

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

TUESDAY, 21 MAY 1991

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

ASSENT TO BILLS

Assent to the following Bills reported by Mr Speaker--

Superannuation (Miscellaneous Acts) Amendment Bill;
Elections Amendment Bill;
Electoral Districts Bill;
Superannuation Trust Funds (Protection of Employee Entitlements) Acts Repeal Bill;
Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Act Amendment Bill;
River Improvement Trust Act Amendment Bill;
Queensland Industry Development Corporation Act and Another Act Amendment Bill;
Pawnbrokers Fees Validation Bill;
Rental Bond Act Amendment and Validation Bill;
Forestry Act Amendment Bill;
Brisbane Cricket Ground Act Amendment Bill;
Sugar Industry Bill.

PARLIAMENTARY SELECT COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO AMBULANCE SERVICES

Second Report

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that in accordance with the resolution of the Parliament agreed to on 29 November 1990 I have received the second report of the Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry into Ambulance Services and accompanying documents.

ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMISSION

Report on Review of Office of Parliamentary Counsel

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have to report that I have received from the Chairman of the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission the report on the review of the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel.

Ordered to be printed.

REFERENDUM

Return of Writ

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to inform the House of the return of the writ for a referendum to approve or not approve of a Bill to extend the maximum

term of future Parliaments from three years to four years. I table the writ for the information of honourable members.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions--

Adoption Law Amendment

From **Mr Beanland** (18 signatories) praying for the amendment of the Adoption of Children Act Amendment Act so that application may be made by a birth parent of an adopted person or an adult adoptee to have their records kept confidential and their file marked "not available".

Nursing Representatives, Queensland Health Council

From **Mr McElligott** (151 signatories) praying that the Parliament will ensure the creation of a chief nursing position at Band 1, a Division of Nursing and regional directors and provide a nursing representative at director level on the Queensland Health Council.

Tobacco Levy Increase

From **Mr Ardill** (88 signatories) praying that the tobacco levy be increased and that the proceeds be channelled into an independent foundation for health promotion, research and sponsorship of sport and the arts.

State High School, Bohle/Deeragun

From **Mr McElligott** (1 791 signatories) praying that a State high school be urgently built in the Bohle/Deeragun area.

Proposed Highway, Mount Cotton

From **Mr Hamill** (4 969 signatories) praying that construction of the proposed highway through the Mount Cotton area be not permitted but that the present Pacific Highway be upgraded instead.

Pornography

From **Mr Beanland** (1 291 signatories) praying that the Parliament will legislate against the spread of pornography.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

The following Papers were laid on the table--

Orders in Council under--

South Bank Corporation Act 1989

Stamp Act 1894-1990

Indy Car Grand Prix Act 1990

Revenue Laws (Reciprocal Powers) Act 1988

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1989

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990-1991

Brisbane and Area Water Board Act 1979-1990 and the Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982-1990

- City of Brisbane (Flood Mitigation Works Approval) Act 1952-1990
- Forestry Act 1959-1990
- Water Resources Act 1989-1990
- Co-operative and Other Societies Act 1967-1990
- Supreme Court Act of 1921
- Justices Act 1886-1990
- Regulations under--
 - Animals Protection Act 1925-1991
 - Health Act 1937-1990
 - Mental Health Services Act 1974-1990
 - Bail Act 1980-1989
 - Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act 1986-1990
 - Fishing Industry Organization and Marketing Act 1982-1990
 - Meat Industry Act 1965-1989
 - Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1962-1991
- Ordinances under the City of Brisbane Act 1924-1990
- Reports--
 - Recent Population and Housing Trends in Queensland 1991
 - Queensland Grain Handling Authority for the year ended 30 September 1990
- Reports for the year ended 31 December 1990--
 - Special Prosecutor
 - Office of the Director of Prosecutions
- Proclamations under--
 - Superannuation (Miscellaneous Acts) Amendment Act 1991
 - Forestry Act 1959-1990
- Rules under the Casino Control Act 1982

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Visit to North America and China by Deputy Premier

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton--Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.07 a.m.), by leave: I table for the information of honourable members a report on my ministerial visit from 17 April to 5 May 1991 to Vancouver, Seattle and San Francisco in North America and Beijing in the Peoples Republic of China. The three North American cities have addressed the problems of urban sprawl infrastructure and affordable housing in remarkably similar fashion through growth management legislation and by providing that commercial developments contribute towards infrastructure such as housing and transport, as well as setting aside 20 per cent of new projects for affordable housing. Other examples such as Fair Share, which requires all local authorities to take a fair share of affordable or public housing and the use of service clubs to help operate community, new, non-profit housing, will be given serious consideration in a Queensland context. I intend to discuss many of those matters with local government and housing groups.

Honourable members who wish to discuss these matters and other items from the report in more detail should contact me personally or read copies of the documents that make up the attachments to the full report. I intend to suggest to fast-growing Queensland councils that they send senior councillors and mayors on an organised visit to North America to see these developments so that they can become personally aware of the

approach to growth management that has developed in recent years in a number of American States. I will be recommending that we continue to cement our strong personal ties with the Peoples Republic of China by the inclusion of China on itineraries of parliamentary delegations.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rail Travel by Minister for Transport

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich--Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: During the past 17 months, I have travelled extensively throughout Queensland in my capacity as Minister for Transport. I have frequently and proudly travelled by rail on such trips as it has enabled me to meet with local communities, local authorities, local members of Parliament from both sides of the House--including the member for Balonne--and those who are the backbone of Queensland Rail, those who work in QR. Contrary to the false, indeed scurrilous, assertions of the Leader of the Opposition, my recent rail trip to Barcaldine was wholly consistent with my commitment to rail and to meeting with those who live in Queensland's provincial and regional centres. It was totally in accordance with my responsibilities and those of others to the Government, the Parliament and the people of Queensland.

Several issues arise out of the honourable member's claims, and I wish to deal with them in turn. Firstly, it has been claimed that the events in Barcaldine on 3 May and 4 May were solely for the Labor Party. Nothing could be further from the truth. The civic reception by the Shire Chairman, Councillor Norman, the pageant involving scores of the district's citizens, the opening of the Workers Heritage Centre--a project supported financially and in kind by local, State and Federal Governments, including the former National Party Government--were public events deserving support. Indeed, the Minister for Education had played a critical role in obtaining facilities for the centre.

In this House on 20 February 1991, the member for Gregory stated--

"The heritage centre is a national project and is to be an educative and interpretive centre, which will be based around community involvement and activities. I trust that the Government can see merit in the project. It is paramount that the Government give immediate and ongoing grants to the centre. I urge the Government to support the venture."

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Southport.

Mr HAMILL: The member for Gregory is nodding in assent. He further stated--

"The centre will be unique in Australia as a place of living history--a museum, an art gallery, a park, an educational resource and a community cultural and research facility. At this point, I should say that we are not about promoting political parties."

I further acknowledge the presence of the honourable member for Gregory at various functions at Barcaldine on that historic weekend, including his visit to the site of the strikers' camp---

Mr Veivers interjected.

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

Mr HAMILL: --where the member for Gregory was in the company of the Prime Minister, the Premier, the members for Yeronga and Greenslopes, other members of Parliament and members of the public. I also acknowledge his presence at the Department of Transport office function on the Friday afternoon when I announced extensions of customer services in both Barcaldine and Longreach. I can only presume from the

remarks attributed to the Leader of the Opposition that he believes Mr Johnson to be a closet member of the ALP. In truth, Mr Johnson's presence as a member of Parliament was entirely appropriate, whereas the Leader of the Opposition was conspicuous by his absence.

The second issue concerns the purpose of the trip. Apart from attending the public and civic functions in Barcaldine, I used the journey to visit Bundaberg, where the honourable member and I promoted bicycle safety and helmet-wearing at a local school. On the train at Alpha, I also met with representatives of the Jericho Shire Council to discuss road issues, a problem which I resolved for the council when I reached Barcaldine. It was an official trip, and other members and I were attending to our public and parliamentary duties.

The third issue is that of accountability, and honourable members should listen to this. Under National Party and Liberal Party Governments, Ministers and others travelled in the special rail cars and the full cost of their travel and their refreshments was billed to the Assistant Commissioner, Financial Administration, Queensland Railways. When I became Minister for Transport, I reformed the system. Those who travel or who are accommodated on the special carriages are billed for their fares, their food and their accommodation. That practice has been in force on each trip that I have undertaken on the train and it was done in respect of the trip to Barcaldine and back. I have things which the National Party travellers never had--a bill for expenses and receipts for the money which I paid.

The fourth point relates to the nature of the travel. Under the Nationals, there may have been valets, housemaids and chefs--there may have even been flowers and chocolates--on board. The staff on board the special carriages comprised a cook and an electrician. Neither could be called a maid, and I suspect that they would fight at that suggestion. The special carriages trailed behind a freight train, including livestock wagons, to Barcaldine and, on the return trip, behind the Midlander and the Capricornia.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Southport for the last time.

Mr HAMILL: I value Queensland Railways and the service that it provides. I also value the opportunity to talk to the people of Queensland in the country towns and cities that were clearly neglected by the National Party when it was in office. I will not succumb to the barrage of mud being thrown by the Leader of the Opposition, nor will I get down to his level. I will not fly over country Queensland; I will continue to meet the people on the ground and on the rail, whether the Leader of the Opposition likes it or not.

MOTION OF CONDOLENCE

Deaths of Mr R. A. Armstrong and Sir Gordon Chalk, KBE

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan--Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (10.16 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move--

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Roy Alexander Armstrong, Esquire, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland, and Sir Gordon William Wesley Chalk, KBE, a former member of the Executive Council of Queensland and a former Premier, Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Transport.

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

Both Roy Armstrong and Sir Gordon Chalk had retired from Parliament before I and many other members in this place today were elected. However, there still are in

this House a number of people who served with them. In addition, both Roy Armstrong and Sir Gordon Chalk did not just fade away after their retirement. As honourable members would know, after his retirement, Roy Armstrong maintained a strong interest in the Parliament. He and his wife would often be seen sitting in the public gallery listening to the debate. Sir Gordon Chalk, as a past State Treasurer, also attended the presentation of many State Budgets. So those of us who did not work with these gentlemen had the chance to meet them in the years following their retirement.

It was in unusual circumstances that Roy Armstrong entered this House as the member for Mulgrave. The sitting Country Party member, Robert Watson, died in March 1959, and at a by-election in June 1959, Carl Wordsworth was elected. But three weeks before the May 1960 State election, Mr Wordsworth died. A special election for Mulgrave was held in July 1960, at which Roy Armstrong was elected at the age of 47. He held the seat for 20 years, retiring at the November 1980 general election. During his years in this House, Roy Armstrong took a keen interest in rural matters, especially the sugar industry, in which he had a close involvement all his working life. Before his election, he had lived in Babinda for 25 years. He was the first chairman of the Babinda Cane Pest and Disease Board when it began operating in 1953. In the 1950s, he also served as a director of the Babinda Co-operative Sugar Mill for two periods totalling four years. At the time of his election, he was a sugar cane farmer at Bartle Frere and a Mulgrave Shire councillor. Roy Armstrong was regarded as a strong local member in the far north and a strong voice for the sugar industry. But he was also known as a person who recognised the importance of addressing major industry issues in terms of their Statewide or national impact.

Sir Gordon Chalk, who of course was much better known than Roy Armstrong, was a true veteran of Queensland politics and of this Parliament. He was an original member of the Queensland People's Party, the forerunner of the Liberal Party. In 1947, he came into Parliament, representing the then seat of East Toowoomba. Following a redistribution, at the 1950 State election Sir Gordon stood for and won the seat of Lockyer. He held that seat until his retirement in 1976. Following the defeat of the Labor Government in 1957, Sir Gordon was Transport Minister in the Nicklin coalition. In 1965, he became leader of his party, a position which brought with it the Deputy Premiership and the job of State Treasurer. In August 1968, following the death of the then Premier Jack Pizzey, and before the Country Party elected Joh Bjelke-Petersen, Sir Gordon served as Premier for eight days.

Sir Gordon Chalk is perhaps best remembered as Treasurer, a position he held for a record 11 years. During that time, he developed a reputation as a fighter for Queensland, a person who had a no-nonsense administrative style and a down-to-earth personal style. As Deputy Premier and Treasurer, he was aware of the need to vigorously pursue Queensland's economic development for the benefit of the whole State. Sir Gordon Chalk was a person whose political career richly deserves the description "long and distinguished". As I said at the outset, although I did not serve with him in this place, on a number of subsequent occasions, and particularly after the time when I became leader of the parliamentary Labor Party, I had the opportunity to talk to him. From time to time, he used to ring me. The last occasion on which he rang me was a day or two prior to the hand-over to the State Library of Cabinet records that had passed the 30-year period. He talked about some of the history of the Queensland Cabinet. That hand-over process will continue year in, year out so that the original records of Cabinet will become available to the public and to historians. On the day of the hand-over at the State Library, Sir Gordon Chalk was there in fine form and with lots of stories and memories to pass on to the people gathered there.

On behalf of members of the Government, I extend to the families of Roy Armstrong and Sir Gordon Chalk our deepest sympathy.

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton--Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.22 a.m.): I am pleased to join with the Premier in speaking to this motion of condolence for two of my former parliamentary colleagues. Firstly, I will

speaking about Roy Armstrong. He was a timber-cutter and a cane-farmer. If I remember correctly, between 1956 to 1961, he served as a local councillor before he was elected to this Parliament in 1960. He was a person in the old Country Party mould. He did not really aspire to be a Minister.

I was elected to this place in 1972. Since then, I have reminded many new members of Roy Armstrong's greatest contribution. When we arrived on the scene, there was a battle over the Speakership. Jim Houghton was going to be nominated by the Government. The word went around that Bill Lonergan was going to nominate as an independent. The person who made up his mind to nominate Bill Lonergan was Roy Armstrong. We often talk about making long speeches in this place. I will always remember the speech that Mr Armstrong, the then member for Mulgrave, made at that time. He stated--

"I move--

'That William Horace Lonergan do take the chair of the House as Speaker.'

It gives me great pleasure to do so."

That motion was seconded by Val Bird, who said--

"I second the motion."

The House debated that motion for one hour. When the votes were counted, Lonergan had won by 47 votes to 32. Members can make a lot of words say a lot of things but, when it comes down to it, if one has the numbers that is where the action is. Roy Armstrong did not muck about. He moved the motion. He had done his homework beforehand. I must admit that I voted for Bill Lonergan. To be quite truthful, I do not know whether that was one of the best voting decisions that I have ever made. Later, Jim Houghton became a fairly good Speaker of the Parliament and a great defender of the rights of members.

I remember Roy for that more than anything else. I also remember him as a man who liked this place. He had a sense of the value of Parliament. As all honourable members would be aware, for many years afterwards Roy visited this place. As the Premier said, Roy Armstrong was always interested enough in the proceedings of the Parliament to sit in the gallery and be part of the support of the Parliament. That was a good thing. I was sorry to see Roy go. My condolences go to his wife, his family and those who supported him over the years.

As to Gordon Chalk--when I first became a member of Parliament in 1972, Gordon was the Treasurer. He was always known as "Chalky" to just about everybody in the Parliament--"Chalky did this", "Chalky did that" or "What is Chalky up to today?" In those days, he was one of the really colourful personalities of the Parliament. Quite frankly, I wonder sometimes what is happening to Parliament. Although members are reading more and more speeches and doing more and more research, less and less heart and emotion is being put into those speeches. When Gordon Chalk made a speech or answered a question in the House, he did so very much off the cuff and did not muck about. If he wanted to let a member know that the member was not on side, Gordon Chalk made certain that he got his message across loud and clear--and I do mean loud.

I wish to tell a story about Gordon Chalk. I was making a speech from the Opposition side of the House. It was my first big, long, written speech. As most honourable members will be aware, I am not very good at reading speeches. I had been reading that speech for about four or five minutes when the luncheon adjournment occurred. After the adjournment, when the first bells rang to summon members back to the Chamber at whatever time it was in those days, Gordon Chalk came up to me and said, "How are you going, young Burnsie?" I said, "All right. I have only got another 55 pages to go." When the second bells were ringing, he took my speech notes, ripped them in half and dropped them on the floor. When the Speaker called the member for Lytton to speak, I was down on the floor trying to put the pages together. One lesson in life that I learned at that time was that numbers should be put on pages. I could not put the pages back in the correct order and could not get the ripped pieces to match. I do not

know for how long I spoke during that debate. I would probably have to consult *Hansard* to find that.

An Opposition member: The full time.

Mr BURNS: I probably did take my full time. In those days, after the House adjourned, almost all members--together with Miss Glennie and others--went to the bar where they relived what they had or had not said and tried to sort out what they had said about one another in the heat of the moment. Unfortunately, much of that practice disappeared during the reign of Joh Bjelke-Petersen when he stated that members should not mix as much as they did. In those days, members fought their battles hard in this place. They said all the things that they had to say. But if one had been having an argument with Chalky, for example, he would have been the first to come up and say, "Come and have a drink. Let us have a talk about that problem that you have or the matter that you raised." That was a good grounding for my early days in this Parliament.

Gordon Chalk went through some very turbulent years. In my view, he should have remained as Premier of this State. However, his party was divided. As honourable members would be aware, a ginger group grew up at that time. In 1971, that group defeated the first of the redistribution Bills in this Parliament. I understand that the second redistribution Bill was passed by a small majority, and the Government endorsed the second redistribution Bill. It has always been my belief that if Chalk had been able to convince his ginger group and others at that time to stand by him, that redistribution Bill would not have been passed. I am not talking politics at the moment. However, it is my view that there would have been a fairer redistribution which, in a few years' time, would have returned Gordon Chalk as the Premier of this State. For a short period, Gordon Chalk was the Premier. He also had a reputation as a very good Treasurer of this State. That reputation remained in the business world until the day that he died.

I found Gordon Chalk and Lady Chalk to be very friendly, warm people who made my wife and I very welcome in the very cold, hard days when the Labor Party had very small numbers in this Parliament.

An Opposition member: A cricket team.

Mr BURNS: That was during the cricket team days when things were tough. Gordon Chalk always tried to make one welcome--as did Roy. The Parliament is sorrier for their passing. They made their contributions. Whether members like it or not, they are here to do the best that they can for the people whom they represent. Although we might not agree with what they say and might not agree with their policies, we must give full marks to those members who do their job well. I do that to Gordon Chalk.

Mr COOPER (Roma--Leader of the Opposition) (10.29 a.m.): I endorse the remarks of the previous speakers, the Premier and the Deputy Premier. Once again, during a condolence motion, the Deputy Premier has hit upon a chord that all members should take note of. On behalf of the National Party and the Opposition, I pass on our condolences to the families of Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong.

It is very difficult for members who were not in this place when Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy were here to understand the type of people that they were and to be adequate in their commendations for the work that they did. All honourable members are aware of the demands that are placed on parliamentarians and their families. Members who are more senior, particularly Ministers and the Deputy Premier--as Sir Gordon Chalk was--must also place the community first. They share those demands with their families. I am sure that members would recognise the pressures that are placed on their families. It was certainly the case with Sir Gordon, to whom we can refer as the father of the parliamentary Liberal Party.

I will not go back over the record of achievement of both men, which has been outlined by both the Premier and the Deputy Premier. Sir Gordon was certainly a very

proud resident of the Rosewood district, where he grew up. He served as the member for Lockyer for a mighty long time. In that time, he was a journalist on the *Rosewood Register*. When he became a member of Parliament, his journalistic instinct was always with him. He was always available to the media. I guess that he knew what it was like when people were not available. Whenever he was contacted by the media and asked for a comment, I am told that he would always begin with, "The Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Sir Gordon Chalk, today said . . ." If there were any pauses and if the journalist thought that Sir Gordon might need some assistance, the journalist was soon told well and truly not to put words into his mouth. He thought that he was quite capable of doing that, and he most certainly was.

He was also a great coalitionist. He not only achieved that aim, which is a challenge in itself, but also continued to pursue his Liberal Party principles. He pursued them to the full and with dignity. As I have said, coalition is certainly a working arrangement. Special kinds of people are required to ensure that that arrangement is based on trust and cooperation. Those ingredients forged one of the strongest coalitions that this State has seen. That coalition lasted for at least two decades. It comprised men such as Sir Gordon, and men of the calibre of Sir Frank Nicklin and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen. The trust and confidence that was placed in that coalition and that was engendered and fostered by those people gathered momentum after the Labor split in 1957. Queensland was then seen to surge ahead. Of course, those people had their differences. Who would not? They were not necessarily tame men--they were anything but tame. However, those differences were very healthy and effective. Not one of those people, including Sir Gordon, ever lost his sense of common purpose. Those men never lost their close political philosophies and goals to which they all adhered. At no time did those differences divert those people from their common goals. Queensland thus went through an era during which Queenslanders were the beneficiaries of the results of the work of those people. Queensland was the envy of the other States.

Sir Gordon had a taste of Opposition. In May 1947, he was elected as the member for East Toowoomba, and he served that electorate until 1950. He was in Opposition until 1957. That 10-year period in Opposition made both Sir Gordon and Sir Joh determined to succeed whenever the opportunity arose. It certainly made them determined to make the coalition a success. That kind of determination and understanding that was required then certainly prepared that coalition for Government. For any future coalition, the example of Sir Gordon Chalk will long be remembered. As has been pointed out, he was parliamentary leader from 1965 to 1976. He received a knighthood in 1972, which I believe was a fitting recognition of very sterling service. His interest in politics never waned. He attended regularly at former members' lunches and functions of a general nature. His sudden passing has taken a dynamic character out of the Queensland scene. His experience and influence will long be remembered. We in Opposition extend our condolences to Sir Gordon's family and to his very close friends.

Mr Roy Armstrong was a National Party colleague of many people in this House. As was very eloquently pointed out by the Deputy Premier, many members of Parliament start out as councillors in local authorities. Roy Armstrong was a member of the Mulgrave Shire Council for approximately five years and he became an MLA in 1960. He represented the Mulgrave electorate for a long time--approximately 20 years. He did not have a university degree. He was a farmer, a timber-cutter, a cane-grower and a haulier. However, he had a degree in experience and in common sense. He had a degree in what life is all about. He had very humble beginnings at Warwick. He eventually joined the board of directors of the Babinda sugar co-op. He was chairman of the Babinda pest control board, Chairman of the Innisfail Conservatorium of Music and a staunch member of the National Party, or the Country Party, as it was at that time. He was president of the National Party Mulgrave electorate council from 1950 to 1956 and a member of the Leichhardt divisional council from 1953 to 1956. He then became a member of the State management committee.

During his parliamentary service, he was a member of a number of delegations. He went to New Zealand in 1963, again to New Zealand and the south Pacific in 1970 and

to the UK in 1974. In common with Sir Gordon, after his retirement, he maintained very close contact with former colleagues and present parliamentarians. He continued his activities. Along with his wife, Marie, he was a familiar sight in the gallery and in the corridors of this place. His passing has taken a great colleague and friend away from this Parliament and the Queensland scene. We on this side of the House--and I am sure that I am speaking for all members--extend our condolences to his family.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong--Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.37 a.m.): On behalf of the Liberal Party, I endorse the remarks of the previous speakers in paying tribute to both Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong. Sir Gordon Chalk can be categorised only as a great parliamentarian, a great administrator, a great Liberal and a great Queenslander. His contribution to this Parliament, the Liberal Party and this State will long be remembered. Sir Gordon Chalk established an enviable record of service to this State through the political process. Although it is now popular in the community to disparage the work of politicians, Sir Gordon Chalk demonstrated that the profession of politics is one through which a great contribution can be made to that community.

Sir Gordon Chalk's record speaks for itself. He served in this Parliament for 29 years. He was a Minister for 19 years and held the portfolios of Transport and Treasurer. His term of office as Treasurer of 10 years and 8 months was a Queensland record. He was Queensland's first Liberal Premier. He served for more than 10 years under three different Country Party Premiers, namely, Sir Frank Nicklin, Mr Jack Pizzey and Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Sir Gordon's death marks the end of an era. He was the last surviving member of the Nicklin-Morris Ministry. He was sworn into office in 1957. As both Minister for Transport and Treasurer, Sir Gordon presided over an era of significant economic growth in Queensland. He was another in a long line of Liberal Treasurers who saw their principal objective as creating the circumstances in which free enterprise could generate growth and create jobs. His years in private enterprise in Toowoomba and Townsville demonstrated to him the importance of the free-enterprise system.

Having served in this Parliament for the final 10 years of Labor rule, he was acutely aware of the impact that Government could have on industry and individuals. What he learned from this lesson he brought to Government in 1957. In his 19 years as a Minister, Sir Gordon Chalk demonstrated dedication, intelligence and understanding which were to make him one of the most effective administrators that this State has seen. He believed that Ministers were elected to office to govern. He summarised his views on the role of Ministers in a speech describing ministerial responsibilities thus--

"Any Minister who allows himself to be a rubber stamp to his executive head eventually loses his own head politically. Heads of departments are there to prepare submissions based on available information but it is a Minister's duty to study the facts and finally make or reject decisions."

