribunal will be a very important part of the industry. In this case, it is quite clear that the Minister has absolute power and authority. Apart from the legal practitioner referred to in clause 12.1 (2) (a), the other two members of the tribunal are to be nominated by the Minister. He will have absolute control of the tribunal. The Opposition is saying that growers and millers in this State should have a say in the Sugar Industry Tribunal, because they will be affected by it. Instead, the Minister said that growers, particularly, do not have the expertise or the knowledge to be appointed according to the criteria in the Bill. Of course they do. Out of 6 000 growers, surely to God, according to the criteria for the election of a person under that clause, at least one grower could do that. I therefore move the following amendments—

"At page 80, line 11, delete—

'legal practitioner'

and insert—

'a Justice or former Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland' ";

"At page 80, line 13, delete—

'Minister'

and insert—

'Queensland Canegrowers' Council' ";

"At page 80, line 18, delete all words after 'the' and insert— 'Australian Sugar Milling Council Pty Limited, who is to be well versed in matters relating to the sugar industry and who does not have any pecuniary interest, direct or indirect in the production, manufacture or marketing of sugar cane or sugar cane products.' "

The Opposition says that that legal practitioner, who may not have adequate qualifications, could have appearing before him senior barristers. Those senior barristers could represent plaintiffs. That legal practitioner could be anybody. The words "legal practitioner" are too vague. That is why the Opposition moved its amendments. We hope that the Government takes cognisance of them.

Mr CASEY: Here we see a very befuddled attempt by the National Party to try to bring back the old board—the very thing that the growers and the millers want to get away from. They want autonomy back in their regions, where it so rightly belongs. Because some disputes may arise, it is necessary to have access to a tribunal of the type that the Opposition supports. However, the amendments show how bright members of the Opposition really are. One of the amendments simply means that the Opposition is deleting the right of the Minister to nominate people for appointment to the Sugar Industry Tribunal and saying that the nomination should be made by the Queensland Cane Growers Council. I ask: how can the Queensland Cane Growers Council make a nomination to the Executive Council? That nomination must go through Cabinet and the Executive Council. In this case, the member of the Executive Council, or the representative, who would do that would be the Minister. The amendment is obviously badly worded. Considering the way in which National Party members behaved in the past, they have a hide to talk about pecuniary interest matters.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 38

NOES, 26

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 12.1, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 12.2 to 14.12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14.13—

Mr CASEY (5.34 p.m.): I apologise, but there are a number of machinery amendments that I must make to the legislation. I have discussed these amendments with the shadow Minister. They relate to a problem which occurred when the Bill was being printed that was outside my control and the control of this Parliament and my staff. A few mistakes were made and these mistakes are being rectified. I assure members that these amendments are machinery amendments only and I will go through them as quickly as I can. I move—

"At page 93, line 30, omit—

'Review'

and substitute—

'Reserve'."

Mr RANDELL: I wish to remind the Minister that, even though these matters were beyond his control, many things happened when we were in Government that were out of our control and yet we do not get much mercy from the Government. The Minister has had 14 months to prepare this Bill and 14 drafts of the Bill have been prepared. We have had our copy of the Bill for only a week and our amendments are out in the open. Throughout this debate, all that members have heard the Minister say is that we have had 14 months to consult with the industry. The people in the industry have had no time at all to look at this Bill. After 14 months, the Minister comes into this Chamber with a page and a half of amendments to correct this Bill. What will he do in the next six months? If I was a bookie, I would bet my bottom dollar that the Minister will be back in this Chamber amending a great deal of this legislation. The Opposition will go along with these amendments because we recognise that the mistakes were beyond the Minister's control. However, I wish to remind the Minister that he should have had this legislation in order.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 14.13, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 14.14 to 14.22, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14.23—

Mr CASEY (5.37 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 95, omit all words from and including 'There is hereby granted' to and including '80 hectares' and substitute—

'(1) There is hereby granted to the holder from the Crown, at the commencement of this section, of each lot of land the description of which appears in the first column of the Table appearing at the end of this section, an assignment with an area of 80 hectares.

The Plans referred to in the Table are registered in the Department of Lands.'";

"At page 95, lines 27 and 28, omit—

'Real property' ";

"At page 96, line 1, omit from the Table wherever it occurs— 'No' ";

"At page 96, line 2, omit—

'Real property'

and substitute—

'Lot' ";

"At page 96, line 15, omit—

'1054'

and substitute—

'1091' ";

"At page 96, line 16, omit—

'Mulgrave'

and substitute—

'Gladstone' ";

"At page 96, line 19, omit—

'1091'

and substitute—

'1054' ";

"At page 96, line 20, omit—

'Mulgrave'

and substitute—

'Gladstone'."

Amendments agreed to.

Clause 14.23, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 14.24 to 14.28, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14.29—

Mr CASEY (5.40 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 99, line 27, omit—

'2.26'

and substitute—

'2.25'."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 14.29, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 14.30 to 14.44 and First and Second Schedules, as read, agreed to.
Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Casey, by leave, read a third time.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Report of Criminal Justice Commission

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (5.42 p.m.): Mr Speaker, on Tuesday, I tabled six CJC reports presented by the CJC at a public hearing of the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice. At that public hearing, the CJC's General Counsel delivered a verbal report, which has now been presented to the committee in writing. I seek leave to table that report for the information of all members.

Leave granted.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE (RAILWAYS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 April (see p. 7136).

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (5.42 p.m.): This is probably one of the most important Bills that have come before this House for many years in relation to railways. Many people are not aware of the parameters of this Bill. It is virtually corporatisation of what has been known as Queensland Railways. This Bill contains wide-ranging powers, which means that, in future, many other avenues will be open to Queensland Railways. I believe that it will open a Pandora's box and lead Queensland Railways into a somewhat uncharted future. Unquestionably, it contains a major new element, which is a strong thrust towards privatisation—despite what the Minister has said. For some time now, a great deal has been said about what will happen in relation to NRFC. It has been said that this will be the death knell of the railways in the near future. Tragically, in my opinion, it also sounds a death knell for a number of unprofitable branch lines and stations, and probably for what are considered to be unprofitable passenger and freight services along main lines.

At this point, I wish to refer to some of the lines situated in my electorate. For example, for many years, there has been a cloud over the future of the Yaraka spur line that runs from Jericho. Probably at some time in the near future, a disastrous announcement will be made about the future of that line. It is a vital arterial link line, and I ask the Minister to remember in future that, because the line carries cattle, wool and other commodities, it provides an important service for a very important part of western Queensland. The same can be said of the line to Cunnamulla, which is also of paramount importance to the region. I have addressed this issue on a couple of occasions when I have spoken to the Minister and mentioned the Quilpie line and the line that runs from Hughenden, around to Emerald and on to Winton. Those lines are very important. Any decrease in services in that region will not be tolerated. This case, no doubt, will prove to be yet another unwarranted withdrawal of services to rural Queenslanders, particularly those in the more remote regions of my electorate. I refer specifically to the electorates of Flinders, Warrego and Mount Isa. It is paramount that we bear in mind at all times that we live in a very decentralised State. I do not have to point out that the people in country electorates are suffering one of the worst crises in modern times since the Great Depression of the 1930s. With the present price of wool, honourable members do not need me to tell them how serious things are in the wool industry. With corporatisation

of Queensland Railways, if the Minister intends to make it a profit-making body, substantial increases in freight charges will occur throughout the State. My comments are reinforced by the Minister's second-reading speech, in which he stated—"A fundamental requirement is for the board to act on sound commercial principles in determining policy . . . "

From reading the Bill and Explanatory Notes, I contend that the "sound commercial principles" mentioned should read "operate at a profit". That is what the Minister is all about with this Bill—trying to make Queensland Railways operate at a profit. I acknowledge that it is important that businesses try to operate at a profit, however, I remind honourable members that we are talking about an essential service. It must not be forgotten that Queensland Railways was first introduced to assist to open up this vast State of ours. It is an essential service and has provided a carriageway not only for livestock, freight, minerals and other commodities but also for servicing our vast, decentralised State and providing a passenger service.

The Bill opens the way for railways to operate on sound commercial principles in several ways. Firstly, the new board will be set up at arm's length from the Minister. Those are his words, not mine. In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that he alone would carry the flak over the line and service closures that now appear inevitable. At the Committee stage, I will seek further clarification of that from the Minister. I hope that he is not running away from this, because he will be reminded of it. The Bill is causing many people great concern. I believe that a lot of people have not read the Bill in depth. It contains many worrying issues. I stated that the Minister was not in sole control of Queensland Railways. There is no doubt that Queensland Railways is part of his portfolio, but the board will have much more to say and will have more authority than has been the case with Railway Commissioners and others who have been in control in the past.

Since he took office, Mr Hamill has been complaining that under the National Party Government the railways operated to service the huge State and to assist its development—not for a mercenary pot of gold. We must realise that Queensland Railways provides an essential service. It was brought into being for the prime reason of carrying the produce and the minerals that are so important to this vast State. If the corporation is to operate in the manner that I believe it will, the people who have been taking advantage of the parts of QR that are now subsidised—for example the passenger rail service in Brisbane, will be paying much more than the pittance that they are paying now. The Bill provides the Minister with the ideal vehicle to reverse the former policy, and that will be to the particular detriment of rural and remote area residents. If the Minister does not make the decisions, the Government must wear the direct blame. At all times, the Minister should be in sole control of Queensland Railways. A corporation or board should not be administering Queensland Railways. The memories of the public adversely affected by closure and restricted services will outlast the Minister and this Government. They should note that the recent local authority elections have caused a rebuff to the Labor Government throughout Queensland. I instance Rockhampton.

Mr Hamill: What about Townsville?

Mr JOHNSON: I will talk about that, too. I will not talk about Ipswich. There are many people there who do not realise what is going on. However, in a few years' time, they will realise what is happening, and there will be rebuffs in Ipswich. I realise that Ipswich has a big railway centre and that it is a Labor stronghold.

Mr Hamill: We got 10 out of 11 on the council in Ipswich.

Mr JOHNSON: The people of Ipswich are not thinking too straight, are they?

Mr Hamill: They are thinking very straight.

Mr JOHNSON: We will see about that. We must realise that there is not much point in having a railway yard at Ipswich if the service to the rest of the State is not

functioning. If we are not careful, that is what will happen. I hope that the Minister will keep a very close eye on the things, because I think his changes will come back and bite him.

Mr Hamill: I will keep a very close eye on it.

Mr JOHNSON: I am sure that he will. When things start to come back on him, he can rest assured that I will remind him of it. I want to get back to what has happened along the coast. What has happened in those railway towns in the north has been a rebuff to this Government. You agree with me, Mr Speaker, do you not? Even the Speaker agrees with me.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

An honourable member interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: There are more problems in Maryborough. The Premier's glossy pre-election promise was that under the Goss Labor Government, rural Queenslanders would be better off. Come the next election, that will hang like a millstone around the political neck of members of the Government. It was a glib message that sucked in quite a large number of rural people. They accepted the Premier's "Trust me" image and helped to vote him into power. As honourable members are aware, my electorate covers a quarter of the State, and I traverse most of the rest of the State. I cannot find anyone who has voted Labor. Somebody is telling a damned lie. Perhaps Labor rigged the ballot-boxes at the last election.

Mr Hamill: Come to Ipswich and I'll show you some.

Mr JOHNSON: I realise the problems that the Minister has in Ipswich.

Mr Schwarten: You're getting confused.

Mr JOHNSON: I was just talking about the electorate of the member for Rockhampton North. Has the honourable member been in the Chamber all the time?

Mr Schwarten: Yes, I have been here.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member says that he has been in the Chamber during my speech so far. No doubt the member for Rockhampton North and the member for Rockhampton are very concerned about retaining their seats. At the next election, the ballot-boxes will tell the story.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Carnarvon and the member for Rockhampton North should talk outside the Chamber.

Mr JOHNSON: Another avenue that this Bill obviously opens up to the Queensland Railways Board is either to enter into partnership with private operators or directly privatise parts of its current or proposed operation. There is no doubt that this is the first step towards Queensland participating in a National Rail Freight Corporation. I know that the NRFC will only affect 2 per cent of the State of Queensland because it only has a very small proportion of the line that runs south to the border. I will go into that in more detail later. A third option that is open to the railways is to operate interstate, and yet another is to contract out its services, either piecemeal or as a construction operation, presumably for new lines anywhere in Australia. Perhaps the Minister can advise honourable members whether this new interstate operational freedom extends to overseas construction jobs. Perhaps it could by way of subsequent regulatory powers. That is the beauty of operation by regulation, which has been wholeheartedly embraced by this Government. It does not attract opposition or public scrutiny prior to its introduction by Governor in Council approval. I think that is a very important part of this Bill.

This Bill throws out the very basis for the introduction of our extensive railway system, which was to service this huge State, not necessarily to ensure a Government

profit. That takes me back to what I said a while ago. It is an essential service, and that is why it was established in the first place. This basic policy was strictly upheld by the National Party Government at considerable cost to its revenue base. The Opposition is aware of that, and the Government is aware of it, but the Government forgets what the ramifications will be if this corporatisation takes place. People will be out of work. This is just the first step towards clarifying what the Commissioner for Railways said in the *Transport Journal* of 28 February, that is, that 6 000 people could be out of work. That is not a quote from Disneyland. My colleague the Honourable Bob Katter has mentioned this in the past, and I will keep reminding the Minister. Yesterday, mention was made in the *Courier-Mail* that Australian Railways needs to shed 25 000 jobs—

Mr Schwarten: It is 25 000 now.

Mr JOHNSON: Yes. This was in yesterday's *Courier-Mail*.

Mr Hamill: That's the problem. They have only got 20 000 up there.

Mr JOHNSON: It is 25 000. I am talking about Australia now. I just hope that the 6 000 in Queensland are not going to be a part of that 25 000.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr JOHNSON: Members of the Government do not want to hear this, of course, but I will read it now in case they did not read yesterday's newspaper.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am sure that they want to hear it.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. They are going to hear it now. That article states—

"Australian railways need to shed 25,000 jobs, close many country branch lines and be run like ordinary businesses, a new report says.

The report from the Federal Government's Industry Commission said those and a host of other 'hard decisions' could add \$4 billion a year to national income."

If that does come to fruition, I would hate to think how many billions of dollars a year will be added to the social security bill. The article goes on—

"They would particularly help the mining sector, thus boosting exports."

Thank God that this State has a mining industry. It goes on—

"The report painted a picture of an ageing, inefficient rail system which had failed to use new technology, ditch unpopular services or make the best use of government money."

I will agree with that statement in part. Some services are ageing and need modifying and updating. There is no doubt about that. However, at the same time, it must be borne in mind that the infrastructure that is presently in place is also a source of employment. I think that is what is important at present—service and employment. The article continues—

"The Commission blames problems on poor management, unions and Governments."

I am pleased that unions were mentioned. I am not a union-basher; I am not anti-unions. However, unions need to be made aware of just how serious the situation is.

Mr Beattie: Think of all those railway workers in your electorate; be careful.

Mr JOHNSON: I am in constant contact with them, and I know that they are very concerned.

Sitting suspended from 6 till 7.30 p.m.

Mr JOHNSON: Before the dinner adjournment, I was speaking about unions. I referred to an article in yesterday's *Courier-Mail*. There is no doubt that unions are a

very important part of any network, whether it be the railways, general business or the waterfront, and I believe that everybody should recognise their important industrial relations. At the same time, there must be consensus and agreement. I think it was the member for Rockhampton North who said that one should not knock the unions because it could rebound in the electorate. That is something of which I have not been guilty. I have spoken with the railway people in my own electorate and elsewhere. As I have said, this Bill obviously is aimed at usurping the aim of providing a service to the whole State, and, if necessary, brutally making it a user-pays operation. In the long term, I think that is what the Minister has in mind. It is the philosophy of the ISC report. If the recommendations in that report are ever implemented, it will become a user-pays operation, which will be totally unsatisfactory. It will be a drastic change in direction which, in my opinion, does not auger well for the State as a whole. I believe that fact will become clearer in the years ahead.

As I said, this Bill opens the door to privatisation. I ask the Minister: is this going to be the first step to enable Sir Peter Abeles and others to take control of QR? I hope it is not. Sir Peter Abeles has a lot to do with railway operations in the southern States, especially Victoria and New South Wales. Hopefully, that will not become the case in Queensland. I have no qualms in expressing that concern, and I do not apologise for making that statement. This matter is critical to Queensland. I trust that the people of Queensland will understand the full ramifications of privatising the railway system.

The Bill specifically provides in clause 2.3—General powers of Queensland Railways—that Queensland Railways has power—

- . . .
- (g) to provide consultancy and project management services;
 - (h) to construct railways or other transportation system;
 - (i) to erect buildings and structures, carry out works and manufacture plant, machinery, equipment and goods;

- . . .
- (k) to undertake and carry on any business undertaking, transaction or operation commonly undertaken or carried on by providers of transportation and transact and do all or any acts, matters or things incidental or ancillary to the business of transportation;"

That was quite a mouthful. The Explanatory Notes take it somewhat further. They say that the board, in order to operate on sound commercial principles, will have specific powers such as participation in business ventures, the ability to hold shares, to enter into partnerships and joint ventures, to hold membership and to permit officers to become directors or bodies or associations, to grant licences to advertise on Queensland Railway property, to authorise other persons to operate transport services on its railways, and to provide for branches and agencies to be established. It makes one wonder who wrote this legislation. I believe that this would be an outstanding Government-backed opportunity for an entrepreneurial-type board. No doubt it is an invitation for such people to enter the operations of Queensland Railways.

Tragically, the same clause also empowers Queensland Railways—

- "(j) to increase, reduce or cease any service or operation it provides in the exercise of its powers including the addition of or removal of infrastructure and facilities;"

I believe that that latter part will, at least initially, be the board's main thrust area, directed as it is to operate in a commercial manner. It is a backhanded way of directing it to operate at a profit.

Mr Dollin: Do you have a problem with profits?

Mr JOHNSON: No, I do not have a problem with profits. The member for Maryborough should know that the railways are there for the well-being of the people

of Queensland. No doubt, when the next State election is held in 18 months' time, the people of Maryborough will remind the honourable member of that fact. Recently, I reminded the Minister about the results of some of the local authority elections on the north coast. I am sure that the member for Maryborough remembers those results. To me, clauses 6.1 and 6.2 of this Bill are an invasion of people's privacy. They give Queensland Railways the power to enter land. Clause 6.1 states—

"Queensland Railways, by its authorised agents, may, for the purpose of ascertaining the suitability of any land for the purposes of Queensland Railways—

(a) enter on, and inspect, the land or any adjacent land;"

I will not read all of the clause, because I know that most honourable members have already read the Bill. Clause 6.2—Powers relating to construction and maintenance of railways—states—

"(1) Queensland Railways, by its authorised agents, may, for purposes connected with the construction, maintenance, alteration, repair or use of a railway . . ."

Then it sets out what Queensland Railways has the power to do. An example is given in paragraph (b) (ii), which states—

"diverting or altering, temporarily or permanently, the course of any watercourse;"

I believe that the Minister should have had a closer look at that part of the Bill, because it is an invasion of people's privacy.

Mr Ardill: Have a look at section 37 of the present Act.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member for Salisbury should look at the clause on compensation. I will remind him of that interjection at the Committee stage. But, tragically, as I have already said, clause 2.3 also empowers Queensland Railways—

"(j) to increase, reduce or cease any service or operation it proves in the exercise of its powers including the addition of or removal of infrastructure and facilities;"

Will the Minister inform this House whether or not it is intended that the seven-member board will include a representative of this State's rural sector? No doubt many members have read the second-reading speech relative to the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Bill that will be debated later. No doubt the Minister has had considerable dialogue with appropriate organisations in this State, and yet the rural people of this State are not well represented by this legislation. I notice in the Minister's second-reading speech on the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Bill that the Queensland Farmers Federation has been consulted, as have the Queensland Confederation of Industry, the Australian Federation of Construction Contractors, the Bus and Coach Association Queensland, the Commercial Vehicles Industry Association of Queensland, the Motor Trades Association of Queensland Ltd, the Queensland Road Transport Association Ltd, the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland, the Local Government Association, the AWU, the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association and the Transport Workers Union. However, there is no reference to the United Graziers Association or to the Cattlemen's Union. It is members of those two organisations who provide a very major part of Queensland Railways' patronage. I hope that the Minister has consulted those people. If he has not, it is a very retrograde step.

Occupying something like 90 per cent of Queensland's land mass, and being one of the largest export-earners, primary industry deserves a say in the board's deliberations. I hope that the Minister will make provision for that. But perhaps this is asking too much. After all, primary industry would be considered one of the railways' major customers. The Minister might also like to inform this House where the construction and operation of private railways is likely in Queensland, or whether it is to be an interstate operation. Perhaps this could be the start of the link to the touted National Rail Freight Corporation. Only time will tell.