It was this view of his role that permitted Sir Gordon to leave an indelible mark on this State's growth throughout the 1960s and 1970s. He fought long and hard to ensure that Queensland received the best possible deal from the Federal Government. His detailed understanding of Commonwealth-State relations made him the most valuable member of the Queensland negotiating team throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s. His expertise laid the foundations for the establishment of a sound financial base for Queensland in later years. At the same time, Sir Gordon was not afraid to compromise if it was in the State's interests. As Treasurer, Sir Gordon saw his principal role as keeping the State's finances on a firm footing. It was this objective that he pursued throughout his period in office. Sir Gordon developed a range of diverse interests which he was able to pursue in Government. In 1971 he stated--

"It is not possible for a young State like Queensland to develop properly and in a balanced way unless there is cultural development in keeping with economic growth."

It is to Sir Gordon that Queenslanders owe an immense debt of gratitude for his efforts to promote this cultural development of which he spoke so highly. In 1974, Sir Gordon

received Cabinet approval for the construction of the Queensland Cultural Centre. He became the driving force behind this major project and the results of his efforts are obvious to all. At the same time, Sir Gordon pioneered direct Government grants to a range of cultural organisations. That such contributions are now regarded as an integral part of the activities of Government is a tribute to Sir Gordon Chalk's early willingness to make this contribution. Sir Gordon brought to the portfolios that he held an understanding and a genuine interest that have been rarely matched. As Minister in charge of racing he demonstrated a concern for the racing industry that will be long remembered. He realised that a strong racing industry would be of benefit to all Queenslanders through its contribution to State revenue.

Sir Gordon Chalk will also be remembered as a great Liberal leader. It was always his great regret that he fell short, by a few hundred votes in key seats, of gaining the Premiership in the 1974 election. He was unstinting in his efforts to promote the Liberal Party throughout the State. There is no doubt that his retirement in 1976 from the leadership and from the party robbed the party of a wealth of experience and knowledge. In pursuing party politics Sir Gordon was as determined as he was in carrying out his ministerial duties. I recall his public argument at the 1973 Liberal Party convention with John Herbert, who was Minister for Tourism, Sport and Welfare Services. From the stage, Sir Gordon roared at a dissenting John Herbert--

"I don't care what you think. Queensland will get a casino."

Well, Sir Gordon won the argument and, in the end, Queensland gained its first casino, which was opened in 1985.

One of Sir Gordon Chalk's greatest strengths was his ability to mix with people from all walks of life. His beginnings in the country town of Rosewood, his early career in private enterprise and his eventual election to Parliament representing the Queensland People's Party in 1947 provided a background in which relations with others were of paramount importance. At the races, in sideshow alley at the Brisbane Exhibition with Clem Jones, in country towns or touring the State's developing coal fields, Sir Gordon was clearly at home with Queenslanders from all walks of life. It was from this that he drew his political strength, his ability to understand what Queenslanders were saying and a willingness to act on what he heard.

This State is the poorer for Sir Gordon Chalk's passing, yet we are all richer for having known him and worked with him. When I was elected to the Liberal Party State executive in 1969, Sir Gordon was a member of that body. I came to know him well and to respect him. Sir Gordon and Lady Chalk became constituents of mine when I was elected as alderman for Taringa in 1985 and again when I was elected to this House in 1986. Sir Gordon's death has robbed Queensland of a remarkable man. He excelled in all his fields of endeavour, made a major contribution to this State's development and left an indelible impression on all those who met him. His death marks the passing of a great Liberal and a great Queensland--one of immense integrity. I extend my condolences and deepest sympathy, and that of my Liberal Party colleagues, to Sir Gordon's widow, Lady Chalk, his daughter, Meredith, and their families.

Roy Armstrong served as the member for Mulgrave for 20 years. They were two decades when remarkable changes took place in this State. In more recent times during his visits to this place, I came to know Roy Armstrong. His time in Parliament was marked by a strong devotion to his constituents and a genuine, longstanding interest in the future of the Queensland sugar industry. At the same time, he was a firm advocate of the interests of north Queensland and of north Queenslanders. He was never deterred from speaking out when he regarded those interests as being under attack.

Roy Armstrong held the position of Chairman of the Select Committee on Subordinate Legislation from 1975 until 1979. Following the election of so many new members of Parliament in 1974, it became a position of growing importance. The work undertaken by that committee in the years immediately after the 1974 election was particularly important in establishing an effective committee system for the Queensland Parliament. Of all his qualities, Roy Armstrong possessed a great understanding of his fellow man.

He spoke what would be a worthy epitaph in his valedictory speech to this Parliament before his retirement in 1980, when he said--

"During my years in this Parliament I have tried to maintain friendship with all parties and all members of parties . . . I have always regarded this place as a very selective club, away from the hurly-burly part of politics, where we build up some sort of affinity with members, whether they be in Opposition or Government."

Those who served with Roy Armstrong in Parliament and those who met him during his regular visits to this place since his retirement appreciate his qualities and mark his passing with regret. The Liberal Party joins with members of other parties in extending deepest condolences to Roy Armstrong's family.

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns--Treasurer) (10.47 a.m.): I wish to take a moment of the House's time to associate myself with the condolence motions for both Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong. As has been said, Roy Armstrong was a north Queenslander. He was the member for Mulgrave, which is the electorate adjoining the Cairns electorate, for the best part of 20 years. He is widely remembered as a gentleman, as a nice bloke. I must say that I have never heard anybody speak ill of him. For a person who spent 20 years in State Parliament during some pretty rough times, I think that that, in itself, is a tribute.

Sir Gordon Chalk is remembered primarily as a Treasurer. It is in this context that I wish to associate myself with the motion. During the 18 months or so that I have been Treasurer, I got to know Sir Gordon fairly well. As I think members of this House know, Sir Gordon religiously attended the bringing-down of the Budget each year. Last year, he did me the honour of attending when I delivered the first Goss Government Budget. Through discussions I have had with him and other Treasury people--particularly people who were around during Sir Gordon Chalk's time--I was able to develop some insights into his character. One of the things Sir Gordon used to say to me was that he was the longest-serving Treasurer in Australia. On a number of occasions I had seen that in print, so I decided to do a little bit of investigation to corroborate it. It is only true if Premier/Treasurers are excluded. He was indeed the longest-serving Treasurer in his capacity as Treasurer only, but a number of people were in Parliament for a longer period. I am not talking only about Queensland, but about the whole of Australia. Sir Thomas Playford was Premier and Treasurer for 26 years, four months and five days, which will probably take some beating. Queensland's Premier, Mr Goss, will be close to retirement age by the time he has been a member of this Parliament for 26 years. Let me say that I will not be Treasurer for 26 years. Sir Henry Bolte was Premier and Treasurer for 17 years, two months and 16 days. Sir David Brand was Premier and Treasurer of Western Australia for 11 years, 11 months and one day. Eric Reece from Tasmania had two terms--one for 10 years and 14 days, and a second one for two years, 10 months and 12 days, which puts him ahead of Sir Gordon Chalk.

Sir Gordon Chalk was Treasurer for 10 years seven months and 20 days from 23 December 1965 to 13 August 1976. He was certainly the longest-serving Treasurer in Queensland and he served longer than any Federal Treasurer. Sir Arthur Fadden was Treasurer for eight years, 11 months and 20 days. The longest-serving Labor Treasurer was Joseph Chifley, who served for eight years, two months and 12 days. I might say that the present Treasurer, Paul Keating, will break that record on Friday of this week. I place it on the record that Sir Gordon Chalk was indeed a long-serving Treasurer, and the longest-serving Treasurer in Queensland's history. He was also the longest-serving Treasurer if Premier/Treasurers are excluded.

On the death of Sir Gordon Chalk on 27 April Toowoomba's *Chronicle* stated--

"He gained a reputation as an astute and competent Treasurer, while his no-nonsense, down-to-earth style made him well-known and widely admired.

He was intensely pro-Queensland, long before it became fashionable to be so."

I think that probably sums up the way in which Sir Gordon Chalk has been remembered and, I think, would like to be remembered. He certainly was a very hard worker and

was recognised as such. As the Deputy Premier said, he had friends right across the political spectrum. He would fight his battles as fiercely as possible, but at the end of the day was prepared to extend the hand of friendship. One of the most notable friendships was with Clem Jones, who was Labor Lord Mayor of Brisbane for a very long time. They were close friends. If one visits the Gabba, one sees that they both have a grandstand named after them. They both shared interest in sport, especially cricket at the Gabba, racing and a whole range of other areas. It was said to me that, when Clem Jones nominated for the seat of Yeronga against one of Sir Gordon's mates, Norm Lee--he used to call him "Normal" Lee, which nickname, I understand, has been added to since, but I do not know by whom----

Mr Hamill: Kev Hooper.

Mr De LACY: I accept that it was added to by Kevin Hooper. However, Sir Gordon found that he had to get out on the stump against his old mate Clem Jones, and he did so. He had that knock-them-down, tear-them-out sort of approach, but at the end of the day he could still share a drink with Clem Jones. Sir Gordon had a no-nonsense style of talking, about which many people still speak. Some Treasury officers have told me that he had the loudest voice in the world and that one could hear him more easily without the intercom than through the intercom. That related to his no-nonsense way of dealing with people. It was said to me that Sir Gordon would run a mile to have a fight and that he used to say to one well-known Treasury officer, "You fill the tin and I'll tip it." I understand that the tin was not always tipped on Labor people. He used to attend the Premiers Conference with Joh. I understand that that was the bane of Joh's life, because Sir Gordon would provide him with no information and no briefing at all, leaving Joh at the conference knowing nothing. After one particular Premiers Conference, Joh retired to bed and Sir Gordon, as was his way, invited all the Treasury officers down to the local bar. They had a good old merry night out. On the way back to their rooms, when Sir Gordon walked down the aisle of the motel, he noted the breakfast order hanging outside Joh's room. He said, "Let's have a look and see what the old bugger is having for breakfast." When he saw that breakfast was ordered for 7.30 a.m., he said, "I thought he got out of bed early." He crossed that time out and put "5.30 a.m." and added "two bottles of champagne". When Joh woke up in the morning and found the funny breakfast orders, I guess that he never knew where they came from.

The other comment I make about Sir Gordon Chalk relates to Queensland Treasury itself. I believe that Queensland Treasury has a nationwide reputation for excellence. In my view, it is without peer as a public service department in Queensland and throughout Australia. The fact that Queensland is not suffering many of the financial problems that are occurring in other States is testimony to that view. When I went to Treasury, one of the things that struck me about it was the culture of hard work which prevails. It may come as a surprise to some members of this House that I do not seek to claim all the credit for the way in which Treasury performs. I believe that those seeds were sown, and had to be sown, some time ago. Sir Gordon Chalk could justifiably take a great deal of that credit. As I said, he was a very hard worker, he set high standards, he selected good people, and he gave the department its head to let it do the things that he knew it could do. He laid the foundation for Treasury as we know it today. As the serving Treasurer, I acknowledge that contribution.

As the Premier said, Sir Gordon Chalk had a long and distinguished career. He is one of those people to whom that cliché applies absolutely. I extend my condolences to the families of Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong. Particularly in relation to Roy Armstrong, as he was a far-north Queensland, I place on record the thanks and the sympathies of all the people of Cairns and far-north Queensland.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Nicklin) (10.57 a.m.): I join this debate to convey my condolences to the families and friends of Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong. Some years ago, I had the privilege to serve with both those former members. I consider that enough has been said by other speakers about their past achievements. They were both

committed, dedicated members of State Parliament. As the member for Lytton said, we are losing something in this Parliament and it behoves all of us to reflect on that and where we are going in the future. The State of Queensland is poorer for the passing of Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong.

Several weeks before his passing, I rang Roy Armstrong and said to him, "It must be tough, old fellow, knowing that you have drawn the short straw." He said, "I have had a good life, I have made my contribution to Queensland and I am not afraid to die." I said to Roy, "Working on the assumption that a compliment while you are alive is better than a hearse full of bouquets when you are dead and gone, I compliment you on your contribution to Queensland and the friendship and assistance that you have extended to so many people." I am now glad that I had that conversation with Roy, because he was a wonderful man and he will be missed in so many ways.

I extend my condolences to the families of both those distinguished former parliamentarians. I conclude by citing an appropriate quote I once heard, "To live on in the hearts of those we love is not to die."

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay--Minister for Primary Industries) (10.58 a.m.): As one who perhaps served longest in this House with both the members whom we are remembering today, I will make some brief comments on the motion. I was also in the fortunate position that, prior to entering Parliament, I knew both former members personally through various associations. One of my reasons for joining the debate on the motion is to indicate to all other members of this House that each of these former members had a couple of great and very rare qualities which ought to be shared and recognised by all parliamentarians.

Roy Armstrong was a great representative of his constituents. He would listen to his constituents' problems and fight for them on the floor of the Parliament, outside the Parliament, through departments and ministerial officers and anywhere else. If he thought somebody deserved a fair go, he would follow it right through. Over the years in which I served with him in this House, I enjoyed our long talks about the sugar industry. We both had similar ideas about that major agricultural industry in Queensland. Roy was never afraid to put forward a point of view, which is very important. Earlier, the Deputy Premier referred to the Lonergan incident, which cost Roy any chance that he ever had of becoming a Minister under the then Premier of this State. He suffered because on that occasion he was prepared to accept the challenge. I join other members in offering condolences to his family.

I knew Gordon Chalk very well before I entered Parliament. In fact, through my associations with him in business, local authority work and the harbour boards, as they were then called, I knew him better than I knew Roy. Gordon was a very tough man but a very fair man. If one was prepared to put a proper point of view to him in a proper way, he would accept the argument and the challenge and follow it through. In fact, when I first entered Parliament I often made the comment--and I still stand by it--that Sir Gordon Chalk taught me more about being a member of Parliament than did members of my own party. As I have said, he was a very fair man. I can remember his first Budget debate. I spoke on the sugar industry and, in particular, the manufacture of sweets and all the ingredients that go into them. By way of interjection, Gordon said, "Yes, put a bit of rum in them, too." I immediately retorted, "Certainly, for suckers like you." I lived to regret that comment because in his reply Gordon really did me over. As we walked out of the Chamber, Gordon came over to me, put his arm around me, and said, "Come on, young Casey, I'll buy you a drink." That was what Gordon Chalk was like. Other honourable members have commented on that style that he had.

I heard Gordon Chalk say two very important things in this Chamber, which are worth while repeating for the benefit of all honourable members, particularly those who have entered this Parliament recently when there has been a considerable amount of change. One of his comments was, "No Government lives forever." That is so true. He used to reiterate that. The Deputy Premier referred to Gordon's ginger group. I heard him warn the ginger group in this Chamber that no Government will live forever and

that Governments do change. Another comment that I heard him make on a couple of occasions was, "All the brains aren't on the one side of the House." That is also true. There ought to be respect by members on both sides of the House for each other's independence, ability and point of view.

Gordon had a great sense of humour. One particular member had a propensity for getting out various volumes of *Hansard* and quoting what someone had said in previous years in this Chamber. He would have a stack of volumes with little notations on different pages from which he wanted to quote. If Gordon got back from lunch early, he would take delight in shuffling the stack and even changing the pages where the member had made notations. Honourable members can imagine the confusion that caused as the member speaking wanted to refer to particular passages of *Hansard*.

I join in passing on to Ellen and Gordon's family the sincere sympathy of Laurie, my wife, and me.

Dr WATSON (Moggill--Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.03 a.m.): I would also like to be associated with the condolence motion moved by the Premier for Roy Armstrong and Sir Gordon Chalk. As I knew only Sir Gordon Chalk, I will confine my brief remarks to that gentleman. As other honourable members have said, Sir Gordon Chalk was educated at Rosewood State School, Lockyer State High School and Ipswich Technical College. Sir Gordon studied accountancy and commercial law and then practised as a taxation agent for quite a number of years. He then moved into private industry and worked with the major Queensland company Toowoomba Foundry Pty Ltd until he was elected to State Parliament. Sir Gordon thus had a strong commercial training. Like his predecessor as Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Sir Thomas Hiley, Sir Gordon was steeped in the profession of accounting. It is little wonder then that the Treasurer was able to refer earlier to the strong Treasury Department in this State because it was Sir Gordon, along with Sir Thomas Hiley, who established the foundations for Queensland's strong financial performance.

Sir Gordon's capacities and skills can be attested to by many people. He had prodigious energy and an extremely wide knowledge of the processes of government, which I think is something that many people today could probably learn from. He had a great capacity to get things done. He was consulted on a wide range of matters not only because he was the Treasurer but also because he was universally recognised as a person of good judgment, of authority and of standing in the Government of this State. I can recall a public tribute that was paid to Sir Gordon in September 1976 by Sir Zelman Cowan, who summarised what Sir Gordon brought to the task of Government, namely, determination, drive and inexhaustible energy, practicality and a very strong pragmatism. As Treasurer, Sir Gordon was sympathetic to the cause of the University of Queensland. Although he did not attend university, Sir Gordon had a clear and imaginative understanding of the role of the university in the community. Because of that support, which I am told was not always given without analysis and critical comment, in April 1974 the university awarded Sir Gordon the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

Sir Gordon Chalk was a man who commanded great respect in the community, in this Parliament--as has been attested to by members who served with him--the Government of Queensland and, I think, the nation. He will be missed by all who knew him. I join with other honourable members in extending to Lady Chalk and Sir Gordon's family my deepest sympathy.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich--Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (11.07 a.m.): I, too, would like to join with other honourable members in expressing my sincere sympathy to the families of the late Roy Armstrong and the late Sir Gordon Chalk. Because he retired in 1980, I did not know Roy Armstrong as a member of this Parliament. However, in the years that I have been a member of Parliament, Roy was often seen in this Chamber taking a keen interest in procedures and matters before the Parliament.

I knew Sir Gordon Chalk perhaps a little better than I knew Roy. As has been mentioned by other honourable members, Sir Gordon came from Rosewood. He always

maintained a keen interest not only in the area of his own electorate--the Lockyer and, of course, parts of Toowoomba--but also in the Ipswich area. Indeed, I think it is fair to say that Sir Gordon played a crucial role in encouraging my predecessor as the member for Ipswich, Sir Llewellyn Edwards, to stand for that seat in 1972. This morning I want to pay tribute to the work done by Sir Gordon not only as a Treasurer--the Treasurer has already done that--but also as a Transport Minister in this State. From 1957 until 1965, Sir Gordon was Minister for Transport and, as such, played a critical role in the development of the infrastructure of this State. It was his work which was largely instrumental in the development of Queensland's major export industry, the coal industry. It was Sir Gordon who shepherded the rehabilitation of the Mount Isa to Townsville railway in the early 1960s when he engaged the New York consultants, Ford, Bacon and Davis, to the project, and then finally goaded the Commonwealth into funding that important redevelopment. It was the Thiess Peabody Mitsui mine at Moura and the subsequent rail development there which facilitated the growth of the coal mining industry. The principles that were applied there were applied later to other mines such as the Utah mine, the development of Hay Point, the Goonyella system and the Peak Downs mine; they were a very worthy contribution indeed to this State's ongoing economic welfare.

The Department of Transport still has staff who worked on those projects and who well remember Sir Gordon's keen interest in them. Other speakers have made mention of his political astuteness, indeed his very populist manner of dealing with the public. A nice little story, which has been recalled to me, concerns the discussions that went on when Sir Gordon was Minister for Transport regarding the then Gold Coast railway, the Southport railway line. Whilst I wish that Queensland still had that corridor, in fact considerable comment came from Southport at the prospect that that line may close. Apparently, a group of fairly articulate, indeed vociferous, advocates from Southport businesses travelled to Brisbane to put their case very forcefully to Sir Gordon. After he listened to their arguments and took note of what they said, he asked them, "And how did you travel up to Brisbane today?" Of course, none of them had travelled by rail. That was the clincher for the argument and the Southport rail line is no longer with us.

Sir Gordon was a wily, political opponent and also a very good advocate. It was mentioned by earlier speakers that he had a good, close working relationship with the then Labor Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Clem Jones. They indeed were the best of friends. Sir Gordon, in his role as Treasurer, played an important role in developing Brisbane's passenger transport infrastructure. It is ironic that, when he first became Transport Minister, one of the projects that he had to proceed with was the electrification of the suburban rail system, a project which had been introduced by the former Labor Government, particularly the work of the former Minister, Jack Duggan. Unfortunately for south-east Queensland, I guess his Country Party coalition mates won the day on that issue and electrification was discontinued. But dieselisation took place in the railways. It was not until 1973-74 that Sir Gordon, as Treasurer, was instrumental in setting in place some of the finance which ultimately led to the realisation of the suburban electrification program. His contribution will be well remembered in that regard. He also played an integral role with the Brisbane City Council in assisting and providing finance for new council buses, such was his commitment to passenger transport in that growing urban area.

In 1971, Sir Gordon was knighted. In 1974, he was awarded an honorary Doctorate of Laws in recognition of the long and meritorious public service to the State. I place on record the sincere sympathy of myself and my family at his sad loss.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (11.12 a.m.): I join other members of this House in this motion of condolence for Roy Armstrong and Sir Gordon Chalk. I am not going to speak at length on their achievements because, from the Premier down, other members have outlined those achievements. I arrived in this place after Sir Gordon had retired. Therefore, I did not know him very well. However, I knew Roy Armstrong very well.

He was born in my electorate; he was approximately seven years older than I. He was well known as a very skilful player in the pipe band, as well as a judge of pipers and Scottish dancing. The Armstrong family, which came from Scotland, had endowed Roy with a love of Scottish music and other recreation for which the Scots in my district were famous.

Roy was a personal friend of mine. I enjoyed his company and his counsel when I came to this place as a politician. On my arrival he was already a member of this House and he welcomed me. A friendship that commenced prior to the war was renewed when I entered this House. I will not say any more. I extend my sympathies to Marie and to Roy's family. I enjoyed every moment of the company that I have had with them. I hope they will accept the fact that, in his later years, Roy was a very sick man and that it was better that he go on to his reward.

Hon. A. G. EATON (Mourilyan--Minister for Land Management) (11.13 a.m.): I join with other honourable members in this House in expressing my sympathy and condolence to the families of Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong. It was not until 1972 that I paid my first visit to this House--as a visitor. I was told that, if one was interested in politics, one should be in the House that night to witness the introduction of a very important Bill. It was an amendment to the City of Brisbane Act, which altered the method of electing the Lord Mayor. It was a very heated and long debate that night, and Sir Gordon Chalk certainly came through. I remember Jack Houston and other Labor members putting forward some very strong arguments during that debate. Sir Gordon was left on his own to handle all the flack and criticism, and he did so very ably. When I left this House that night, I had no doubt in my mind about Sir Gordon Chalk's ability. Those abilities were apparent in other aspects of his portfolio, such as the administration of the State as Treasurer.

For 12 years, I was a constituent of Roy Armstrong, as well as an opponent during the 1977 election, which he won. On being selected as a candidate to oppose Roy, I travelled to Babinda to see him. Unfortunately, he was in hospital. When he left hospital, I advised him that I was the candidate, a fact that by then he already knew. I said, "Well, Roy, it is going to be a hard job, but I am in it to win it. I am going to pull out all stops, but it will be a clean fight." He said, "Well, don't think that I'll be sitting down twiddling my thumbs, either."

Over the years, both as a constituent and a resident of the adjoining electorate, I was involved in many campaigns supporting the Labor Party's candidate against Roy Armstrong. I take my hat off to him because he always fought a clean campaign. He was a man of the people. He was never unseated. The fact that he remained a member until his voluntary retirement proves his ability. He had an affinity with the land and with the people whom he was elected to represent. I certainly respect that. I express my sympathy to his family.

Roy was a community man through and through. He was a patron and sponsor of many community organisations. The member for Warwick mentioned that he was well known as a bagpipe-player. He was a great supporter of the north Queensland pipe band, which at one time was Queensland's champion pipe band. Many of its members were individual State champions. Roy was always very proud of that. To show that he could play, he loved nothing better than to join in playing the pipes at social functions. Roy's other interest was as Chairman of the Innisfail Conservatorium of Music. When he found that his political workload was too heavy, he stepped down from the chairmanship and became the conservatorium's patron. He put a lot of time into that job. He helped bring great artists and operas to north Queensland. The Innisfail Conservatorium of Music is the only conservatorium in Queensland which is outside Brisbane. Roy was one of the people who were instrumental in its establishment. It is something of which the Innisfail community is very proud.