A Government member: Ha, ha.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member could be laughing soon. I remind the Minister——

Mr Hamill: You should read the answer I gave in the House today about the NRFC in Queensland.

Mr JOHNSON: No doubt we have heard some answers in the House in the past, but we wonder whether they contain any concrete evidence. I hope they do. Some of the answers leave a little bit to be desired. They do worry me. I remind the Minister——

Mr Hamill: It would be fair to say that the only thing left to be desired is the comprehension of the Opposition.

Mr JOHNSON: The Minister should not worry about the comprehension of the Opposition. It is a very good Opposition. No doubt, in time he will see——

Mr Hamill: I reckon you are well suited to it.

Mr JOHNSON: I thought the Minister was a man with some intellectual ability. At present, he is very worried about the composition of the Opposition. I will give him the mail: in 18 months' time he will know what the Opposition's real composition is when it again occupies the Treasury benches.

Also, I suppose only time will tell the net result of clause 3.5 (b) of the Bill, which instructs the board to "earn a rate of return and attain standards of productivity and service as determined by the Minister from time to time". Is this one of the Minister's crystal balls? It worries me. For Queensland's sake, I certainly hope his visionary profit percentage does not drive the railways into ultimate financial ruin. Costs will be exorbitant. Therefore, rural people will again have to cop the brunt of them. The Minister knows as well as I do that the Government's Transport platform is that it will provide a service for rural people. I hope that the Minister honours that commitment. Rail services provide a vital link between country and city. Through the carriage of rural products and minerals which are exported, railways provide the people on the eastern seaboard of this State with employment. If the increase in charges is as exorbitant as we think it will be, there will be no livestock or wool transported by rail because most of the people in the regions that produce those commodities will not be able to afford to use the facility.

I doubt very much whether many railway workers have an iota of faith in the Minister's crystal ball gazing on the subject of staff reductions. The Minister can say that the newspaper report was from Disneyland. However, I will remind him of it. He said that it will go away. I hope that, for the benefit of the people who are employed by Queensland Railways, it will go away. The introduction of the Minister's grand freight rationalisation program, which reduces 312 current rail loading sidings to just 23, without, he claims, forced staff losses, will be the first real test. I hope that that will go away, too. As I mentioned before, the Minister's "story from Disneyland" claim when it embarrassingly appeared in the *Courier-Mail* might turn out to be anything but funny for many railway employees. They are already wondering what their future is. I remind the Minister that many people out there—and I am not talking about places such as Brisbane, but about coastal areas and towns in the bush where the railways do function—are wondering what their future holds. Many of them live in small railway towns. They are confronted with the prospect of having to move elsewhere. The value of their property is not very high. They experience problems educating their children and face many other disadvantages that confront people in such regions. It is paramount that those people be kept in mind at all times. I hope they will not be forgotten.

The establishment of the National Rail Freight Corporation to take over all interstate operations will also severely test the Minister's "no sackings" claim. An article in yesterday's *Courier-Mail* contained the Minister's comments about railways in regional and country areas. It stated—

" . . . the Transport Minister, Mr Hamill, said that while he had not read the report it appeared the commission had taken a 'purely market line' on railways.

'I reject that policy,' he said.

'While we firmly believe that Queensland Railways must be more commercial we also recognise our responsibility to provide services, particularly in country areas.'

Mr Hamill: Hear, hear!

Mr JOHNSON: I am pleased to hear the Minister acknowledge that. I can see merit in some of the things that he is trying to do with QR. I know that there are problem areas. At the same time, I honestly believe that cutting those railway distribution centres from 312 to 23 is not satisfactory. The article stated further—

" 'We are moving to identify those areas the Government will ensure will be kept as part of its community service obligations.

'In short, this report is fine for economic theorists,' . . ."

People in Australia are talking about micro-economic reform. This country does not have the population to require micro-economic reform. I believe that the Prime Minister and the Federal Land Transport Minister, Mr Bob Brown, have started using that term, which worries me greatly. There is no doubt that the transport set-up throughout Queensland and the rest of Australia—whether it is railways or whatever—needs a great deal of investigation to sort out a few of its problems. I hope that that will come to bear fruit.

Interlinked with the proposed Inter-State Commission recommendations for a national vehicle registration scheme with substantial registration charge rises for heavy transport vehicles, the redundancy axe will hang heavy over many railway employees in rural areas.

Mr Hamill: Who wrote this?

Mr JOHNSON: I wrote it. If that ISC report is implemented, we will not have to worry about railways in regional areas, because there will be no trucks to service the railways in those areas, and there will be no people left there. The huge jump in registration costs will force many transport operators out of business, severely curtailing services to residents in areas hundreds of kilometres from the nearest railway facility. If the interlinking transport service is lost, then, logically, the railways must ultimately lose out or embark upon providing the interlinking road transport services to retain freight tonnages.

If the new railways board exercises its powers in accordance with sound, commercial principles, it will do everything that it can to block or minimise this obviously unrecognised flow-on from the Inter-State Commission recommendations. While it may prove a boon on the coastal interstate routes, it will be a disaster for the State's inland rail freight services. As I said in the early stages of my speech, the transport of minerals is probably a very beneficial part of the services provided by Queensland Railways. There is no doubt that passenger services within Brisbane have been subsidised to a great extent. We must remember that the goods that are produced in rural areas provide a great deal of employment and income for people who do not live in those areas. There is no doubt that, without the rural areas of this country, railways would not be needed. If this Government is going to streamline the organisation, I ask it to bear in mind the problems that confront people in rural Australia, particularly rural Queensland. The situation is not good out there. In the next couple of weeks, when the Minister journeys to Barcaldine for the Labor Party celebrations—and I hope that most Government members will, because it is a great part of our State—

Mr Szczerbanik: Are you going to be there, Vaughan?

Mr JOHNSON: Yes. I will have a drink there with the honourable member. I assure the House that many people in that area are on their knees. The situation in the wool industry is disastrous. Wool and livestock represent a large percentage of the goods carried by Queensland Railways in rural areas.

A Government member: Rubbish!

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member might say, "Rubbish!" However, when one considers the amount of money that wool and livestock earn for this country and the number of jobs that they create in the coastal areas of Queensland, one cannot say that it is rubbish.

I hope and trust that many people will realise the problems that confront Queensland Railways. I know that the Minister is trying to rectify many of those problems. The National Party does not support this Bill in its entirety and will oppose it at the Committee stage.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes) (7.50 p.m.): I rise in support of the Transport Infrastructure (Railways) Bill. The requirement to establish new legislation to replace the Railways Act 1914-1989 stems from the decision to have Queensland Railways operate as a corporatised commercial entity rather than simply as part of a Government department. With the assumption of responsibility to act commercially and to tailor all of its activities to its ability to earn income, there is a corresponding need to allow, to as great an extent as possible, the same commercial freedoms as are available to a private organisation.

The Bill provides for the establishment of a board of directors to determine policy for Queensland Railways under the general control and direction of the Minister. This Bill sets out to update provisions, some of which are unchanged since railway legislation was first enacted in Queensland, and to arrange these in a more logical sequence. The new legislation will be restricted to essential elements, with other matters being contained in subordinate legislation or set out in administrative directives.

The existing Act sets out the powers of the corporation in the various parts of the Act to which they apply. The new legislation contains a recital of general and specific powers of the corporation immediately following the preliminary part. This simplifies the task of anyone who is checking the Act in search for reference to a particular power. Indeed, in the past, gaining access to the appropriate part of the law that might apply in a particular case was a great problem.

The Act specifically provides powers for Queensland Railways to carry on any type of transport operation or ancillary business, including partnerships and joint venture undertakings, whether they are conducted inside or outside Queensland. Although the objective is to have the corporation act in a commercial manner similar to comparable organisations in the private sector, it is recognised that there are some essential differences. One consequence is the provision for the board chairperson, the deputy chairperson and the remaining five directors to be appointed by the Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister.

The emulation of the corporate model itself represents the most fundamental development that is created by this proposed law. It is a development which moves a substantial distance in constructing within the Government-owned enterprise many of the ingredients of the privately owned modern company. Apart from the creation of the Queensland Railways Board itself, other elements of the corporate model are contained within the Bill. It sets out requirements for the board to act on sound commercial principles. It requires the Government-owned enterprise to earn a rate of return and to attain standards of productivity and service as determined by the Minister. Those few words—specifically, the words "rate of return"—represent perhaps the most pervasive change that will be created by the Bill. It represents the introduction of commercial logic, which will, for the first time in the history of this industry in Queensland, bring a rigorous accounting for public funds. The key phrase here, again, is "rate of return".

By bringing the accounting concept into statute, we open up an explicit scrutiny of the entire process through which taxpayers' funds are allocated. It means that, for the first time in this organisation, the assets in that sphere must be valued and the economic deployment of those assets evaluated. By prescribing an expected numerical level that should be attained by the Government-owned enterprise in terms of its rate of return,

standards of performance may be set for the entire corporate structure which are consistent with the desired rate of return. The fixation of the desired rate of return on capital becomes central to the projection of the future performance of the Government-owned enterprise. The fixation of the rate of return on capital heralds, in a sense, within the Government-owned enterprise context a science in itself. This rate of return must be fixed essentially upon the basis of other comparable enterprises in Australia and, in this era of international financial competition, by reference to internationally comparable enterprises and realistic rates of return.

Gone are the days when Government-owned enterprises such as the railways were used as an economic buffer, as a palliative to curtail unemployment. Such a position has historically been widespread in the Western World. There was a sense that labour could simply be applied in such utilities without much recourse to the economic productivity of that labour. Good government now demands that those old attitudes be substantially modified and modern practices established. Given the growing need for this attitudinal shift, it is significant that the basic form of the statutory corporation has not altered significantly since its earliest appearance late last century. In his book *Government Administration in Australia*, Spann claims that the statutory corporation as an instrument of Government enterprise may well have been invented in Australia. Indeed, it was in relation to the railways that the political and administrative advantages of the corporations were first attempted. In 1883, Victoria became the first colony to create a statutory corporation to operate the Victorian railways. That early experiment ran into difficulties because of the great autonomy given to the commissioners at the time. Later, New South Wales pioneered a corporation for its railways, which provided a more balanced system of control that moved away from formal autonomy to a system that gave greater involvement to the Minister of the day. That model became the preferred structure, which was subsequently adopted by the other States. Subsequent refinement of the corporation after the turn of the century then concentrated upon refinement in general terms, which was intended to separate out the province of the expert from the political domain. The refinement sought the elimination of direct political control from undertakings which served a political consensus. Subsequently, throughout the century there have been various experiments relating to the State company, which have involved various combinations of private and Government ownership and resultant combinations of control and administration. The nature of those undertakings has also varied significantly and, at times, has extended into enterprises that are normally the clear province of private capital.

Although the railways have always been a commercially oriented undertaking—indeed, in other countries such as the United States they have been largely established and continued under the establishment of private capital—in Australia they have historically involved establishment and continued operation largely by the intervention of the State. That intervention on the part of the State has principally been undertaken because of the historical pressures to provide social and economic infrastructure. It could be argued that, because of the compacted historical development of Australia compared with that of other industrialised countries, such as Britain, such an early intervention by the State was required. In fact, the scale of private capital accumulation that was required in countries such as Britain to establish the early rail networks has been proffered as a significant juncture, a turning point, in the development of the large private company that emerged within the past century.

The historical imperatives for social and infrastructural provision by the State through the railways is retained within this Bill. The Bill sets out in general terms the functions of Queensland Railways, but again this is tempered by the requirement to act upon commercial principles. The overriding tempering is also found within the Act where public interest is invoked to give guidance to the Minister in his decision to give direction to the board. This aspect is developed at various places within the Bill and reaches perhaps its most specific form where reference is made to any cessation of service requiring approval by the board and such exercise within limitations set out by the Minister.

Throughout this Bill there is a historical development and modernisation along two themes. Firstly, the facilitation and cordoning of expertise within the management of the corporation. This Bill will complement the restructuring already under way within Queensland Railways to provide modern lines of management and responsibility for the various functions exercised by this enterprise. Creation of the board will enable a team of highly qualified and capable people to exercise real executive responsibility where it is most important to do so at the very pinnacle of the organisation. The structure provided by the legislation which mimics the accounting and micro-economic performance behaviour of private enterprise will provide a powerful motor for the board to ensure productive utilisation of taxpayers' funds. The second theme developed within the Bill is the finetuning in articulating the balancing of power between the Minister and the board. It is a relative autonomy that is created within this Bill, as the limitations of the power of the board and the Minister are delimited in finer detail. The context of the delimitation is largely the imposition of safeguards. These are safeguards against economic mismanagement and against unwarranted political intervention in the professional discharge of management functions by the experts, that is, those people who are best qualified.

When examining this Bill in the first instance, one must conservatively consider the dangers of a proposed law in creating an environment for a more economically precarious utilisation of taxpayers' funds than we have experienced in the past. Upon examination of this Bill, there can be only one answer. One can only support this Bill when one considers the relatively primitive measures that have been in place for valuing capital currently in place and ensuring that an adequate return is derived from it. Historically, that first and most fundamental ingredient of the equation of economic assessment has not been in place. A first and inevitable consequence of this proposed law, therefore, will be the development of an assets register which is valued upon sophisticated principles which relate directly to the productive outcomes which they should represent. There is no doubt, therefore, that this Bill represents a great advance upon what has proceeded. It has to be better than past practice.

In this instance, accountability must commence with accounting principles, and it will ultimately be within the sphere of accounting principles that the significant impact of this proposed law will be felt. The form of accounting employed within Queensland Railways has up to this day been centred upon the line-item budget. This is an extremely static form of accounting. This form of accounting is concerned with the inputs which are required to carry out production in terms of materials, labour, etc. It has provided a very basic means of checking regularity and honesty, but very little more, because it provides nothing in terms of the economic or social rationale behind the inclusion of the various inputs.

A more dynamic form of financial control has evolved beyond line-item budgeting in other jurisdictions in the form of program budgeting. This form of budgeting started to gain more widespread adaptation in the 1970s. This is a system of financial control which relates specific programs within the authority in question to performance criteria. It relates the prioritisation of scarce resources to the objectives of the authority on the Government itself. While the principles behind program budgeting are sound, in practice difficulties arise because of the vagaries of Government objectives and the problems in translating them into concrete items. Further, the relationship to Government objectives can be argued to effectively prejudice the objectivity of the authority. Despite these difficulties, program budgeting in its refined form proved useful to many operating concerns, even though it has not been adopted by Queensland Railways in its full form. This Bill advances the concept of program budgeting, and what I understand will now be employed in Queensland Railways will be a higher form of program budgeting, which relates performance and budgetary consideration to commercial performance. This must invariably be a dynamic form of financial control, as it builds into the financial model the day-to-day exigencies of the financial interest market, fluctuations in pricing of commodities and the current commercial expectations of the industry in question.

The corporate model has certainly been the subject of wide debate in other parts of the Western World and the subject of some experimentation in terms of changing the performance of many enterprises. This is particularly so in countries such as New Zealand. In all those experiences and experiments, a different combination of financial control and authority was exercised by the Executive arm of government. I believe that this Bill provides a very sound balance in terms of controlling the specific structures provided for in the Bill. It is therefore very difficult to understand the head-in-the-sand attitude of members of the National Party who still want to turn their backs on the future. They want to stay with the past. The National Party does not want to change its methods of economic evaluation or advance into new techniques that will provide substantial benefits for the taxpayer. The use of corporatisation in other countries has provided great advantages for the taxpayers in terms of increased services, better services for the public and better returns on capital expenditure. I support the Bill.

Mr J. N. GOSS (Aspley) (8.08 p.m.): Members of the Liberal Party are concerned about the Bill before the House tonight, and are particularly concerned about rural rail services and the employees of Queensland Railways. The corporatisation of Queensland Railways, in principle, is a good move. Queensland Railways has to become more efficient and offer a good service that the customer can rely on and trust. The ALP policy that was announced before the last State election contained a lot of great words. An example is—

"Under a Goss Government community obligations to those living in remote areas will be honoured by the provision of an affordable freight service to these areas."

It is interesting that all the Transport Minister's plans now seem to be centred on taking away freight services from rural areas. The policy also states—

"In keeping with our goal to provide regional passenger rail services, Labor will also oversee the introduction of a new generation of motor rail vehicles to service communities such as those on the Atherton Tablelands and the Brisbane Valley . . ."

That is yet to occur.

The ALP attacked the previous State Government's policy on transport. The attack centred on small decreases in services that had occurred over a number of years, owing to a gradual decrease in funding. However, that is insignificant when compared to the decreases in rail transport contained in the last State Budget. Moreover, if the Federal Government's Industry Commission has its way and if changes occur too quickly, the resultant effects on transport will be disastrous. The Industry Commission report estimates that 25 000 jobs throughout Australia are likely to disappear.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr J. N. GOSS: If the honourable member for Salisbury says that there are 25 000 lazy railway employees throughout Australia, perhaps those jobs should go. The effects of that reduction will result in 4 000 railways' employees in Queensland losing their jobs.

Mr Schwarten: Ha, ha!

Mr J. N. GOSS: The member for Rockhampton North may think it is funny that people will not have a job, but—

Mr SCHWARTEN: I rise to a point of order. I am being deliberately misquoted by the droning, boring buffoon in the corner of the Chamber. I ask that the insulting remark about my caring or otherwise about people's jobs be withdrawn.

Mr J. N. GOSS: I ask the member for Rockhampton North to withdraw the offensive remark.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! I ask the member for Aspley to return to his speech.

Mr J. N. GOSS: I have asked the member for Rockhampton North to withdraw the offensive remark.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I withdraw the word "boring".

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member for Aspley to proceed.

Mr J. N. GOSS: The member for Rockhampton North knows nothing and will never know anything. The Minister has said that no-one will be sacked from Queensland Railways, but let us be realistic. In today's economic climate, how many railways employees will accept a redundancy package? I can understand a number of employees who are close to retirement accepting a package, but unless that package is awfully generous and would ensure that a person was well provided for over a number of years, I cannot see anyone rushing to accept a redundancy package. If they did go out into the wider labour market, it would be almost impossible for them to find another job. Given the increases that are occurring in the rates of unemployment, they would have to wait a long time before getting a job. I hope that this Government will not rush into implementing the recommendations contained in the Industry Commission's report in relation to urban rail. The results would be that urban rail fares will double and people who use peak hour commuter services would have to pay a surcharge as well. I suspect that it may suit the Federal Government very well to force people to use their cars more frequently because the more fuel that is purchased, the greater will be the revenue obtained by the Federal Government from fuel taxes and excise charges. Honourable members would be aware of the flak caused by increases in rail fares that are as low as 6 or 7 per cent. If fares are to double and, at peak hour, be the subject of a surcharge as well, the end result will be a mass desertion by passengers from Queensland Railways and from public transport overall.

Mrs Edmond: Who said it is going to double?

Mr J. N. GOSS: The member for Mount Coot-tha should read the report. The proposal for the use of private trains on Government-owned tracks is a good idea, provided that the transport operations of this nation—that includes air, road and rail—do not fall into the hands of one operator. The great risk in Australia today is that one operator could get control of all major freight and transport services. Part 3 of the Bill reveals that the ALP is looking for more positions for its cronies and friends. The Health Minister has told us how he has effectively abolished hospital boards. Now we find that the ALP has had a change of heart. However, the provisions of clause 3.4 mean that the board will basically become a puppet of the Minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! We will discuss the clauses of the Bill when we reach the Committee stage.

Mr J. N. GOSS: I am just helping members opposite understand what I am talking about.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will return to the Bill. We will discuss the clauses later.

Mr J. N. GOSS: The Queensland Railways Board will be established for two reasons—to give the cronies a job and to keep the Minister at arm's length from the unpopular decisions, such as fair increases, closures of lines and mass redundancies; we have already seen the recent persecution of children on the Gold Coast who were left stranded by a bus many kilometres from their homes. That shows how much heart the Transport Department has. If it was not for the supertax on the mining companies' rail freight services, what would already be happening to our rail services? All the promises made before the last State election about coal and mineral freight rates now appear to be forgotten. The day is fast approaching when the rail freights on minerals will have to be reduced drastically. Mines—particularly coal mines—now opening in Indonesia are undercutting our export markets. It will not be long before we will have great difficulty selling any of our coal overseas.

We have concerns about the powers in another part of the Bill—I cannot refer to the clause—which relates to construction and maintenance of railways, the felling and lopping of trees, and demolishing and destroying buildings. However, there is no provision in the Bill for adequate compensation. The provisions for compensation are really wishy-washy. The clause dealing with regulations gives the Governor in Council the power to make regulations not inconsistent with the Act, but a further paragraph appears to create the same situation in which the high school principals have found themselves. If railway employees, in particular senior officers, receive a significant increase in salary, they may well be required to reapply for their jobs in a similar manner to that in which the high school principals were required to reapply. This is just another clause to allow friends and cronies of the Labor Party to take senior positions within Queensland Railways and to obtain cushy jobs. It is no wonder that people are coming here from southern States. It is getting too risky for them to keep their jobs, particularly in Victoria, where, because of the state of the economy, they may not be paid for much longer.