I express my sympathy and condolences to the Lady Chalk and her family and to Roy Armstrong's wife, Marie, and his son, Graham, and assure them that if there is anything we can do, we will be only too pleased to help.

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (11.17 a.m.): Roy Armstrong was a very rare commodity in this place. He did everything in an attempt to stay out of this place. On three separate occasions, he was approached to run for Parliament and on each occasion he almost certainly would have been endorsed for and almost certainly would have won what was then a strong Country Party seat. On all occasions, he refused. He experienced an extraordinary set of circumstances when he was the electoral council chairman. Two deaths occurred in quick succession in the electorate. One member died and, a short time after that, the member who took his place also died. Roy Armstrong could not convince any of the other four or five people whom he felt should have become member for the area to nominate so, with the time-frame that existed, he was left no alternative than to run for the seat himself. Although a person who never pushed his own barrow and who was never forceful or ambitious, he made a very significant contribution in this place. Very few people realised the very great influence that Roy had in this House, which indicates clearly that, at the end of the day, many of the more prominent people who are thought to make the decisions in this place simply do not make them.

Roy Armstrong was instrumental in the election of Bjelke-Petersen as Premier. His was the critical vote that swung the support of north Queenslanders. He was always very friendly with and very well liked by all of his north Queensland colleagues in the then Country Party. He was very instrumental in throwing the full weight of their support behind Bjelke-Petersen and securing his election as Premier of this State. If it were whittled down to a single person, the person who put Bjelke-Petersen there in the first place was, probably more than any other, Roy Armstrong. When I came into this place, Roy Armstrong had a very great influence upon me. Many of the decisions that I made in the party room were guided by him. Being the youngest member of my own political party in this House for many, many years, I felt I had to rely upon senior people, such as Roy Armstrong, whom I liked and respected.

Many honourable members have mentioned Roy Armstrong's very strong humanitarian principles. I think he was one of the most bipartisan members of this Parliament. He was always terribly friendly with ALP members. Although at odd times there was some pressure from the top, he completely ignored it and continued his friendship with and humanity towards people on the other side of the House. That was coupled with a very strong commonsense approach at all times. I can remember him stating that Mike Ahern should be in the Ministry. I think that he played an integral part in Mike Ahern's appointment to the Ministry. I do not think that, without being in the Ministry, Mike could ever have become Premier of this State. However, Roy said that whilst his support might have been very critical in having Mike Ahern appointed to the Ministry and whilst he thought that he most certainly should have been appointed to the Ministry, he said also, "But I would never support him for leadership because he is a man"--and I remember these words well--"who never knew what it was like to have to battle for a quid out there in the real world." He used that phrase on a number of occasions.

Roy Armstrong also took a very strong stand on a number of other matters. He took the then Premier, Bjelke-Petersen, head on in running Mike Ahern for the deputy leadership. That forced Bjelke-Petersen to put Ahern into the Ministry. It was the only way in which he could stop Mr Ahern from becoming deputy leader. So, once again, Roy Armstrong played a very crucial role in the mechanics that operated inside the National Party and which resulted in the sort of leadership that we enjoyed or did not enjoy in years past.

This condolence motion deals also with Sir Gordon Chalk, who was a Treasurer of this State. In that regard, it is relevant that I tell the House of the very acrimonious fight that occurred between north Queensland and the then Treasurer over the introduction of the wine and spirit merchants' licence. The decision that was reached left a lingering discontent between members who represented north Queensland and the then Treasurer. In fact, I am certain that it had a lot to do with his eventual resignation. Once again, one of the people fanning the fire was Roy Armstrong. When Roy Armstrong decided to take a stand, no-one could do much about it. Once the stand was made, no-one could change his opinion one way or the other. The only time I saw him modify his stance

somewhat was, strangely enough, in this place during the debate on the abortion issue, about which he had very strong convictions. He felt that the law was being watered down a little bit. I was one of the people who had to argue with Roy and point out that the Government did not have the numbers to pass the legislation to stop what we saw were the problems with abortion continuing in this State. I explained that we had to water down the legislation a little to make it more palatable and to get the numbers to pass the Bill through the House. I assure honourable members that that was an enormously difficult task, because Roy had a very great belief that abortion was one of the great evils in society and that it had to be stamped out.

One matter of great importance to north Queensland was the Speakership of the Parliament. That position might be regarded as being above the field of politics. Many people believed that north Queensland had been ignored for a long time and that it had to be looked after. Roy and Val Bird led the charge that resulted in my predecessor, Bill Lonergan, becoming Speaker of the House. The people of north Queensland made the statement that they did not intend to be ignored and treated like dirt in the Parliament. That statement led to Val Bird and Ron Camm exerting immense power and influence in the House. The courage to take that stand really came from Roy Armstrong. Because of the very courageous stand that he took against his own party and his parliamentary colleagues with respect to the appointment of Bill Lonergan, Roy had to take most of the brickbats, criticism and opprobrium of his colleagues.

Although Roy Armstrong never pushed his own barrow or enjoyed the fruits of being on the front bench in this place, he influenced the Parliament in a very dramatic way. At all times throughout those years, Parliament bore the stamp and influence of Roy Armstrong. The people who appear to be the stars in this place are not always those who make the decisions and make this place work. Roy Armstrong was certainly one of the people who made it work. North Queensland and Queensland as a whole are far richer and better off for his having been a member of Parliament in this State.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (11.25 a.m.): I would also like to be associated with the condolence motion that was moved by the Premier. As I did not personally know Sir Gordon Chalk, I shall confine my remarks to Roy Armstrong. He was born on 14 January 1914 at Warwick on the Darling Downs. Because he came from a farming family, there is no doubt that he was destined to work on the land. Initially, he did that as a mixed farmer. He then became a timber-cutter and, later, a cane-farmer at Bartle Frere in the Babinda district, which is in the Mulgrave electorate.

Roy Armstrong was 47 years old when he was elected to represent the seat of Mulgrave in the Parliament. As the Premier said, Roy came to this place in tragic and somewhat unusual circumstances. The election on 23 July 1960 was brought about by the sudden death of not one, but two previous members. The sitting Country Party member for Mulgrave, Robert Watson, had died in March 1959. At the subsequent by-election on 6 June 1959, Carlisle Wordsworth was successful in winning the seat that had become fertile ground for the conservative side of politics after the ALP split of 1957. Wordsworth served out the remainder of Robert Watson's unfinished term and nominated as the Country Party candidate for the general election that was set down for 28 May 1960. However, three weeks before the poll, Carl Wordsworth also passed away, and it was announced that a special election for the seat of Mulgrave would be held on 23 July 1960. That special election saw Roy Armstrong, who was a popular local cane-farmer of 25 years' standing, installed as the new member for Mulgrave. There is no doubt in my mind that Roy Armstrong served the people of Queensland, including the electors of Mulgrave, faithfully for 20 years until his retirement prior to the November 1980 election, which saw my immediate predecessor in this place, Max Menzel, win the seat for the National Party.

As befitted a man with farming in his blood, Roy Armstrong concerned himself mainly with rural matters, particularly cane-growing and dairying. Those two great primary industries were--and still are--dominant in the electorate of Mulgrave. On many occasions in this House, Roy Armstrong extolled the importance of the sugar

industry to the economy of north Queensland. He argued rightly that many small towns owed their very existence to the sugar industry, and was quite outspoken in his call for continued Government support. As I said, Roy Armstrong also championed the cause of the northern dairy industry. He was particularly supportive of the marginal dairy-farmers reconstruction scheme agreement with the Commonwealth Government in 1970. Roy drew great pride from the fact that the dairy industry on the Atherton Tableland--part of his electorate--had one of the lowest dairy farm failures in the nation at that time.

Prior to his election to this Parliament, Roy Armstrong was a councillor on the Mulgrave Shire Council. He served on the council from 1956 to 1961. He relinquished that role when his parliamentary duties became so heavy that he felt he could not do justice to both roles. He was the inaugural chairman of the Babinda Cane Pest and Disease Board when it commenced operation in 1953. He also served as a director of the Babinda Co-operative Sugar Mill from 1951 to 1953, and then again when it required his services from 1956 to 1958.

In 1960, Roy Armstrong took part in an industry deputation to the then State Government, arguing for the upgrading of Mourilyan harbour to a bulk-handling facility for sugar. I might add that that upgrading was opposed by many people. However, Roy's skills as a negotiator were evident even at that time when, prior to the general election, the Country Party Government announced the much-sought upgrading to those harbour facilities, which have proved to be a great boon to north Queensland.

Throughout his parliamentary career, Roy continually lobbied Cabinet Ministers for funds for the reconstruction of the Palmerston Highway, which provides the virtual back door to the Atherton Tableland, linking Innisfail to Millaa Millaa. Roy was critical of his own Government's dedication to mere maintenance. On many occasions he pointed out the important role that an enhanced highway would play in the economic growth of that region. No doubt, Roy took much pride in the final chapter of the Palmerston Highway saga with the official opening on 4 May 1990 of a truly magnificent piece of engineering.

Whereas Roy Armstrong represented his electorate and the far north quite capably, he was never parochial. He was genuinely concerned with the development of the State as a whole. Besides his deep commitment to the Country Party and, later, the National Party, he was also keenly interested in music and involved himself in the activities of the Innisfail Conservatorium. His interests included lawn bowls and band music. Many members have mentioned Roy's great love for that particular form of music.

On his retirement, Roy moved from Babinda to Brisbane and was a frequent visitor to the House to observe proceedings. On occasions, I had the opportunity to talk with Roy and to bring him up to date with the happenings in his former electorate. Upon his death, I took time out to once again read his maiden speech and his valedictory speech to the Parliament. I must say that one could not help being impressed by the sincerity of the man and his obvious genuine love for the area that he served. Evidence of the special relationship that he built with the community is clear. During his 20 years as member, he gained respect right across the political spectrum. In turn, the electorate saw him hold the seat of Mulgrave with a series of convincing wins. Roy Armstrong set high standards of conduct for himself and was widely recognised as carrying out his responsibilities in a manner which I believe gave real meaning to the title "gentleman".

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (11.31 a.m.): I join with other speakers before me in expressing my condolences and sympathy to the families of Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong. In particular, I pay tribute to Sir Gordon Chalk and his achievements. I did not have the honour of serving with Sir Gordon in this place. However, since his retirement from Parliament I have had many opportunities to work with and benefit from the wisdom of Sir Gordon Chalk. We have heard about his distinguished career and the way in which he progressed from Rosewood to the Treasury. The example of Sir Gordon shows that public life is open to all and that, with the qualities that he displayed, even the highest office is possible for those without privilege and wealth. The

Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party quoted the tribute that Sir Zelman Cowan paid to Sir Gordon, when he described him as a man of determination, drive, inexhaustible energy, practicality and strong pragmatism, all of which contributed to the achievements that others have described. It is testimony to the type of man that he was that Sir Gordon concluded one of his earliest political speeches by announcing that he was proud to have been born of humble parents and to be classed as a worker.

I should like also to talk about the debt that Sir Gordon is owed by Queenslanders for his contribution to the development of this State. During his record term as State Treasurer, he oversaw public finances during the period when Queensland blossomed from the "cinderella" State to the State of opportunity. It is often forgotten that, in the 1940s and the 1950s, Queensland was regarded as a backwater with a static population and a tiny economic base. In the postwar immigration boom, Queensland was unable to attract proportionately as many migrants as the major southern States did. Few saw the potential here for the extraordinary growth that was to occur.

During his maiden speech in 1947--when he was, at 33, the youngest member in the House--Sir Gordon expressed his frustration at the unrealised potential of the State. He spoke of an economy stifled by the continuation of wartime rationing and citizens straining under the rigid controls that were maintained for years after the end of hostilities. It is forgotten now that State and Federal Governments at that time sought to impose in Queensland the same dead hand of the command economy that has led Eastern Europe to decay and dislocation. Displaying the robust common sense that characterised his political rhetoric, Sir Gordon said that he was--

". . . pleased to hear"--

a colleague--

"advocate the elimination of the rigid controls that now exist, because I think that the controls are the reason for most of our production troubles."

He continued--

"As soon as production rises (because the incentive to produce goods will be revived by the abolition of price controls), we shall have set up quality and price as purchasing factors instead of availability as we have it today; we shall eliminate black marketing."

When different philosophies were put into practice under the stewardship of Sir Gordon Chalk and when the talents and energies of the people of Queensland were liberated, Queensland's development and population growth outstripped that of nearly every other State. The "cinderella" State became the promised land, attracting not only overseas but also interstate migration.

However, Sir Gordon was never a blinkered technocrat with narrow interests only in the economics sphere. He showed a real interest in and concern with the problems of everyday people. In his maiden speech, he discussed the importance of affordable housing and advocated policies for allowing the private construction industry to meet the tremendous backlog of housing requirements. He also noted the poor quality of much of the Housing Commission stock. He said that he had seen in certain State houses gaps in the walls through which the wild westerly winds would whiz and whistle. His proclaimed ambition was to see "that every worker in my electorate, and in fact in every electorate, has an opportunity to improve his position in life". The economic policies that he adopted during his term as Treasurer and the climate that was created did much to see that ambition become a reality. However, as other speakers have said, Sir Gordon Chalk was able to allow the cultural life of Queenslanders to improve immeasurably.

If one were to seek his monument, one should look across the river to the splendid Queensland Cultural Centre. In November 1974, Sir Gordon put to Cabinet the proposal that led to that development, and, despite some opposition, it was persisted with. As art gallery trustee, Sir Leon Trout, noted--

"Sir Gordon Chalk is responsible for Queensland having a worthy cultural centre."

Lest it be thought that his interest was confined to providing facilities simply in the Brisbane area and in the south-east corner, it is worth while pointing out that Sir Gordon provided a subsidy for the construction of similar facilities in other cities. Queensland now boasts a network of very impressive complexes right across the State. Sir Gordon was a Treasurer and a member of this place for the whole of the State.

As has been stated by previous speakers, Sir Gordon took an interest in many issues. Those involved in the racing industry throughout Queensland have reason to be grateful for the interest that he took in the development of infrastructure and for the initiatives such as the computerisation of the TAB. Indeed, in one of his interviews, he reminisced about his time as a race-caller at the Cluden racetrack near Townsville. Sir Gordon took an abiding interest in many other matters cultural and provided support to foster the development of groups such as the Twelfth Night and La Boite Theatres, the Queensland Ballet, youth orchestras and the like. Among his many other interests, Sir Gordon was closely associated with the English Speaking Union, whose magnificent headquarters, Palma Rosa, is situated in my electorate.

Mr Speaker, I join with others in this place in expressing my condolence and sympathy to the families of Sir Gordon Chalk and Roy Armstrong and, in particular, my appreciation of the tremendous contribution that Sir Gordon made to the well-being of this great State.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (11.37 a.m.): I join in the condolence motion for the two members, Roy Armstrong and Gordon Chalk. It was refreshing to hear the Deputy Premier, Tom Burns, and Ed Casey recall the things for which Roy was responsible in this House, his work behind the scenes and his long association with this House. Those of us who knew him well are aware that he had a significant influence on his party and was often influential in achieving successes that were not sheeted home to him. However, the success that was sheeted home to him was the famous vote for the Speaker, when Bill Lonergan was elected. As Tom said, perhaps later on, when in Opposition, we lived to regret that election.

Gordon Chalk was a man for all seasons. He thrived on debate in this Chamber. He performed better than most of the members I have seen in my time. He handled his political situation dextrously. As has been pointed out, he was always in a difficult position. He guarded jealously his dominance of the Treasury. He told his colleagues and members of the Opposition as little as possible about how things worked. However, he did preside over a period of rapid growth in Queensland. If a member gained any information about Gordon Chalk and tried to score a point off him, he either knew where the information had come from or was able to get back at that member very subtly. On one occasion, after a piece of information had come from Canberra, I dropped it on him in the Chamber and he replied, "I suppose that the honourable member gleaned that information from his Safari-suited friend from the sand hills of South Australia." That happened to be true.

As I said, he dominated the Treasury. He opened up Queensland's coalfields with the famous 5c a tonne royalty. I always disagreed with that rapid development at the expense of tertiary infrastructure. Right up to his date of retirement, he used to debate that with me on a personal basis.

Tom Burns and Ed Casey have recalled some of their memories of Gordon Chalk. He always remembered that he was in Government and had been in Opposition. If he did belt or bucket a member, he would usually make it up to that member outside the Chamber. So he is certainly one of the members we remember. One bait that he did not rise to was usually offered by Brian Davis. We all wondered how Gordon Chalk kept his hair so dark in colour. He would not rise to that bait.

His friendship with Clem Jones has been mentioned. There were also some monumental blues about Clem spending far too much money on Brisbane and Gordon did not like Clem being in the limelight so much. They are the sorts of things we

remember about Gordon Chalk. He was a great parliamentarian. He loved this place. He took his responsibilities seriously. He was able to live within the confines of the party system in this Parliament. He will certainly be well remembered by all Queenslanders. I extend the condolences of my wife, Lois, and myself to the families of the two members with whom I served.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (11.42 p.m.): I support this motion of condolence. In common with the member for Mulgrave, I will limit my comments to Roy Armstrong. He was a fine north Queensland and was a very good advocate for north Queensland. He was a member of Parliament for many years. He was my father's electorate neighbour and, for that reason, they were very close friends and good colleagues.

Roy Armstrong came into this place in the hard old days when members were away from home for sometimes four or six weeks at a time. They stayed in either the old Lodge or the Bellevue. My father and Roy shared a room with two of their colleagues, so they developed a great camaraderie. It was a time when members knew each other very well and understood each other's needs and worries. In addition to sharing bedroom accommodation, they shared desks because there was simply not enough office accommodation in those days. They had no secretarial help and their access to postage and telephones was limited. They were more parliamentarian than we are today.

The friendship between the Armstrong family and my family became very important to us all. So important was it that Roy Armstrong did our family the very great honour of being the chairman at my sister's wedding and at my wedding. We remember him as a fine north Queensland. He served north Queensland and his electorate well. He was indeed a very great advocate. I take this opportunity to pass on to Roy's family the condolences of my family, particularly my father. I trust that this record sits well with them and that they understand that Roy was held in very high esteem by the people of north Queensland and the members of this Parliament, particularly those who served with him.

Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

By-election Results

Mr COOPER (Roma--Leader of the Opposition) (11.44 a.m.): The fabled Goss Government has had a mid-term judgment of it by the electors, solely on merit. In Nundah, the swing against it was 14 per cent. In Toowoomba South, it was almost 6 per cent. If these swings were repeated Statewide, this Government would be out of office. That is an amazing turnaround in less than 18 months. We have been given a variety of excuses for this dismal performance. They include blaming Bob Hawke, blaming Phil Heath and blaming Paul Keating. They are lame excuses. All that is needed is a mirror. The results are signs of a Government that thought it was omnipresent, but which has come off the rails within 18 months of its election.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is too much conversation taking place in the Chamber. Members can go outside and speak, if they want to.

Mr COOPER: The reasons are quite simple. The Premier and a couple of non-elected party people seized control of the Government from day one. So much for parliamentary democracy! At will, the troika scraps party policy, tears it up and throws it away. It does it with impunity. Members on the opposite side of the House know that, but all they do is simply sit back and watch. However, resentment is growing because Ministers find that they cannot get past this troika, which contains just one elected member. When they manage to sneak something past, they know the chances are that they will be pulled up short before they get too far. The Racing Minister knows exactly what I am talking about because he had the rug pulled from under his saddle very smartly. Similarly, the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander

Affairs knows what it is like to have her business hijacked. The Minister for Industrial Relations also knows what I am talking about because he plays second fiddle to a troika adviser. Resentment over this internal putsch is also growing within the party. The rank and file are seeing policy become expediency.

Matters are not much better at party headquarters. If the Premier was in the Chamber, I could ask him. The other night, he did not even get an invitation to Terry Hampson's farewell party.

Mr Welford: Ha, ha! You're a classic.

Mr COOPER: Did the member for Stafford get one? No. It is funny, especially considering the way the Premier treated Terry Hampson. Did the Minister for Police and Emergency Services get an invitation?

Mr Mackenroth: Yes.

Mr COOPER: That is good. A few did, and a few did not. Mr Wayne Swan did not get one, and that is two out of three from the troika. What a mess it is making! Inside 18 months, Queensland has gone from being a dynamic and progressive State in this nation to a State of stagnation. The Premier has gone from being Labor's wunderkind to its new Dr Doolittle.

References have been made to so-called reforms, and they are coming out of our ears. However, there is nothing on the table. What is happening in this Government? One in three of our kids cannot get a job. One in 10 adult Queenslanders cannot get a job. Bankruptcies are at a record high, and industry says that that is going to get worse. The Premier told the people of Nundah that last weekend's by-election was about "jobs, jobs, jobs", but just a few weeks ago when I asked him in this House to name one job-generating project that this Government could claim as its own and has actually got off the ground, he could not give me an answer. I ask: why could he not give me an answer? It is simply because he does not have the answer, and Queenslanders passed judgment on his efforts on the weekend.

The people know that the economy is in a recession. They want jobs; they want to be able to pay off their house; they want to be able to pay off their car; they want to have some confidence that their kids can get a job. They do not want to go to sleep worrying about what will happen if they lose their jobs. They want bread and butter, but 18 months into the term of this Government they are still on a diet of self-indulgent nonsense and media hype. They are getting social engineering and lots of brainwashing about so-called reform, but there is no meat on the table in Queensland any more.

This Government is not really concerned about reform. It calls its policies "reform" but it is more in the nature of change--but certainly not change for the better. This Government is concerned about self-indulgence. There are 580 jobs under threat at the Collinsville mine complex because this Government cannot get its priorities right and put its mind to the real job. Unless the Government gives some concessions on the up-front mine rehabilitation costs and coal freight rates, Mount Isa Mines is going to close that mine. This Government promised that company a review, but it simply has not delivered. The workers even made concessions. They made them promptly and are now waiting on the Government to act. Because this Government will not make a commitment to infrastructure development at the port of Townsville, there are also 750 jobs under threat at the Townsville nickel refinery. Greenvale will close in early 1993. This Government has arrived at the cusp, and the Opposition wants to know what it is doing.

There are many thousands of jobs that are going begging and many projects that could get off the ground if Government support and encouragement were given. The Government's role is to show the way. A thousand jobs are going begging at Gladstone because this Government cannot bring itself to sell the power station. Members of this Government cannot cross the ideological barrier to look at the project as a package and deliver not just a thousand jobs but also massive export-earning income to secure a future for Gladstone and the Boyne smelter. At this very moment, the Government

could have a success story on its hands; instead, Queensland has a disaster. This Government could be sending a message to everybody in Queensland saying, "We can make things happen." The National Party used to make things happen. Unfortunately, the people of Queensland are receiving enormous shocks from the lack of performance of this Government. Members of this Government are doing nothing. As usual, they are sitting on their hands. The Treasurer sits in his place as though he is Micawber and is hoping that something will turn up. He is waiting for a recovery that some people say is going to take place. He says that the State Government cannot do much, but the Opposition says that the State Government can do a great deal. It does not have to do everything, but it can certainly advance capital works programs and it can encourage and support industry and set the parameters for private enterprise. Members of the National Party know that a State Government can do more than this Government is doing. The present Government should be doing more and it can do plenty, such as getting on with those projects. The confidence that can be generated is really amazing when a Government takes the lead and assists an economy that is in a recession.

By embarking on a State Capital Works Program worth \$600m over three years, the former National Party Government did exactly that in 1985-86. It did not mean to say that the Government was doing everything that had to be done, but it telegraphed a message to industry and commerce that the Government was behind them, and that gave them confidence. This Government could also cut payroll tax, which would give business some heart. It could also cut land tax, stop talking politics about the public works programs and actually get some of them under way, but the fact is that it will not. The key reason given by the Government for this inaction is that it cannot be afforded. This Government has mortgaged the next State Budget to the hilt and has sought to disguise massive increases in spending. In an increasingly desperate attempt to stem the flood of liabilities it has unleashed on taxpayers, it is shaving cents off departmental budgets.

But worst of all, the Government will not do anything because the penny has not dropped, and it never will. It does not understand the fundamental responsibilities of a State Government. It has been in Opposition for so long that it has forgotten what it is supposed to be doing. We are in the middle of a recession. The Government's first responsibility is to create a climate that will keep people in jobs. Its second responsibility is to do everything in its power to create a climate in which business will have the confidence and the capacity to get people back into jobs, and to maintain that momentum. Unfortunately, we are seeing none of that. At the weekend, the Labor Government was judged solely on its merit. Queenslanders have begun to see what the Government has done, or not done. They have started to recognise the Government for what it is: a typical first-term Labor Government, the sort of Labor Government that we have seen too much of in the past decade in this country. What occurred last weekend was a just judgment--the Government's being judged solely on its merit. It is not the last occasion on which the Goss Government will be so judged.