The ALP policy on transport has been forgotten. I suppose that many Government members have not even read their own policy. The employees of Queensland Railways have been forgotten. The rail-users have also been forgotten. The urban commuters will not be able to afford to travel by train and the rail service in Queensland will deteriorate. If we can discourage enough people from using Queensland Railways, we will not have to have a Queensland rail service and we will be able to save all that money. As I have said before, I believe in the corporatisation of Queensland Railways—it is a good move—but the way that this Government is going about it leaves a lot to be desired. I am concerned not by what is in the Bill but by what has been left out of it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! I call the honourable member for Isis.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr Veivers: Hear, hear!

Mr NUNN (Isis) (8.20 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, Mr Veivers, members of the National Party, I am so pleased by the warm welcome that has been extended to me tonight. To that end, I will try to entertain honourable members as best I can. When the member for Gregory read the speech which was written for Mr Katter, he made the point that the railway is an essential service. He will get no argument from me on that point. However, nowhere is it written—certainly not on tablets of stone—that the service cannot be made to run more efficiently. In fact, it is imperative that it be made to do so. Nowhere is it written that the service must lose vast amounts of money. Much as the National Party might like to see it keep doing that, we cannot accommodate them. If it is written as such, I invite the honourable member to show me where it is written. To continue to lose money is utter lunacy. I do not know to whom the honourable member has been speaking, but I have been talking to those involved in the running of the railways and, therefore, those responsible for the success of the strategy upon which the Government is about to embark. Those people include management and railway workers. Later, I will deal with the UGA; I will not disregard it. The people to whom I have spoken are excited and full of optimism, which is in stark contrast to the quivering bottom lips of the people who inhabit the Opposition benches. They are the gloom-and-doom merchants who come out at night.

Members of the Opposition have all the dash, all the verve, all the foresight and all the fighting qualities of a dead rat. To meet the challenge of the future, they have the courage of a gutted carp. I have not talked with representatives of the United Graziers Association, but I will talk to them when this Government, with the cooperation of Queensland Railways, has improved the service. When the Government gives them a reason to return to the railways, then I will go and talk to them and encourage them to use the railways, but not before. The previous Government had 32 years to adapt to a changing world but, led by an ageing ratbag, it failed the test. That Government lost its bottle, and now Labor has taken up the challenge. I can assure honourable members that this Government is about to deliver the goods.

The purpose of this Bill is to establish the legislative framework required to put Queensland Railways on a sound commercial footing. Anyone who is critical of this Bill is criticising something which sets out to state that the principal function of Queensland Railways is to operate safe, efficient freight and passenger transport services using sound commercial principles. Making Queensland Railways more competitive will reduce its reliance on Queensland taxpayers for survival. Over the years, the taxpayer has been slugged unmercifully to support the railways. There was justification for this when rail was playing an important role in the opening-up of this State. However, times have changed, and this is the first serious attempt to take the burden away from the taxpayer. The new legislation will also be easier to understand and more up to date than its archaic counterpart. During the consultative process, agreement was reached with unions representing railway employees to virtually all of the employment provisions which occupied sections 16 to 32 of the old Act being deleted and appropriate provisions incorporated in either subordinate legislation or an employment agreement. I must say that this consultation was long and exhaustive. Everyone who wanted to have a say was able to do so, and the process has had a lot to do with the break-down of barriers which existed between the railway unions and the previous Government.

In line with the new corporate commercial identity of Queensland Railways, the appointment or removal from office of the chief executive will be a matter for the board of directors, with the consent of the Minister, and not the Governor in Council, as was previously the case. Although the details of standards and processes will not be contained in legislation, there is a specific provision in the new Bill preserving the entitlements of employees who held office prior to the new legislation in relation to service and superannuation. This is contained in clause 4.6, and sets out that these employees will enjoy terms and conditions which will be no less favourable than those which they already enjoy. With a limited number of exceptions, provisions regarding offences and penalties have been removed from the Act and will be included in subordinate legislation. Those retained in the principal Act are of a serious nature such as endangering the safety of trains, wilful obstruction and damage, and, consequently, the power of a police officer to require names and addresses of people in certain circumstances is also retained. The procedures for setting up formal boards of inquiry are contained in the legislation. These are basically in conformity with those which existed in the previous Act, the principal difference being that the boards may be convened by the Minister rather than the Governor in Council, and the particular requirements of the Workplace Health and Safety Act have been taken into account in the composition of the board.

I do not want to take up the time of the House because I know that many knowledgeable members on the Government side wish to make a contribution. However, let me say to the Opposition, "Be not afraid. Put your trust in this Government. It will not betray your trust, and you will be richer and very much rewarded for the experience." I support the Bill and commend it to all honourable members, in particular the member for Southport.

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (8.28 p.m.): Once again, honourable members are faced with a very vexed question in the State of Queensland. It is a very vexed question because it seems that almost every week that goes by, more and more evidence accumulates which indicates clearly to the people of Queensland that there are going to be massive cut-backs in the railway system. It amuses me no end—and, quite frankly, it has helped to enhance my credibility throughout the State—that wherever he goes, the Minister says that there will be no cut-backs in Queensland Railways and that there will be no reduction in jobs. If one makes the statement in one month, "This Government is going to reduce the 312 rail freight centres in Queensland to 23 and service the rest by road transport"——

Government members interjected.

Mr KATTER: One is always hearing jeers from the Government side. I suppose it must be because what is being said is very offensive and provocative and, undoubtedly, is enormously damaging to the Labor Party. Whenever the Minister makes a statement,

members of the media contact me and I say, "Look, I haven't said that 6 000 jobs are to go." Mr Pat Dunne, the secretary of the ARU in Queensland and a member of the QCE, has said that 6 000 jobs are to go.

Mr Swarten: The QCE hasn't existed for 15 years.

Mr KATTER: Whatever the new term is for the central executive——

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. I believe that it is incumbent upon me to inform the House that Pat Dunne, who is a good friend of mine, has in fact retired. He is no longer the secretary of the ARU, but while he was, he did a very good job.

Mr KATTER: I fail totally to see what that has got to do with the statement made by Pat Dunne. Maybe now that he has resigned from the Railways, he has become a liar. I do not know. I am simply saying that Pat Dunne stated that 6 000 jobs were to go. He has made some three or four separate press statements on the subject. Professor Michael Taylor told a national geography conference that 1 600 jobs will go in Townsville alone and that some 45 000 jobs would go nationwide, which would entail considerably more than 6 000 jobs in Brisbane.

Mr Swarten: Who is he when he is at home?

Mr KATTER: Professor Michael Taylor, who works at the University of Western Australia and who has studied the pattern of potential job losses, stated that Townsville stood to lose——

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr KATTER: I will just move along.

The *Queensland Transport News*, the management magazine for transport operators, contains an article by Mr Andrew Stewart, who has been written up in at least one article I cited as a member of Mr Goss' kitchen Cabinet. I do not disrespect Mr Goss for that. I think he is quite a reputable, intelligent person of some considerable integrity. It is quite an intelligent article, and states——

"After 5 000 jobs were cut out of Queensland Rail in the last decade, another 6 000 are due to go as O'Rourke shifts the emphasis from an operational-led to a business-led railway."

The article contains a large picture of Mr O'Rourke. It incorporates an interview between Mr Andrew Stewart and Mr Vince O'Rourke, the manager of Queensland Rail, or whatever title he now bears.

Government members interjected.

Mr KATTER: I will move on. The front page of the *Courier-Mail* dated 12 March was headlined, "Railway sets goal to shed 6 000 jobs".

Government members interjected.

Mr KATTER: No, it is not. It is Peter Morley and Cheryl Thurlow. The article quotes a senior source in Queensland Railways. Is there anyone on the opposite side of the House who is naive enough to believe that Opposition members do not have eyes and ears into the upper echelons of the Queensland railway system or that we do not know that people are openly and clearly making those statements to protect themselves and their jobs in the industry in which they have worked all their lives? I rely on the information in the State Budget papers. With all due respect to the Minister, he has spoken on a number of occasions on this subject in the House and on not one single occasion has he informed members where the funding will come from. His department is no longer covered by the Consolidated Revenue Fund. How is the Minister's department going to finance the losses that obviously will be made by Queensland's railway system this year? I am reliably informed that those losses could be around \$175m, which I do not think is unreasonable since it was \$133m last year and we are experiencing a

recession. I ask the Minister to advise members where the funding will come from. I have asked that question on at least a dozen occasions. I am quite happy to return to my electorate and reassure my constituents that at least we know where the money is going to come from to fund the losses this year. But the Minister has made statement after statement that he is going to run Queensland Railways at a profit. The Minister must excuse those poor people who are running around in terror when he continues to make such statements. If Queensland Railways ran at a \$133m loss last year, and there is a recession this year, I think those people can be excused for believing the stories that are circulating so widely and prominently in the State.

A media release by the Minister stated that the 312 rail freight centres would be reduced to 23. Depending on the political clout which the various communities can apply, more and more rail freight centres are listed for retention every day. If Opposition members keep going and are as successful as they have been up to date, I think there might still be 312 rail freight centres. Every day that goes by, Opposition members receive more and more information. The union movement provided most of this information to the Opposition. I thank those prominent trade union officials along the eastern seaboard who have provided Opposition members with that information.

I also cite the ATAC minutes and communique. Apparently there will not be any jobs lost in Queensland, and yet the honourable Minister's name appears on page 8 of this document. Page 2 states that an interstate committee will be established to, amongst other things, handle services and programs to assist the unemployed rail workers. But, of course, Opposition members are alarmist/extremists who race around saying that jobs will be lost. Horror, horror that jobs will be lost! On the same page, there is agreement that the railways will be run at a profit. However, we alarmists are stupid enough to believe the statements made by the Minister at national conferences, and I suppose maybe we are.

Mr Nunn interjected.

Mr KATTER: I will move on. As I say, every day that goes by my file grows. The level of support enjoyed by members opposite outside Brisbane continues to diminish. Opposition members thank Government members for that. I think the Minister has had a lot to do with the conservative forces seizing control of most of the cities up and down the eastern seaboard of Queensland. I thank the Minister very much.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr KATTER: He is not the only one who thanks Mr Hamill and his supporters—his very vociferous and loud supporters in this place.

Mr Nunn interjected.

Mr KATTER: I love the interjections from the honourable member because I go into his electorate and say, "I don't know. Mr Nunn, he is a very strong supporter of Mr Hamill. I don't know. You would have to take it up with him." I am sure they do. Yesterday's *Courier-Mail* contains another alarmist statement, but this one is made in the Federal Government's Industry Commission report. The article states that 25 000 jobs will be lost in the Australian railways. However, Queenslanders are very pleased because the Minister announced this morning that only 60 of those will occur in Queensland. I am sure that everybody in Queensland believes that although 25 000 jobs will be eliminated Australia-wide, Queensland is only to lose 60 jobs. I am sure that everyone believes that. I do not have any difficulty with that statement.

Whenever I am interviewed, I say that we have a choice here. On the one hand, we can believe Professor Taylor, we can believe Peter Morley and Cheryl Thurlow and the Editor of the *Courier-Mail*, we can believe Pat Dunne, we can believe the report of the Commissioner for Railways, and we can believe Andrew Stewart and Vince O'Rourke. On the other hand, we can accept that every one of them is a liar. There are only two options: either Mr Hamill is not telling the truth or all of them are not telling the truth.

One group of people is saying one thing and the Minister is saying something completely different. Every time the Minister makes a statement, the media ring me and I tell them, "I don't know, really. All of them say one thing and Mr Hamill says the opposite. Maybe all of them are liars and Mr Hamill is the only truthful person amongst them. I do not know." I leave that to the determination of the people who read these documents. Obviously, judging by the outcome of the local authority elections, they have made their decision.

Members on this side have been accused of inconsistencies. It has been said that we believe in economic rationalism and that if something is not making a profit it can be closed down. I support strongly the remarks made by the Opposition spokesman, the honourable member for Gregory, Mr Johnson. I back him up, because the statements that he made today are 100 per cent correct. This legislation is an act of arch hypocrisy and a very cruel thimble-and-pea trick to perpetrate on this State's railway workers. What Mr Hamill is now saying is going to be the truth. Mr Hamill will not be closing the railway lines. Mr Hamill and the Government will not be sacking the workers. But the people who work in Queensland Railways are not stupid. When they are told that an independent board is being set up, they release a string of obscenities in describing the new Government of Queensland and say, "These people won't even do their own dirty work. Then they will think that we will be stupid enough to believe that it is the independent body that is responsible for all the sackings." Quite frankly, I can no longer find anywhere in my communities anyone who is standing and defending the ALP. The railway workers know that what is being set up is a body to do the dirty work for the Goss Government. Let us not let poor little Mr Hamill take the blame for what is going on. It was not Mr Hamill who threw himself out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Obviously, he would not do that. It was this State's illustrious leader, the man who makes all the nice statements and then lets Mr Hamill do all the dirty work for him. When the stones start being thrown, they will be thrown at Mr Hamill, not at Mr Goss. Mr Hamill has become smart. He recognises the rules of the game. He is finding another group of people for the workers to throw the stones at.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! Will the honourable member for Flinders be addressing the Bill at some time in the future?

Mr KATTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I cannot think of statements that are more relevant. A body is being set up to do the work of rationalising the railway system in Queensland. Rationalisation means the closure of all lines that are not making a profit. Interestingly, a recent *Courier-Mail* article made public the Federal report, which tells us only what we already know, namely, that the massive losses are being incurred in the commuter systems in the city. The lines outside of Brisbane are not incurring losses. However, there is absolutely no intention to close any services in the city. We are not advocating the closure of any services in the city. National Party Governments were able to keep such services operating. I do not know why, suddenly, this panic has begun. For 30 years, National Party Governments ran the railway system. They did not have to undertake massive rationalisation and convince the business groups and the upper-class groups of Queensland that members of the National Party were great people or that we were going to slaughter all the workers and take their jobs away from them. We did not have to prove that we were tough by doing those sorts of things. We did not have to do that in the railways. But suddenly, all these massive changes have to be carried out.

What will happen when those lines are closed? What will happen when the freight centres are closed? No-one will convince me that, if by some miracle members opposite are able to cling to the Government benches in this House, in the next 5 or 10 years that will not happen. If it does happen, all of the freight will have to be carried on the road system. In that case, two things will happen. The cost of road transport is three times higher than the cost of carriage by rail. For a start, the transport of everything in Queensland will increase by 300 per cent. The road system is not capable of handling the huge increase in the volume of traffic and will suffer dramatically. Therefore, extra

money will have to be spent on this State's roads. While Mr Hamill and the Government will be able to skite about making a profit or breaking even in the railways, it will be over the broken backs of the consumers in Queensland who will have to suffer a cost imposition on every single item that they have to buy. Let us not even talk in a remote sense about our export industries, which were again smashed to pieces today in this House by the abolition of 100 years of work in putting together the sugar industry of this State. All of our export industries will have imposed upon them a massive new cost structure of having to carry their goods by road transport instead of by rail. At the end of the day, what will the 6 000 workers have achieved by sacrificing their jobs? Over the broken backs of the men who will lose their jobs, there will be a massive increase in the cost of carrying everything from point A to point B as well as a massive cost imposition upon all of the export items upon which this State depends for its wealth and job creation.

Another aspect deserves some attention. I emphasise that all things are not entirely bad. One of the things that I hope the Minister is doing is moving towards some sort of arrangement for door-to-door deliveries. That is vitally important. I hope that the Minister is not naive enough to believe that the railways can secure all of the small parcels transportation. I am not naive enough to come here and demand that he should try to take all of that business. I believe most certainly that a very large proportion of the business that has been lost can be recouped if that change is carried out. If the Government is doing that, the Opposition most certainly compliments it.

We are here to talk about the creation of a body that will take over the operation of the railways system in Queensland and run it at a profit. It is very easy to run that system at a profit. If all the railway lines except coal lines were closed down tomorrow, a massive profit would be made. However, people who live outside Brisbane suspect that all the lines outside Brisbane will be closed down. A massive loss is being carried by the commuter system in Brisbane. For those who are not familiar with the transportation systems throughout Australia, I point out that the railway commuter systems in Sydney and Melbourne are running at losses of about \$1.4 billion. The sorts of losses that are being registered in Sydney and Melbourne will start to be registered in Brisbane as the city grows—and we all hope that it will grow. Those very same massive losses will be exploding upon the Queensland scene and imposing vast costs upon all the people of Queensland. However, there will be no cut-backs and no increases in charges to those people, because the Minister has already made announcements along those lines. The Opposition is not pleading the cause that there should be increases in cost impositions or any cutting-away of those services, because it never found that it had to carry out those particular operations.

As the Minister participates in Cabinet discussions, let him talk about Ensham and Gordonstone and woodchipping. If some of those industries get off the ground, they will supply some sort of goods that can be carried on the railways system in Queensland. I refer honourable members to the phosphate operations in Mount Isa and the lack of coal from Collinsville. Let the Minister attempt to deal with some of the development projects in Queensland, and let his leader, who has forced him into this invidious position, start to make some decisions in this State so that we can attempt to create some jobs and produce some goods that can be carried on the railways system in Queensland. Once again, we enter into the very same debate. I was able to provide the Minister's last speech to all the people in my electorate. On the last occasion when I spoke in this House, I sought an explanation——

Mr Hamill: Was that last Friday?

Mr KATTER: I believe that a charge is being made against me because I was not here last Friday or Thursday. I believe that I should answer that charge. The reason that I was not here was that, in the past six months, my home town of Cloncurry—a tiny little town—has now lost its eighth major service. Six of those services had been established in that town for almost 100 years. I most certainly do not intend to be in Brisbane taking part in a debate when my home town is being crucified by Government

members sitting opposite and occupying the Treasury benches of this State. Not only has the Government ruthlessly crucified that little town, but it is also attempting to do the very same thing to the railways in that town. In 18 months' time or sooner, when this Government chooses to hold the next election, the people of that town will have the opportunity to voice their opinion. We will see then whether or not they understand what is taking place—whether they believe the Minister or members on this side of the House.

Because there was a policy of non-replacement, the National Party had to take an awful lot of criticism. Because the National Party got rid of only 5 000 jobs in nine years, it was criticised in *Queensland Transport News*. We were a really slack operation. But this new, slick, smooth operation will achieve far more.

Time expired.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (8.49 p.m.): All honourable members have heard of Alice in Wonderland and the Mad Hatter's tea party. They have just witnessed the "Mad" Katter's tea party. As many members would be aware, I have had a close association with the railways over a long period. I also have a deep affection for the railways system in this State. As many members would know, the railways opened up Queensland. They were part of the reason why this State is the most decentralised State in Australia. However, it is time that changes were made to make sure that rail grows for the future. This Bill is about building rail for the future. Times of change are sensitive. The worst thing that one can do during times of change is to use scare tactics such as those used by the honourable member for Flinders. Quite frankly, it was a disgraceful performance for him to use the media to scare the men, women and families who work for Queensland Railways.

Let me deal with some of the nonsense that honourable members heard from Mr Katter. He denied that he had said that 6 000 jobs would be lost. Lo and behold, on the front page of the *Morning Bulletin* of 15 April 1991 was the headline "Katter: Government will sack 6,000 in rail". That headline is bigger than the honourable member's brain. The article states—

" Plans to scrap the jobs of 6000 Queensland railwaymen were linked to progressive moves to monopolise Australia's surface transport industry, State Opposition Transport spokesman Mr Bob Katter said yesterday.

'Railwaymen could soon find themselves in a similar position to the pilots when the pilots' dispute erupted during 1989,' he said."

Mr Katter: That's not true.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member says that that is not true. If the report is not true, why has he not issued a statement to the *Morning Bulletin* denying it? Why has he not corrected that newspaper article? I am appalled that the *Morning Bulletin* did not bother to contact the Minister or the local member, the member for Rockhampton North. That newspaper relies for its support on railwaymen and women and their families in Rockhampton. It is about time that it started supporting local railway people instead of printing the sort of nonsense that comes from the honourable member for Flinders.

I turn now to another matter. On 17 April 1991 in Mount Isa, there was an interview on the local radio station. The transcript of that interview has been kindly presented to me by the honourable member for Mount Isa who, as we all know, has a keen interest in railway matters. During that interview, Mr Katter was asked whether he had told lies about the 6 000 jobs that were going to be lost. This is fundamental to the Bill.

Mr Hamill: Did he answer truthfully?

Mr BEATTIE: I will let Parliament be the judge of that. He said—

"So you've got two people here, one is saying that there's going to be 6,000 jobs removed from the railway system in Queensland"—

that is the honourable member for Flinders—

"and you've got another person, Mr. Hamill, the Minister saying that they won't be removed. Now when I make my statement I back it up with factual information. This is not a statement pulled out of the air, this is a statement backed up with hard evidence . . . Now let me produce the evidence because that 6,000 railway jobs to go is not my figure."

He said—

"I wouldn't have a clue how many railway jobs are going to go."

He said that he would not have a clue how many railway jobs would go. I am happy to stand up in the House and say that I believe the honourable member. In that statement, he was telling the absolute truth. I am in no doubt whatsoever that Mr Katter was telling that radio station the absolute truth. Let me deal with a few other matters. The major function of the Bill is to establish a board of directors to be responsible for the exercise and discharge of the powers, functions and duties of Queensland Railways as specified in the Bill.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! The honourable member for Flinders!

Mr BEATTIE: The board will consist of seven members who will possess skills that will enable the board to carry out its functions. Members of the board will require a clear understanding of the commercial and managerial environment. Of course, people who are directly associated with transport businesses that are in competition with Queensland Railways will not be considered for membership of the board. The Minister is required to gain the approval of the Governor in Council for any proposed appointments to the board. The board itself has the responsibility to appoint the chief executive of QR, who will be subject to the control and direction of the board.

Mr Katter: Rebut one single piece of evidence.

Mr BEATTIE: I will come back to the honourable member. He should not get excited; it is not good for him. The board, therefore, has the primary responsibility for the determination and administration of policy but, importantly, that responsibility is to be subject to the strategic direction of the Minister. The necessity of having a board arises from a number of considerations. I want to deal with this matter, because the National Party has attacked in a very deceitful way the composition of and the need for the board. Firstly, in the past, rail managers have failed to be held properly accountable for their actions. That is a very fundamental point. It is about time that we honestly put that on the table. Consequently, there is a need for a body that actively monitors the operations of QR management on a regular basis. Seven part-time directors with a direct and narrow interest in the operations of QR will be much more effective in making rail management recognise and respond to its responsibilities than Government Ministers can ever hope to be without neglecting their other duties. That is a very important fundamental point.

Secondly, the history of blatant and unnecessary political intervention in the operations of the railways is long and voluminous. If ever there was an illustration of political intervention, it was Don Lane and the National Party. When it comes to political intervention, they have an appalling track record. To illustrate my point, I will refer to two matters. An article in the *Courier-Mail* on 24 February 1983 was headlined "Cabinet to defy court on railway". Those are the people who will accept the umpire's decision. The article stated—

"State Cabinet will defy an Industrial Commission recommendation to defer Cabinet's unilateral decision to wipe 500 percent Sunday penalty rates for railwaymen."

What a wonderful way to treat railway workers in this State! For the information of members of the House, I table that article.

Let me give honourable members another illustration. I have an article concerning a trade union leader, the same Pat Dunne whom Mr Katter so readily quoted a little earlier. It states—

"A trade-union leader is furious over the sudden creation of scores of high-paying management jobs within the Queensland Railways Department."

Of course, that was to the detriment of ordinary railway workers. Let us not have any humbug about the history of the National Party and its involvement in the rail industry. I know from my own personal experience that there was continued political interference in the railway system. What did we get from the likes of the National Party Minister, Don Lane? He ran around naming locomotives after himself and he fiddled the figures to try to say that Queensland Railways had gone through some great metamorphous change. He was simply interested in kicking railway workers and their families to death. For the honourable member for Flinders to try to defend that nonsense is, quite frankly, untenable. That honourable member was in the same Cabinet. There is a consequent need for the operation of the railways to be seen to be focused upon the provision of an effective and efficient service to the Queensland community—

Mr KATTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Maybe your ruling will be that I have not been maligned, but I made no attempt whatsoever to defend the performance of our Government. What Mr Beattie said is totally incorrect.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Flinders has already spoken in the debate. He has had his say and he should now let other members have their say. I call the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

Mr BEATTIE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I agree with the honourable member for Flinders. He could not defend the previous Government's decisions.

Mr Hamill: At least he has to draw the line somewhere.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes. I can see where that is.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. That is not what I said. The honourable member has misrepresented me. He said that I could not defend the Government. I said just the opposite. In fact, I said that I could if I wanted to, but I am not.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I find the interjections of the honourable member through points of order to be tedious. I suggest that, if he continues in that manner, they will be taken as offending against Standing Order 123A. I call the honourable member for Brisbane Central.

Mr BEATTIE: I will reiterate what I said. There is a consequent need for the operation of the railways to be seen to be focused upon the provision of an effective and efficient service to the Queensland community as a whole—not to those particular sections of the community that are able to influence unduly the Government of the day. The installation of a board of directors between railway management and the responsible Minister serves to formalise the separation of the operational from the political—a very important point. Bearing in mind the history of railways in recent years, I cannot emphasise that strongly enough. The concern to inhibit the potential for political interference should not be confused with the need for a strong and clear strategic direction to be provided by the Government. As the sole representative of the share-holders—that is, Queensland taxpayers—the Government has an important responsibility to ensure that the strategy of QR reflects the social and economic imperatives that are identified by the community.

The Bill provides for the Minister to play a central role in the identification and monitoring of strategy. On the basis of consultations with the Minister, the board is required to formulate a five-year corporate plan. The Minister will then be presented

with a draft plan, which can then be amended or altered in any fashion whatsoever. Furthermore, the Minister has the power to issue any directions to the board which are deemed to be in the public interest. In the interests of ensuring that Ministers are accountable for their actions, any such directions are to be published in the annual report of Queensland Railways. The establishment of a board of directors can therefore be seen to be a necessary step in the development of a fully accountable structure of responsibility. It will not be a cloak for the Minister to hide behind. The Minister will still be answerable to Parliament for the operation and performance of Queensland Railways and, under this Bill, the Minister will have sufficient decision-making power to match the accountability expected by Parliament—a point that refutes a number of points made by the Opposition tonight.

When I was involved with the Queensland Railway Station Officers Union—and a very proud involvement it was, indeed—many of the stationmasters concerned were affected by change. At that time CTC—a new train control system—and EDP were introduced. Many people were unprepared for that change and, as a result, a number of stationmasters suffered health problems and a deterioration in their standing. I am delighted to say that the Railway Department is spending a lot of time on human resources, making sure that people can cope with change. That is very, very important. This has not existed before and I believe that this action will be supported by all members of the House. Over the years there has been a move towards greater efficiency and more technology, but the human relations component that should have gone with it was not present. Now that is happening under the new administration.

Mr FitzGerald: Ask the boys at Spring Bluff what they have been told. They have been told nothing.

Mr BEATTIE: As I said, one of the strengths is that the Railway Department is dealing with the human relations component and communications—

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: If the honourable member waits a moment, I will answer his interjection. I do not dispute the fact that this is a very important point. Communication is an important component of human relations. There are two ways in which one learns about information in the railways; the first is by means of the weekly notice—something that Mr Katter would agree with—and the second is through the grapevine. One of the reasons why I was so critical of Mr Katter is that one must deal with the facts and not go out scaremongering amongst people who in recent times have been through a great deal of difficulty.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! The member for Flinders is warned under Standing Order 123A.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! And the member for Warrego can have a warning under Standing Order 123A.

Mr Hobbs: I was provoked.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Warrego is on his final warning under Standing Order 123A.

Mr BEATTIE: Stationmasters have gone through a great period of change. I have had a close association with them and I have enormous regard for them. I am delighted that, under these new arrangements in the Bill, stationmasters will be given the opportunity to be at the forefront of selling Queensland Railways to the local community.

Mr Katter: Those that are left.

Mr BEATTIE: The honourable member would agree with that and every member on the Opposition side of the House should agree with it as well. These stationmasters will be at the forefront of selling Queensland Railways and giving people the opportunity to use the railways instead of other competitive forms of transport. I conclude by making two points. I will quote from the transcript of the interview held on 17 April during which Mr Ed Knowles said—

"Yes, but Mr. Katter, Mr. Hamill said he's offered you more than a month ago to arrange a briefing to discuss with you the problems in Queensland Railways that you believe to be problems but you have never taken up the offer."

Mr Katter replied—

"I don't have anything to discuss. He has launched upon a policy which he has made quite clear to all and sundry and look Ed, look, when someone calls you a liar you're entitled to project your evidence. Now you want me to hurry up, I'll hurry up . . ."

The reality is that, if Mr Katter was sincere about representing the people in his electorate, he would take up the offer of that briefing and accurately represent the people who live in his electorate.

The change in this Bill is very important to railway workers and their families, as well as to Queenslanders generally. It is about time that these things that are of such importance are not denigrated by people playing politics. Unfortunately, that is what Mr Katter is doing. I hope he will get out of the gutter of politics and look at the future of the railways and the future of the people who work in that industry.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the honourable member for Peak Downs.

Mr Hayward: This will be a treat.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs) (9.05 p.m.): Yes, it will be a treat. I rise tonight with a sense of sadness because the Minister has abdicated his responsibility. If I can use the term, it is a gutless way of doing business. There is no other way to describe it. The provisions of the Bill mean that any decisions made will be made by the board. In his second-reading speech the Minister said that he will stand at arm's length from the board. This is a very sad day because, whilst the Minister has given certain assurances about many areas in the Railway Department, those assurances were given before the board was set up. The board will be run by people who are accountants and who no doubt will be used to Brisbane. They will sharpen their pencils and bring about a corporate result. At the end of the financial year the Minister will ask the board what profit has been made or if the loss has been reduced. To achieve that the board will have to cut out some of the country rail services which have been a vital part in the development of this great State of Queensland from the turn of the century onwards.

One particular riding instruction that the board will be given will be not to interfere with the suburban rail services. There is no way that the board will dare to interfere with them. No doubt there will be reasons other than the directive of the Minister for not taking that action. For example, some of the people on the board would probably use these suburban rail services and, of course, it would also be electorally damaging to cut out suburban commuter services. The country people will be the ones who have to pay, and that is a tragedy if ever there was one. I frankly believe that in recent years Queensland Railways has greatly improved its performance. Train-drivers, guards, conductors and catering staff are now very, very proud of Queensland's rail system. I honestly believe without a shadow of doubt that Queensland's passenger rail service is the best in Australia.

Mr Ardill: Hear, hear!

Mr LESTER: The member for Salisbury supports my remarks, and with good reason. The conductors and the catering staff are very pleasant people who are trying to help the passengers and the service. The courteous service that is provided is the reason

that Queensland Railways patronage is increasing. The member for Salisbury and I recently chose to save the taxpayers some money when we had to undertake a Travelsafe committee inspection by taking an overnight train trip from Sydney to Melbourne.

Mr Springborg: And Mr Fenlon.

Mr LESTER: Mr Springborg and Mr Fenlon came, too.

Mr Pearce interjected.

Mr LESTER: Mr Pearce travels by train, too. Those who travelled between Sydney and Melbourne by rail would agree that although we had no specific complaints, the service was not up to the standard provided in Queensland. In fact, it was a pretty rough old train, although the section that we occupied was not too bad. I do not think I would have cared to travel in the lower-class section of the train but, as it happened, the section in which we travelled was quite good. I noticed that there was a barrier in the middle of the train preventing the people in the front section of the train from communicating with the people in the rear section. Fortunately, such barriers are not used on Queensland's rail service, which is good.

Mr Elliott: We wouldn't allow that sort of thing up here.

Mr LESTER: That is probably part of the problem in the southern States. However, Queensland has reached the stage at which all of the excellent services for which Queensland Railways is renowned will soon be cut. For example, I am sure that the Government will be looking closely at the Westlander. The Midlander service will probably be shown some grace, because people travel by the Spirit of Capricorn and then change to the Midlander to travel to the Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach. The Government will probably also take a close look at the Inlander, although the member for Mount Isa, Mr McGrady, will probably have something to say about that. However, I am of the view that at this stage the Westlander might be in trouble and that the Sunlander may also be subjected to scrutiny. It is a fact that those services do not pay, but it cannot be denied that they provide substantial advantages by reducing the number of vehicles using Queensland's roads. Having fewer vehicles on the roads means that there is a reduced potential for accidents, less traffic and less damage caused to the roads. It is up to members of Parliament to ensure that the board mentioned in the Bill keeps the country freight services going because, if these services disappear, more goods will have to be transported by road, which will mean an increased number of accidents, more carnage on the roads and an increase in the damage caused to the roads. Although the board may sharpen its pencil and save a little bit of money by boosting coal freight services and cutting back passenger services, the simple fact is that, in the overall scheme of things, the Government will lose money through the deterioration of the roads and an increase in the number of road accidents.

Mr Beattie: Hear, hear!

Mr LESTER: I ask the Minister to ensure that the board acts in a very careful manner and takes the trouble to consult people such as the member for Brisbane Central, Mr Beattie, who is obviously supporting the comments I am making. Of course, he has had a good deal of experience in dealing with Queensland Railways. Many years ago when I was a Minister in the previous Government, I can remember he came to see me about an important railways matter. Between the two of us, we managed to partially fix the problem. Presently, I am concerned about the rail services that are provided in my electorate, which is one of the most progressive areas not only in Queensland but also in Australia. Towns such as Emerald, Tieri, Capella and Clermont are really booming. It is my responsibility to urge the Minister to maintain and upgrade the rail services to those areas. However, I recently discovered that the position of area superintendent has been abolished. That person's job has gone, and so has the deputy area superintendent's job. What level of staff does the Minister intend to provide in that important central Queensland area? The department intends to provide a stationmaster, and that is all the staff that will be provided.

Mr Hamill: What have you got against stationmasters?

Mr LESTER: The Minister can say anything he likes, but he knows damn well that he is kicking Emerald in the guts. He does not care about the people of Emerald. He intends to run the rail services from Rockhampton. What does he intend to do with the control clerks who live in Emerald and who are educating their children in the Peak Downs area—those who have lived in the area for a long time, who have become involved in providing services to the community and who have provided great service not only to the local area but also to Queensland Railways? These people do not know what they are going to do. Their lives have been upended and they will be shifted to Mackay, Rockhampton or Bundaberg. They have tried to see the Minister, but they have failed. However, they contacted the Premier and received a reply from the Premier's office. I have no doubt that the letter was dictated by the Minister and passed on. The letter states—

"If the Area Manager is also withdrawn from Emerald, appropriate arrangements would . . . need to be made."

The intention is to run the show from Rockhampton. The letter goes on to state—

"This is not seen as any major problem."

That is what the Minister has said via the Premier's office. I am not misleading the Parliament; it is available for honourable members to read. The Premier has said, "Emerald doesn't matter. We'll run it from Rockhampton." I remind the Minister that the Central Highlands is an alternative regional centre to Mackay and Rockhampton. It is a sheer disgrace to find out how the people of the Central Highlands are being belted from pillar to post by the Government and how loyal workers, many of whom voted against me in past elections—voted for the Labor Party—have found that they have lost confidence in the Government. They are coming to my office in droves. Because they are sad and upset and do not know where they are going, I took the deputation to the Premier. I will stick up for the people in my area; I always have done. No-one can claim that I have not stuck up for them. Who got the electric railway line to Emerald? I did. Many years ago when I first raised that matter in Parliament, members opposite laughed at me and said, "Goodness me, you are in fairyland." I was not in fairyland. We now have that electric railway line to Emerald, and we got it with the support of the railwaymen and women in the Emerald district who have served us so well.

Today, Mr Keith Ashmore from Yamala, who is a very good citizen in the area, forwarded to me a copy of an article from the newspaper. He said that he was very angry that the Yamala trucking yards will be closed down. That man's livelihood depends on the trucking yards. Because he cannot load his cattle at Yamala, he will have to take his cattle on the road to Emerald, at some risk to road-users. I am voicing in Parliament a concern of my constituent, whom I support. When one looks at the list of sidings in that article, one is appalled to discover that, at Anakie, services are being taken away. Anakie is a good town. It is the gateway to the gemfields. The stationmaster at Anakie, Mr Golledge, is devastated. Honourable members should not knock the stationmaster at Anakie, because that good man does all that he can to promote the railways. Recently, I went to the station to talk to him and he gave me every timetable of every train in Queensland. That is how keen he is.

Mr Hamill: You hate stationmasters.

Mr LESTER: The Minister should not knock him; he is a good man who is doing a lot of good work for the railways. I am disgusted to find that the Minister is having a go at me because I mentioned one of his really good men who has done so much to promote the railways in the gemfields. The Minister will not even accept good words about some of his railway staff. That man gave me the timetable of even the tourist train that travels to Forsayth. I thought it was pretty good to be able to get that information from the stationmaster at Anakie. As well, the siding at Gindi, which is in the heart of the Emerald wheat fields and is an area which supports a great many cattle, will be closed down. That is a wonderful and progressive area. I ask the Minister to

consider the amount of taxation that is collected from cattle production in that area and the employment that is provided. Yet a basic service is being taken away from Gindi. Withersfield, another very important place between Emerald and Alpha, has found that its siding is going by the wayside as well. Yamala, Withersfield, Gindi and Anakie are in one of the most progressive cattle areas in Australia, as honourable members would know from their lessons at school. Rockhampton, Emerald and Clermont are major cattle centres in central Queensland.

I table that list for the Parliament to see how serious this problem is and how it affects country people. I say to our control officers in Emerald, "Keep your chins up. At least the National Party is going to battle for you." I say to the stationmasters and railway employees who do not know what is going to happen, "Keep your chins up. I can assure you that the National Party will battle for you." Because people will be made redundant, I also say to the Government, "Be fair with the redundancies." As I travel on the trains—I am happy to do so—I find that older men and women come and talk to me and say that everything is changing and they cannot quite get used to the new system. What is more, they tell me that they cannot afford to live because the redundancy package is not enough. The Minister knows that it is not. These days, that sort of money does not get one very far.

I ask the Minister to talk to the board to make sure that it acts realistically and to make sure the railways offer a public service. That is what it is all about—a public service. We want it to be efficient, but we do not want the areas that have smaller populations to lose out.

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton North) (9.21 p.m.): I want to deal with some of the salient points in the Bill. I want to talk about the corporate structure, the accountability, the rate of return, standards of service, standards of productivity, the recognition of community obligation and the removal of political interference. I draw the attention of the House to clause 2.2 of the Bill, which outlines the functions of Queensland Railways. For the first time ever, what Queensland Railways is all about is in black and white. For the benefit of honourable members, I will read that clause—

"(1) The functions of Queensland Railways are—

(a) to establish, maintain and operate or otherwise arrange for safe and efficient freight and passenger transport services whether by railway or otherwise"—

and the Opposition objects to that—

"(b) to provide or otherwise arrange for ancillary services or works which in the opinion of the Board are necessary for Queensland Railways to efficiently carry out its functions.

(2) Queensland Railways may exercise its functions in and outside Queensland.

(3) In carrying out its functions Queensland Railways is to apply sound commercial principles."

The National Party had 32 years to set the agenda, but it was never game to put down in black and white what Queensland Railways was supposed to do. It is little wonder that when this Government inherited Queensland Railways, it was losing more than a million bucks a day. That Government flogged the hide off the rail system. It interfered politically with the rail system. Now the National Party wants this Government to go along the same track. This Government will not go down that track. It will not be lured down the track that the honourable member for Flinders and the honourable member for Peak Downs want it to follow, that is, the track of falsehoods and innuendo designed to scare the wits out of those good, loyal Labor voters in the rail system, and they are still good, loyal Labor voters.

I was heartened to hear Mr Katter admit tonight for the first time that he has been receiving information from people within the rail system. I can tell honourable members where he gets that information from. He gets it from the grubby, tory parasites who

have been able to stay in that system and are frightened because it is going to become efficient and they are going to lose their jobs. That is where the honourable member is getting that information from. He is deliberately misleading the good, loyal, honest, hard-working railwaymen in this State. I heard Mr Lester talk about what the National Party Government did for the railway workers. I invite honourable members to cast their minds back to 20 August 1982. I will tell the House what members of the National/Liberal Party Government wanted to do. They wanted to sack the railway workers of this State because they went on strike. Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the members of his Government wanted to sack those railway workers. What have the railway workers got from the Labor Government so far? They got a 38-hour week. They did not have to go on strike or face the threat of the sack for going on strike.

Members of the Opposition should not tell me what they did for Queensland railway workers. They should not come in here and big-note themselves about how well they looked after the workers of this State. One only has to remember the industrial disharmony that the National Party Government caused in 1985. It is absolute hypocrisy for any member of the National Party to stand up for any worker in this State. Members of the Opposition ought to be ashamed of themselves and their record in regard to railways in this State. Now, members of the National Party want to crawl to the railway workers of this State in the vain hope of getting their votes. I can give the Opposition the drum: it is not working because the railway workers of this State are not stupid. The Opposition can get the *Morning Bulletin* and the *Courier-Mail* on side and invent rubbery figures but, at the end of the day, the railway workers will see the colour of the money, which was in their redundancy packages. Mr Katter was running round this State saying that railway workers are not going to get half of what the previous Government gave them. They are now getting double that amount. They are seeing the colour of that money. Vince O'Rourke has now written to every railwayman in the State and announced that, and it is no longer an issue. Members of the Opposition have been proved to be frauds and liars, and the railwaymen of this State are a wake-up to them.