Time expired.

Subcontractors

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (11.54 a.m.): Today, I bring to the attention of the House the continuing and worsening plight of building subcontractors and suppliers in this State. In doing so, I acknowledge the work being done to support those groups by my colleague the member for Isis. When he spoke recently in the House during an Adjournment debate, he highlighted the unsatisfactory situation which presently prevails in the Hervey Bay region. In Cairns, because of the tourism-driven development of recent years, circumstances are just as bad--possibly worse.

In February last year, I first became directly involved in this matter when the Girvan Group and its subsidiary, Trinity Bay Hotels, went into receivership. Since then, firms such as Thiess Watkins White and Solander, to name just two, have also succumbed, leaving numerous suppliers and subcontractors not being paid for materials and labour.

The direct result of that is a situation in which subcontractors and suppliers, through no real fault of their own, find themselves in a tenuous financial position. Worse still, many are forced to the wall and driven out of business, with workers and businesses dependent on them being added to the chain of suffering. Although owners and major contractors have a case to answer, I firmly believe that the nub of the problem has been the profligate lending policies of banks and other financial institutions. In their mad scramble to carve out their share of the lending market, they appear to have thrown money around with the abandon of a drunken sailor. In many cases, those promoting projects were merely peddling concepts and ideas. Quite often, it was obvious that those involved had no substantial means to back the dreams they proffered.

That brings me to the subject of risk. Under present legislation and the ability of the unscrupulous to manipulate corporate controls, risk does not seem to lie with the lending institution, the owners or even the project manager. Each of those has, in most cases, mechanisms which satisfactorily protect them from liability. The receivers ensure that the secured creditors are paid out. Of course, we should not forget that the receivers also get their fair share of what is left over. The banks, which in many cases show extremely poor judgment in advancing finance in the first place, are rarely losers. The directors of the construction firm, by setting up \$2 companies, are able to divorce themselves from any personal liability. In many cases, they strip the assets from one company and transfer them to another, putting themselves promptly in a position to repeat the black comedy.

It would appear to me that subcontractors and suppliers are forced to bear a risk far greater than that which should be reasonably expected of them. Those people take a risk each and every time they quote on a job. If they underquote, no-one is expected to come forward and bridge the shortfall. However, they face a far greater risk. They face the risk of losing materials once placed on a site and they face the risk of not being paid for their labours. Some may say that they should be more selective--be more careful--when becoming involved with a development project. However, the simple truth is that subcontractors and suppliers do not have the resources to fully check the bona fides or viability of development companies. I add that financial institutions, which presumably do have those resources, fail to adequately apply them, being content in the knowledge that they are secured creditors and will be paid first if the operation folds. As a direct consequence, in those circumstances, subcontractors and suppliers are acting as an insurance policy for financial institutions too free with their money. In recent times, I notice that those same financial institutions are putting the screws on all and sundry.

I acknowledge the work being done by a group formed last year in Cairns, the Unpaid Suppliers and Subcontractors of Cairns. The leading identities in that group have continued to fight for some form of justice for subcontractors in the full realisation that they have little or no chance of recovering any of their own losses. Jeff Hatswell of Easylift, Ed Ahern of Ahern Plumbing, Henk Doggen of Apex Crane Hire, Dan Neate of Paramount Hire, Jim Millett of Millett Crane Hire, Lou Garozzo of Garozzo Agencies and Peter Lennox, an independent engineer, have battled hard on behalf of a traditionally fragmented industry. For that they have earned my ongoing respect.

Over the last 12 months, I have taken a keen interest in this issue and during that period have gleaned a great deal of information from other jurisdictions, particularly South Australia and British Columbia, where their Legislatures are working assiduously to address the problem. Of special significance has been the recent report by a select committee of the House of Assembly of South Australia into that State's Worker's Liens Act. Today, I wish to briefly put to members some of the matters considered by that select committee of inquiry. One possibility canvassed was that of the establishment of a form of trust fund into which payments from owners would be received and held on behalf of the subcontractor. The inquiry looked at two possibilities. One scheme involved a central trust fund into which all payments for building works would be paid and another scheme allowed a builder to open and operate a trust fund for each project undertaken by his company. There are, however, problems with each of those formats.

The central trust fund would require a large administration to receive, pay out and account for all moneys. By necessity, the cost of that operation would be passed on to the industry, inevitably raising building costs themselves. Even the second scheme, although less expensive, would still require monitoring, with the need for investigating staff and auditors--another impost.

One consideration could be the setting up of a trust account as part and parcel of standard building contracts. This would in some way remedy the problems of subcontractors using the legal recourse of breach of contract or misappropriation of funds. The South Australian committee of inquiry considered that it would be appropriate and desirable for the industry to self-regulate such changes. I endorse that concept. The direct payment of subcontractors by the building owner was also examined. This process ensures that the subcontractor is not disadvantaged in the event of a builder becoming insolvent. At present contracts are drawn up between owners and builders, with the subcontractor playing no part at all. One possibility to be explored is the standardising of contracts, thus enabling owners to pay subcontractors directly.

At one stage, the group active in Cairns that I mentioned earlier promoted insurance as a means of addressing the problem. The notion that small subcontractors providing labour only, and small suppliers of materials, could insure against the insolvency of the main contractors has some merit. However, in order to keep a reasonable ceiling on premiums, it may be necessary to make such an insurance scheme compulsory. The South Australian committee believed that schemes could be set up by employer groups, by unions or even, on an industrywide basis, by the building industry itself. The issue of insurance was also raised in a 1990 report by the building industry in Victoria, where the industry has considered the prospect of credit insurance for a couple of years now. Basically, this requires a subcontractor to buy insurance on a job-by-job basis, usually covering 80 per cent of any loss that he may suffer should the builder default. The obvious drawbacks were the high cost of premiums and the conditions placed on the policies by insurance companies.

One ray of light on the insurance horizon is what is known as a spread loss program, which provides for owners to take out insurance cover that will protect them, their builder and his subcontractors from default by any of the parties concerned. A premium would be payable whenever a building contract or a construction management agreement is entered into. Again, of course, compulsion to pay would require a change to legislation. In addition, a building permit would not be issued until proof of payment was provided. In my opinion, in all probability the most appropriate party to pay the premium would be the owner. Even if it were decided that the premium load would be shared, there is no doubt that the reality of the situation is that the owner would inevitably bear the costs anyway.

Actuarial studies would need to be undertaken to ascertain premium levels. One suggestion made by industry representatives is to base premiums on objective criteria on a project-by-project basis. The actual contract sum would be suitable, and it has been suggested that premiums in the order of 0.25 per cent to 0.5 per cent of the contract sum may be satisfactory. The tax deductibility of premiums could add to the attractiveness of such a scheme. The actual operation of spread loss insurance when payment default occurs needs to be explained. In the situation of the owner being the one to default, the procedure to apply could be, firstly, that the oldest claim should be paid first. Secondly, because the contractor, the subcontractors and the suppliers are all unsecured creditors, it could be reasonably argued that no order of priority should apply. The suggestion is that, when the principal contractor or builder defaults, priority should be given to the subcontractors or suppliers on a rateable basis.

The Minister responsible for the current legislation, the Honourable Glen Milliner, is aware of the problem and has accepted the fact that the Subcontractors Charges Act is not working satisfactorily. On many occasions I have made representations to him in regard to this issue, and I am encouraged by his interest in and understanding of the problem. The Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government has also

indicated his support for legislative intervention. The problems surrounding the building industry will not go away. Unless the Government moves to address these problems, the future for subcontractors and suppliers in Queensland remains bleak. I urge the responsible Minister or Ministers to initiate a review of the existing legislation with a view to its amendment or repeal and replacement----

Time expired.

Nundah By-election; Trade Union Rules

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (12.04 p.m.): I wish to speak about deceit and wrong-doing within sections of the union movement and, more importantly, this Government's desire to cover up that wrong-doing and deceit. The things that I will say today will clearly lend the lie to the assertion of Goss, Swan et al that this Labor Government is a truly reformist, open and accountable Government. My message today will clearly underline the message sent out to the Labor Party by the voters of Nundah, where the Labor Party and the Premier suffered the humiliation of a 14 per cent swing against them. In Nundah, where he masqueraded as both the candidate and the leader of this State, the Premier--Mr "Eighty Per Cent"--could convince only 43 per cent of the voters to put No. 1 next to his name. I remind members of the Government what happens to leaders who have an 80 per cent approval rating but can only attract 43 per cent of the vote. I remind honourable members that Nundah is the electorate that was vacated by Phil Heath because he--another Goss/Swan hand-picked candidate who won his plebiscite 14 to 13 after enormous influence from the Premier and Swan--was not being listened to by his political mentors. Phil Heath has also sent out a message that this Government is anything but the reformist Government that it fraudulently claims to be. Phil Heath turned his back on this Government, as did the people of Nundah and the people of Toowoomba South, and by the time the Liberal Party is finished with it, so will the rest of Queensland.

For some time, it has been common knowledge that a number of unions registered in Queensland have failed to conduct their affairs--including their internal elections--in accordance with the registered rules. Queensland industrial law requires unions to comply with the registered rules. Any lapses in complying with these rules are contrary to the laws of this State. Although any such lapses do not affect the union's status as a registered organisation, it does mean that such unions do not have any validly elected officials. This in turn means that, if challenged, the union concerned would be unable to conduct any business because it does not have anyone capable of signing any documents or of representing it. For example, such a union would not be able to appear in the Industrial Commission or make any applications to that commission. This state of affairs would effectively put the union out of business. As you undoubtedly know, Mr Speaker, in Queensland there are State branches of federally registered unions and there are other unions that are registered only in Queensland. In some cases, what has occurred is that unions registered in Queensland and their officials have ignored their election responsibilities under the State registered rules. In flouting that law, they have simply adopted the election results of the State branch of the Federal union. In most cases the Federal branch election requirements are quite different from the election requirements of the State union. Recently, this particular issue has affected two unions that have received attention from a hard-working Queenslander, Mr Marshall Cooke, QC. They are the Liquor Trades Union and the Australian Bank Employees Union, two unions which are trying desperately to get their not-so-clean hands on the membership of the hard-working staff at Metway and Power Brewing.

I will talk about the LTU first. Recently, that union appeared before Commissioner Kevin Edwards of the State Industrial Commission arguing its right to be part of an enterprise agreement under the terms of the new Industrial Relations Act. At the same time, it tried to absorb the Power Brewing Company workers under its patently and obviously sordid umbrella. I was present for part of those hearings. The suggestion was made to the State Industrial Commission that, in living memory, the Liquor Trades

Union had not conducted an election for officers of its Queensland registered union, which meant that the LTU had no lawfully elected officials and that, indeed, even its employees would not have been constitutionally employed by the union. Although that matter was argued before the commission, because the parties to the dispute concerned subsequently reached agreement, that point was not pursued. However, the point is that the LTU, like many other unions in Queensland, has not complied with its own rules. It is most doubtful whether, in such a case, the union has any lawfully registered officials to represent it in the commission, or anywhere else for that matter. Its quest for new members, new sources of funds and new power is thus in jeopardy.

I now turn to the case of the Australian Bank Employees Union. It can be proven conclusively, again from evidence emerging during the current hearings before Commissioner Edwards, that the ABEU, which, by the way, is also trying to pilfer the financial membership of the staff of Metway, that, in effect, an application for membership of the ABEU seeks membership of the Federal union rather than the State union. Therefore, the State union, by definition, has no members. In effect, the State union is a post office box. It has no members and no numbers. The forms refer only to the Federal union. This is clearly a fraudulent state of affairs, which I suggest the Minister should fix. All subscriptions paid to the union go to the Federal body, not the State union, which, by definition, is not financial. It relies on handouts from the Melbourne-based union. Those handouts have enabled it to conduct itself in a fraudulent manner, which I again suggest the Minister should fix. It has become patently obvious at the commission hearings that for the past two years at least, and perhaps for longer, there is no trace of elections having been conducted for State officers of the ABEU. The union is unrepresentative of a non-existent group of members--again, a fraudulent situation which the Minister is trying to fix up.

I submit to the House that Dawson Petie, known as "Petty" Dawson, the alleged State secretary of the State union, has been fraudulently appearing before the commission, seeking to push the case of a non-existent union. The major point of my speech today is that the position will be further aggravated if, in this Parliament, the Minister later on this week or next week introduces retrospective legislation to legitimise all the wrong-doing, all the fraudulence and all the dishonesty of his union mates within the LTU and the ABEU. He will seek to cleanse away their dishonesty by pushing through this place retrospective legislation which, basically, will have the effect of legitimising, retrospectively, the unlawful action or, more appropriately, the deliberate inaction which led to their failure to hold elections as required by law and in accordance with their unions' registered rules. Rather than require the offending unions to pay the penalties relating to non-compliance, the Minister will seek to protect those union officials by indulging in the despicable practice of covering up their failures retrospectively. Later on today, tomorrow or whenever else the legislation is introduced, the Minister will leap out of his slumber and say that Mr Santoro does not know what he is talking about. Perhaps he will further claim that some other industrial organisations are well and truly involved in the same way as the above-mentioned unions.

I can advise the Minister that that is not the case. Members of the Liberal Party know what they are talking about and they will go down this track irrespective of who is involved. Unlike the Minister, members of the Liberal Party do not believe in cover-ups and protecting those people who have clearly broken the law. The Minister and members of the Labor Party will again seek to protect the LTU and the ABEU because those unions form part of the corrupt power base that gives the ALP its members' money, without consulting them, and that provides the ALP with a patently undemocratic and clearly law-breaking power base.

That is not reform. It is a cover-up. I suggest to members opposite that real reform means keeping the Government's promise to uncover corruption in every corner where it exists. Before it went to the last election, the Government told the people of Queensland that it would seek to root out corruption irrespective of where it existed. What has been the Government's real commitment to its promise of a so-called reform process, which the Premier and many other members opposite flaunted in the Nundah electorate? That

commitment is absolutely essential now because, as press reports, including those dated 17 May 1991, clearly indicate, every corner that Marshall Cooke turns and every avenue that he goes down clearly show that corruption and wrong-doing exist within the Labor movement--within the trade union movement--which provides the Government with its support. If members opposite are men and women of principle, they should consider the banner headline, "Reassurance on inquiry future needed says Goss" when speaking about the Fitzgerald inquiry. I challenge members opposite to say to Mr Goss and to the Minister, "Let us keep the Marshall Cooke inquiry going" because everywhere that he turns, every union that he looks into is displayed as part of the soft underbelly of members opposite. Ultimately, that is what is going to lead to their downfall. People on this side of the House are going to keep on telling the people of Queensland, as they did in Nundah and as they keep on saying in this place, that members opposite are supported by a corrupt bunch from corrupt organisations.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member's time has expired. I call the honourable member for Mount Gravatt.

Domestic Violence

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (12.14 p.m.): The plight of a constituent of mine has prompted me to speak in this Matters of Public Interest debate today. A couple of years ago, my constituent--I shall call her Betty--managed to extricate herself and her children from a violent, horrendous marriage. So vicious was the husband's abuse of his family that he was allowed only two hours supervised access to his children each week.

For Betty, the separation, the divorce and the custody and property settlements did little to end this man's harassment of her or her children. He kept coming around; he abused her; he watched her, and he frightened her. Betty applied to the courts and had a domestic violence protection order taken out against the man. He broke the order; he entered their home; he stood in her yard and yelled obscenities. He was arrested, taken before a magistrate and fined \$50. He broke the order a second time and he was arrested and fined \$100. A week ago, he broke the order again and entered Betty's home for the third time. Immediately after this third crime, Betty phoned me. She is at breaking point. What hope does she have? The man is breaking the law, and her own safety and that of her children is repeatedly threatened by a violent man who, when finally arrested, is given paltry fines.

If I were to drive across a double white line, I would be given an on-the-spot fine greater than the \$50 or \$100 fine that this man has been given for threatening his family. Police officers have told me that a magistrate has fined one man \$5 for breaking a restraining order and that \$50 or \$100 fines are quite normal. This is despite the fact that magistrates have the power to impose 12-month prison sentences or fines of up to \$2,400. It is no wonder that police do not like attending domestic violence disputes, helping women take out protection orders or following up breaches of these orders if, after all their time and effort, the offending law-breaker receives less than a speeding fine as punishment. Why are some magistrates not being more sympathetic? Why are some not treating domestic violence disputes more seriously? Perhaps they, like the rest of the community, do not see the seriousness of the problem.

In recent years, much has been said and written on the subject of domestic violence. It is not a political matter. I believe that the Opposition finds it as abhorrent as I do. Indeed, the National Party Government moved in the right direction by establishing a domestic violence task force and introducing the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act, which intended to shift the onus for protection away from the victim saving herself. But Betty knows she has to save herself. I make no apology for again speaking out on a subject which some honourable members find boring, about which some are tired of hearing and which some think is not too serious. I applaud the steps that this Government is taking in tackling the problem through the Police Department, its new women's safety project and the Women's Policy Branch in the Premier's Department. This Government

is treating the problem seriously. It is funding the resources and the rhetoric, and the groundwork that is being done now may soon produce positive results. But, in the meantime, women are living in fear.

Criminal assault of women in their homes, euphemistically labelled "domestic violence", occurs in maybe one-third of Australian homes. Last year in Queensland, 15 women were killed from domestic violence disputes alone. The abuse experienced by women consists of severe and prolonged physical, sexual, psychological, social and financial abuse which results in almost total destruction of women's self-esteem. A victim of such abuse is brainwashed by the man into believing that she is crazy, inadequate and responsible for the violence perpetrated on her. The community at large, including the health, media, education, legal, welfare and housing systems, believes a great many myths about domestic violence which further escalates the victim's difficulties in securing proper services from those systems. The service-providers are usually seriously ill-informed about the realities of domestic violence and often believe wrongly that victims are "naggers" who deserve what they get, who provoke it to feed their adrenalin habit, or who are crazy.

Again, I can imagine many honourable members thinking, "Oh, another of these women MPs trying to give us another lecture on how we all ought to behave." But just as they expect a measure of protection and retribution when their home is broken into and their life or property is threatened, so too does Betty. I would argue that domestic violence, when it involves physical violence, is criminal behaviour and that there is accordingly only one appropriate response--the full force of the criminal law. Anything short of that response effectively decriminalises domestic violence, with consequent adverse effects on people's attitudes to perpetrators, victims and the behaviour which constitutes domestic violence.

Obviously, some forms of domestic violence do not necessarily amount to criminal offences, but there is no doubt that, when actual physical violence takes place, the perpetrator has committed a criminal offence or offences. It follows that he should be prosecuted and punished. It is notorious that, in many cases of domestic violence, this does not happen. A failure to prosecute or, as in Betty's case, a prosecution that leads to a \$50 fine encourages the offender to feel that his bashing is condoned or excused by the legal system. This, in turn, demonstrates to victims and to the wider community that domestic violence is not "really" criminal. Such feelings do nothing to remove the attitudes which foster the phenomenon of domestic violence. I am not suggesting that the law should not provide a non-criminal response. I believe the victim's needs should be of paramount consideration in deciding what are the appropriate legal responses to domestic violence. For some women, any sort of legal intervention is regarded as extreme and inappropriate. For such women, a standard criminal procedure for every complaint of domestic violence would be unwelcome.

However, when women cry out for help, I think it is fair that we should expect that the police will respond. They are at the front line and we expect them to do their jobs and enforce the law. The shortcomings of the police have always been a problem in this area. However, I am pleased to report that this Government has given the Police Service's domestic violence unit the opportunity to train the police to enforce the law properly. Nevertheless, it is probably unrealistic to assume for the moment that domestic violence offenders are suddenly going to be dealt with in a way which is consistent, rational and appropriate to their deeds when society in general is still not prepared to regard this activity with the level of abhorrence it deserves. Should people who kill zoo animals really be punished more severely than people who subject their wives to years of terror? It is undeniable that the "tariff" for domestic violence is out of kilter. Whether a person is guilty of an assault or breach of a protection order--or both--the very same consequences should follow, namely, conviction and punishment.

In the Western World, 97 per cent of criminal assault in the home is perpetrated by men on women, and most of those victims blame themselves and hide their shame and injuries. Clearly, we must begin to treat the perpetrators in order to resolve effectively

this extensive social problem. This is not a women's issue, it is an issue for all of us. As a community, we endeavour to construct walls that shield us from acknowledging this problem and hope that someone else will take care of it. At the cultural level, to acknowledge domestic violence is to challenge the belief that the family is the unit of society that nurtures and protects its members from external harms. Domestic violence forces us to acknowledge that for some families this is not the case, and that for some individuals the greatest danger is the threat of harm from within the home. Our belief that positive family life builds a strong community with the potential for all to make a meaningful contribution is also tested if we acknowledge the damaging effects of domestic violence upon family life and the individuals concerned.

I return to Betty's case. She faces an uphill battle in leaving her violent partner, re-establishing a home for herself and her children, coping with stresses of single parenthood, overcoming the emotional trauma and building a happier life for her children. Betty is studying Senior and hopes to enter teacher training next year. She has few financial resources. Many of her friends deserted her. However, Betty could find a great level of contentment and happiness if she were allowed a greater measure of protection from the man who threatens her. I understand that the Criminal Justice Commission is investigating Queensland's domestic violence laws.

Time expired.

Aboriginal Land Rights Legislation

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (12.25 p.m.): I intend to speak about the Government's intention to introduce into this House legislation in relation to Aboriginal land claims. However, this issue is not about the merits or otherwise of land claims but very much about deceit and betrayal. It is about the raising of false hopes and expectations of a people whom everybody agrees are struggling to be part of our modern twentieth century white society.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Burnett may speak about an issue, but he may not refer to legislation that is pending in this House.

Mr SLACK: I am speaking about the Government's handling of this issue, not the actual legislation itself.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will listen to what the member has to say, and rule accordingly.

Mr SLACK: All members opposite should wriggle and squirm because, whether they like it or not, they are party to what can be described only as a cruel hoax. What has come forward from this Goss Government is not what the Aboriginal people expected. More importantly, it is not what they were led to believe they could expect. Firstly, I refer to the Labor policy document that was circulated prior to the last State election. That document stated that the loss of rights over land must be compensated and that this compensation will recognise original tenure of all parts of mainland Australia and recognise offshore islands. It also mentioned the granting of mineral rights and compensation in general.

Then there was the sorry saga of the submission by the Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs Department to the Fitzgerald inquiry into Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Straits region. Because that submission went forward with the authority of the department, it is only natural that the Aboriginal people would expect the department to be endorsing and supporting their land claims. Although the Minister attempted to distance herself from the submission, prior to her becoming Minister she was identified as being outspoken in her support of Aboriginal land claims. The Premier and Matt Foley, the member for Yeronga, have also been closely identified with Aboriginal land claims. They have all been found wanting, not because they failed to deliver but because they used a very sensitive, racially explosive issue for political purposes. For that they deserve to be totally condemned.

Government members cannot escape blame, because they are quite happy to hang on to the Premier's coat-tails to ensure their political future. But at what cost? Their political integrity and credibility! I hope that they feel proud of their acceptance of the turning of the political agenda over to Wayne Swan and Kevin Rudd. Phil Heath may have had problems, but did he not hit a raw nerve about ALP policy? In the meantime, those Government members have been found wanting. They are a gutless mob of yes-men. What has happened with Fraser Island? Why has the report not been released? Apart from the Aboriginal implications, does the report create some problems for those Government members who believe in ALP policy? How can the Premier announce the land claims legislation at a news conference unless he was arrogant enough to believe that all the puppets would meekly say, "Yes"? I understand that, when that was announced, the issue had not even been discussed by caucus.

Let me return to the circumstances that led to the announcement of the legislation. All honourable members may ask: what led to the Premier announcing in the House a program for land rights legislation? If honourable members think back, they will realise that the announcement was made out of the blue. It would be an insult to the Premier to suggest that he would not be aware of the political implications of such an announcement, namely, immediate public interest and media interest in a controversial issue. Members would do well to look back and consider the issues that were receiving attention before the Premier made that announcement. Was it abortion? There was not much publicity about that. The departmental submission on land claims to Fraser Island was quickly dying. I remember distinctly that, on the Tuesday of that week, the issue of members' travel entitlements became very embarrassing for the Government. No-one wanted to talk about that matter. Incidentally, what has happened about the investigation into travel entitlements? Everyone has forgotten it, have they not? Do I detect some blushing faces?

It cannot be denied that, although many Government members with starry eyes enthusiastically embraced what they believed was a step to redress the social injustices that they felt were the lot of the Aboriginal people, their Premier was not nearly as naive. He approached the issue cautiously. Because the Premier wanted to placate the miners, he stated that no mining royalties would be given to the Aborigines. Because he wanted to placate the general constituency, he announced that no urban backyards would be handed over to the Aborigines.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed the member for Burnett to speak generally, but I will not allow him to discuss pending legislation.