I want to say a bit more about what members of the Opposition are crooked about in regard to Queensland Railways. What they are really saying is that they oppose efficiency. Mr Lester referred to Emerald. It is all right for efficiency to occur somewhere else, but not in his electorate. Recently, representatives of the union who went to see Mr Lester on behalf of the control clerks came to see me and the honourable member for Rockhampton. We were able to set them straight on a number of things. We were also able to get the Honourable Minister to agree to talk to them. They are quite happy about that because it is refreshing to them. The previous Government did not bother to talk with them. It interfered politically with the railways. One only needs to consider how many railwaymen in this State have been transferred because they were members of the Labor Party. One only needs to consider how many railwaymen were frightened of losing their jobs if they dared to hand out a Labor Party how-to-vote card in a tory electorate. I have lived in tory electorates where railway workers were in proliferation, and I have heard those sorts of stories. I have also seen the evidence of it. So the hypocrites on the Opposition side should not suddenly start running to the aid of railway workers in this State, because it will not wash. If they think that it is working at the moment, they are dead wrong. They cannot get down to the grassroots level, as I do with those workers when I visit the railways in Rockhampton every week. They do not believe Mr Katter. They think that he has got all the credibility of a python in a fowlhouse. They think that having stumbled over the truth once, Mr Katter quickly recovered and went on his merry, mendacious way. That is what they think about Mr Katter.

Mr Livingstone: Do they think he's a liar?

Mr SCHWARTEN: They think that he treats the truth with gay abandon and that, if he was found in possession of the truth, he would be charged by the police with possessing stolen property. The fact is that these lies that members of the Opposition are telling are having a great effect not only on the railway workers but also on their

wives and children. I have received letters from the wives of railwaymen who plead with me to advise them as to what they should do. They have read in the newspapers the lies and deceit that members of the Opposition have peddled. It does the newspapers of this State no credit that they continue to push that line.

Mr Stephan: Have you got a letter from Mr Dey?

Mr SCHWARTEN: No, not of late. The member for Gympie is the only idiot in this place who is prepared to take up his cause. I can assure the honourable member that the railway workers of this State are a lot smarter than members of the Opposition and a lot smarter than Mr Dey.

The fact is that, at the end of the day, this Government will be judged on a number of things. One of those things will be its commitment to efficiency in this State, its commitment to lack of political interference. Those are the sorts of things upon which this Government will be judged. Despite the way they have been hammered into the ground by the National Party Government, the smart railway workers of this State—and they are smart—are waking up to the fact that this Government is looking after them and doing the best that it can. They can add up. They know that if \$1.4m is being lost every day, it is only a matter of time before there will be no rail service at all in this State. That is the way things were headed under the National Party Government. That Government had a coal-only rail system in this State. That was the only thing that was returning money. I do not know whether there were any slings involved to prevent true competition. However, the fact is the previous Government did not do a thing to make Queensland Railways compete on an even playing field. That Government let the trucks run all over the State and let the multinational companies eat their way into the system. It did not want a door-to-door service. All of those services went under previous National Party Governments and now Opposition members are standing up and saying to the Government, "Don't corporatise it. Don't make it a properly set up, competitive agency. Go along the way that we were doing it. Let it run the way that it is going." The fact is that it cannot. Anybody who believes otherwise is a fool. The fact is that if the Government does not have the strength of character to stand up and look at Queensland's rail system, then it is going to go the way of the troglodytes and dinosaurs. There is no question about that.

When the Act was introduced, the rail system in this State did not extend as far as Rockhampton. This Government is updating that legislation and bringing it into the twenty-first century. The Government is bringing it out into the open—

Mr Randell: You have done nothing yet. You haven't done one thing.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The honourable member does not even ride on trains. He would not be allowed on them. He would not have a clue about the train service. I asked him once why he did not get the train to Mackay. He said, "It takes too long." That is how he supports the railway system. He is unlike the honourable member for Peak Downs who at least uses the rail system.

Mr Hamill: He uses saccharine in his coffee.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Does he? I would not have a clue. I think he has been using something else in his coffee, quite frankly—lunatic juice or something like that.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order!

A Government member: Unparliamentary.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Very unparliamentary.

Mr Randell: I'm very worried about what happened to the Mayor of Rockhampton.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I am pleased to hear that the honourable member is worried about what happened to the Mayor of Rockhampton because it shows what a hypocrite he is. He has got all the tories in Rockhampton opposing all the initiatives of this

Government. I am referring to all the so-called independents in Rockhampton, who are tory mates of the member, and who do not have the guts to come out and say that they are National Party members.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to return to the Bill, please.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I bow to your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker, but I was provoked.

Mr Livingstone: Have you ever worked in the railways?

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, I have as a matter of fact worked for Queensland Railways. I was a fettler for some 16 weeks at Boolburra outside Duaranga. I might say that I was not a bad fettler at that. I could certainly hold my own with the best of them.

Ms Power: Has Mr Katter worked in the railways?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I do not know if Mr Katter ever worked in the railways. I do not indeed know if he has ever worked.

Mr Bredhauer: I think he was a sleeper.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Or off with the fairies.

Mr McGrady: They say he was a sleeper.

Mr SCHWARTEN: He was a sleeper. I was going to say he was a dog spike, but he is not even that.

I want also to comment on a couple of points raised by Mr Lester. He tried to insinuate that members on this side of the House are in fact belittling the efforts of the officers of Queensland Railways. Nothing could be further from the truth. I can assure honourable members that the standard of the tradesmen who work in the Rockhampton railway workshops is better than anything that is out in the private-enterprise world. Anybody who has seen the standard of production at that workshop would have to agree with me when I say that the standard is as high as can be found anywhere else in Australia.

Mr Beattie: World class.

Mr SCHWARTEN: In fact, in some cases it is world class. It was a pity that under the previous Government those workshops were run down, operating with machinery almost from the industrial revolution, with belts and goodness knows what else overhead. Fortunately, as more funding is made available, changes are occurring in those areas. More apprentices are being appointed to Queensland Railways in Rockhampton, which now has a driver-training school. The future augurs very well indeed for rail in Rockhampton.

Mr Livingstone: And all their jobs are safe as well.

Mr SCHWARTEN: And their jobs are certainly safe. It is like the old saying, if at first you don't succeed, lie, lie, lie again, and that is what has happened. In this case, the constant stoning has not worn away the drip. It does not matter how many times Government members say it, some idiot of an editor out there will put it on the front page of the newspaper or some irresponsible journalist will say, "6 000 jobs to go. Today is Sunday. Let's make it 9 000." The fact is that no-one's job in Queensland Railways is at risk.

Mr Katter spoke about blokes turning up late for work being sacked. That is what used to happen under the previous National Party Government if the worker had a Labor Party ticket in his kick, but that does not happen under this Government. It has developed proper and appropriate industrial relations for Queensland Railways. Statements such as those that came from the mouths of members opposite have a great hollow ring to them.

Mr Pearce: They were threatened with the sack if they spoke to candidates.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, that is right.

Mr Beattie: Actually, Katter was never on time in his life.

Mr SCHWARTEN: That is right. All of those fear and smear tactics are not going to work. I can assure members opposite that, for every lie that they tell workers at Queensland Railways in Rockhampton, I will be following them with both eyes on them. I challenge any member opposite to front up to the railway workshops in Rockhampton, to be on the same platform as me with the Rockhampton rail workers and make the same statements to me as they made in this place and see how they are judged. That challenge is open to any member who sits on the other side of the House—to come up with the evidence, to stand up in front of the rail workers in Rockhampton as I have done, to come and visit the running staff, to come to the diesel shed, to come to the workshops with me and to repeat the statements that they have made here and try to get away with it without the evidence. It is one thing to get some rank-amateur journalist to print a story in the paper, but it is quite another thing to convince a bloke who has got some brains and knows what he is about.

I am cognisant of the time. I want to conclude by saying that, if ever there was a chance in the life of the National Party to show that its members support the notion of competition, which they purport to do, tonight is their opportunity to put their cards on the table. This is their chance to say how they believe in free will, the free-enterprise system and the opportunity for competition to prevail. Members opposite have their chance. They should not stand up and preach about socialism and how they will look after workers in this State, they should live up to the principle they are supposed to uphold, namely, the principle of efficiency which is borne out by a corporate structure. If they can do that, we will not have anything to worry about, because they will support the Bill. I certainly support the Bill.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Carnarvon) (9.38 p.m.): It is with a great deal of pleasure that I rise to participate in this debate. I think even the Minister would admit that, during the entire debate on the restructuring of Queensland Railways, I have been highly constructive. I have not gone out and been destructive. In fact, I led a delegation to see him and to raise some of the concerns of ordinary railway people.

Mr Hamill: You are a very responsible member.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the Minister very much. However, that does not mean that I do not still have some concerns. Ordinary people who use the railways and who work on the railways have exactly the same concerns because they have heard so much information, some of which may have been misinformation. However, neither the Government nor the department has given a firm indication about what will happen. We hear about restructuring and about the closure of some stations. However, we do not know how many. We hear that no worker will be retrenched or lose his job. But what happens to someone who works at a railway station that will be closed and become a freight collection point for road transport? What if he has been resident in the area for a long time? What will happen to him? Many people are concerned about that. Today in the House, the Minister said that no rail worker need fear retrenchment or job loss due to the national rail freight initiative.

But what about the restructuring in Queensland? I am not satisfied one little bit that the Minister and his Government can guarantee railway workers, the majority of whom vote Labor, that they will not be retrenched, or that at least some of them will not be retrenched. It stands to reason that, with restructuring and the scaling-down of services in some areas in order to create efficiency in other areas, that has to happen. I want to make the point, as many other speakers already have, that railways have opened up Queensland, opened up Australia and they have——

Mr Beattie: I said that.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I was reiterating a point that was made earlier. We recognise that railways are important. I certainly would not like to see rail services scaled down. I feel a great deal of sympathy for the Minister because I think, from what we have heard from him, he is the most misquoted Minister in Australia's history. One minute we hear mentioned a figure of 6 000 and then the Minister has to say that that is not the case.

Mr Hamill: It is a lack of numeracy on the part of the Opposition spokesman.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I would not say that. Many people within the railways are not receiving the answers that they want. As I said, the Minister was receptive enough to take my deputation and receptive enough to listen. In fact, I gave the Minister a pretty good run. Since then, I have said that many things have to be overcome. However, I am not satisfied that we have received the answers that we need. A press clipping, in which reference is made to restructuring, states—

"The warning came after an announcement by Transport Minister David Hamill that the majority of the 312 rail freight centres were to be used as collection points for road trucks.

Only 23 stations have been earmarked so far to continue as major rail freight centres."

A newspaper article of 27 September 1990 states—

"Transport Minister David Hamill told delegates to the Queensland Local Government Association conference at Rockhampton on September 13 that 23 areas, including Miles, had been identified as major freight centres."

The Minister cannot blame railway workers and people who use the rail service for being upset. They are not receiving the information they need to calm their nerves and to make them feel a little bit more comfortable with what is happening. Can the Minister blame them for that uncertainty? No, he certainly cannot. Another press clipping states—

"But restructuring any system carries a price, and the plan will probably spell the end for about 250 rail sidings.

. . .

Mr Hamill's plan is to cut the number of rail sidings from 312 to about 60 which have proved to recoup about 98 per cent of total freight revenue."

Whether those press clippings are right or not, I do not know. However, that is the information that people in the community are receiving, either from the Minister's office or from other places. I believe that the information contains a certain amount of substance. A further newspaper article stated—

"Mr Hamill said that news media reports suggesting 6000 positions would be lost were speculation—'unreal and unrealistic'. 'The truth is that we have not arrived at any target figure and it really is impossible to quote a number,' Mr Hamill said.

'I have repeatedly given my assurance that no Queensland Railways worker needs to fear the sack. Nobody will be sacked . . .'

In one paragraph Mr Hamill is quoted as saying—

"The truth is that we have not arrived at any target figure and it really is impossible to quote a number."

That figure relates, perhaps, to the number of people who may be made redundant or who will be retained. However, the Minister also said that nobody needs to fear for his job. That is the sort of misinformation that people are hearing. We know that some railway stations will be closed. At first, we were told that no workers would be sacked. Then we were told that all the workers would be staying. What happens to those people when a station closes? Are they transferred to another station 100 to 200 miles away or to a station that is just up the road?

We often hear about how much the general freight arm of Queensland Railways loses. But what about the south-east passenger service? It lost \$98,769,000. We hear about restructuring and about fairness and equity. What about the south-east passenger service? It recoups something like \$50m but actually runs at a \$98m loss. So what will happen to it? Will the habits of people who travel by rail be changed? Will the fares be tripled? Will the number of people who use that service be tripled so that the amount of money that is now lost can be recouped?

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I have not finished yet. I will speak a little bit longer. This matter concerns me and my electorate. I am sure that the honourable member for Archerfield, being such a believer in democracy and social justice, would not deny me my basic and fundamental democratic right in this place. The Minister stated that, in time, Queensland Railways will have a successful transport business in general freight that is not a drain on the general taxpayer. If we cut rail freight losses, we can employ 15 000 more police. The rail freight losses are larger than the budgets of almost every other State Government department. I say to the Minister that I hope that when all that money is saved, some of it will be spent on improving roads in my electorate so that they can carry extra freight and also to provide a couple of policemen who were taken recently from my electorate. Can the Minister blame the people in that area for feeling very uncertain and unsure about what is going on?

Since this Government came to power, Queensland has been losing its courthouses and Department of Primary Industries buildings. People are saying, "Look, this State Government has not got any heart. They do not really care about people out here west of the Great Dividing Range." One cannot blame them for thinking that. Much is said about efficiency. How does one define efficiency? I know that the Minister agrees that there is a certain need for community service obligations. Contrary to what the honourable member for Rockhampton North, Mr Schwarten, would like us to believe, I do speak to the railway workers in my electorate. Those people vote Labor, and many of them will probably still vote Labor after all this uncertainty. However, they are concerned, because they are not receiving answers. They say to me, "Look, can you blame us for feeling that we are the pawns in this? We are the blue-collar workers. We support this party." Contrary to what Mr Schwarten says, in the past many of those blue-collar workers supported the National Party, because it believes in the work ethic and in reward for effort. I do not believe that people would dispute that.

Honourable members witnessed what Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen did in getting a substantial number of blue-collar workers to support him in 1983 and 1986. Those people are now saying, "Look, we are the ones who are going to be earmarked. We are the people who are doing all the work." I ask the Minister: how about putting some practical people out there—stationmasters and railway workers? Wallangarra has a very good stationmaster. The railway station there is running at a profit at this stage. Unfortunately, it is part of what seems to be an uneconomical branch line. That stationmaster is the sort of person whom the Government could be using. He has community contact and knows what a community service obligation is. Neville Mills appeals to the community, and he knows what it is like to be part of a community that is suffering socioeconomically. He has actively sought and gained freight. He is now running services into northern New South Wales, and is doing a damned good job. I hope that 250 railway stations in Queensland are not going to be closed down. I want the railway stations at Yelarbon and Inglewood in my electorate to remain. I want many stations in the Granite Belt to remain. We can improve the image that has been created of grumpy, old stationmasters who do not necessarily care about the people with whom they deal. We must reverse that image. Queensland Railways also has a bad image as to the carriage of goods. People say, "Why should we put anything on the railways, because when we get it there it is going to be damaged. They are going to tread on it and throw it on the train." I do not endorse or subscribe to that belief. I have always used Queensland Railways to transport my goods, because it always gets them there and carries them at a cheap rate. On occasions, one might have

to go to a railway station to pick up the goods. We must overcome that image and take more care in the transportation of freight so that people do not believe that if they put a filing cabinet on a train it will be knocked about by the time it arrives at its destination. A classic example of this was when I recently bought a filing cabinet in Brisbane. I said to the girl from whom I bought it, "I would like to put this on Queensland rail." She said, "No, you can't do that. They will knock it about." I said, "Put it on Queensland rail. I will worry about that. They won't knock it about." That is an example of the misinformation that is being peddled.

I believe that the next issue that I raise has some merit in keeping some of our smaller stations open. Perhaps a retired couple or a young person could be put on a retainer. Although that might not meet with approval from the railways union, those people could also receive as commission a certain percentage of the freight that they shift through those stations. That would create the necessity on their part to work with their customers, and they would be out there gathering freight. I do not believe that, in the past, Queensland Railways was necessarily out there gathering freight and acting as a competitor to road transport. People in Inglewood and other places have told me that they have never been approached by representatives from Queensland Railways. They say that if they were offered competitive prices by Queensland Railways, they would use that service. I say to the Minister that many people will think twice about using Queensland Railways if the freight has to be transported on a truck from a major freight centre 100 kilometres down the road. That does not conjure up for them images of what Queensland Railways is really all about. I realise that the Leader of the House would like me to conclude my speech. I have another 10 or 15 minutes left. I have tried to be fairly quick in this speech so that we can get out of this place sooner. However, it is my democratic right to stand in this place and voice the concerns of the people. Surely Mr Mackenroth would not deny me that right.

I wish to rebut a couple of things that Mr Schwarten said. He is a lovable chap. In fact, I would say that he is a real bottler. The ALP should certainly pickle him, because it will never get another one like him. Nobody should dare suggest to me that he is probably doing that himself. Mr Schwarten spoke about the terrible tories in the railways who are knockers and who are feeding misinformation to the community. Mr Schwarten gave the impression that not only have members of the National Party persecuted the Labor Party in the past, but members of the Labor Party are now going to start persecuting anybody who dares to be a tory and dares to suggest—

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: That is the impression that I get. I certainly hope that there will not be a wave of persecution. Mr Schwarten also suggested that it was not the railway workers who are concerned, it is their wives and children. I say to Mr Schwarten that the railway workers in my electorate are concerned about this issue. I have not been creating hysteria amongst them. I have been talking constructively to them. I am sure that the Minister would recognise that. The wives and children of railway workers are concerned because they do not know what their future is. As soon as this Government can lay down a list of the stations that will remain open—if the Government can say, "Okay, Stanthorpe is going to stay open, and it will have a particular number of people. Inglewood is going to stay open, and it will have a particular number of people. Yelarbon, Capella and Emerald will remain open" or whatever the case may be—those people will feel better. It does not matter how many times the Minister and other members visit those areas and say, "Look, you have nothing to fear", those people are going to say, "There is a lot going on. There are a lot of pens to be sharpened. There is a lot of restructuring to be done. So we certainly are under threat to a certain extent."

Many of the famous initiatives that have been mentioned during this debate with regard to Queensland Railways were National Party initiatives. There is certainly no doubt that there may be a need to improve some sectors. If we are not prepared to look to the future, we will not move with the times. We must understand that. In this State, we have electrified a large amount of rail. Because of community service obligations,

we have kept a lot of rail open. We must continue to do that. In regard to new infrastructure development in Queensland Railways, except for the current restructuring proposal, I do not think that there has yet been one Goss Government initiative. I certainly hope that the restructuring will be a success. However, because I am concerned, I will not support the Bill. Many railway people in the community are also concerned.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The honourable member can say "Rubbish". Would the honourable member deny me the right to stand up in this House and put forward the views of my railway workers?

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: As I have said before in this place to the honourable member, I have been constructive in the past. The closing of stations and the uncertainty caused by that is a point that must be stressed. However, living in his cushy, little Brisbane electorate, the honourable member would not understand that. I will finish with that. I am concerned that a lot more information should be available. I know that Queensland Railways is conducting seminars. I hope that we can overcome this uncertainty as soon as possible.

Mr ARDILL (Salisbury) (9.53 p.m.): Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that all wisdom is not on one side of the House. In amongst a considerable amount of chaff coming from the other side tonight, we have heard quite a few grains of wisdom and quite a few grains of truth. Queensland Railways is one of the most important operations in this State. It is just as important as the police force, the health services or any other Government activity and public service in this State. However, no-one will thank the Government if we allow the railways to continue on their downward slide that began under the former National Party Government. No-one will thank us if we do not introduce efficiencies into the service and if we do not continue to upgrade the service and to compete with other means of transport. The Minister and the new Commissioner for Railways who he appointed are trying to bring that efficiency into the railway service. That efficiency means that, as well as some gain, there will certainly be some pain.

Mr Lester, the member for Peak Downs, mentioned that Emerald will be downgraded from a district headquarters. It is inevitable that some district headquarters, such as Emerald and, to some degree, Mackay and Cairns, will be downgraded to normal station and depot activity. That must come about. It is nothing new. Years ago, Warwick was the bustling centre of the south-western railway operations. Because the Warwick depot is approximately 100 kilometres from Toowoomba, it had to close. As a result of the improvements in communications—for example, with telephones—and the increased speed of trains, it is only natural that some of the depots and district headquarters will close. We must accept that. It is sad to see people being uprooted from towns such as Warwick but, unfortunately, that is inevitable. However, it is not inevitable that stations all over the State should close. Wherever a railway station serves a useful purpose and maintains the lines of communication, it should be kept open. Tonight, some options were offered by the member for Carnarvon as to what could be done.