Mr SLACK: There is no legislation pending before the House. I am referring to the Premier's press statements.

The Premier wants to placate the general constituency, which may support his approach provided that it is not affected. In order to placate land-holders, the Premier stated that no grazing land will be handed over to the Aborigines. That is the action of a good, sensible, conservative Premier. Obviously, the Premier had no intention of following ALP policy. In fact, he has actually demonstrated a blatant disregard for it. The next step is to take the control of the legislation out of the hands of the controversial Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs Minister and place it in the hands of the professional hatchetman and realist, Kevin Rudd. All of that adds up to a cold, calculated approach to an issue that the Premier obviously realised could get out of hand if it were not carefully managed and controlled. To manage it carefully, a decision was made to form a large consultative committee, to lock some of the more outspoken people into it, to pay them a big consultative fee, and they should support the Government. It is my understanding that Noel Pearson was being paid \$750 a day, plus expenses. A question arises from that: what fees were being paid to the other people involved? Of course, that all came unstuck when Noel Pearson resigned. It appears that he could not be bought or placated.

Then a couple of other things went wrong. The Aboriginal people were not playing ball when what was previously considered to be a conservative, non-radical body came

out with unacceptable claims. The Premier did not want to know about it. As a result, the consultative process suddenly went out the door. His Environment Minister, Pat Comben, also had said on ABC radio that Queensland's land rights legislation should be along the lines of the Northern Territory model. Again, the alarm bells started to ring. Conservative Queenslanders were confused and were becoming increasingly uneasy. Besides, the issue had served its purpose.

It is obvious that the Premier, Wayne Swan--or was it Kevin Rudd--thought that it was time that they got on with it. Besides, it was not the sort of issue that they would want running into an election, and it was becoming increasingly apparent that, following a radical redistribution, it may not have been practical for the Parliament to run its full term. Following an extensive consultative process of legislation at the end of the year, the announced program was not politically tenable, so it was time to put it behind them. Then they thought that perhaps they could fool the people by referring to the impending High Court decision on the Mabo case. It was worth a try. Unfortunately, not too many people bought that excuse and it appears to have been dropped as a reason. It is time that this Parliament looked at the costs, both financial and social. Those costs must be borne by the community at large. It would be interesting to know how much money has been spent on that exercise, particularly at a time when money is tight, people are without jobs and many people are suffering incredible hardship.

This same Premier refused to provide \$90,000 to the Abused Child Trust, which would have enabled it to continue its valuable work. Are they the actions that one would expect from a sensitive Premier and a responsible Government? I sometimes wonder if it was not a premeditated exercise to demonstrate to the public that, although the Labor Party may have unacceptable social policies, the Premier understood and deserved the support of all Queenslanders as he represented a rational, balanced approach to difficult social issues. As a result, we are already seeing an escalation in Aboriginal discontent and a predictable reaction from both whites and blacks, which divides the races further rather than brings them together. We have not only division between whites and blacks over the issue but also division between blacks, which has undone much of the good work that was done in the past. Then, of course, there is increasing dissension among the people opposite. That cannot be denied.

I will close by quoting the Premier's own words when he spoke in relation to another issue. He said--

"At least everyone knew where they stood with the National Party."

I am sure that that is a sentiment with which the Aboriginal people would agree. I believe that the Aboriginal legislation will be introduced this week and debated next Friday. Why the rush?

Energy Policy

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (12.34 p.m.): In February, the Government launched a discussion paper on energy policy directions for Queensland into the twenty-first century. The lack of an energy policy framework in the past has prevented any comprehensive coordinated approach to supplying the energy needs of this State. Whilst growth in supplies has been encouraged and is desirable, continued growth at current rates will have catastrophic consequences. That is the nature of exponential growth. In 1948, when the State Electricity Commission first became responsible for coordination of supply, the estimated system maximum demand was only 156 megawatts. In 1989, electricity demand rose to 3 800 megawatts, and it is predicted to rise to just over 5 000 megawatts in 1995. By the year 2010--only 20 years away--if growth remains at current levels, the maximum yearly demand will have doubled to approximately 10 000 megawatts, which is equivalent to another three Stanwell Power Stations or eight Tully/Millstream projects. Because of the exponential nature of growth, the scenario after 2010 becomes really frightening. Thus, in another 100 years, peak demand will have escalated more than 130-fold above the 1995 level. That would require constructing another 450 power stations the size of Stanwell--clearly, an impossible situation. Even a 3 per cent growth in annual demand

would produce a 20-fold increase over the next 100 years. Saving power is not a luxury; it is a necessity. Now is the time to begin reducing peak demand for electricity and using electricity a lot more efficiently. Because Queensland relies so heavily on coal for electricity generation, such a strategy will not only conserve non-renewable resources but also cut down on greenhouse gas emissions.

The current debate over the proposal to build the Tully/Millstream dam to provide 600 megawatts of electricity has highlighted that question of demand management and State energy policy generally. Programs that attempt to meet people's needs for the services powered by electricity in ways other than by building and operating more generating plants are known as demand-management programs. Such programs attempt to encourage consumers to modify their demands for electricity. That can be achieved by more efficient use of energy so that less energy is used to obtain a comparable or superior result. Equally importantly, the time at which energy is demanded can be changed so that the maximum energy required to be generated by the system at peak times can be reduced.

Those programs have been practised to a much greater extent overseas than in Queensland. In 1973, Japan introduced energy efficiency measures. Since then, the production of goods and services has risen by 46 per cent, but energy use has decreased by 6 per cent. The Californian Energy Commission has also a long history of successful demand-side management. From 1973 to 1984, the amount of energy required to produce a dollar's worth of goods and services in California dropped by 35 per cent, saving Californians US\$23 billion. By 1985, energy efficiency programs were saving consumers more than \$840m annually in lower electricity bills. These savings removed the equivalent of 15 power plants from the 20-year construction plans, and expenditure on the programs has never exceeded more than 1 per cent of gross operating revenue. While visiting Canada last year on a political exchange program, I received a comprehensive briefing from Hydro-Quebec. Its history of encouraging energy efficiency goes back to the 1960s. Hydro-Quebec estimates that residential energy consumption has almost halved since 1971 owing to the introduction of demand management programs.

I have documented at length these positive achievements because the assessment of the potential of demand-side management in the report of the Tully/Millstream task force has been so very conservative and subsequently questioned by the conservation movement. Thus the task force which commissioned SRC Australia Pty Ltd to examine the issue concluded that the net load reduction potentially achievable by cost-effective demand-management programs was only 270 megawatts by 1998 when Tully/Millstream is proposed to be complete. SRC indicated that this level of reduction in demand was equivalent only to one year's rate of growth in demand by 1998, thus deferring the need to build Tully/Millstream by only one year. But the task force recommended that even this delay of one year was a high risk strategy because of uncertainty about these savings from demand management. Subsequently, the task force concluded that the timing of the construction of Tully/Millstream should proceed as planned and that any possible energy savings from demand-side management programs should be ignored.

The position of the conservation movement on the question of demand-side management has been best summed up by Denny Green, an energy consultant who worked for the Federal Government. She claims that, for every \$5 invested in energy efficiency, there is a saving of \$15 on establishing new energy supplies and one tonne of carbon dioxide. The detailed analysis of potential savings from demand-side management has been carried out by Dr Ailo Keto, president of the Rainforest Conservation Society. That society concluded that the potential reduction in peak demand of 2 672 megawatts was achievable by 1999 from demand-side management programs in the industrial, commercial and domestic sectors. This compares to the SRC estimate of only 340 megawatts by that date. I have attempted to compare the analysis of demand-side management reported by the task force and that of the Rainforest Conservation Society. However, I found it very difficult because the task force provided no critique of the society's detailed submission and its data was not presented in a comparable form. No

doubt there were important differences in assumptions and methodologies in these two analyses to arrive at such very different conclusions.

A similar picture emerges from a comparison of the task force report and the Rainforest Conservation Society submission with respect to alternative means of supplying electricity. Co-generation--the combined generation of heat and power--for example was sighted by the Rainforest Conservation Society as providing a potential saving of 540 megawatts compared to the task force estimate of only 100 megawatts. The possibility of linking the Queensland electricity grid to that of the other eastern States and South Australia provides a means of tapping into supply being generated in New South Wales and Victoria, where there is currently excess generating capacity. There are many advantages to Queensland in this proposal and it has been suggested by the conservationists that an interconnected grid capable of carrying 500 megawatts could be installed, thus alleviating the need for Tully/Millstream. The conclusion of the Tully/Millstream task force report, however, was that the construction of a link between Queensland and the other eastern States, while possible, was irrelevant to the decision as to whether Tully/Millstream should be constructed.

A similar conservative negative view was expressed by the Tully/Millstream task force report on the question of both non-renewable and renewable energy alternatives. Thus, natural gas was barely examined and was dismissed on economic grounds. On the question of renewable energy alternatives, the report concluded that none would be likely to be cost-effective providers of significant amounts of electricity at least up to the year 2005. This conclusion has been hotly contested by energy experts such as Dr Ian Lowe and Dr Mark Diesendorf. While I personally very much hope that we do not have to build the Tully/Millstream dam, there is no doubt that we cannot take the risk of jeopardising electricity supply to Queensland offices, homes and factories and, thus, it could be argued that the conservative approach adopted by the task force in its report is appropriate.

However, the conclusion of the conservation movement and those of the Tully/Millstream task force are at such variance that I believe further scrutiny is required of both the assumptions and the methodologies on which the report was based. While I make no judgments regarding consultants Ewbank Preece Sinclair Knight, who were commissioned by the task force, their professionalism and independence have been questioned by others. I therefore welcome the Government's decision to refer to the Tully/Millstream task force report to a working group consisting of Federal and State Government representatives and representatives from the World Heritage Management Authority. The opportunity for this working group to scrutinise the consultants' report on which the task force conclusions were based is a most important initiative and will, I believe, ensure that a final recommendation in respect to Tully/Millstream will be soundly based and should have the confidence of all parties. However, at the end of the day, whether the Tully/Millstream dam proceeds or not, we must look back to 1991 and say that this was the year that the control of energy policy in Queensland was wrested from the Queensland Electricity Commission and the year in which the basis was laid for a sustainable future in which promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy resources became the order of the day.

The Federal Government has accepted this challenge with a distribution to every Australian home of an energy guide booklet which shows how we can both conserve energy and protect the environment. In Queensland, the Government discussion paper entitled, "Energy Policy Direction for Queensland in the 21st Century" is a step in that direction with its overall energy policy objective, which is to ensure that the energy sector operates in a manner which is economically efficient, environmentally responsible and socially acceptable. The tragedy is that, had we had this policy in place some 20 years ago, the current debate about Tully/Millstream would not be necessary. I wish, in the short time available to me, to endorse particular policy options outlined in this Government discussion paper, including adoption of at least a cost-planning approach under which the most cost-effective means are taken to balance demand for and supply of electricity. This implies that a mixture of programs will be undertaken, including the

reduction and modification of the demand for electricity as well as the installation of new generating plants and, in addition, monitoring of research into new technologies for electricity generation which have high efficiency or use non-polluting fuels.

Time expired.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time allotted for the debate on Matters of Public Interest has expired.

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE (RAILWAYS) BILL

Committee

Debate resumed from 10 April (see p. 7507).

Clauses 1.1 to 2.1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2.2--

Mr SPRINGBORG (12.45 p.m.): For my benefit, for the benefit of people in my electorate and, I would suggest, for the benefit of those throughout Queensland who are very unsure about the present restructuring of Queensland Railways and who would like some guarantees, I wish to clarify a couple of points with the Minister. I ask the Minister when he will be in a position to publicly inform people of a local area of the future of their small stations and what the particular function of those small stations will be? When will he be in a position to say whether or not those small stations shift enough freight to warrant their staying open, even as a small freight centre? I also want to know what will happen in situations in which there is a major freight centre 50 kilometres up the road to the north and a major freight centre 50 kilometres down the road to the south and people who want to transport small items, such as two cartons of fruit or a wardrobe, and who are only a few kilometres away from a small station? Will those people be required to travel to the small freight centre and leave an article, such as a wardrobe, to be collected by Queensland Railways employees and taken to a major freight centre, or will it be loaded straight onto a train at a particular station?

With regard to the restructuring of Queensland Railways--can the Minister inform me whether any impending closures of small stations have taken into consideration community service obligations and the social upheaval that closures might cause in some areas? I point out that, in some cases, three or four railways employees are involved and that they contribute quite significantly to the local economy. So that I will not have to keep rising in my place, I ask those questions in bulk so that the Minister can answer them now.

Mr HAMILL: As I stated in my reply, I acknowledge the concern felt by the member for Carnarvon, who has raised these matters with me before. I compliment him for his commitment to his electorate and for his recognition of the need to adequately service the needs of the community. First, I make the point that there are no impending closures of small stations, and I wish to make that very clear. As I have said all along throughout this small freight project, it is designed to provide a better quality service and at the same time arrest the very serious losses that are sapping the vitality of service by Queensland Railways. Individual areas will be serviced in a manner that is appropriate for a particular area. Whatever works near Goondiwindi will perhaps not work near Atherton. Whatever works in, say, the Quilpie area will not be appropriate for an area around Miriam Vale. The major objective of the small freight project is to win the freight for rail by providing a comprehensive, door-to-door service. As far as it is humanly possible, it will not be a case of people having to cart their goods and leave them at sidings, nor will it be a case of their having to go and pick up their goods at the station if they do not want to.

The important feature of the project is door-to-door servicing. This is an area that Queensland Railways had been prevented from servicing by previous Government policy, and I am pleased to say that that policy has been overturned. People demand the

convenience of deliveries and collection, and that is the principle behind the small freight project. The examples given by the honourable member of the wardrobes or the cartons of fruit fall very much under the principle of collection and delivery. It might involve Queensland Railways or it might involve a contracted carrier, but the formula must vary from place to place according to local needs. Queensland Railways certainly recognises that, in a number of centres in this State, the local carrier provides very useful employment and it is that carrier service that will be engaged. Queensland Railways knows only too well that the folk who live in the district could well reject the service if it was not perceived as providing and maintaining employment in local areas. Although I cannot provide the honourable member with specific details on the example of particular sidings, I can say that sidings are not being closed; nor are stations being closed. Queensland Railways is looking at the way in which business is handled and it is after more business, not less business. Consequently, there is great sensitivity to local community needs in servicing those areas.

I wish to make one last point. In discussions I have had with the honourable member, he has been very concerned with the centre at Wallangarra. This is an area that was under threat because there certainly was a low rate of recovery from the traffic on that line. It is pleasing that, through the efforts of station staff in that centre, additional business has been won, particularly in relation to meat that is being transported from that area. I am very confident that, as the months progress, an increase in freight task will come over the border from New South Wales, particularly in the transportation of cotton and wheat, which will be all to the benefit of Queensland Railways and the south-west area of this State.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The Minister mentioned a door-to-door service. I ask him to outline briefly for the Committee the extent of that door-to-door service within a local area. Will it be within, say, 5 kilometres of the town centre, or will Queensland Railways employees actually go out to properties to pick up and deliver goods? With regard to the closure or otherwise of small stations and whatever their function might be--how long does the Minister think it will be before he is able to outline for people who live in local districts the future of the station in a certain area? Will it be a matter of months, or will it be longer?

Mr HAMILL: I can state very briefly that Queensland Railways will look at the servicing of the centres away from railway lines as part of the provision of a transportation service. The small freight project has been rolling for several months. The final details and final business plans will be finalised by September, which is why extensive consultation has been undertaken throughout the length and breadth of this State. In most areas, following consultation with local industries, local rail employees, local chambers of commerce and local councils, Queensland Railways has obtained a pretty good idea of the way in which local communities see themselves in the context of rail services. There are particular places around the State where discussions are going on in the light of local needs that have been identified. I am confident that those issues will be resolved. The project is well on track to being implemented by September.

Clause 2.2, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 2.3 to 2.9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3.1--

Mr JOHNSON (12.53 p.m.): This clause concerns the Opposition more than any other part of the Bill. It allows Queensland Railways to be governed by a body called the Queensland Railways Board. As I understand the Bill--I seek the Minister's confirmation on the matter--the policies of Queensland Railways will be determined by that board. That process takes the determination of policies away from the Government. We were elected to formulate and implement policies, a process which we are carrying out in this Chamber today. The Opposition is concerned at the make-up of the board. From what walks of life will the board members come and what qualifications will they be required to hold? Another aspect that concerns me greatly is: if Queensland Railways

does not run at a profit and that is not acceptable to the Government--I realise that Part 3 of the Bill allows the Minister to interfere--will consolidated revenue come to the rescue of the board?

Mr HAMILL: I take on board the honourable member's remarks. I shall try to deal with them and to give him the assurances that he desires. The establishment of a board for Queensland Railways is no different from what occurs in port authorities where boards are established to manage the affairs of those port authorities. However, I draw the honourable member's attention to a later clause in the Bill, that is clause 3.4, which provides the Minister with the capacity to make directions in the public interest. So that those directions can be quite clear and the Government can be removed once and for all from the taint of exerting undue political interference in people's promotions, transfers and so on, which we have seen in the past and which has been a sad and sorry tale and has demoralised the system----

Mr Booth interjected.

Mr HAMILL: I am disturbed to hear the honourable member say that, because it does not go on.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the honourable member for Warwick wishes to interject, he should do so from his own seat.

Mr HAMILL: If the honourable member can present to me evidence of my interference in the proper appointment or transfer of railway staff, let him put up the evidence now. I inform the Committee that I have not done that. In fact, I find that activity totally repugnant and inappropriate. The question of policy does indeed rest with the Government through the responsible Minister, as quite properly it should. Therefore, the Government has the responsibility also of making provision through consolidated revenue for those services which the Railways Board considers are not appropriate to be subject to commercial decisions. In other words, we are saying to the board, "Run the railways commercially and responsibly and husband those public resources, but for areas such as passenger services in country and city, in certain areas of the freight distribution network, particularly in remote areas, where quite clearly, if it were based on a purely commercial decision the railways would not be in those areas, the Government has the responsibility to determine the community service obligation and fund it accordingly." One of the first steps towards that CSO funding can be seen with the introduction of the seniors card. It irks me that for so many years the concessions which have been provided for rail transport, particularly for passengers and for pensioners, have always been borne as a cost to the railways. In other words, it was a loss over which the railways had no control. With the extension of the seniors card, there were others who, quite rightly in accordance with Government policy, were afforded benefits, particularly with rail transport. As a consequence of that extension of the entitlement, the additional cost is to be funded to the railways from the appropriate department budget which is funding the seniors card.

Mr Schwarten: That's welcomed by railway workers.

Mr HAMILL: Indeed it has been welcomed by railway workers. That is how it should be. I hope that gives the honourable member for Gregory a clear indication of the difference between what is commercial and what is of a social service nature. This Government does not retreat from its social obligations to the people of Queensland. However, this framework allows for everyone to know and to recognise that those social obligations are being met. Through the powers in the Act, it is up to the Minister and the Government to ensure that the board fulfils Government policy on those matters but, at the same time, runs the railways as a commercial entity.

The other question raised by the honourable member related to the composition of the board. The legislation does not specify two left-handed persons, three right-handed persons, a redhead, someone who lives south west of Quilpie or someone who lives north of Ipswich. It would be improper to do that. The Bill provides for a board to be appointed through the Executive Council, in the same way as other statutory authority

boards are appointed. I assure the honourable member that the membership of such a board is broadly based. It will not be a case of having people from south-east Queensland in charge of the railways, because the railways has a responsibility across the State. It will be a broadly based board bringing together people who have expertise, capacity and a knowledge of the needs of the State but who also are canny and understand commercial realities. They are the types of people who will go onto the board. I am sure that the board will enjoy very strong support and, I trust, broad support from the other side of the Chamber.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Clause 3.1, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3.2 to 4.4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4.5--

Mr SPRINGBORG (2.31 p.m.): Because of the overwhelming amount of concern that has been expressed in my electorate about the continuation of employment of Queensland Railways employees, I want to speak briefly about this clause. Grave concern has been expressed to me by Queensland Railways workers about their future. They are very cognisant of the fact that the Minister for Transport has given an assurance that their jobs will be safe. However, they keep reading reports that 5 000 or 10 000 Queensland Railways employees may be----

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It is nothing to do with that. The overwhelming restructuring that is taking place in Queensland Railways, the fact that some small railway sidings may be closed down, that employees may be relocated to other places and that some redundancies may occur is causing uncertainty. No amount of reassurance from the Minister seems to be placating some of these people. The railway workers may not be sacked. What might happen is that they may very well be offered jobs in other places. A railway worker out the back of Woop Woop might be offered a job as a clerk down at Cleveland because there is no position available where he comes from. That person might turn down that job on the grounds that he or she has longstanding commitments in that particular community. People may have their roots fairly and squarely established and may not want to move a long way away. Concern has been expressed that that may be a backdoor method by which many Queensland Railways employees may lose employment. Many hundreds or many thousands of Queensland Railways employees may lose employment not by being sacked directly but by being offered a job somewhere a long way from where they live because there is no job in their own area. They may refuse to go because they want to stay where they are. I ask the Minister to respond to that.

Mr HAMILL: Yet again I give an assurance that no Queensland Railways worker need fear the sack, and no Queensland Railways worker need fear compulsory, involuntary retrenchment.

Mr Beattie: Have it tattooed on Mr Katter's head.

Mr HAMILL: It would probably be the most sensible thing to do. In response to the other point raised by the honourable member, I make the point that in any process of restructuring and organisation there are always difficulties in dealing with the human factor. Queensland Railways has adopted a very compassionate approach to the restructuring within its ranks. Where changes and adjustments need to be made, it is the individual's welfare that is first and foremost in the mind of Queensland Railways management. That is a bit of a change from the past. All workers who join Queensland Railways realise that a part of their employment in the service is that they can serve anywhere in the system, much the same as teachers, police and, indeed, Government employees in general. However, as far as is humanly possible, the Government will seek to avoid dislocating families from areas where they wish to stay, and it will certainly

not be adopting a backdoor approach to force people from Queensland Railways by giving them transfers that are totally repugnant or unacceptable. The Government will not be sending people to Woop Woop to get them out of the service. Those are the assurances that I can give.

This has been an issue that I have discussed at length with the commissioner. I know that his view on the matter accords strongly with my own view. Over the months ahead, these changes will come into place. They will be changes for the better. They will be changes that will generate a stronger railway service in Queensland. These changes will give Queensland Railways a future and a capacity to be a vital part of this State's transport network into the next century. That is the best guarantee that I can give to Queensland Railways workers in regard to their employment. The Government is providing them with a future. It is providing them with a railway service that will employ them in the future. I trust that, despite the best endeavours of some to sabotage the process, that message will get out into the community,

Mr SPRINGBORG: Just briefly on that point--the Minister does agree that a substantial amount of redeployment will be part of the new Queensland Railways structure.

Mr HAMILL: I did not say that. What I said was that in instances in which there could be a need for redeployment, it will be done compassionately, with the interests of the Queensland Railways employee and his or her family foremost in the minds of Queensland Railways management. I believe very strongly--which is totally consistent with my public statements on the matter--that there will be a total net reduction in Queensland Railways employment over the next few years. It will not be nearly as dramatic, nor as savage, as the sort of reductions that have been meted out in Queensland Railways over the past seven years. In less than the past decade, under conservative Governments in this State, the number of employees in Queensland Railways was reduced from approximately 28 000 to 20 000. These changes will be effected largely through natural attrition and, to some extent, through voluntary early retirement. I stress "voluntary early retirement", because that is exactly what it is. No-one will ask any Queensland Railways employee to apply for voluntary early retirement. That is a decision for the individual. It is up to the individual to decide that he or she wants to apply and wants to leave. The Government is not applying an open door policy, either. This Government will not go down the same road that has been gone down in some other places where these schemes were offered.

I will give honourable members an example. In Victoria, a voluntary scheme was offered--an open-door policy. On Friday, all the shunters at Spencer Street station lined up with their hands out. On Monday, they lined up again and came back as consultants because the railways could not operate without them. That is a ludicrous situation. The Government's voluntary retirement scheme is very clear. It provides enhanced benefits--very good benefits--for railway workers and, in turn, through them, their families, but it is applicable only where people are surplus in those grades. It is a very well-managed system. It is one that is compassionate and is designed with the best welfare of railway families at heart.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I have spoken to many people about this matter. I am not referring to what the Minister described as misinformation in newspaper articles which stated that between 6 000 and 10 000 railway workers would be made redundant.