The member for Peak Downs also raised the matter of livestock yards. In a recent trip around the State, I saw quite a large number of steel livestock yards that are in excellent condition. It would be a wilful waste for those to be scrapped and sold to Japan as scrap steel. Local authorities should be invited to take over the maintenance of those yards. Even if trucking from those yards occurs on a seasonal basis only once a year, those yards should be maintained. I certainly believe that that matter should be considered. If shire councils want the livestock yards to remain as trucking yards, their upkeep could be a matter for those councils. That is one option. The railway service should not be allowed to close down on the basis that, at the present moment, little business is offering. We should keep our options open. As with all cyclical things, sooner or later there will be an upsurge in the economy in this country and around the world.

We must keep our options open so that we can provide for that future upswing in business when it occurs. There is another aspect, also. The Federal Government proposes that the trucking industry should be called upon to bear at least some part of the cost that it imposes upon the community by the \$32,000 worth of damage that every truck does on the roads in Australia every year. When that is brought to fruition, it will provide an upswing in business for the railways. Again, we must keep our options open. Until all of those options are fully investigated, no railway branch line should be closed. That is Labor policy.

The saddest thing about the debate is the clear evidence that some members of the National Party have gone around the State terrorising rail workers, who are among the greatest people in Australia today. They are true pioneers, working in places where many other people would not be prepared to work. Those people have been scared out of their wits by the sort of headlines that have been spread around the State by people such as the member for Flinders. It is to his everlasting disgrace that he has made capital out of this sort of activity. If other members engage in the same sort of activity, they should be ashamed of themselves. It is very important that those railway workers know the true facts. Quite clearly, the Commissioner for Railways has stated unequivocally that the railway system will not sack people.

Anyone who wants to take early retirement can do so. The terms have been clearly spelt out; that message has been sent to all the railway stations. Unfortunately, railway workers are receiving contrary messages from people who peddle in rumours. Rumours go around the countryside all the time and the workers do not know what to believe. Over the years they have been fed a great many wrong stories. They were fed stories by Don Lane, who said how efficient their service was when everyone knew how inefficient the railway service had become. That was not because of the people working in it, but because of the management and policy directions given by the previous Government.

In some areas the railways have been heavily overcapitalised. They are now being called upon to pay the interest bill on that overcapitalisation. In many areas they have been undercapitalised and much remains to be done. I do not envy the commissioner his job of finding sufficient finance to upgrade the railway service in areas that really matter. The railway line between Caboolture and Gladstone was electrified at a huge cost, which will be paid off over the next century at huge cost to the railway service. On the basis of the operations of that rail service, that cost could not be justified. It was purely an activity to utilise excessive electricity and gain brownie points for the Government and the Minister of the day. It is unfortunate that, right throughout the century, for a quarter of the railway's existence political decisions have resulted in huge capital amounts being put into sections of the railways which are no longer productive, although they may have been productive for a short period of time. It is grossly unfair that that should now be a charge against today's operations. Unfortunately, these are the facts. In that case the community must be called upon to shoulder its share of the cost and also to pay for the community service obligations which the railway service clearly provides. That is what railways are all about: providing a service to the public of this State, as they have done for 125 years and will continue to provide into the future. It is pleasing that efficient management is in place. It is very important that the Government and the people of this State accept their obligations to pay for the service which the railway provides.

The cost of passenger transport amounts to \$200m a year which, through taxation, will have to continue to be paid for by the people of this State. At long last it has been clearly identified as a community service obligation, and that should continue. There are other sections of the railway service which clearly have community service obligations to Queensland's far-flung underpopulated areas. People were encouraged to go and live in those areas, and the railway is the only link through which goods and services can be delivered to those people. Anyone who knows the size of the State of Queensland must realise that fact. There is a long way to go in improving railway services and there is a lot to do. I believe that the Minister, commissioner and the other people involved, in particular the railway men down the line in the far-flung areas—anyone who has

visited those areas has come to respect these men—will continue to provide a magnificent service to the State of Queensland.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (10.04 p.m.): It was refreshing to hear the member for Salisbury. He is the only truthful member of the ALP who has spoken in this debate tonight.

Mr Ardill: You weren't here. You weren't in the House.

Mr HOBBS: I have been listening and watching what has gone on. The member for Salisbury said that stations will be closed, families will be uprooted and moved and staff will be reduced. That is exactly what we on the Opposition side of the House have been saying. This is exactly the effect that this Bill will have on the people of Queensland and it is what we have been saying to the people working for the railways and those who use the railway service. The honourable member also made one other point. He said that the only reason the National Party electrified the railways was to pick up brownie points. Is the honourable member saying that the electrification would not have gone ahead under a Labor Government? Is the honourable member saying that this Government will not progress along the line of upgrading and improving the service through electrification?

Mr Ardill: At what cost?

Mr HOBBS: At some stage of the game one has to look to the future. I do not think that the Labor Government is looking at it correctly. Tonight I wish to support many of the views expressed by my colleagues on this side of the House, because their views are very pertinent. In particular, I wish to endorse the words of the members for Gregory and Flinders, who have electorates which are very similar in size to mine. It is very difficult for people living at the end of the railway line. People living halfway along the railway line or down here in the Brisbane metropolitan area are not as dependent on the railway service as people living in rural areas. People here would not notice the difference if 100 or 1 000 employees lose their jobs in the Brisbane area, but if one, two or three employees lose their jobs in the small country towns, the effects are terrific and instant. The point must be stressed that they take their children out of school and leave the town. I have looked at the list of speakers tonight. All of the Labor Party members who are speaking to this Bill are all Brisbane-based members, except for Mr Schwarten, who comes from Rockhampton.

Mr Dollin: What about Bill Nunn?

Mr HOBBS: His electorate is not very far away from Brisbane and the area is pretty urbanised. The line extending from Brisbane to Rockhampton is packed solidly with rail traffic and it is not likely to suffer any reductions. In fact, in years to come, it can only improve as the population increases. A member of the Opposition mentioned earlier that one of the real effects of this so-called reform legislation is loss of jobs. The way I see it, this fits in well with the constant Labor Party philosophy, which is to the effect that it is better to make welfare payments than to have a healthy and vibrant economy. As I said, the member for Flinders, Mr Katter, and others said all that needed to be said about job losses. I ask the Minister what he intends to say to the parents who live in western districts when all the schools close down because of insufficient numbers of students and when schoolbus transportation services close down because there are not enough schoolchildren to make them viable, or because there is no longer a policeman in the area, or because the schoolteachers no longer live in the smaller centres? I point out that a downturn in rail services will have ongoing effects on town stores, garages and infrastructure services. Everyone would realise that the railways played a very important part in the development of Queensland. It continues to play an important part. I reiterate what was said by the member for Peak Downs, who summed up this legislation. He said, "It is a gutless way of disposing of faithful railway employees." I agree wholeheartedly with his sentiments. Presently, morale in Queensland Railways is at an all-time low. A constant problem is freight being lost, stolen or broken.

Mr Ardill: It has been down the tube for 10 years.

Mr HOBBS: It has never before been as bad as it is now. Although I appreciate that every industry has its ups and downs, but the situation in Queensland Railways has never been worse.

Mr Ardill: Yes, it has.

Mr HOBBS: At the moment, Queensland Railways is falling down around the ears of the honourable member. It seems to me that rail freight rates are increasing, but the service is being downgraded. The system of volume loading has been changed and that is affecting people who live in far-flung districts. The cost of transporting white goods has increased. Even the cost of transporting a motor bike increased from \$40 to \$140, which will provide honourable members with an idea of the level of freight rate increases that have to be borne. In conclusion, I endorse the comments made by Opposition members. I believe that the Government is on the wrong track with this Bill.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (10.10 p.m.), in reply: I thank members for their contributions to this debate. However, it distresses me to listen to comments made by a number of members—but not all of them—on the Opposition side of the Chamber. They tend to dwell on the present, which demonstrates that the National Party has learnt nothing about the operation of Queensland Railways, and that members of the National Party have certainly learnt nothing from their period in Opposition. The greatest tragedy is that the speeches made by Opposition members exemplify their lack of vision. The reason why Queensland Railways is having problems is the lack of vision that was demonstrated by conservative Governments in previous years.

Over the last few years, Queensland Railways slowly ground to a halt. This grinding-down of rail services occurred particularly in country areas, especially the areas represented by honourable members who rose during this debate to express their concerns. I do not doubt that members of the Opposition are legitimately concerned when they speak about diminished services and the winding-down of rail services in their electorates, but I must ask those members to reflect on their comments and ask themselves honestly, "What did 32 years of conservative Government in this State do for those country areas?" Of course, I am referring to the areas that members of the Opposition claimed are suffering from the parlous state of rail services. What type of policy characterised that period of conservative Government? It was a singular lack of investment in the railways in those areas. I travel extensively throughout this State and I have inspected the conditions under which railway workers operate. When I visit the freight sheds in this State, I wonder when the last time a dollar was spent to upgrade the facilities of railways centres outside the coal areas of this State.

Mr Ardill: Jack Duggan's time.

Mr HAMILL: The member for Salisbury is probably right. The parlous state referred to by Opposition members was brought about by a lack of investment. It is little wonder, therefore, that a downturn in the fortunes of the railways occurred in those areas and it is little wonder that the transportation of freight by rail has diminished. Although railway workers are the best workers in this State—as the member for Salisbury said—they have not been provided with the tools to do the job to the best of their ability. If they had been provided with the tools, they would have been able to provide a far better service than they are providing today. This is really the crucial issue. The reason why freight has left the railways is because other operators have been able to do it better. I repeat "other operators have been able to do it better." I would have thought that honourable members opposite who profess to be au fait with the world of business and au fait with the world of enterprise, competition and so on would have had the acumen to recognise that if a service being provided is inferior to the standard of service provided by a competitor, obviously the business will go to the competitor. That is why, over the last 40 years, railway systems—and Queensland Railways is no exception—have lost a

substantial part of the freight task that they once carried. No crocodile tears were shed by members of the National Party when they were in Government, but they are awash with crocodile tears tonight. The sad fact is that nothing that was said in the debate this evening indicates that they have changed their tune. Their contributions were a whinge and a whine about what is, but there was no vision for the future and no sense of commitment to doing things differently from the way things were done when they were in Government.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr HAMILL: I make an exception in the case of the honourable member for Carnarvon. I do not wish to embarrass him, but I believe that he has acted responsibly in the process of this most important task of restructuring Queensland Railways. He came to me with legitimate concerns about the services that would be provided in the part of the State he represents. He brought people from those areas to see me, and a number of Government members did the same. They wanted to discuss the particular problems confronting the areas they represent. There was a recognition in all of that that things had to change. By crikey, they had to change if Queensland Railways was to get back on its feet, particularly in the important small freight area. In contrast to the responsible attitude of the honourable member for Carnarvon, we have the irresponsible scaremongering, the mindless incitement to fear among railway workers and their families as peddled by such as the likes of the member for Flinders—and the member for Warrego is not without guilt in this regard. I remember, before the last election, travelling in the south west to centres such as Cunnamulla and Charleville.

Mr Palaszczuk: I was with you.

Mr HAMILL: I was accompanied by the honourable member for Archerfield. He will recall how rail workers in that area said that the National Party said, "If the Labor Party comes to office, they will close our railway lines down." The fact is that there was no bigger wrecker of the railways in Queensland than the National Party Government. One only has to look at the withdrawal of country passenger services and freight services to understand that litany of abuse meted out to Queensland Railways during those sad years. We have picked up the legacy of a demoralised, run-down railways—with one exception, the coal freight. If one was hauling black coal, one was valued. If one was hauling black coal, one was given investment moneys. Because one was hauling black coal, that was the panacea for all good in Queensland Railways. This might sound like a bit of heresy, but I suggest that, whereas black coal has in many respects been the salvation of Queensland Railways, it is also its Achilles heel. We cannot have an enterprise that is so reliant on one industry as we have with Queensland Railways' relying on the black coal industry of the State for 70 per cent of its revenue. If something goes wrong with coal, the rest of the system will fall on its face.

Mr Hobbs: That's the same in most businesses. What about wool and wheat and all those? They are all the same.

Mr HAMILL: The member for Warrego might be prepared to see railways exposed to those sorts of dangers. However, as the responsible Minister, I am not. And I will not allow a situation to further develop in which Queensland Railways' fortunes are so tied to the welfare of one industry. That is why this Government has gone to great lengths to examine in infinite detail the small freight system of Queensland Railways—not with a view to closing it down. Frankly, if it were left to the policy direction of our predecessors, we would not have had to close it down, it would have closed down around them. In the past five years, the number of head of livestock carried by Queensland Railways has halved—and most of that time under a Government which professed to be concerned for the welfare of country people and rural industry. In this State, rolling stock that has been in operation for 104 years is still carting livestock around the State. As we are approaching the twenty-first century, there would not be too many other industries in this State that are using the tools of the nineteenth century. Yet Queensland Railways was supposed to carry on under those sorts of conditions. This Government

has a vision for Queensland Railways. That vision is a railway system that can proudly take its place among the world's railway systems and be serving the people of Queensland well into the future—a railway system that is providing a wide range of services to the people of Queensland, servicing a wide range of industries—not just simply hauling coal, but doing the job for Queensland.

I wish to address a number of the points made by Opposition spokesmen in this debate. The first aspect that I wish to address relates to the board. It has been alleged that the establishment of a board for Queensland Railways is somehow tantamount to the Minister abrogating his responsibilities. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bill provides adequate provision for the Minister to take a very keen interest and to direct the board on policy. But it does, indeed, provide the arm's length management and a safeguard against the sort of insidious interference that we saw in Queensland Railways over many years—interference that extended to who got a transfer and to where they would be transferred; interference as to who got promoted and to what position they were promoted; or interference into which tribunals of the State would be observed by Queensland Railways and which ones would be denied railway workers. To give another example, I noted the comments of the member for Peak Downs when he referred to trucking yards in central Queensland. He mentioned Yamala. I will tell honourable members a little story about Yamala and how ministerial direction was exercised in the time of our political predecessors. When electrification of the railways in the area required the removal of a cattleyard at Yamala because it was too dangerous to load cattle next to the live wire of electrification, all hell broke loose. The income that was generated from those cattleyards was \$5,000 a year. The usage of those cattleyards was six wagons a year and it serviced one property. Yet the cost to relocate those yards clear of the electric wire was going to cost far in excess of \$30,000. So what happened? Political interference. Queensland Railways was instructed to reinstate those yards at that cost. I wonder how many fettlers lost their jobs to pay for that political interference. That is the sort of thing that the National Party wants to condone when it attacks the provision to make sure that the day-to-day management is at arm's length from the politician. The politician—the Minister—will ensure under the new Act that management is appropriate and is secure from undue political interference but that the policy guidelines are clear, unequivocal and laid down by the Government. A point that was missed conveniently by honourable members opposite was that it is not simply a case of a profit-making exercise. I think it was quite extraordinary to hear these paragons of small business talk about profit as a dirty word.

In areas in which Queensland Railways can make a profit, surely it is entitled to make a profit, and surely it is entitled to plough those profits back into Queensland Railways and improve the quality of the service that it provides to the people of Queensland. However, in areas where there can be no profit, in areas where railways are there to provide a service to the community, let the service be provided. This Government and I, as Minister, will require Queensland Railways to meet its community service obligations. What is more, this Government will make sure that it gets the funds to provide those services. That is the difference. The Government has to make sure that what is commercial is commercial, and that what is social is adequately paid for.

I find most disturbing the scaremongering that honourable members have heard from successive Opposition speakers about loss of jobs. When it was the National Party Government that ripped 4 000 jobs out of Queensland Railways in the three-year period from 1986 to 1989, is it not rich that members of the Opposition came into this Chamber tonight awash with crocodile tears? I remind honourable members that most of those jobs were in the country areas and the provincial cities. They had an impact in the communities, yet tonight members of the Opposition shed crocodile tears of concern for the social impacts of reduction of employment.

Which figure are we to believe? Do we believe Mr Katter's figure of 6 000, or his figure last October of 10 000, with 3 000 jobs to go immediately? Let Mr Katter and his ilk be judged on their prophecy. Let them be judged by the railway workers and the people of Queensland as they see the restructuring take place and they find that the

fabrication, the lies, the fear campaign and the scaremongering was nothing more than petty politicking in its lowest form. Tonight honourable members heard the member for Flinders say that 1 600 jobs will be lost in Townsville. I assume that he means that the railway in Townsville is to be closed down, because one would be lucky to find 1 600 railway jobs in Townsville. I have heard the member for Flinders say that 10 000 jobs are to be lost in north Queensland. There are only 4 000 railway jobs in north Queensland in toto. Tonight honourable members have heard that 25 000 railway jobs will go. There are only 20 000 railway jobs in all of Queensland. The people of Queensland are being insulted by the nonsense that is being peddled by members of the Opposition. Railway workers do not deserve the shoddy treatment that is being meted out to them by what is supposed to be a responsible Opposition.

This Government's record regarding employment in the railways is a good one. As I mentioned this morning in the House with respect to apprentice training, this Government recognises the important role that railways can provide in building up the skills base in the community. In 1988, under the National Party Government, Queensland Railways engaged five first-year apprentices throughout the State of Queensland. As the member for Rockhampton North knows, only two of those were in Rockhampton. This year, the Labor Party Government engaged 123 apprentices. In fact, in its first two years, this Government has increased the apprenticeship intake fourfold to fivefold over the performance of its predecessors in their last two years of office. That is an investment in the future. That is not the action of a Government that is going to dismember Queensland Railways. That is not the action of a Government that is hell-bent on destroying Queensland Railways, nor are the actions of this Government in investing \$3.5m in Rockhampton in driver training and \$21.5m in upgrading the rail link between Townsville and Mount Isa the actions of a Government hell-bent on ripping the heart out of Queensland Railways—quite the contrary.

This Government is concerned about the quality of service. It is also concerned that the quality of service that can be provided is being limited by the massive losses that are being sustained in very important parts of that service. The \$480m loss last year in small freight simply cannot be sustained. The \$30m loss in bulk grain simply cannot be sustained. Likewise, in the passenger area, there is room for improvement. But the vision of this Government is not retreating, not cutting off the arms of Queensland Railways but, rather, playing to the strengths and reinvesting and redeveloping the range of services that Queensland Railways can provide.

Opposition members made great play of the fact that last year the urban/suburban rail system lost \$98m. They did not make much play of the fact that country rail passenger services lost \$52m in the same year. Unlike the National Party, which commissioned a report in 1989 arguing the case to withdraw those long-distance country services—which, I suggest, was only stopped by the 1989 election, when this Government came to office—this Government does not have a program to deny the people of Queensland passenger services, whether they live in Longreach, Lawnton, Mount Isa or Ipswich. What members of the Opposition failed to recognise when they did their equations was that, while Queensland Railways provides urban rail services to take the stress off our urban roads, the Government can provide 80 per cent of the State's roads budget in country areas where those roads are needed. If the Government takes away urban rail services and that brings about a greater demand in urban areas for freeways—perish the thought—then, quite frankly, country areas would be denied the funds that they need for the maintenance of highways and arterial roads. I, as Minister, will not countenance that sort of retrograde step.

The member for Peak Downs showed his hatred of stationmasters. He said that, because management was being withdrawn from his area, the railway system there would somehow fall on its face. I want to put it on the record that I believe that stationmasters are very valuable employees of Queensland Railways. I believe that stationmasters have an increasingly valuable role to play in the future of Queensland Railways. In the past, criticisms about the inadequacy of the old commercial branch came fast and furious. I visited the areas represented by the member for Gregory and the member for Warrego,

and I heard nothing but complaints about the old commercial branch of Queensland Railways. I heard nothing but complaints from people in those communities who wanted the opportunity to get out and win more freight business for Queensland Railways. They said that they knew the local community. They said that they could get out there and chase business. Under this Government's restructuring of Queensland Railways, those people will have their chance. They are chafing at the bit to do just that, and I wish them well, because I reckon that they can do a very, very good job.

There is no denying that there is uncertainty in a process of change. It would be foolish to say otherwise. People always find it easy to accept the practices and the procedures that they have grown up with, unchanging. Society as a whole—in Queensland, in Australia and throughout the world—continues to change. Unless we can change and keep up with change, we will be left behind. We will decay. We would become irrelevant. Queensland Railways cannot become irrelevant. This Government will not allow Queensland Railways to become irrelevant.

The processes of change are difficult. They involve a lot of commitment both from the Government and from the people on the job. That is why, with respect to the small freight project, teams are moving throughout the State talking to people on the ground, discussing it with the local chambers of commerce, discussing it with the railway customers, discussing it with the railway unions, discussing it with the people on the job and bringing together those viewpoints, that information, to put in place a plan for the future. This is using practical people, with practical experience and with practical solutions for Queensland Railways' problems.

This Bill is significant. It provides the framework for the future, the vision for the future for Queensland Railways. It is a real future for Queensland Railways, not the slow decay, the slow wind-down, the degrading experience which Queensland Railways has been put through by the National Party in Government; rather, it is a blueprint for the future, a blueprint for a railway system which, technologically, is the best in Australia, with a commitment of people with heart, who have the capacity to make it work. I have confidence in Queensland Railways. I have confidence in the people who are doing the job. This Government is very proud of the fact that Queensland will have a railway system which will be the pride of all Australians. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 45

NOES, 25

Resolved in the affirmative.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.40 p.m.): I move—

"That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday, 21 May, 1991."

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (10.40 p.m.): I move the following amendment to the motion moved by the Leader of the House—

"Omit the expression '21 May' and substitute—
'14 May'."

It is very easy to become cynical about politics when this sort of basic political opportunism occurs. This is one of the most blatant and politically naive attempts by a Government to run scared that we have seen for a long time. All members of Parliament were presented with a timetable which indicated that Parliament would resume on 14 May. Of course, obviously because of the by-elections for Toowoomba South and Nundah, the resumption date of 14 May has been put back until 21 May.

Throughout this week there have been rumours that this Government might try to do this. It was rumoured by the media that the Government would put the resumption date back from 14 May until 21 May. It was rumoured by members of Parliament themselves that, because the by-elections are to be held on 18 May, that was what the Government would try to do. It was rumoured that the Government would not resume on 14 May and allow political discussion before 18 May. Instead, the Government wants to delay the resumption of this House until 21 May.

Quite obviously, other members of Parliament have made arrangements for the week of 18 May. I understand that members of the Committee of Subordinate Legislation had planned to travel around Australia from 18 May. Those plans will now have to be changed. I understand that there are members who will not be going on that trip—there are members who are now not allowed to go on that trip. I understand that the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee had plans for meetings in that week. Those arrangements will now have to be changed. Quite obviously, members of Parliament and Ministers who have made plans for the week of 18 May will not be able to carry out what they intended.

Today, in answering a question from the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the Premier said that there was too much pressure of Government business and that Ministers could not answer questions on Comalco and the expansion of Boyne Smelters. Yet the Government now proposes to delay the resumption of the House from 14 May until 21 May. Bills still have to be discussed. The Bill which has just been discussed—the Transport Infrastructure (Railways) Bill—has not been completed. What a mockery we have seen here tonight! At 20 to 6, the Leader of the House suddenly realised that if the House rose at that time criticism would be levelled at the Government. As a result, Government backbenchers were made to sit here, and still that Bill has not been passed. The Leader of the House made a mockery of the whole situation. He told Government backbenchers that they had to sit here tonight. We are still no further down the road in relation to the railways Bill than we were at 20 to 6 this evening.

The Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Bill has not been discussed. Two Transport Department motions, which I was told on Tuesday afternoon were absolutely urgent and had to be discussed that day, are still listed on the business paper. There are 65 notices of motion that will now have to be put back even further. Of those 65 notices of motion, some relate to important matters such as the economy. I remind Government members that, on Tuesday, the Premier could not outline in this House an initiative on the economy. He could not answer a question on that subject from the Leader of the Opposition. Yet there are 65 notices of motion, some relating to the economy, which still have not been debated. There are notices of motion relating to land rights; bans on electronic media; the wheat industry; the Cape York spaceport; Railway Department rationalisation; crime on the Gold Coast; the Gladstone Power Station, and many others.

However, the most blatant example of something that will be left on that business paper is a motion to disallow an education regulation that I moved today. The other day, I moved that a regulation listed in the *Queensland Government Gazette* be disallowed. Obviously, the Government was trying to slip that regulation through the *Queensland Government Gazette*. It has obviously checked and found out that it should table that regulation. Today, that regulation was laid on the table of the House. I have moved its disallowance.

The positions of 35 secondary school principals are supposed to be spilled on 27 April. That figure is now 36. The Teachers Union was going to object legally to that and say that the Government could not spill the positions of 35 secondary school principals. The Government found out from its lawyers and legal representatives that perhaps that was right; that perhaps it could not spill the positions of those 35 principals—either it spilled the position of every principal or none at all. So this Government decided to slip a regulation into the *Queensland Government Gazette*. When the Opposition reminded the Government that because of regulations passed in 1971 it cannot simply slip a regulation into the *Queensland Government Gazette* and that it must be tabled in this House, this Government slipped it through today. Therefore, the Opposition gave notice of a motion to disallow that regulation. The Government is still prepared to go ahead on 27 April and spill those principals' positions when it knows that legally it cannot do so.

Yesterday, it was brought to the Government's attention that those principals who miss out on their positions cannot appeal against the loss of their jobs. What is the Government now going to slip in? It has decided that it should slip in an extra regulation that will allow those principals to appeal when they miss out on their positions. However, honourable members go home tonight with a notice of a motion to disallow a regulation still sitting on the business paper; with 65 notices of motion still to be discussed; and knowing full well that the Government is running scared. It is not game to come back here before 18 May and sit in the Parliament for three days. The Government is frightened about what the rumours regarding WA Inc are going to do. It is frightened about the economy, and it has run scared.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.48 p.m.): I intend to speak to the amendment proposed to the House tonight by the honourable member for Fassifern. At the outset, I must say that it really comes as no surprise that the party that said that, in Government, it would give new meaning to the operations of Parliament is attempting to prostitute the credibility of this place. At 8 minutes to 11, late on this Thursday night, there will be a shut-down of the Parliament to prevent three days' of sitting prior to two crucial by-elections in Queensland. The Leader of the House is making sure that his reputation is preserved intact—the hatchetman of the Queensland Parliament; the Robespierre of democracy in this State; and a man who is prepared to put the political expediency of his party ahead of the proper functioning of the Parliament.

I endorse the remarks made by the honourable member for Fassifern. There are 65 notices of motion on the business paper. The first of those dates back to 6 March 1990. On 18 April of the following year, those 65 notices of motion have not been debated. There was a spectacle in the House this morning when the Premier refused to debate the issue of hundreds of workers being retrenched at Gladstone because of his Government's inability to negotiate the sale of the power station to facilitate the operations of the Boyne Island smelter. What did the Premier say during question-time this morning? His reason for not having that debate was "pressure of Government business". The pressure of Government business is such that tonight this Government has to close down the Parliament. It is prepared to throw away three sitting days—three question-times. I remind honourable members opposite that, during this week, each day, an average of four members of the Opposition have had the opportunity to ask questions during question-time.

Our economy is in crisis. The Government is unable to come to grips with the second-highest unemployment rate in Australia. I remind honourable members opposite

that, when the National Party left Government, Queensland, which had 16 per cent of Australia's population, was pumping out 30 per cent of all new jobs in Australia. Today, 16 months later, under Goss this Government is not achieving half of that. Against the national trend, when the National Party left Government unemployment in Queensland was dropping. This State's unemployment rate was the third-lowest of the rates for all States. Under the stewardship of the Labor Party, this State's unemployment rate is 0.1 per cent lower than the highest unemployment figure to be found anywhere in Australia.

There is business to be done. All the issues on the business paper are matters of concern that warrant detailed debate. I am quite sure that the workers in Gladstone who are facing retrenchment tonight would find it amazing that this Government wants to take a holiday while they face the sack because of the inaction of this Government and the economic dunce who presides as Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development. I ask honourable members opposite: just what are they frightened of? The Opposition knows about their incredible sensitivity in respect of the Nundah by-election. Perhaps the Government does not want questions about that issue to be asked in the House a few days before the Nundah by-election. Perhaps that could be a little embarrassing to some members of the Government.

I say to the Government: if it has nothing to hide, do not shut down the Parliament tonight. Do not run away like a pack of scared dingoes, close down the Parliament and run for cover. I find it quite extraordinary that so many honourable members opposite, who were so adamant and critical about the way in which the National Party conducted the affairs of this House, can stoop to something so low tonight. I say to the Leader of the House and to Government members: as we take them through the debate and as we take them to division, their credibility is on the line. The people of Queensland will not be fooled by a midnight hijack attempt on the Parliament to close it down to save the Government from some very embarrassing questions and from the embarrassment of what may come out before a couple of very crucial by-elections in this State on 18 May.

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (10.53 p.m.): Almost 17 months of this Government's term—half of its entire life—has gone. What has been achieved in that half term? The Government has only 18 months left. Yet, here it is, running away from the people of Queensland, from the press and from this House. In the past two weeks, it has taken a terrible hiding, so I cannot blame it for running away. The people of Queensland elected the Government to govern and to make decisions. We are still waiting for a decision on Ensham, Shelburne Bay, the Gladstone Power Station, the ethanol initiatives, Collinsville and the Mount Isa pipeline. It is easy to reel off those names, but Government members cannot even walk into the House to pass enabling legislation. Let us hear the reasons. Where are the speakers on the opposite side who will give us reasons why the Government has called off the next week of Parliament?

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr KATTER: I will sit down very shortly. It will then be incumbent upon the honourable member to give reasons why the Government is calling off the next week of Parliament. As the Government calls off a week of Parliament, the Mackay sugar mills are saying that they will put off one-third of their work force. Mount Isa is saying that it will put off 1 200 of its work force. Half of the jobs in Collinsville have gone. Yesterday or today, Gladstone announced that a very significant proportion of its work force has gone. Where are Government members? They are running away from this House, where they must face the music. The Government has been in office for only 18 months, and it is already running away. In the past two to three weeks, the Government's ace in the hole—the Fitzgerald inquiry—suddenly began to look very sick, with the leading investigator of that initiative suddenly being proved in this House again and again to be a proven perjurer.

We continue to hear about the railway issue. Government members do not talk about anything else. A large section of the media in Queensland also talks about nothing

else. The unemployment rate, probably unprecedented since the Great Depression, is 10.2 per cent, if one adds the numerous training schemes of the Federal Government. The Government was also enormously embarrassed by the mercy dash in the aeroplane—which the Government was never going to use—to help that person who was critically ill. Queensland has held four elections, and the Government will have lost all four of them and a referendum. The Government has had a marvellous success rate! Four out of four losses and the referendum as well. That is the reason why the Government is running away from this place.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.57 p.m.): I rise in support of the amendment. The Labor Government is clearly attempting to abandon its election commitment. How well we all remember that commitment given by Mr Goss and by members of the Labor Party about open and accountable Government. One element of open and accountable Government is facing the people in this place, particularly prior to election-time. It is no coincidence that, in the week before the House will resume, the by-elections will be held. Of course, Parliament is being put off for a week. The Government does not want to stand the heat in the kitchen. It knows that it must face the music on a number of very important issues that, in recent weeks, have proven to be of grave embarrassment to the Government. With the by-elections coming up, Parliament would be a forum, a spotlight to focus on those important issues.

Those issues include the high rate of unemployment in this State, which is the highest for many, many years. Under this Government's stewardship, unemployment has increased by approximately 3 per cent. Economic growth are words that are not in the Government's vocabulary. The Government does not want to talk about the failures in relation to the sale of the Gladstone Power Station, the failures of the Collinsville so-called negotiations. If any negotiations are going on, they are clearly in someone's mind; they are not actually happening. To see that, one need only consider the number of people who are being sacked at Collinsville. The nickel refinery at Townsville has a shadow hanging over it. Every day, that shadow gets darker as the people there face the real prospect of getting the sack. The spaceport at Cape York Peninsula is certainly on the "no activity" list. That list also incorporates coal rail freights, which were the subject of a clear commitment by the Government. That is something that the Government does not want to face at the two by-elections.

There are issues after issues. They are all about jobs and economic growth—something that is totally foreign to the Government. One needs only to go into the community to see the fear and the uncertainty on people's faces. The Labor Party has wreaked havoc on this State and this nation. Every State in which the Labor Party has governed has been totally and utterly destroyed. The Minister knows it. The people of this nation know it. The people of Toowoomba South and Nundah know it also. That is why the Government is not prepared to face up to the Parliament for the three days prior to the by-elections. The Government does not have a stomach for the real issues. The Labor Party has failed this country and the States of this nation miserably, and the record speaks for itself. The Leader of the House has his own little problems concerning the private plane trip to Port Macquarie. That matter is on everyone's lips in the community. There are more questions that have to be answered about the Minister's plane trip. It is little wonder that this Government wants to close down this very important forum that will focus the spotlight on these important issues.

So much for accountability. It is being buried tonight by the Labor Party and the Leader of the House knows full well that that is the issue. He knows very well that the real issues in these by-elections are the ones that I have outlined. Over recent times, the Government has failed miserably over the law and order issue. Now the Government and the Premier are in a panic. We have seen it in the last few weeks. They are running scared. They are frightened of these two by-elections because they have failed to meet their commitments. They have failed to carry out decisive action and promote economic growth for the people of this State. The only growth industry is that of committees and commissions. We have seen them by the hundreds, but there has been no real action

or decisive decision-making. The Government is asleep. There is a large amount of important business on the notice paper that is yet to be debated, but it is quite clear that the Government does not want to debate many of these issues. No doubt the Government supports the banning of political advertising on the TV and radio. It is clear that this Government supports the banning of political advertising, even though that ban strikes at freedom of speech and freedom of expression. This Government is quite happy to support that ban because it and the Commonwealth Government are in the same camp when it comes to these important issues. Tonight, open and accountable government is being buried. This Government does not have the fortitude to face the people on these real issues under the spotlight in this forum prior to the forthcoming by-elections.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (11.03 p.m.): I rise in support of the amendment. I do not intend to canvass the points made by previous speakers from this side of the House. All the points have been pertinent and I support them. I wish to bring to the attention of the public and members on the Government side of the House that this holier-than-thou Government is denigrating the functions of this Parliament for political expediency. One example which has not been given so far in this debate is the effect on the function of select committees of this Parliament. The mover of the amendment, the member for Fassifern, mentioned that the decision to close Parliament and not come back as was planned has meant a dislocation of advertised meetings of various committees. I point out that one of those meetings involves the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. That committee has advertised and invited people to attend public hearings. It has invited people to travel interstate and made arrangements for those people to appear before it. Due to political expediency on the part of this Government, those public hearings will not proceed. Those people will be told that they have to postpone their appearance at the public hearing of that committee. Fresh advertisements will have to be placed. I hope that these advertisements say—and that the people of Queensland understand—that all of this has happened for the sake of political expediency on the part of this Government. I hope that it has the fortitude to say in the advertisements that all of those people are being inconvenienced because this Government was not prepared to take part in debate in this most important forum—as the Leader of the Liberal Party said—in the week prior to the two by-elections. That decision to destroy the credibility of select committees of this Parliament rests on the head of this Government. The committees made the arrangements in good faith based on the parliamentary program and these arrangements will have to be changed.

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (11.05 p.m.): This morning I listened to the great apologists for the mob on the other side on Rod Henshaw's program. They said in answer to the very good comments and points raised by the Leader of the Liberal Party that all members of the Liberal Party, the Government and every member of Parliament will be able to go out into the electorate at large during the next four weeks and raise all of the issues that are relevant to Queensland. In a few moments I will take members on a little tour. The Premier said that politicians and members of political parties should go out and debate the issues in the electorate. This is not the same Premier who, before the last election, got off his backside and said that the greatest abuse of Parliament that he had ever seen was the Queensland Parliament because it was constantly gagged, prorogued and closed down. Every opportunity demanded by the then members of the Opposition—who are now the Government—for proper and comprehensive debate was denied to them by the National Party Government. Government members should be ashamed because they can barely be bothered to get up and speak this evening. They have been in the bar, totally relaxed and utterly and totally resigned—

Mr PALASZCZUK: I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at that comment. That is not true. The honourable member is referring to members of the Government of which I am one. I have been in the Chamber all evening and I ask that the member withdraw that comment.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I remind the member for Merthyr that there is a convention about those matters and normally good grace would dictate that the member does not talk about them.

Mr SANTORO: I accept your ruling, Mr Speaker, that there is no point of order, but I am very, very happy to withdraw the comment. However, let us face it: I will not see many members of the Labor Party rise in this Chamber and defend the abysmal record of the Premier and the Leader of the House.

Mr Palaszczuk: You were in the bar, that's who was!

Mr SANTORO: The member for Archerfield will have to sit there dumb and muted.

Mr Palaszczuk: Why don't you stand up straight?

Mr SANTORO: What the honourable member will do is——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. The member for Archerfield will come to order.

Mr SANTORO: Members of the Labor Party will sit in this Chamber dumb and muted and they will have to cop it. They will go back on yet another promise that has been made to the people of Queensland.

Mr Sullivan interjected.

Mr SANTORO: The honourable member will go back on his party's promise to sustain the democratic principles upon which this Parliament is based. He will be doing that not only tonight but also during the period right up to the next election. As I have said time after time, members of the Liberal Party will keep reminding the people of Queensland and those who attend this Parliament that members of the Labor Party are frauds when it comes to sustaining democratic principle. It will be absolutely essential for members of the Labor Party to prove their claim that Parliament is where the debates should be taking place. They will have to do that at a time when the public gallery and the media gallery are full of people who will be reporting on the performance of floundering Ministers and a floundering Premier when members of the Liberal Party ask them, "What are you doing about employment?", "What are you doing about cronyism?" and "What are you doing about all your broken promises?" Members of the Labor Government do not have the answers to those questions, and they will have to sit still. Mr Gibbs and Mr Mackenroth—the leader of the Left and the leader of the Right respectively—have said to the backbenchers, "Keep quiet. Don't rock the boat, and the Ministry will not be too far away."

Mr Palaszczuk: Ha, ha!

Mr SANTORO: The peacock from Archerfield who pretends to be filled with mirth and laughter is the organiser for the AWU in this Parliament.

Mr Prest interjected.

Mr SANTORO: The member for Archerfield pretends to be laughing, but he is the weakest ALP member. The Government Whip, the member for Port Curtis, has been a member of this Parliament for longer than most members. You sit in this Parliament and are an embarrassment to the Australian Labor Party. The other members of the Labor Party could not give you any other job, so they said to you, "Bill, you can barely count, but you can certainly sit. So why don't you sit and try to count?"

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the member for Merthyr that he direct his comments through the Chair. I think that any other form of address will create a little bit of heat in the Parliament.

Mr SANTORO: I was simply referring, Mr Speaker, to the singular lack of talent that sits close to the Government front bench, namely, the peacock from Archerfield

and the member for Port Curtis. Members of the Liberal Party look forward to a better contribution being made by the successor to the member for Port Curtis, who is presently his campaign director and his crony mate and who was appointed Chairman of the Gladstone Harbour Board. The board listened to the member for Port Curtis on at least one occasion and has appointed his successor to that position. I am sure that in one week he will make a far more worthy contribution than the member has been incompetently making over a period of years.

I come back to the major point that I am trying to make. This morning, the Premier of this State said that over the next four weeks, members of this Parliament should be concentrating on politicking. Members of the Liberal Party say that it is the responsibility of the Premier to concentrate on governing. In an economic sense, this State is going downhill. That fact cannot be contradicted by rational analysis. One only needs to refer to the 10.5 per cent rate of unemployment to illustrate the point I am making.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr SANTORO: That was not inherited by the honourable member for Manly's Government. The Treasurer has admitted, and independently compiled Treasury documents confirm, that the honourable member's Government inherited a sound economy.

Mr Dollin interjected.

Mr SANTORO: Only one of two groups can be blamed: either the Federal colleagues of members of the ALP in this Parliament, who are constantly being bucketed, or members of the Queensland Labor Government. Either way, members of this Government are losers. Members of the Labor Government should be ashamed of their Premier who broadcasts on the radio, "Let's close down Parliament and let's go out politicking. Let's abandon the Parliament and scrutiny of the Government by the Opposition. Let's go politicking." What a cheap statement, and what an utter dereliction of duty!

Mr Palaszczuk: You are too scared to get out there.

Mr SANTORO: The peacock from Archerfield keeps nodding his head. He is trying to rattle me by making inane statements. If he thinks that I will be upset by what he is doing, or that I will sit down, or that I will run out of breath, I can tell him that members of the Liberal Party will tell the people of Nundah and the people of Toowoomba South exactly how bad the record of this Labor Government is.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

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

Mr SANTORO: Members of the Liberal Party will publish what they said in Parliament last night about the Goss legal Mafia, about the communist connection, and about the way in which all members of this Labor Government are contributing to those types of organisations. I will tell the people of Nundah about the public meeting I attended a year ago that was hosted by the former member for Nundah and the member for Stafford. At that meeting, approximately 600 people got together and said, "We want action from the Goss Government. We want the Goss Government to deliver on one very important issue—law and order." At that stage, the former member for Nundah and the member for Stafford said, "We will deliver." The Leader of the House and Minister for Police was also at that meeting and he expressed sympathy for the plight of those people. He nodded his head wisely and said, "Yes, we will deliver and we will make sure that the vandals who are breaking into your houses and threatening the elderly and the young are in fact eliminated from the streets." I can tell the Minister for Police that I am still receiving representations from many of the people who attended that meeting. Those people are not politically motivated or supporters of my side of politics; they are people who are demanding action from this Government, but the only action this Government can give them is—

Mrs Edmond: That you have a psychology test soon—that's what they are demanding.