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: If the honourable member for Brisbane Central will listen for one moment in his life, he might learn something. As I said before, not only the railway workers but also those people who use Queensland Railways will feel more secure when they understand the full implications of the new Queensland Railway structure to be put in place after September. Perhaps the Minister's rhetorical reassurances will come to fruition. Those people understand that there will be massive changes and restructuring.

Whilst they are not sure about what is to occur in their local area, they are unsure about their own employment. If the ramifications of the restructuring could be explained as expeditiously as possible, then the misinformation--whatever one calls it--and the uncertainty could be more easily addressed.

Mr HAMILL: I could not agree more with the honourable member. I will give him an illustration of the type of problem that has been encountered. In October last year, the honourable member's colleague the member for Flinders announced to all and sundry that 10 000 railway jobs were to be wiped, with 3 000 disappearing immediately.

Mr Beattie: What a disgrace!

Mr HAMILL: It was a disgrace. The fact is that both claims were absolutely untrue. Similarly, he claimed that 14 000 railway jobs would be lost from north Queensland. To begin with, there are not 14 000 railway jobs in north Queensland. He further stated that some 1 600 jobs were to go in Townsville. That is more jobs than there are in the railways department in Townsville. In addition, he cited some authority for this claim. Initially, he cited a Professor Colin Taylor. I spoke to Colin Taylor. He told me that he would not even talk to Bob Katter if Bob Katter rang him. Then the honourable member stated that it was not Colin Taylor, that it was Professor Michael Taylor from Western Australia. Contact was made with Professor Michael Taylor, who said, "Who is Mr Katter? I have never heard of him and I have never spoken to him." It turned out that the Professor Taylor to whom Mr Katter was referring was not up in Townsville talking at a transport conference; he was a geographer over from Western Australia for a conference. Certainly, the only fact that was true was that he was in Townsville. A lot of nonsense was being spoken and, as I said before, I believe that much of that nonsense was quite malicious and designed to cause maximum disturbance, concern, anguish and fear among railway workers and their families.

Mr McGrady: Shame!

Mr HAMILL: It is a shameless tactic. It is about time that members opposite desisted.

I agree with the honourable member for Carnarvon--truth will out. The process is under way and we will find at the end of that process a stronger railways than we have had for a very long time in Queensland.

Clause 4.5, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 4.6 to 5.2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6.1--

Mr VAUGHAN (2.42 p.m.): If I can say it, this clause is the real guts of the Bill. It is a complete invasion of people's privacy. It gives power to enter on a person's land. I believe that all honourable members would have read this legislation before the last recess. The clause 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."

Members of the National Party believe that, if a National Party Government had introduced this legislation, Labor Party members in Opposition would have been outraged by this clause. Queensland Railways will be given almost impunity to enter on any land in this State in which it is interested. It could be a good farming block, a grain-grower's block on the Darling Downs or any housing estate worth a lot of money to a developer or a private individual. This clause is not acceptable to the Opposition. Queensland Railways will be totally protected by this legislation. In the past, it has never occurred that anyone could invade another person's private land to that extent. The provisions of this Bill could totally wreck the suitability of land for the owner's purpose.

Mr Ardill: Have a look at the Main Roads Act.

Mr JOHNSON: I will refer to the Main Roads Act later. No doubt there are similarities between that Act and this Bill.

Mr Hamill: It is also in the old Railways Act.

Mr JOHNSON: Opposition members are concerned that this clause is so wide and gives such powers to Queensland Railways to virtually decimate good land, if that is desired. I believe that that aspect of the legislation should be looked at more closely. I do not know how deep the Minister's investigations into this clause have been, but it is certainly one that is opposed by Opposition members. At this stage, I indicate to the Minister that the Opposition will not be dividing on this point. However, I put on record that members of the National Party completely disapprove of this part of the Bill.

Mr HAMILL: Quite frankly, I find the honourable member's remarks almost unbelievable. The provisions contained in this clause relate to "Power to enter land". A subsequent clause provides that, once the Railways has entered onto land, it should do as little damage as possible to that land. In fact, provisions for compensation exist to protect the rights of land-holders. I draw the honourable member's attention to the Railways Act, which will be replaced by this legislation. As long ago as 1863, the Railways Act prescribed power for the temporary occupation of land and power to be able to take things from land and to use land consistent with the purposes of the railway. I am not quite sure to which antediluvian source the honourable member refers in his opposition to this particular provision. However, the rights of land-holders are safeguarded in this legislation. The provisions are not significantly at variance with those which have been part of railway legislation in this State for as long as railways have existed.

Mr JOHNSON: It may be that such a provision has existed from 1863, or whenever the legislation was first introduced. However, this new legislation contains no provision at all for consultation with land-owners. This greatly concerns me and most other members on this side of the Chamber. In some instances, people may have land on which they have very valuable assets. It greatly concerns me that the Railways can ride roughshod over those people.

Mr HAMILL: I can only say that the honourable member's remarks betray his failure to actually read the Bill which is before him.

Mr Prest: A small boy in a big pool.

Mr HAMILL: And drowning. If the honourable member were to read clause 6.3, he would see that it states quite clearly--

"(1) Before exercising its powers under section 6.1 or 6.2 in relation to any land, Queensland Railways is to give reasonable notice, in writing, of its intention to do so to--

(a) the owner of the land; and

(b) if the land is occupied by a person other than the owner of the land--the occupier of the land.

(2) A notice given under subsection (1) is to specify the purpose for which Queensland Railways intends to exercise its powers."

Clause 6.4 sets out the grounds upon which compensation can be paid. I only wish that the honourable member would read ahead before he makes comments which cannot be borne out by the facts.

Mr JOHNSON: In answer to the Minister--fair enough. I have read clause 6.3. However, the Railways have the power to enter land at any time. This greatly concerns me. Another clause may provide that entry on to land can be done in the right way, with protection to the land-owners. That aspect will be addressed later when the clause relating to compensation is dealt with. However, I am greatly concerned that the Railways have more power than do land-owners.

Clause 6.1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6.2--

Mr JOHNSON (2.49 p.m.): This clause is virtually a flow-on from clause 6.1. It is probable that clause 6.2 should have been incorporated in clause 6.1. This clause also greatly concerns the National Party Opposition and my colleagues in the Liberal Party, which is in total agreement with the opposition to this clause. Everyone on this side of the Chamber disapproves of clause 6.2. This clause provides for "Powers relating to construction and maintenance of railways". This clause will allow for the wrecking of any superstructure that land-owners have in place. This is a totally unacceptable provision. The list contained in the clause is nothing short of a licence to vandalise and destroy. Queensland Railways can rip the land apart, change its physical profile, alter watercourses, take timber, gravel, clear trees and dig tunnels or construct cuttings. It can even take water from any stream or storage on land owned by people. This same Government plans to implement the Wolfe recommendations about land care and management. The Government knows all about the Wolfe report and what its ramifications will be. At the same time, the Railways can, at will, destroy people's private property. In essence, that is what this clause means.

It would be a nightmare trying to run a farming or stock-raising enterprise if Queensland Railways took an interest in it, particularly a property such as a good Darling Downs grain farm, a good grazing property somewhere else or a rural subdivision in which someone had a great interest. This clause, which is a violation of people's rights, should have been incorporated in clause 6.1. In common with our stance in relation to clause 6.1, we on this side will not divide the Chamber on clause 6.2. However, we are totally opposed to it. We feel that more research and more work should have been put into it.

Mr HAMILL: Quite frankly, I find the honourable member's remarks yet again unbelievable. The provisions contained in clause 6.2 are similar in content to the existing provisions contained in sections 37 and 40 of the Railways Act. They have existed since there has been a railways system. As I made the point in relation to clause 6.1, reasonable compensation and grounds for compensation are contained in clause 6.4. Let me take the honourable member's point to its perhaps illogical conclusion. He is saying that, come any consideration whatsoever, the land-holder's rights are absolute. He is saying that a project for the community benefit cannot override in any way, shape or form a person's enjoyment of the land. That is not a principle which has been subscribed to by this Government, nor is it a principle which was subscribed to by the honourable member's party when it was in Government. In fact, no Government could subscribe to that principle. The principle to which we on this side subscribe is that where an infrastructure is being built, whether it be a rail line or a road corridor, and it is a benefit that accrues to the community as a whole--a communal enjoyment of that benefit--and where that communal benefit involves some detriment to the usage of the land by its owner or its occupier, then the owner and occupier are entitled to fair compensation. That has always been the principle that this Government has upheld. Indeed, it was the principle to which the conservatives subscribed when they were in office. I find it very surprising indeed that the honourable member has put forward a concept that is totally at variance with the way in which Government has operated in this State ever since it has had a Government.

Clause 6.2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6.3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6.4--

Mr JOHNSON (2.54 p.m.): This clause is of great concern to the Opposition, and I foreshadow an amendment to it. This clause calls on Queensland Railways to cause "as little detriment, inconvenience and damage, as is practicable". It also calls for rent at an agreed rate, and the payment of compensation for damage of a temporary or

permanent nature. The rub comes when agreement on compensation cannot be reached. The Bill calls for a determination in the Land Court. The future of the Land Court worries me greatly. If the court is to remain, the determination of that compensation will form the majority of the cases that it handles.

The Minister betrays his absolute lack of any common sense that would be gained from working in the real world. That most people would go broke while waiting for the hearing of an appeal in the Land Court greatly worries the Opposition. Many people have been waiting a long time for their appeals to be heard in the Land Court. I ask the Minister to reconsider this matter with the Minister for Land Management. It is up to the Minister to formulate a system that will give a land-holder access to immediate justice. If he does not, many people will be ruined by what Queensland Railways will do to their properties and the businesses that they operate thereon.

I believe that Queensland Railways still has the ability to do virtually what it wants to do. That worries me greatly. As I said in relation to clauses 6.1 and 6.2, we are not here for a holiday, we are here to protect and look after the interests of our fellow Queenslanders. I am not opposed to new railway schemes being introduced and new railway lines being constructed. I am concerned about retaining the existing railway lines. This Bill should contain a compensation clause that widens the parameters of land-holders in the event of new structure being laid down by Queensland Railways. As I discussed previously with the Minister, it is only fair that we look after the interests of those people. The Minister knows that an organisation such as Queensland Railways has greater access to the courts system than does the ordinary man in the street. Therefore, I move the following amendments--

"At page 18, line 36, omit--

'and' ";

"At page 18, line 39, insert--

'and' ";

"At page 18, line 40, insert--

'(c) loss of income or business trading, either temporary or permanent, as a result of the disruption caused by Queensland Railways.' "

Mr HAMILL: The honourable member's amendments are well intentioned but wide of the mark, as indeed were a number of his comments during this debate. Clause 6.4 adequately puts in place the means for fair compensation for land-holders and the occupiers of land for the usage of their property. I draw the attention of honourable members to the words "such rent or compensation as is determined by the Land Court". Provision exists for compensation by way of rental to be paid for the temporary occupation of a person's land.

To analyse the honourable member's amendments would be to embark upon some very difficult territory indeed. I come back to the question: what is a community benefit? Constructing or maintaining community benefits can produce short-term disadvantages to individuals. However, in all cases we must weigh up the overall community benefit and should not impede that benefit simply because an individual suffers a short-term disadvantage. For example, a local authority that resolves to repair a road and fill in its potholes may well cause a disruption to traffic outside a shop-keeper's premises. Should that shop-keeper then have a right of action against that local authority for doing what it is supposed to do, namely, providing a decent thoroughfare to the benefit of the community? I suggest not. If the local authority acts negligently and causes damage, certainly there is a right of action. But if a public authority or utility is doing work of a community benefit, surely the honourable member's proposition is inappropriate. Consequently, the Government cannot accept his amendments.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: This issue seems to be similar to the issues raised during the debate about mining exploration companies and land-owners. Has the Minister considered the developments that have taken place in regard to access to land and compensation

to land-owners for loss of income that developed out of the protracted discussions that took place three, four and five years ago when this legislation was first formulated? It would seem to me that, in that context, we developed some wording and some actions that are more detailed than the provisions contained in the Bill before us.

Question--That the word and expression proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause--put; and the Committee divided--

AYES, 42

NOES, 27

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 6.4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 6.5 to 6.9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6.10--

Mr HAMILL (3.08 p.m.): I wish to move an amendment to this clause. I apologise for having to do this in the Committee. However, upon proofreading the Bill, it was decided that some words should be deleted. I therefore move the following amendment--

"At page 22, line 28, omit--

'Queensland Railways or the Commissioner for Railways,'."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6.10, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 6.11 to 6.21, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7.1 to 7.12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7.13--

Mr JOHNSON (3.10 p.m.): This clause really provides for invasion of privacy, because it commences--

"Any police officer who--

(a) finds any person committing;

or

(b) believes on reasonable grounds that any person has committed or is about to commit;

on any land vested in or under the control of Queensland Railways, any offence against this Act, may require that person to state their name or address (or both) and, if the police officer believes on reasonable grounds that the name or address

(or both) stated is false, may require evidence of the correctness of the name or address (or both)."

That might be fair enough for a police officer, but subclause (2) provides the same powers for an inspector. If an inspector forms the opinion that a passenger is about to commit a crime against the State, he has the same power as a police officer. It seems that every Bill passing through this House has some connection with the police and with the invasion of privacy. The old saying is that everybody is presumed innocent until proven guilty. These powers are far too extensive. If the passenger refuses to give his or her name, that person will virtually be called a criminal and will have to give a reason for that refusal. Subclause (4) reads--

"When required under this section to produce evidence of the correctness of any particulars a person is not to--

(a) refuse or fail to produce that evidence;

or

(b) produce false evidence with respect to those particulars."

That offence attracts 20 penalty units. We should be trying to place or create confidence in people, but it seems to me that we are not trusting people. I believe that the Committee should disapprove of this clause. We in the Opposition are totally opposed to it. It is nothing but an invasion of privacy.

Mr HAMILL: The honourable member's comments this afternoon never cease to amaze me. On the one hand, the argument has been put that Queensland Railways should not enter onto land in order to maintain or construct the network. On the other hand, the honourable member is now opposing powers for police and train inspectors to seek the name of a person committing or seeking to commit an offence on a train. All of the offences are set out in clause 7.12. The Government is very proud of the measures taken to enhance passenger safety on trains. We have sought to upgrade the suburban passenger network and have engaged security officers on those trains, so we are affording passengers a greater measure of protection.

I find it quite extraordinary that the honourable member would insult the intelligence of members of this Parliament by arguing against power being given to obtain the name and address of a person who is committing an offence of wilful damage of the type that occurred a couple of months ago when vandals threw a slab of concrete on the railway line and caused extensive damage to a passenger train. Fortunately, on that occasion, no lives were lost and no injuries occurred, but as recently as the other day, steel girders were placed on a rail track. I find it extraordinary that the honourable member would condone that type of behaviour and would deny the police or a train inspector the right to seek the name or address of a person who is causing that type of damage.

This provision contrasts quite clearly with the police powers that the National Party sought to have enacted, because this clause merely allows the police officer or the inspector to seek the name or address of a person who has committed an offence or who is believed on reasonable grounds by the inspector or the police to have committed, or to be about to commit, such an offence. If this had been National Party legislation, the provision would have given power to obtain thumbprints, toeprints, palmprints and headprints--and any other sort of prints. The clause merely provides power to obtain the name and address of the person involved. The clause hardly contains a pernicious policing power; rather, it contains a very proper power for the running of a railway service that passengers can enjoy without having to worry about the activities of vandals.

Mr JOHNSON: The part of the clause to which I refer states--

"(b) believes on reasonable grounds that any person has committed or is about to commit;".

This gives a police officer the power to require a person to give his name and address. Subclause (2) states, in part--

"(2) An inspector who--

(b) believes on reasonable grounds that a person has committed or is about to commit;".

I am not saying that anybody who commits an offence or causes damage to Queensland Railways property should not be apprehended or arrested. I have no time for those people, and I suggest that no-one in the Opposition would have any time for them. However, when the provision is based on suspicion, the question must be asked: are we supposed to be mind-readers? My concern illustrates the whole problem with the justice system in this State. If the justice system imposed appropriate penalties on some of the people who are convicted, Queensland may not be a bad place in which to live. In this instance, members of Parliament are persecuting people who have not been convicted, and this is what I am concerned about.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: The Minister shakes his head, but I am concerned about the effect of that part of the clause.

Mr HAMILL: I can only express my dismay at the naivety of the honourable member and at his claims in respect of this provision. Let me put forward a scenario. A couple of months ago, a derailment occurred at Sandgate. It is presumed that vandals took slabs of concrete and put them across the tracks. If a police officer or train inspector had come along and noticed that there was a slab of concrete on the tracks and then saw a couple of people moving another slab of concrete, is the honourable member saying that that police officer or train inspector should not be able to ask them for their names or addresses, based on the reasonable expectation that they may have been the culprits who moved the initial slabs? That is the type of situation the provision is designed to deal with, and it hardly amounts to pernicious policing powers.

I will consider the honourable member's argument on its own terms. He is saying that the authorities would never be able to identify people who are causing damage to trains or railway facilities unless the police officer or inspector actually saw them committing the offence, or unless the offenders were caught red-handed. He is saying that there can be no grounds for a police officer or train inspector to believe on reasonable grounds that a person has committed an offence or is about to commit an offence. If the Government were to adopt that attitude, the police and the train inspector would be rendered virtually powerless.

Mr JOHNSON: I think the Minister is misunderstanding what I am talking about.

Mr Ardill: You have not read the Bill.

Mr JOHNSON: I have read the Bill, but I doubt that the honourable member has. At no stage did I say that a person who is carrying out wilful destruction should not be apprehended. This clause seems to be based on a person who looks suspicious. How does anyone know whether or not a person looks suspicious? The person involved has to be doing something that will cause damage to Queensland Railways. The clause contemplates the apprehension of someone who has not done anything, and that is what concerns me greatly. I place on record that it is the view of every member of the opposition parties that anybody who wilfully destroys the property of QR or is proven to have done so should not be defended. There is no way in the world we would stand up for that person, but in considering this clause we are talking about somebody who is suspected.

Question--That clause 7.13, as read, stand part of the Bill--put; and the Committee divided--

AYES, 41

NOES, 27

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 7.14 to 8.10, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

Third Reading

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

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE (ROADS) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 April (see p. 7099).

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (3.29 p.m.): This Bill has ramifications for a number of wider issues. The most important point that needs to be brought to the attention of the House is the fundamental change that the Bill will implement in the way in which accounting and financing is conducted in the Roads Division of the Transport Department. No longer will registration moneys flow automatically into the coffers of the Roads Division; they will go into consolidated revenue. The implication of that change in funding arrangements is that registration fees will no longer be a way of financing roads but a way of raising revenue for the Government. Anyone who saw this move as anything other than a cynical manoeuvre paving the way for the introduction of a road tax in this State would be kidding himself in a fairly magnificent manner. By channelling registration fees into consolidated revenue, the Bill provides the opportunity for the introduction of a road tax.

The second issue which I wish to address concerns the general concept of the removal of the Minister from the decision-making process. In fairness to the Minister, I concede that the creation of a giant portfolio such as the one he is administering must make it difficult for him to handle the day-to-day running of his department. The Bill ensures that he cannot be blamed or held culpable--at least, that is what he will claim--for anything that goes wrong in the administration of roads in Queensland. However, we can rest assured that he will be claiming credit for anything that goes well and denying responsibility for anything that goes badly. Any move that makes the people more remote from decision-making is a move against the principles of democracy and a move against better Government.

Because of the Bill's general concept, that is, that decisions will be made by a more remote bureaucratic system rather than a more immediate system, the Opposition opposes

it in toto. I do not wish to bore the House by detailing each provision that delivers that concept. However, previously funding in excess of \$120,000 had to be referred to Cabinet; now it does not. That is one of many examples which exist in the Bill relating to the introduction of remoteness from the parliamentary processes and the control of the people. It is the second concept of the Bill to which the Opposition objects strongly.

I now want to talk about the general thrust of the Bill in more detail. The Opposition will be objecting very strongly--both publicly and in this Chamber--to one particular clause. I refer to the clause that requires that the permission of what was the Main Roads Department be obtained for all subdivisions contiguous to a declared road or contiguous to a road that may in future become a declared road. It is an unpleasant and unhappy fact that widespread allegations have been made about corruption and the influencing of Government decision-making by corrupt people who have paid moneys to have certain decisions made. If ever I saw a manoeuvre that would once again expose the people of Queensland to those sorts of dangers, whether they be imagined or whether they be real, it is this particular manoeuvre. Every person who wants to carry out a subdivision in Queensland is going to have to be very nice to the regional director, or whatever the title is of the person in charge at Main Roads--whatever it is called these days. One has tremendous difficulty keeping up with these names; they change every five minutes. Whatever the title is of the person in charge in Main Roads, he will have immense power and the whole system will be open, in a very unfortunate and unpleasant manner, to corrupt practices. It is very hard to believe that people will not try to ingratiate themselves with Main Roads officers when the disposition of such a large amount of money will be so enormously dependent upon decisions made by Main Roads.

Quite apart from that consideration--exposure to these grave dangers, about which so much has been said--is the fact that yet another bureaucratic imposition is being made upon anyone who wishes to act in any manner whatsoever in this State. A person who recently asked for permission to set up a giant clam farm on Fitzroy Island informed me that he had to get 23 permits, permissions and licences to start operation. This took a period of seven years, and that person is still waiting to start. That industry was very important to Queensland. Yet Ministers such as the Transport Minister can make decisions with gay abandon that impose yet another layer of bureaucratic structures upon anyone who wishes to create jobs in Queensland. In the case of a subdivision, jobs are invariably involved. Somebody is going to build houses or buildings upon subdivided land. That is why land is subdivided. Yet another bureaucratic layer, yet another hurdle that people have to jump, yet another time delay that in many cases will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars, will be imposed and added to the cost of a piece of land in this State. This requirement is totally unnecessary.

The system that has operated up until now has worked amazingly well. I do not think that I have ever heard any member of this Parliament complain about the existing system. To create another huge bureaucratic structure and impose it upon one of the most basic development proposals in the State at any time--the subdivision of land--is an example of the sort of impositions that have been made upon the working and risk-taking class in this State and this nation. The working and risk-taking class has been crippled and the economy of the nation has collapsed because Ministers can impose with gay abandon yet another bureaucratic structure upon these people. When honourable members vote for this clause, they should understand that they are condoning the sorts of impositions that have created the disastrous economy in Australia today. The Opposition objects in the strongest possible terms to the changes that are proposed in this clause.

During my time as a member of this Parliament--most certainly in the party room and on two or three occasions in this Chamber--I have not crossed the floor but I have absented myself from the Chamber when vicarious liability has been involved, that is, when a person can be blamed for something that he simply has not done and for which he is really in no way culpable. I understand the Minister's concerns and the concerns of the bureaucrats about the difficulty in regard to prosecution of road-users, particularly

in the case of offences involving overweight trucks. I understand the sorts of forces that have worked upon the Minister and led him to introduce this proposed change. But one cannot blame the truck-owner for something that the truckie does. Those honourable members who have mixed with truckies will be aware that at times they can be a pretty wild bunch. It is the nature of the job that they do. If one wants the job to get done, one needs people like them to do it. They are prepared to do a very tough job, to be away from home for protracted periods and to take advantage of any opportunity that is afforded to them to earn a quid. I can understand the types of forces that have worked upon the department and the Minister to propose what is a complete abrogation of the principles of British justice, such as the reverse onus of proof and vicarious liability, which has made countries such as Australia enviable places in which to live. For those members in the House who are not familiar with the term "vicarious liability", it means people can be blamed for having done something even though they have not done it.

Mr Hamill: That's a fairly bodgie piece of law.

Mr KATTER: I accept the interjection from the Minister.

Mr Hamill: That's a fairly bodgie piece of law that you are expounding. That's about master and servant, employer/employee relationships. It's a basic part of British justice.

Mr KATTER: If the Minister is saying that a concept of reverse onus of proof or blaming somebody for something that he has not done is an acceptable practice, I most certainly hope that the Government never makes him the Minister for Justice. Honourable members can only hope that he is not moved over to that portfolio. In fact, because of the assistance that he has been able to give the National Party in the State, I would hate him to be moved out of the portfolio that he is in.

Most certainly, in the Nundah hotels at which I was campaigning, it was very gratifying to hear the remarks made by the people with whom I spent a considerable number of pleasant hours.

Mr Hamill: Have you been hanging around bars?

Mr KATTER: Unfortunately, that is a vice that I have to own up to.

However, I will return to the Bill. A very tough and rough and ready bunch of people, the truckies of the Queensland, at times are wont to do things which they should not do: make the trucking industry of this State one of the most efficient industries in Australia. In fact, the livestock hauliers of this State——

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr KATTER: I hear laughter, scorn and derision from the Government benches. I can state to honourable members that the livestock hauliers in this State are carting for much the same price now as that for which they were carting nearly 40 years ago. Can any honourable member tell me any other industry in Australia, or in the world for that matter, that is being paid the same amount of money now as it was being paid nearly 40 years ago when the industry commenced? If one wants that sort of performance, one has to have the sort of tough men who man the big rigs. Of their very nature, they are people who do not worry too much about whether the load is a bit more than it should be or whether some other particular problem exists. I am not for one moment trying to justify that type of action. However, to say to a person who owns the truck that he will be liable, even though he has absolutely no knowledge and has given very specific and detailed written instructions—I think that many of them do this—that the laws of Queensland are not to be broken by the person who drives the truck, and then to blame him when the laws are broken is unfair. As all honourable members know, that can occur.

The roads in my area were closed for three months of this year. Because the roads are closed, the truckie goes down to the local hotel and has a few sherbets. Having spent

a pleasant afternoon with the boys, he is not over the limit to drive a truck but he is in a pretty merry frame of mind. Upon seeing a big sign up advising not to drive on the road, he says, "I am going to drive on the road." As a result, he does a million dollars worth of damage and his boss has to find the \$1m for the damage or be bankrupted. That is what the Government is proposing by this Bill, that the owner of that truck is vicariously liable, even though he has given specific recommendations——

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr KATTER: I am quite happy to take an interjection from the Minister. He is laughing. If that statement is incorrect, I ask the Minister to tell me. I would like to know so that the Opposition will not waste the time of the House by calling for a division.

Mr Hamill: I can assure you that I am laughing at you, not with you.

Mr KATTER: The Minister laughs at me constantly and regularly. In fact, I took great delight in taking to all my railway men his speech in the House where he interjected and called me a fool on 15 occasions——

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member has misrepresented me. I never said he was a fool. I said only that he was mad.

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

Mr KATTER: He called me mad and a fool and various other things. All I can say is that I was very pleased to be able to take those denigrating remarks horde to show to my people. Some of them thought that I was not being harsh enough upon the Minister. After they saw the type of remarks that were made by the Minister, it was quite clear that there was a very strong antagonism between the two of us. I thank the Minister for his remarks and hope he continues with them.

During the whole of a debate on railway matters in the House, I presented eight separate pieces of hard evidence that railway jobs were to be taken away. In his speech the Minister did not make a single, solitary reference to the evidence that I had presented in the House and that I asked him to address. Again here today I have stated that a person who owns two or three trucks—some little battler who is trying to make a quid for himself and for his family and his country—is going to be wiped out completely even though he is totally innocent. He can have the most reliable of truck-drivers. Anyone who knows truck-drivers will agree that the type of scenario that I have painted during this debate is not only probable but also one that we can expect to be repeated again and again. Yet, if any significant damage is caused to the road pavement, the truck-owner probably will be liable for up to \$1m.

Opposition members do not have the advantage that Government members have of having specialists available to assist them with the interpretation of the legislation. If my interpretation is incorrect, I invite the Minister to interject and advise me that I am incorrect. He has not. He has only called me a fool, and that is something that he does fairly regularly. If the Minister wants to say that I am incorrect in my statements, [will gratefully accept any advice that he wishes to give. However, on my reading of the Bill, that is the position that prevails. It is just another nail in the coffin of the small business operators of Queensland. Most of the carriage is being done by small operators, because they work for virtually nothing. The big boys find it a lot better to use them than to actually own the trucks themselves. They do not expose themselves to the terrible liabilities that are being imposed by the outrageous proposal that is being put forward in this Bill, namely, to hold the owners of those trucks vicariously liable. That is the situation that will prevail from now on.

People who are employers—the job-creators, the risk-taking class in society—say again and again to the Government, "You are putting so many impositions upon us that we do not want to be in business any more; we want to get out." That is what is happening across Australia. I do not think there is anyone, even on the opposite side

of the House, who does not honestly know that that is what is occurring in the community. The Government must understand the huge burden of oppression that this legislation is placing upon the working and risk-taking people of Australia. It is creating dangers and traumas. It was sad to read in today's newspaper that the number of suicides in this State has risen dramatically. That is clear-cut, objective evidence of the way in which many people are suffering a life of misery, hardship, worry and torment. That suffering will worsen as a result of this legislation and its proposal for vicarious liability.

I have spoken about the general background against which this legislation has been introduced. We on this side applaud minor parts of the legislation which we think are good moves that will streamline the operation of the department. But it is being introduced against a background of the creation of an underlying structural system whereby moneys received from the registration of vehicles will go into consolidated revenue. Whereas those registration moneys once went directly into roads, now they will become part of a revenue-generating exercise for the Government. When that happens, it will be a very sad day for Queensland. When the Federal Government introduced a road tax, it received about \$1,000m a year. All of that money was spent on roads. At present, about \$7,000m a year is raised by way of a road tax and only about \$1.3m or \$1.4m is spent on roads. The imposition of that road tax has been a massive revenue-raising exercise for that Government. We can see the same thing happening in this State with the socialist Government going down exactly the same road as the Federal Government went down. Instead of putting registration moneys into roads, the first move will be to put them into consolidated revenue, and consolidated revenue will be able to take whatever percentage it likes. We can rest assured that, as the years pass, that percentage will increase.

The other matters that the Opposition wishes to take the Minister to task on relate to the remoteness of decision-making. The Minister will no longer make the decisions in the department, they will be made by the bureaucrats. As a result, the people of Queensland will be very much removed from the control of the bureaucratic arm. Neither the Minister nor anyone else in this House would deny that that is what is contained in the Bill. The Opposition sees two other objectives as being the more obnoxious elements in the Bill. The first relates to the issue of contiguous lands onto declared roads and the requirement for subdivision. The second highly obnoxious aspect, as far as we on this side are concerned, is the concept—or whatever one wants to call it—of blaming a person who has had no responsibility for, or who has in no way whatsoever been responsible for, the law-breaking event that has occurred. In most cases, such events would probably relate to overloading or driving on roads when it was not permissible so to do.

I point out to the Minister that, during the wet season, I approached his office in an endeavour to persuade him to reopen the Flinders Highway. I sympathise with him, because it was a great and grave risk to him to reopen that highway against the advice of technical staff who said that it was dangerous. The Flinders Highway was closed to commercial traffic such as heavy vehicles. All of the commercial operations in the midwest and far west of north Queensland came to a standstill for three months. Quite frankly, I cannot remember, before the sealing of that highway, that road ever being out of use for three months of the year. For a quarter of the entire year, road transportation was unable to use that road. In addition, the railways were out of action for a significant proportion of that time. Surface transportation was affected. Part of the reason for Mount Isa Mines' massive cut-back was that, during that period, its production levels dropped because it could not get the product from Mount Isa to Townsville. I regret very much that MIM did not contact me sooner than it did. I think it was trying desperately to hold off for as long as possible before going to the Opposition. Over a period of three months, MIM received absolutely no satisfaction from the Government.

The cattle and sheep operators in the area, the shearers, contractors and all the other people who depend upon those industries had no work for a quarter of the year. Although it was a big wet season, it was nowhere near the biggest wet season that has occurred. I can remember three or four wet seasons that were bigger. Once every three

or four years, people in that area lose the use of their highway for three months of the year. All sorts of technical mumbo jumbo was forthcoming about the angle of deflection on the road being such that no vehicles could be allowed to travel on it. That is all very well. If the Minister seriously considers that this State has an operational road system when one particular sealed highway can be used for only nine of the 12 months of the year, then I say to him that there is no road system or communication system operating at all. By not intervening in that case, the Minister must take full responsibility for the commercial carnage and economic destruction that was wrought on the mid-west region of north Queensland, and what we know is the north-west region of the State as well.

I sympathise with the Minister to some degree, because technical evidence was put to him, as it was to me. However, the bullet should have been bitten and that road should have been opened. This legislation puts a great deal more power into the hands of the people who made those decisions and curtails very significantly the Minister's ability to be able to intervene in those cases. I am deeply disappointed that this year the Minister did not intervene in that particular case. Because of these structures that the Minister is putting in place, it is becoming increasingly impossible for him to intervene. Because of the way that the system works, people complain to their local member of Parliament who then rings the Minister's office. The Minister should react to that sort of pressure. Because of these proposals, the Minister cannot intervene even if he wants to or has the courage to do so. Ultimately, he can sack all of the people involved, but it is very rare that a Minister would go to those lengths to solve a problem. A Minister should not have to do that. I use that issue to demonstrate graphically to the House and to turn into pounds, shillings and pence—to use the old-fashioned jargon—the sorts of problems that exist and are being created and exacerbated by this Bill. Many less important issues and other aspects of the Bill that the Opposition does not like will be discussed at the Committee stage.

Mr NUNN (Isis) (3.55 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I support the Minister in his intention to replace the former Main Roads Act with a Bill that will adjust to the changes that have occurred since 1920 when that Act was passed. During the ensuing 70 years, there has been no fundamental review of the Main Roads Act, which has had bits added to it, bits removed and other bits altered. It should really be known as the ad hoc Main Roads Act, because that is what it is. Although it was within the scope of the previous Government to do something about the legislation, it chose not to—probably for its own reasons—and I am not about to question it.

It is the Government's intention to make the legislation easier to understand. In all sections the legislation is expressed in the quaint language of a past era. The old blokes who drafted the Magna Carta would have been really proud of this legislation as it stands today. The fact remains that the only people who understand the old Act are some very old public servants. Honourable members would know them. They are the ones with the ear trumpets. They are the only ones who would understand the old Act, which is full of obsolete and irrelevant provisions that mean nothing in today's circumstances. It is necessary to make substantive changes that will improve the effectiveness of the whole organisation and simplify various administrative procedures. I believe that it goes without saying that many Acts and departments need simplification.

I intend to speak about the opening-up of avenues of appeal contained within the new Bill. As all members would be aware, the Government is committed to open and honest dealings with the public. Therefore, it is necessary and important to provide for appeals against particular decisions. It is reasonable to suppose that the appeals process will help to keep all parties on not only an honest course but also a fair and reasonable one. The Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Bill has incorporated appropriate internal and, external appeal mechanisms against particular decisions that affect people. Alternatively, those people have the right to utilise other existing administrative law appeal mechanisms that are available outside the Act. Existing appeal provisions have been reviewed in this Bill. I refer to the summary of them contained in chart 10.3 of the Outline of Bill document contained within the Explanatory Notes. That chart contains a simple, direct

set of mechanisms whereby appeals may be made either to the Minister, the State Supreme Court, the Land Court or the Local Government Court. It even contains a provision for an internal appeal on administrative arrangements. Obviously, the previous speaker read selectively from the Bill. He read only those parts with which he is intent on scaremongering the population at large.

Mr Ardill: That's typical of him.

Mr NUNN: It is typical of him. He did it with the railways Bill. Any figures that he proposes to put forward should be ignored. When the member spoke about the railways legislation he mentioned a figure of 10 000 job losses, and then changed it to 6 000. From private conversations that I have had, I believe that one could take a figure anywhere between those two figures, or even outside them. One cannot take too much notice of what the honourable member said.

Some of the more significant matters in the Bill are worthy of further explanation. Clause 2.12 gives authority to the corporation to obtain from local authorities information that pertains to roadworks. Such a provision exists in section 34 of the current Main Roads Act. However, this Bill has added a protective mechanism for a local authority to appeal to the Minister for Transport against what it considers to be an unreasonable request. Again, provision exists for an appeal and protection exists for the appellant. Inter alia, clause 3.4 of the Bill provides that a local authority may appeal to the Minister for Transport against a proposal by the corporation to declare a local authority road to be a declared road, that is, a road that is to be the responsibility of the Transport Department. Given the cost of maintaining roads, I have a deep suspicion that the number of appeals by local authorities to the Minister will be few. Under the Acts Interpretation Act 1954-90, it follows that an appeal lies against a proposal for a declared road reverting to the responsibility of a local authority. Clause 3.4 also allows appeals against proposals to change the classification of a declared road, limitation of access or its status as a motorway. I mention that only to show that the appeal process exists. It is not new. Similar appeal mechanisms exist in the current Main Roads Act.

Clause 3.7 of the Bill enables the corporation to place restrictions on the means of access to and from any land that is contiguous with a declared road. A similar provision exists in section 21A of the Main Roads Act. However, unlike the current Act, this Bill allows an appeal to the Minister concerning a total prohibition against direct access to and from a declared road. Of course, compensation is payable in that situation. Again, the Opposition spokesman had not read the Bill. I will grant him that he read the first part of it, but at about that time his concentration span ran out and he did not read on. He should have read subclause (2), which addresses any concerns that he has about the first subclause. Clause 3.7 (2) states—

"The Corporation is not to make a determination under subsection (1) (b) or (c) totally prohibiting access unless it is reasonable and necessary for the present or future safety and convenience of road users or the efficiency of the road system in the vicinity of the land."

What is his argument against that? I remind the honourable member that any responsible local authority would do what that clause states. I do not know what he was talking about. He said that the Minister called him a fool and that he was insulted. I thought that the Minister praised him.

Local authorities can approve subdivisions on certain terms and conditions. Under their by-laws, that has always been possible. When the land is contiguous with a declared road, it is sensible that those terms and conditions take into account the effects of any proposed subdivision on the proposed road. The Bill places a requirement on the local authorities to refer such applications and to not approve applications for subdivision without the consent of the corporation. That is just what I said before. I emphasise that the Bill provides safeguards in every respect. Currently, local authorities have a legislative requirement to consider the impact only on declared roads that are subject to limitation of access. Whilst most local authorities cooperate with the corporation, that discretionary requirement is an inconsistent approach to dealings with developers. In many of the

Bills that the Government is introducing, we are trying to get rid of that inconsistency. Members may be reassured by the fact that an appeal mechanism has been provided for the local authority to appeal to the Minister if it considers that the corporation's requirements are unreasonable or if it has failed or refused to consent.

Clause 3.15 provides the mechanism for determining compensation where access to or from a declared road has been affected. If no agreement can be reached as to whether compensation is payable or as to the amount of compensation, the Bill provides for an appeal to be made to the Land Court. When the corporation temporarily occupies private land for the duration of construction of a road project or for use as a temporary road, clause 7.9 of the Bill provides for compensation for physical damage to the land. Appeals against the amount of compensation are made to the Land Court, which is the mechanism that is already established for land-related issues. The Opposition spokesman complained about the time taken by the Land Court to hear certain matters. However, he must remember that the Land Act is complex. Land Court decisions are never taken lightly, although some complaints have been made at times that the Land Court is inclined to be a bit conservative. If a backlog of cases exists in the Land Court, surely the previous Government must take some responsibility for it. The former Government could have done something about the mechanisms, but it did not. It was probably a wise decision not to interfere with the processes of the Land Court.

Members will see from those few examples that the Government is conscious of the rights of people who are affected by Government decisions and has protected those rights through the extension of not only appropriate appeal mechanisms but also compensation provisions in the Bill. I applaud the Minister for his endeavour to widen the appeals process and to include the compensation provisions. I support the Bill.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong--Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.05 p.m.): The legislation before the House is very important. It puts in place the Minister's favourite child, the superdepartment--the Department of Transport. When I read the legislation and the Minister's introductory remarks, I was interested to note that they contained no indication of what savings will be made and what benefits will flow to the people of Queensland. Since the Government came to office, we have seen a number of people appointed and others reappointed, and the department has been rearranged. A great many changes have occurred. However, at the end of the day, apart from a great deal of confusion, very few benefits have flowed. Certainly, we have a number of wonderful-sounding terms such as executive managers, executive directors, and principal advisers. That is all very well, but one must ask what benefits will accrue to the people of Queensland? I contend that, to date, very few benefits have flowed to the people of this great State following the rearrangement of the superdepartment.

The previous Department of Main Roads was a very efficient, effective department in its operations. In travelling around the State, I talked to people who have had a great deal of involvement with the department. They had nothing but praise for it. That department was one of the Government's most efficient operations. Unfortunately, with all of the changes that have occurred and because it takes time to adjust to those, we do not hear the same words of congratulations about the new Department of Transport. Therefore, to make his new Department of Transport--his superdepartment--work and function effectively in the interests of the people of this State, the Minister should give it a great deal more attention.

One of the previous speakers mentioned road-funding. According to the Minister's speech and the changes that have been made, the Government will not have a separate fund for roads. The funds will be placed in the Consolidated Revenue Fund, out of which the Government will be able to take more or less funding for roads. The Government of the day might decide that some of the funds could be used for other than road purposes and, to make up those funds, might consider, for instance, horrific increases in registration fees or the introduction of a road tax. From reading the small print, I do not think that benefits will flow through to the people of this State by simply

allowing for the funds to go through consolidated revenue. In one line of his second-reading speech, the Minister glibly overlooks the very significant change that that can have on road-funding in this State.

At the end of this financial year, because of the economic situation, we could find that there has been a cutback in road-funding over the past 12 months. I would like to know from the Minister how the road funding allocation is proceeding and whether the full allocation will be spent this financial year. This is a particularly important area. Queensland is very reliant on road transport and all Queenslanders are wary of how the Government spends road funds. People have been bitten too often by what has happened federally. The Federal Government started off taking a few cents per litre of petrol. Over a period, the amount taken has grown until now more than half the cost of a litre of petrol goes to the Federal Government by way of fuel tax. The State receives only a meagre portion of that amount for roadworks.

We do not want the same sort of situation to arise under the current regime because it is this Government's Labor colleagues in Canberra who have made an art form of transferring to one purpose funds raised specifically for another purpose. Until recently, this has allowed the Federal Treasurer to declare a large surplus, but that will not be the case this year because the credit will be required to prop up the Budget and keep it out of the red. Under this State Government, road-funding has played a low-key role. We have not seen the Minister tackling his Federal colleagues for road funds and that is very disappointing. The previous National Party Government did that and the Liberal Party campaigned vigorously over the years for a greater share of road-funding to ensure that the State's very important infrastructure was not only maintained but improved. Road-funding is very important because the Government is considering the closure of railway lines that are uneconomic. If there are to be changes to the rail service because of the economic situation, it is terribly important that there be an improvement to the roads particularly those leading to country towns. The people in those areas must be assured of an adequate transport service. So I again ask the Minister, if there are to be changes made to Queensland Railways, to give very careful consideration to increased road-funding to make sure that the roads are upgraded.

Local authorities have always been the thin end of the wedge or have drawn the short straw in any cut-backs in road-funding. We all know how road-funding has been cut back in recent times, and this has meant that many local authorities have been forced to tear up bitumen roads and convert them into gravel roads. The people living in the areas where that has happened are starting to question the Government's wisdom in closing some railway lines, particularly when the roads are not good. This is happening in many country areas, and some of them are not very far from Brisbane.

Mr Elliott: It is happening now on the downs.

Mr BEANLAND: Yes, it is happening in a number of nearby areas. The people living in those areas are starting to feel the pinch of the attitude of this Government. It has happened in areas such as Hervey Bay, the Darling Downs, central Queensland and north Queensland. The local authorities have suffered a great deal through the general cut-backs in road-funding. The legislation refers to the franchising of roads, that is, the toll road system. I will not talk at length on this subject but I hope that the Minister will explain his broken promise to the people on the Sunshine Coast in relation to the Sunshine Motorway. I know that the honourable member for Landsborough will speak at length on that matter. It is disappointing that the Minister has not come to the party and honoured the very clear Labor Party election commitment to the people on the Sunshine Coast in relation to the Sunshine Motorway.

I want to say something about road safety. Again this is a very important area in funding. Recently, an allocation has been made to overcome some of the black spots, that is, the dangerous sections of our road system. But nowhere near enough has been provided for a worthwhile program to remove all the black spots. Unless additional funding comes from the Federal Government--not the half-hearted attempt we have

seen from the Federal Minister--we will not be able to get on with this program. The Bruce Highway, which is part of Highway 1, is still far from satisfactory and is another project in need of increased funding from the Federal Government. In spite of that need, not one single word has been said by Queensland's Minister for Transport. It could be that he is too busy creating his superdepartment and changing personnel, but his juggling of departments from one hand to the other does not gain benefits for the people of this State. The people of Queensland know that they are being ripped off by the Minister's Federal Labor colleagues.

I believe that the Labor Government has failed to campaign for the removal of sales tax from safety items. In recent times, there has not been very much activity on the part of the Government in relation to road safety. The bicycle helmet wearing campaign started six months late because of a lack of Government funds. This is unfortunate, especially when it seems that there are adequate funds to fly the Government jet around this State and when it is remembered that this Government has three jets, which is one more than the previous Government had. In spite of that, basic funding that is required to implement the bicycle helmet wearing campaign is not available. I point out to the Minister that this is a very important matter for young people. I hope that, as the campaign has now begun, the people of Queensland will see a greater involvement on the part of the Government as it brings its publicity machine to bear to encourage young people to wear safety helmets.

I ask the Minister to clarify the Government's position in relation to the Inter-State Commission's report on road use charges and vehicle registration. As the Parliament is considering the changes that will be brought about by this Bill, and because representatives of many of this State's industries are alarmed at the huge costs with which they will suddenly be faced if the recommendations are implemented, I believe it is an appropriate time for the Government to spell out its position. Grain industry representatives believe that costs would increase by 6.5 per cent, or a total of \$12m in the first year of the report's implementation. This increase would then lead to increased costs of approximately \$7m in subsequent years--and those costs relate to one industry only. All types of industry, including the tourism industry, could be affected by the Inter-State Commission's report and recommendations, and this could mean that tens of millions of dollars will be added to transport costs in this large and diversified State. The discussion of this Bill is an opportune time for the Minister to spell out the Government's position in relation to this report. Many people in this State are concerned about its ramifications. I notice that in more recent times the Government has been curiously silent about these recommendations.

The legislation contains some good provisions that will assist in resolving a number of problems. On the whole, this legislation will have the effect of updating the Main Roads Act and will enshrine the policies that the Labor Government has wanted to put in place since it came to office.

Mrs EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha) (4.19 p.m.): It comes as no surprise to me that the Opposition will oppose the Bill. The only role I have noticed the Opposition playing in this Parliament is providing a negative response and opposition to all reforms. However, it comes as some surprise to me that the Opposition opposes the Bill because it provides for some separation of responsibility from the Minister's portfolio because each other piece of legislation that has come before the Parliament has been opposed by members of the Opposition on the ground that it provided for more responsibility to be given to a Minister--a prospect that terrifies them. This Bill replaces the Main Roads Act 1920-1990. The Main Roads Act was passed in 1921 and has been amended many times since that date. As the member for Isis indicated, there has been a range of ad hoc changes, but a complete review of the Main Roads Act has never been undertaken. It remains a document that is difficult to understand because it was written in the style and language of an earlier era which was more fitting for the 1920s than for the 1990s. It shows that the legislation was in need of a good spring clean.

The Main Roads Act was appropriate for Queensland in the twentieth century, but this Bill is designed to see road transport into the twenty-first century and provide an

interface with other transport functions of rail, sea and air. In keeping with Government policy, it has been written in language that is easy to understand and has been restructured into a logical sequence. It deletes many obsolete and irrelevant provisions and simplifies administrative procedures to improve the effectiveness of the organisation. In today's terminology, this Bill is designed to be user-friendly. A significant deletion is the reference to the Main Roads Trust Fund.

Mr Elliott: Can you tell us who it is user-friendly to?

Mrs EDMOND: It is user-friendly to people such as me--people who have been involved in community groups that have tried to read through the many amendments. The member for Somerset, Mr Gunn, knows how much trouble community groups in my electorate have had in the past in interpreting the Main Roads Act. It was difficult to find the sections applying to various areas and decide which little pocket of funding was applicable out of the Jindalee funding, the Everton Park funding, freeway funding or funding for the Western arterial road. The honourable member should sit quietly because this Bill is a large step forward. It makes the legislation understandable by the people of Queensland, if not by the member for Cunningham.

Mr Elliott: The Minister says that the transport operators are going to find that it is user-friendly.

Mrs EDMOND: Yes. I wish to comment on the transport operators because I find it surprising that the member for Flinders would insult them by claiming that they had no knowledge of what their drivers were doing. I always understood that they were responsible people who would have some understanding of and control over their employees.

The Main Roads Trust Fund was established in the main to retain the net proceeds from collection of motor vehicle fees for use in the construction and maintenance of declared roads. Under this arrangement, funds from motor vehicle registrations were hypothecated for use on declared roads. The disadvantage was that this mechanism provided little flexibility in the way that funds were used.

I wish to comment briefly on the arguments advanced by the member for Toowong. The argument for full command of fuel tax for road-building purposes is one that is very popular, but it is simplistic and conveniently ignores the other effects that roads have on the community. It ignores the quite obvious health problems, the traumas resulting from road accidents and the welfare payments needed for those people left behind or injured. It ignores research into road safety and the need for necessary education in road safety--just to name a few of the wider social aspects that are involved with roads. It is highly appropriate that we spend fuel tax income on things other than roads. I would like to see it going to funding public transport rather than being spent on roads to encourage some of the eggheads I have seen driving around.