Mr SANTORO: —the Premier saying, "Let's close down the Parliament and let's go politicking for four weeks." I hear the mouth from the mount. The mouth from the mount has come down to the Chamber. I do not know which one is bigger—whether it is the mouth or the mountain.

Mrs Bird interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Whitsunday will not engage in conversation while I am on my feet. I suggest to the member for Merthyr that he should not be as provocative as he has been. He should address members by their proper title. Again I ask him, for the last time, to address his comments through the Chair.

Mr SANTORO: I take the point about the provocation. However, with respect, through you, Mr Speaker, I point out to the House that I am subjected to much abuse. I am not complaining, I am just—

Mrs EDMOND: I rise to a point of order. I was merely expressing my concern about the member's health.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not a point of order. Honourable members, the night is late and we can all have some fun, but I would rather be home. I suggest that honourable members do not take frivolous points of order and that they try to address the question, which is why the Parliament should be sitting at the times proposed.

Mr SANTORO: Before the point of order was taken—which you wisely did not accept, Mr Speaker—I was saying that one of the reasons why the Parliament should be sitting is that we should be debating the record of Mr Goss and his Cabinet, particularly in the electorate of Nundah. My speech is more relevant than those of most speakers who have preceded me—with the exception of the Leader of the Liberal Party. The weak Premier went on record this morning, but all that he could say was, "Let's close down the Parliament and let's go and politic." We want to address the law and order problems of Nundah and the concerns of citizens which the Minister, the former member for Nundah and the member for Stafford sought to allay, but which they have clearly failed to deliver. The Government may close the Parliament down, but we will take out the advertisements and doorknock every house in Nundah. We will distribute the literature and make the people of Nundah and the people of Toowoomba South very much aware. We will make the people of Nundah and the people of Southport very much aware of another broken promise by the Premier, who promised that there would not be 100 per cent foreign investment in Queensland. This morning, in answer to a question from the Leader of the Liberal Party, the Premier admitted that, despite the foreign investment guidelines, Club Med has been given a 100 per cent share in Lindeman Island. Queensland business interests were denied the opportunity to have a stake in Queensland. What was good for Queensland was certainly not the criterion of the Premier. I say to all the members who do not have the courage to stand up and defend the motion of the Leader of the House and who do not have the courage to stay in this place and debate the merits of their policy and to defend the inefficacies of their policies, "It is about time that you all woke up and displayed some courage and supported the principle that saw you elected to this place, that is, a respect for the Parliament and a respect for democratic institutions." Government members may laugh. Unlike them, I had the courage to stand and have my say. They have not, and the people of Queensland will condemn them for it.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (11.19 p.m.): After hearing the member for Merthyr, one would have to respond. If one closed one's eyes when listening to some of the things that the honourable member for Merthyr said, one would think that one was listening to the former member for Merthyr. When he took over his office, he must have picked up the files. The matters that he talks about in this Parliament are the matters that I heard raised here for 12 years. I suggest to Mr Beanland that, if he wants a reshuffle, perhaps he could make the honourable member for Merthyr the shadow Minister for prisons. The position is that, if the member for

Merthyr keeps up the performance at the intensity that he kept up here tonight, the Leader of the Liberal Party will have no worries because the honourable member will drop dead of a heart attack. He worked himself into such a frenzy that he is going back to doorknock in Southport. We had a by-election in Southport a number of years ago. However, we should not worry, because the member for Merthyr is going to doorknock there. The member said, "Don't worry, we'll get out and doorknock." Maybe that is one of the reasons that we do not want the Parliament sitting. What we would really like is for all honourable members to get out and show themselves to the people of Nundah and the people of Toowoomba. Even if we give them a full four weeks to do that, the nine of them will not get the job done.

Let us go back to the very start of this debate. Honourable members talked about the fact that the Government is changing a week of sitting that was set down on a tentative program that was put out with the words on it "subject to change".

Mr Lingard interjected.

Mr MACKENROTH: For the benefit of the member for Fassifern, I will talk about honesty. I handed that program to him personally and also to a member of the Liberal Party. When I gave it to them, I said, "We are giving you for the first time ever in this Parliament a tentative program for the whole year. It has never been done since I have been here and, to my knowledge, it has never been done. But we will give it to you on the understanding that it will allow you"——

Mr Borbidge: It's not worth the paper it's written on.

Mr MACKENROTH: The honourable member should just listen. I said to them, "We will give it to you on the understanding that we will change it throughout the year, but it will enable you to be in a better position to plan things for the future." The Opposition cannot keep to such deals as this one on the parliamentary program that the Government issued. What the Opposition has ensured is that in the next parliamentary year, it will never again get a program such as that. I have no problems with giving the Opposition a program on the same basis as programs were given to the Labor Party when it was in opposition—no problems at all. If that is what the Opposition wants, that is what it will certainly get.

Mr Lingard: You never said anything to me about 21 May. You haven't even had the courage to say that to me as Leader of Opposition Business.

Mr MACKENROTH: I would not have the courage to talk to the member for Fassifern. A number of points have been raised tonight. The member for Fassifern raised the fact that the Sugar Industry Bill was debated beyond the stage to which it was going to be debated and then the Parliament moved on to another debate.

Mr FitzGerald: You told us you would get up at 5 o'clock.

Mr MACKENROTH: The Government wanted to adjourn at 5 o'clock to allow country members to have the opportunity of travelling home to their electorates tonight, if they wished. However, the Opposition wanted to debate the Sugar Industry Bill beyond 5 o'clock——

Mr Lingard: We could have finished at 20 to 6.

Mr MACKENROTH: But the planes had gone. The Government allowed the Opposition to debate the Sugar Industry Bill in full. The stage had then been reached at which the next Bill could be debated because the number of Government backbenchers who would have gone home tonight was much fewer and they will now go home tomorrow. I see no problems with changing the time tonight. I think the Leader of the Liberal Party raised the gagging of debates and the promises that the Government made. Let us have a look at what has happened in this Parliament since the Labor Party has been in Government. I think that one could say that the gag was used in respect of only two Bills. One Bill was gagged after two days of full debate, and the other one was

gagged after a full day of debate. In some 16 months, the gag—if members of the Opposition want to refer to it as that—has been used in this Parliament by this Government on legislation on two occasions. This Government certainly has not used the gag regularly.

The business paper that the Opposition keeps talking about is not limited to Government business, but I remind honourable members that Government business does take precedence. This morning, the Leader of the Opposition had the opportunity to ask the Premier a question about the motion that he wanted to move. The position is that this Government has increased the opportunities for the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party to initiate debates in this Parliament. On each Wednesday there is a Matter of Special Public Importance debate——

Mr Lingard: You haven't even finalised the grievance debate.

Mr MACKENROTH: That was done when I was not here. I went away that day. I will not do that again. In addition to that debate, on Wednesday night there is a further Adjournment debate. Those are two debates that the Parliament never had before in which these matters can be raised. The business paper contains a notice of motion which states that Mr Cooper wants to censure me for my complicity in a Government cover-up to hide from the people of Brisbane the possibility of a major toxic waste health threat. The week after I released the report in relation to Kingston, I said to the Leader of the Opposition, "If you ever raise the issue of toxic waste again, I will belt you around the ears." Those were the words that I used. To his credit, the Leader of the Opposition was smart enough never to raise the issue of toxic waste again. Each and every time that members of the Opposition raised that issue in this place, I look at Notice of Motion No. 13 and I think to myself that, if I was a devious person, I would bring on for debate Notice of Motion No. 13 and belt the Leader of the Opposition around the ears, but I would not want to help the member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr Gibbs interjected.

Mr MACKENROTH: He is a generous person. The matter of the Public Sector Management Commission regulation that was tabled in the Parliament today was the best example of drawing the longbow that I have ever seen in my life. The regulation goes into the *Government Gazette*, after it goes through Governor in Council. The Minister has 14 sitting days in which to table regulations in Parliament. As Leader of the House, one matter that concerned me when I looked at our legislative program was that four or five Bills have been passed which validated regulations that the previous Government failed to table in this Parliament. I am not suggesting that it deliberately did that. It was because of the process that was in place. There were no checks and balances. This Government has had to validate four or five——

Mr Borbidge: Don't speak too soon.

Mr MACKENROTH: No. I will continue. Under the previous Government, there were no checks or balances in place in relation to how the system operated. This Government has put in place checks and balances in relation to regulations that need to be tabled in the Parliament to make sure that the public servants whose job it is to give them to the Ministers ensure that that does happen. There is a process in place which allows——

Mr Borbidge: The Committee of Subordinate Legislation.

Mr MACKENROTH: The Committee of Subordinate Legislation picks up the mistakes. We do not particularly want to see those mistakes. I would say, though, that what the member for Fassifern tried to make the House believe was that in some way he had brought the Premier out. That is just so stupid; it really is. The Premier had his regulations to table. I am sure that honourable members have seen the sheet that is handed out each day and that the Premier was down to table documents today, which he tabled. There is no mystique in the fact that the member moved a disallowance

motion and that within the 14 days those particular regulations were tabled in the Parliament.

Another matter that was raised by a couple of members is the trip that I made to Port Macquarie. In relation to that, I just want to say that last Thursday in answer to a question in this Parliament I said to the Leader of the Opposition that, if he wished to come and talk to me after question-time, I would make certain information available to him. He failed to do that. If he really wanted to know, confidentially, I would have made that information available to him. He did not wish to do that. I cannot help that. That offer is still open to him.

The other point that was made—quite a strange one—was about the parliamentary committees. ALP members, including a number of people in the Ministry tonight, sat in this House for 12 years with no select committees. We have now the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts, the Parliamentary Committee of Public Works, both of which the previous Government certainly started, the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice, the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review, the Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry into Ambulance Services and the Travelsafe Committee. Those parliamentary committees were not in place prior to the time of this Government, yet members opposite want to whinge about the operations of them. The number one priority of every member of Parliament is to be here when the Parliament is sitting. If other matters come up that are necessary to deal with—they do arise—and if members can organise that with their Whips, they seek leave, they get that leave and they attend. I understand that members of the Committee of Subordinate Legislation and the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts will still travel to their conferences when the Parliament sits on 21 May.

Mr Lingard: Will all the Labor Party members go?

Mr MACKENROTH: I understand that all of the honourable member's people are not going. We will have a look at how many people will be allowed to go. That is the Whip's job. We will make those decisions based on the information at the time.

I find it quite incredible that members of the Opposition and the Liberal Party criticise this Government for allowing them their democratic right to get out there in Nundah and Toowoomba South to campaign on the by-elections. The only thing that I can believe is what was raised on the radio this morning when the Leader of the Liberal Party said that members would not have parliamentary privilege. Parliamentary privilege, particularly in the political context, means that members want to say something for which they do not have the proof or which is not true.

Mr Borbidge: Don't you believe in parliamentary privilege?

Mr MACKENROTH: I am certain that if the National Party or the Liberal Party—

Mr Borbidge: Don't you believe in parliamentary privilege?

Mr MACKENROTH: —have any legitimate issues to raise in relation to the by-election campaigns, the media will pick up on them and run with them. In answer to the honourable member's question: yes, I do believe in parliamentary privilege. At times it is a very necessary thing.

Mr Borbidge: When it suits you.

Mr MACKENROTH: No, not when it suits me. In relation to what members opposite are talking about, no, that is certainly not the case. If members opposite have got anything at all to sell to the people of Nundah and Toowoomba, they should get out there on the ground and sell it to them. The best thing that members opposite can do for the Government is to get out there and work very, very hard, because the more that they do, the more it will help the Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I wish to make clear that I did not rule that the Leader of the House had closed debate. I am ruling that he spoke to the amendment. I suggest that members do not become too repetitive, but I will give all members who seek the call an opportunity to speak. The member for Cunningham was first.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (11.36 p.m.): The only reason I want to speak to this debate on the motion for the special adjournment of the House is that, because a change has occurred in one particular local government area, I want to raise the matter of the Rochedale land-fill dump. Now that members opposite control the Brisbane City Council, can I now expect to see the Minister for Environment and Heritage give his wholehearted support for this issue? The last time I asked him a question on this matter, if my memory serves me correctly he stated that he was pushing in that direction, that he would do everything he could towards recycling and that he was going to ensure that this Government took a lead in that area. I ask the Minister to put his money where his mouth is and to do something about this issue.

Mr COMBEN: I rise to a point of order. I will be doing that on 5 June.

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

Mr ELLIOTT: That will be interesting. Opposition members are concerned that they will not get the opportunity to debate certain issues. Many Opposition members have motions listed on the business paper and they are concerned that they will not get the opportunity to debate them. No wonder we are therefore very cynical.

ZETA 86

ELLIOTT (LOQ)

It was interesting to hear the Leader of the House. It would not have been so bad if, at the last election, Government members had said, "If you elect us you can consider as read that we will do unto you as you did unto us." Perhaps we would have sat here, copped it and said, "Well, they warned us, and the people were silly enough to put them in." But, no, the Government has adopted a holier-than-thou attitude. It said, "We are going to introduce a whole new reform in democracy." It had this wonderful Westminster glow.

Mr Borbidge: A new era.

Mr ELLIOTT: A whole new era; that is what we were going to see. All of the things that had existed previously were going to be overturned and redressed. Quite honestly, Government members reek of hypocrisy. What is worse, all of them have been gagged and they are not game to say anything. Where are the two marvellous members who speak on environmental matters, the member for Mount Coot-tha and the member for Mount Gravatt?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Are we debating the environment?

Mr ELLIOTT: No. Mr Speaker, I am asking: where are they? Will they be speaking to this motion? Are they going to support us to ensure that the Rochedale land-fill dump does not go ahead? They made impassioned speeches in this House and said what a dreadful thing that dump was. From speaking to them, I know that they do not support it. What are they going to do about it? Are they going to allow their consciences to get them down for the rest of their lives because they did nothing about it?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Can the member for Cunningham actually tie that to the motion?

Mr ELLIOTT: I do not wish to keep us here all night. All I wish to say is that the Opposition has on the business paper a notice of motion which we are not given the opportunity to debate. Government members—in particular, the two whom I have mentioned—are hypocritical because they are not taking the opportunity in any way, shape or form to allow that notice of motion to be debated.

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (11.40 p.m.): I support the amendment moved by the member for Fassifern and supported by members on this side of the House. I believe

that the Parliament should sit during the week of 14 May. By-elections are to be held on 18 May. The Government has given no good reason why the sittings should not resume on 14 May. I believe that the Government is running scared of the electorate. I speak particularly of the electorate of Toowoomba South. I can assure the Government that the people in Toowoomba South will no longer be taken for fools by this Government. First of all, those people elected a member to serve in this place for three years. Then, under legislation passed by this Government, that member was turfed out of Parliament. That is the first insult that the people of Toowoomba South suffered. Another insult that they have suffered—

A Government member: He chose to go.

Mr FITZGERALD: When he was elected to this place he was Mayor of the City of Toowoomba and he should have been allowed to serve one term in this House. My second point is that on Tuesday next, 23 April, an extension to a TAFE college in Toowoomba will be opened. What is happening in relation to that? Invitations have been sent out everywhere. Along with Senator Margaret Reynolds, the Honourable Nev Warburton, the Minister in charge of TAFE colleges, was to open that extension. What has happened now? It was a very opportune time for the Premier to announce that he will attend the opening. I think blow torches are being used to try to change the name on the plaque that was purchased. An extra plaque will have to be made. The Toowoomba people are saying that the Government is playing politics with this opening. From the invitations that were sent out, it was well known that, along with Margaret Reynolds, the Honourable Nev Warburton was to open this facility. The Toowoomba people are very proud of their TAFE college.

Mr Beattie: I will come up and paint the plaque.

Mr FITZGERALD: The honourable member should read the papers. They are saying that the Labor Party is turning this into a political stunt. The people of Toowoomba will not cop that. The third issue about which the people will be cynical is the Government's running away from Parliament in order to avoid answering questions in the week of 14 May. The proposal to adjourn the House until 21 May was brought on at the last minute. Until the Leader of the House moved that the House be adjourned until 21 May, which was well after the proposed date of 14 May, no-one in the Opposition was told that the Parliament was to be closed down. There was no consultation with members on this side of the House. The Toowoomba people are very cynical about the Government, and they will judge it accordingly. I am sure that, in the by-election on 18 May, a National Party member will be returned to this place and that most probably a conservative will be elected to the seat of Nundah.

Mr BARBER (Cooroora) (11.43 p.m.): This evening, the National Party has proved that it does not know what to get impassioned about. Its members become impassioned about the changing of a week of parliamentary sittings. They are not interested in the issues that are confronting Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. I warn the member for Cunningham under Standing Order 123A.

Mr Elliott: I am sorry. I was looking the other way, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: I will take that into account when the honourable member next does something silly. I would like to hear the member for Cooroora.

Mr BARBER: At school, there is always a boy in the class who has a higher opinion of his own abilities than he actually possesses. The National Party is full of such

swaggering schoolboys. It will be lucky if there is one line in tomorrow's press about this amendment. Queensland is simply not interested in this type of debate. This evening, the Parliament is moving to adjust the sitting of one week of Parliament. The National Party is silly enough to think that this matter will be on the front page of tomorrow's press. Why can National Party members not get impassioned about the issue of child abuse? Why can they not get impassioned about public housing? Why can they not get impassioned about job creation? Why can they not get impassioned about workplace rip-offs? Parliament is a place in which the conservatives are more interested in the softness of the leather and the enjoyment of the meals. That is why they want to be back here in the week of 14 May. Queenslanders want results from this place. Queenslanders are interested in the results that this place produces.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Flinders!

Mr BARBER: Queenslanders are not interested in which week in May Parliament sits. As soon as the Nats wake up to the fact that it is results that people want from this House, the better. People are interested in economic management, public sector reform and social equity. To paint a changed week of parliamentary sittings as a threat to democracy is a furphy.

The Goss Government is interested in the committee system. This evening, it has been alleged that the committee system is being threatened by this motion. The member for Fassifern was wrong when he said that the subordinate legislation committee's attendance at its Perth conference in the week of 20 May is threatened. Let me assure the House that that committee will attend that conference. The Goss Government is interested in its committees becoming informed and doing their research. It is also interested in the quality of debate in the House rising from the terrible standard to which the National Party has taken it in the past.

I understand that the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee will attend its Darwin conference in that week in May. This Government is interested in the standard of debate in this Parliament being raised by people informing themselves. The members of the Goss Government will be doing their homework in those May weeks when the Parliament does not sit. Members on the other side of the House would do well to do the same.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (11.46 p.m.): Obviously, honourable members are talking about being able to present law and order issues to the people of Toowoomba South and Nundah in the week leading up to the by-election. In the past few weeks, law and order in Queensland has certainly been very much at risk. The prisons system has gone from bad to worse. Prison officers in Townsville have gone on strike. Allegations of sex scandals in the prisons have been made. In the past few months, a CJC inquiry into the prisons system in Queensland has highlighted many of the problems associated with that system. Some of the problems extend to funding. The Liberal Party would like to highlight to the people of Toowoomba South some of those problems, such as robbing of Federal Government funds.

I refer also to the classification of prisoners, which also puts the people of Toowoomba South and Nundah at risk. An example of the type of prisoner who is putting the people of Toowoomba South and Nundah at risk is Henry Bartczak. How did such a prisoner get out of prison? I intend to refer to some of the transcripts of the CJC. This is an example of the type of issue that the Liberal Party wants to highlight in this Parliament during the week leading up to the by-election. These are the issues on which the people of Toowoomba South and Nundah will want to vote. On 22 May 1986, Bartczak was convicted of murder and sentenced to life imprisonment. On 9 November 1988, he was received at Wacol as a class B1 prisoner. Five weeks later, he was down-graded to class B2. Thirteen days later, he was down-graded to class C. On 2 November 1989, he was down-graded to class C1.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed the member for Nerang to speak to this debate. However, it is not a law and order debate. He can certainly make points about issues that could be debated this year in the House. However, I will not allow him to debate any issue at length, because that is out of order.

Mr CONNOR: Criminals such as Bartczak are getting out of prison not because they are escaping but because they are being let out by a revolving-door prison policy. They are being let out through the door. The door is opened for them and they walk out on a leave of absence because the management of the prisons system has lost—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have just told the member for Nerang that I will not allow him to continue that line of debate. He did not accept my ruling and has continued to speak to that issue. Under Standing Orders, he will resume his seat.

Question—That the words and expressions proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 45

NOES, 26

Resolved in the affirmative.

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

AYES, 45

NOES, 26

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House adjourned at 12.03 a.m. (Friday)