Since 1 July 1990, funds for roads have been provided from the Consolidated Revenue Fund and from loan funds arranged by Treasury, as is the case for many other elements of the Department of Transport. Thus, the Main Roads Fund and borrowing mechanisms by the Main Roads Department had become anachronisms. Prior to July 1987, local authorities were required to make a contribution to the cost of construction and maintenance of certain declared roads running through their areas. In July 1987, the Department of Main Roads negotiated with the local authorities for them to accept responsibility for secondary roads in exchange for the waiving of a contribution by local authorities for expenditure on declared roads. Since that time, several sections of the Main Roads Act have been made obsolete and the opportunity has been taken to delete those provisions from the Bill.

Also, the Bill changes the title of the chief executive and the corporation. "The Commissioner of Main Roads" is being replaced by "The Director-General, Department of Transport" as the legal entity for the department. Accordingly, section 3 of the Main Roads Act has been deleted. Section 9A of the Main Roads Act provides for the

Commissioner of Main Roads to belong to interstate organisations. As the need for such a legislative provision is seen to be unnecessary, it has been deleted. Section 9B of the Main Roads Act provides for the Commissioner of Main Roads to have involvement in some aspects of traffic management. That provision has not been incorporated into this Bill on the basis that the necessary powers exist in the Traffic Act, which also is administered by the corporation. Section 19 of the Main Roads Act allows for the allocation of funds from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, rather than from the Main Roads Fund, for roads to new settlements. That provision has been deleted on the basis that funding for all roads now is provided from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. Several other minor matters have been deleted. Pages 50 and 51 of the Bill list in detail the Acts affected.

Many of the changes reflect the new role of road transport within the amalgamated Department of Transport. The incorporation of the former Main Roads Department into the Transport Department is a move that I not only fully endorse, but it is one that I actually advocated and worked for prior to the last State election. It allows traffic management and transport decisions to be made using logical, national strategies rather than being locked into unimodel decision-making. I know from bitter experience that if one asks a road engineer--I ask those present to excuse me, but I am sure their memories are the same as mine--how to solve a traffic problem, he--and I say "he" advisedly, not carelessly--will almost invariably return with magnificent plans for bigger roads, flyovers, etc. that often create bigger traffic problems as well as social and environmental problems. The new structure allows transport solutions to be found outside traditional road-engineering solutions.

The Minister is to be congratulated on the initiatives being shown by the amalgamated Department of Transport. I am pleased to serve on his committee. One initiative in particular that I naturally fully endorse is the change in attitude to community consultation. I do not believe that he will be surprised to hear that. The formation of local area consultative committees has been well received and is providing an effective medium for community input into the planning process. Another important research project is examining techniques for minimising traffic noise. Traffic noise can cause severe distress and consequent health problems to people affected, and obvious loss of living amenity. It is much harder to deal with in our subtropical, open life-style than in European countries, of course, and it is vitally important that we find, if possible, some method of ameliorating its effects before we continue to harm people, as has happened in the western suburbs along the Western Freeway. I congratulate the Minister on his concern about this issue, for so long ignored by road-builders and road-users alike.

I comment briefly also on the matter of road safety raised by the member for Toowong. I note that neither he nor any member of his party were interested enough to remain in the Chamber.

Mr Johnson: There's one here.

Mrs EDMOND: I thought he was a member of the National Party. I hope that honourable members will forgive the mistake. It is sometimes difficult to tell members opposite apart.

A Government member: A coalition forming.

Mrs EDMOND: They are holding hands. Well, now we know. It is a coalition forming. It is legal now.

Mr Johnson: Have you got 15 per cent?

Mrs EDMOND: Ten per cent hold hands. Under the present Minister, road safety has been upgraded enormously to a division. I have been very impressed by the work that has been done. The baby capsule program has been enormously successful. The program on bicycle helmets has been aimed not at solid enforcement but more at targeting the age groups concerned--the groups that are most resistant to wearing bicycle

helmets--with a very good advertising campaign. If honourable members have not seen that campaign, I advise them to go and see it. They will find that it is most impressive. If the member for Toowong took one opportunity to look at any of the material sent to him, he would be terribly impressed. The fact that he has not done so shows that he is wasting his time in the inner city. He should be out on the Darling Downs where his party received such a wonderful result at the recent by-election and which is an area about which he is so concerned.

A Government member: Who with?

Mrs EDMOND: For the Liberal Party. The Queensland Department of Transport is also undertaking a series of research projects designed to provide greater value for the road dollar and to better integrate its roadworks and the environment. One of the most visible projects will be the Full Scale Pavement Performance Study to be carried out at the Beerburrum test site. That study will be a cooperative venture with the Australian Road Research Board and the Australian Pavement Research Group. The study will test commonly used crushed rock materials as well as western Queensland--I note that Opposition members are not listening--fine-grained gravels under accelerated loading using the 45-tonne accelerated loading facility. The jointly funded trial will lead to better utilisation of those crushed rock materials and the ability to safely utilise local materials in western Queensland, which is very important.

In the past, the allocation of road funds to construction projects and maintenance throughout the State has been a somewhat ad hoc affair and has caused a great deal of community concern. This Government supports a more strategic and rational approach, which will enable the competing needs of the various regions and types of roads to be compared fairly. It will establish a road network strategy to examine these needs and opportunities and also economic significance. The aim is to provide direction to the allocation of funds for the development and management of those roads for which the State is responsible and to ensure that scarce resources are put to best use. The major criteria for investment will be the potential to generate new economic activity and/or to facilitate existing activity where it is currently hamstrung by transport conditions. The principles behind a road network strategy approach are well advanced and will form the basis for future planning of the road network. The pork-barrel approach of the past is a totally inappropriate means of determining funding priorities.

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (4.32 p.m.): I rise to speak on this important Bill with very mixed feelings. In some instances I agree with what the Minister is endeavouring to do, particularly the cutting of bureaucratic red tape. At the same time, I have some serious concerns about parts of the Bill. I also have some questions that I believe the Minister should answer in his reply before the Bill is put to a vote. I say that because if my presumptions are correct, the Bill will have substantial long-term Statewide implications.

I might say at the outset that this Bill once again raises the concern that Bills that are being introduced provide very substantial powers to be invoked by regulation alone, without having to come before Parliament for ratification. I believe that legislating to allow the implementation of regulations not yet available to honourable members to check opens the door to possible abuse of ministerial and bureaucratic power and that things need to be tightened up. I noted in the Minister's second-reading speech an impressive array of organisations that were consulted in the drafting of this Bill. I commend him for that, but I note with concern that two major rural organisations, whose members cover most of this huge State, were not included. I refer to the United Graziers Association and the Cattlemen's Union, which are two very important grower organisations in this great State. I believe that they should have been consulted. As the vast majority of Queensland's roads affect the section of the community that those organisations represent, they had as much a right to be consulted as, say, the Australian Workers Union, the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association and the Transport Workers Union. I suppose that rural Queensland and I should be grateful

that at least the Queensland Farmers Federation was on the list. However, that federation is not the governing body of a lot of the growers in this State.

As the Minister stated in his second-reading speech, the regulations that will be required to complement this Bill, to come into effect from 1 July, are not before this House, nor have they been given to the consultative organisations so that they could be checked. The Minister stated--

"The opportunity has been taken to rationalise the provisions that should be in the regulations rather than in the Act."

He went on to advise that the provisions in the old Main Roads Act had been significantly reduced, but he also said--

"However, it is still expected that there will be fewer regulations in all."

After receiving that tantalisingly and intriguing bit of useless information, it would appear that honourable members should be grateful that they are blind to the facts. The point is that these as yet unclear or unknown regulations will reflect the department's extended responsibility across all areas of transport in Queensland, be it by road, rail, air or water. Honourable members have before them a very substantial area of Government administration which, on the Minister's own statement, is undergoing substantial change and restructure. It is a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. In his second-reading speech, the Minister is at pains to point out that the changes to the department's hierarchy and its legal status as a corporation under this Bill should not be construed as foreshadowing an intention to privatise it. However, I believe that the Bill indicates that the way is definitely left open for privatisation of Roads Division vehicle registration services at least. Whether or not the ISC report is implemented remains to be seen. It would also appear to be clear that the way is open for the department to operate associated business enterprises and provide technical, consulting, property and business services. Just what are the associated businesses referred to? Does this mean that the department wants to farm out the vehicle registration business on the one hand but on the other hand go into business itself? I ask the Minister to clarify the position so that honourable members know exactly what they are debating and what they are voting on. Or are these points to be clarified by regulation?

I welcome the decision to make the allocation of funds more flexible, particularly where it relates to what I call shire link roads. These are a very important part of the road network in this State. They are the roads that are commonly used by both locals and interstate tourists as short-cuts between highways and declared roads. They are linked with main highways and railways. At present many of these roads are in a bad state of disrepair. In many areas, the desire of the tourist to get off the beaten track, so to speak, has led to heavy use of shire roads, some of which have become de facto highways. Some people get a thrill out of driving on these roads.

Our roads should be kept and maintained in a condition so that this State can progress, and do so in more ways than one. I speak of tourism, transport of livestock and produce to rail heads, as well as local use. This has resulted in higher than expected maintenance costs to quite a few local authorities. I believe that this provision will be welcomed by those shires. However, I question the department's being totally responsible for conditional approval of applications for subdivisions of land contiguous with a declared road subject to limitation of access. I believe that more input occurred at a local level between local authorities and the Main Roads Department under the former Government and the former Main Roads Minister, Mr Hinze. I believe that was a healthy course taken by the Main Roads Department and the Transport Department in this State. However, it seems that we have a Government of regionalisation in Queensland today and, until the next election, I suppose we will have to put up with that.

I believe that the officers of the relevant local authorities are the people on the spot who should retain an input in the decision-making process and not have to rely on an appeal to the Minister if they disagree with the department's bureaucratic decision from afar. I am not against the idea of limited access on to Queensland's major freeways and

highways so that subdivisions will not eventually create the very bottlenecks that the freeways were designed to eliminate. However, having said that, I urge the Minister to ensure that the department declares its proposed location of future freeway and highway routes and their likely limited access as soon as practicable. This would assist people buying land in the area for future business or residential purposes from coming into conflict with access problems.

I note also at the top of page 5 of the Explanatory Notes that the courts have ruled that current provisions do not empower the department to prohibit access, although, quite obviously, this has been done on a fairly widespread scale. I ask: how liable does this leave the department and the Government to litigation, or will this legislation be made retrospective by regulation to block this loophole? I would also seek clarification from the Minister on the basis of a section of the same Explanatory Notes. Midway down page 6, dealing with "Part 5. Property Provisions", which relates to property acquisitions, it states--

"Limitations are to be removed regarding the types of land over which declarations for reservation of future declared roads can be made. Currently, lands in a city or town or lands being built upon at that date are excluded from such declarations."

Does that section mean what it indicates, that additional powers will be given to the department to freeze large stretches of urban land, say, in Brisbane for future freeways? I ask the Minister to clarify that point for me.

A very important aspect of the Bill is that it simplifies agreements with local authorities to carry out construction and maintenance work on declared roads outside their own area. I agree that many shires, particularly the larger shires, are better equipped to do this type of heavy construction work than smaller shires, which may not have the necessary machinery. I emphasise that this is a very important aspect of country shires. I not only refer to those shires in my electorate but also to all shires throughout the State. This work is a source of employment to many people in those country towns and shires. At the same time, I voice a note of caution that most shires, particularly those in the more remote regions, depend to a larger or smaller degree on Main Roads work to help defray their plant costs. I request that, up to the capacity of their equipment, the smaller shires be given preference for this type of work within their boundaries. I believe that it is of paramount importance that work of this type continue to function within the parameters of the local shires.

I also agree with the dropping of the need for an Order in Council for any construction project exceeding \$120,000. Back in the 1920s this might have been considered a major job but, in today's terms, it represents only the cost of moving an on-site Main Roads camp from one location to another.

On the matter of imposing extended road load limits after prolonged flooding--I agree that there is a need to avoid additional road damage. I commend the Minister for his efforts during the recent floods. At the same time, I point out that, as a result of those limitations, much hardship was faced by transport operators in rural Queensland and other parts of the State. I ask the Minister to bear that fact in mind. I know that he has worked in close liaison with Main Roads personnel in various locations throughout the State. However, I urge the Minister to bear in mind the hardship that has been imposed on those truck operators. On various occasions I have discussed this problem with the Minister. I am aware that in the Cloncurry region some people had to wait six months before they could transport their fat cattle out.

Mr Elliott: The difference between buses and transport has been a bit of a bony contention.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member for Cunningham has raised an important point. There is no difference in weight between a loaded bus and a loaded road train. I make special reference to that point.

The people in the bush are suffering considerable hardship. If flooding occurs in the future in those remote areas, I ask that those restrictions be lifted as soon as possible. Many such centres are far from rail services and virtually depend on their local road transport operators for their continued existence. Honourable members will be aware that that is the case throughout the length and breadth of this State. In order to feed Queensland's rail network, the road transport division must be in operation at all times. As I have said before, one cannot do without the other.

I am well aware that in this day and age costs are rising. However, I do not support the doubling of penalties contained in this Bill. I am well aware of the unfortunate need for penalties for breaches of the Act, but a fine of \$2,000 is substantial in anyone's language, even allowing for inflation. I fear that this provision is just another camouflaged tax grab on behalf of the Treasury.

On a somewhat related matter, I ask the Minister to clarify the implications relating to the statement "Granting and managing vehicle registrations and permits" which is specified as a subject matter for regulations and which is contained in the First Schedule on page 48 of the Bill. The Minister might also expand on the subject of "Tolls payable through use of transport infrastructure" which occurs a few lines above the previous statement. Does "Granting and managing vehicle registrations and permits" propose what it indicates, namely, the opportunity for privatising this major phase of the department's operations? I ask the Minister to clarify that at a later time.

I also ask him to provide some clarification of the point made near the bottom of page 5 of the Explanatory Notes relating to the Land Court. For various reasons, as I mentioned during the debate on the Transport Infrastructure (Railways) Bill, the Land Court plays a very important part in relation to security of tenure within this State. In the Explanatory Notes, under Division 5--Compensation Concerning Access, the point is made that--

". . . matters to be considered in determining the amount of compensation are specified in the Bill, whereas, under the current legislation, the Land Court is not compelled to take account of such relevant matters".

On the surface, it appears that this impinges on the independent powers of the Land Court. Is it the thin end of the wedge to dictate the powers of the Land Court to the point at which it could be claimed to be unnecessary and eliminated? Is this the dawning of the era of bureaucratic decisions without the tried and true safety net provided for many years by the Land Court's independence? I sincerely hope not. I ask the Minister for his immediate assurance that there is no move within Cabinet to eliminate the Land Court.

I congratulate transport authorities right throughout our great State on the outstanding work they are doing in their local areas. Their input will still be very important. I can see what this Government's intentions are in relation to regionalisation. However, I believe that the people who have the hands-on experience and who are in the field know best the needs of the people in their areas. That is the case whether they be in remote areas, on the coast or in south-east Queensland. I ask the Minister to bear that in mind. With this Bill, if everybody works together it is possible that a great road infrastructure could be provided in Queensland.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (4.48 p.m.): I rise, naturally, to support the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Bill. In doing so, I indicate that I am delighted that a more sensitive approach will be taken to main roads. Because I represent an electorate such as Brisbane Central, I know that roads have a direct impact on the quality of people's lives. I will refer to that point later. As the Minister for Transport rightly commented, the current Main Roads Act is difficult to read and understand. One of the objectives of those drafting this Bill was to develop legislation which is comprehensible by the public and by those charged with the responsibility of its administration. That objective has been achieved. Indeed, we continue to make sure that Bills presented to this House are in plain English and not in some legal gobbledegook. The Bill has been

structured in a logical fashion and in this regard is light years ahead of its predecessor. It addresses the rights of and interrelationships between those organisations which have the authority to occupy the declared road corridors throughout the State, the owners of adjoining land and the road-users.

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: It is obvious that the honourable member has been hit by a truck on the road. It is important to understand that the road is all of the land between boundaries with contiguous land--it is not just the black part in the middle. That is something that the honourable member should take up and understand. This is illustrated in chart 10.6 of the Outline of Bill contained within the Explanatory Notes. Additionally, whilst the corporation has property in the land, others continue to have rights--for example, road-users, owners of statutory utilities and owners of contiguous land.

The Bill uses terms which accurately describe roads-related matters, and those terms have been applied consistently throughout the legislation. Those terms include transport infrastructure, road transport infrastructure, ancillary works and encroachments, statutory utilities and means of access. Some of these terms may seem confusing at first but they do have precise meanings which, once understood, make this legislation far simpler than the current Main Roads Act. To aid in members' understanding of this Bill, I refer to chart 10.5 of the Outline of Bill contained within the Explanatory Notes. As can be seen on the diagram, transport infrastructure is the broad umbrella which covers all of the transport options--for example, road, rail, marine and air. Road transport infrastructure refers to the roads and everything contained in them which is managed by the corporation.

Chart 10.5 contains the expression "Works for RTI"--which is works for road transport infrastructure. That expression is common in the Bill because it relates to the primary visible activity of the corporation. The term is defined in the Bill but, in short, it refers to the construction and maintenance activities associated with man-made items within a road. It replaces the outdated terms "permanent works" and "permanent improvements". "Naturally occurring materials" are those provided by nature, such as grass, trees, soil and gravel. These are important to the travelling public because they need to be maintained so as not to obstruct vision. These materials are part of the road transport infrastructure and are the responsibility of the corporation.

"Ancillary works and encroachments" is a mouthful but it has a precise meaning. It replaces in the current Main Roads Act the term "obstructions", which is both a misnomer and somewhat offensive to owners of cane railways and such which exist legitimately within a road. Cattle grids are the best example of ancillary works which form part of the road transport infrastructure, but their purpose is ancillary to the movement of traffic. Petrol bowsers and awnings are examples of encroachments which have permits to exist in the road. Road transport infrastructure includes works for road transport infrastructure, naturally occurring materials, ancillary works and encroachments. This Bill expects the corporation to consider the best transport solution rather than to restrict its focus to road solutions. Accordingly, the corporation will be empowered to construct and maintain works for transport infrastructure and to maintain the associated naturally occurring materials. This could involve the corporation in the provision of items such as a road/rail interchange or a jetty, as illustrated in chart 10.5. Honourable members will be aware that this Bill replaces an Act that has not been restructured since it was introduced in 1920. That becomes obvious when one reads it. The Minister is to be commended for the excellent job that has been done to bring order out of something approaching chaos.

I turn now to deal with environment and urban environment which, as honourable members would appreciate, is a matter of considerable importance to my electorate and me. The Minister for Transport has already told the House that the Main Roads Act has not undergone a fundamental review since its inception in 1920. I have just made that point. Perhaps not surprisingly, that Act talks only about the construction and maintenance of roads and makes no mention of the impact of those activities on the

environment. That matter has been of some annoyance to people in my electorate. In this more enlightened era, the corporation is expected to have regard for environmental assessments in carrying out its primary function of developing and managing road transport infrastructure in this State. That is something that was not done terribly well in the past by the former Main Roads Department. Clause 6.1 of the Bill authorises the corporation to carry out surveys and investigations, inter alia, regarding the avoidance and mitigation of negative environmental effects. This State has had a Main Roads Department that was efficient at building good-quality roads. However, it did not always deal sensitively with the people who lived near those roads.

Mr McGrady: And a good commissioner.

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to accept that the former Main Roads Department had a good commissioner. The Department of Transport is also working with the Australian Road Research Board on the development of practical noise amelioration policies and with the Griffith University on basic research into particular noise factors. The honourable member for Mount Coot-tha made reference to that matter. Trials are already under way to test various methods of minimising traffic noise problems. I stress that noise, particularly in the inner-city areas and inner suburbs of my electorate, directly impacts upon the quality of life of people who live there. When one bears in mind that the inner suburbs have a disproportionately high percentage of elderly people, one understands why noise is not only a political issue but also a health issue.

It is worthy of note that the Department of Transport has established an internal heritage committee to manage its responsibilities to preserve the transport heritage of this State. That is of considerable importance. This Government, which has an enlightened view about the environment and heritage, is enshrining that commitment in legislation. The Department of Transport is putting those policies into effect.

I return to the issue of quality of life in the inner suburbs. I quite happily acknowledge that the former Main Roads Department made a significant contribution to the development of this State. As I said, it was a good builder of roads. However, when one talks about the quality of life of people in the inner suburbs, one cannot adopt an engineer's mentality about where to build a road. That is not an attack on engineers. The former Main Roads Department employed many good engineers. However, where the building of a road severely impacts upon the quality of life of people in the inner suburbs, a more sensitive approach must be adopted to the construction of that road. On several occasions in this House, I have mentioned the Hale Street project. Although it is a council responsibility, that project has had a devastating impact upon the quality of life of people living in Petrie Terrace and Paddington in my electorate, to the extent that some of them have suffered a detriment to their health and, because of their age and because their lives were disrupted, a couple of them have died. That is the sort of consideration that must be given to the construction of a council road or a Transport Department road.

At present, I am experiencing difficulties with the roadworks on Kelvin Grove Road. Although the construction of that road is a magnificent physical achievement, it has had traffic spin-offs about which I have written to the Minister. Indeed, I have obtained a sensitive response from him, and I thank him for that. The problems with that project, which was commenced under the former Main Roads Department, have had an impact. At 9 a.m. tomorrow, in an endeavour to resolve some of those problems, I am meeting with a representative from the Transport Department and one of my local constituents, Mr Frank Messina, who lives on Kelvin Grove Road and is concerned about what has happened to traffic in the area. Inevitably, when a road such as Kelvin Grove Road is widened, when traffic islands are constructed to deal with the widening of the road, and when traffic management difficulties are created, that severely impacts upon the traffic flow in nearby streets. One cannot be insensitive when dealing with road construction. One cannot be insensitive to the impact that the widening of a road will have on nearby areas. That

includes not only the flow of traffic but also factors such as traffic noise. I have raised the matter of Kelvin Grove Road with the Minister and the department, and I am happy with the responses that I received.

Mr Hamill: We looked after some trees very well.

Mr BEATTIE: I am delighted to take the Minister's interjection, because he has shown a willingness to ensure that trees are maintained not only to beautify the inner suburbs and minimise the impact of major roads but also to reduce noise. There has been some debate about this issue. I believe that, if the correct types of trees are planted in a particular area in the inner suburbs, they do reduce noise and give people in those areas a feeling of protection from the large roads that are being built there.

When major roads are planned, what will happen to the traffic that flows off those major roads must be carefully evaluated. I return to the Hale Street example. The Brisbane City Council has created the huge monstrosity of Hale Street that will dump a very large number of cars outside the Royal Brisbane Hospital and there will be very little ability for them to get away from that area. I am aware that all sorts of engineering solutions are being formulated at the moment, but I have grave concerns that, at a later date, there will be a push for a freeway through the northern suburbs of Brisbane. The Minister is aware of my total opposition to such a concept, which would be detrimental to the quality of life of people who live in my electorate--all of whom are very intelligent people, because they vote overwhelmingly for the party in Government.

In his speech to the House, the honourable member for Toowong talked about there being some confusion. The only confusion is in his mind. Again, he has not taken the trouble to read the Bill. This Bill goes a long way towards resolving the concerns that I have expressed to the House today, which relate to the past, not to the present. The Bill has gone a long way towards achieving some sensible planning in roads. I acknowledge the contribution made by the Minister in that area. This is the second major Bill that the Minister has introduced this year, the first being the Transport Infrastructure (Railways) Bill. I pay tribute to the contribution that he is making towards improving transport in this State.

Mr BOOTH (Warwick) (5.01 p.m.): When I speak to Bills, I often follow the member for Brisbane Central. On this occasion, I agree with some of the things that he said--not all of them, but a good many of them. He made the point that roads have a significant bearing on quality of life. That is so in the city, particularly with regard to noise, but it is much more so in the country. If good roads are not constructed, people cannot travel anywhere within a reasonable time. I also agree with the member for Brisbane Central that the old Department of Main Roads did a good job. It managed to keep construction happening and to spread that expenditure fairly well throughout the State. I am sorry to see the change in name of the department, but I guess the name is not everything.

For country people particularly, along with health and education, roads are one of the main factors that affect people's quality of life, and they also affect commerce. Roads can also have a variety of other smaller effects on the community. As I said, I am not particularly pleased to see the change in funding or administration of the superdepartment of transport, as it has been called in the press. It is all very well to call it "the corporation". However, all that calling it "the corporation" does is to set up a buffer zone so that, if something goes wrong, the Minister can say, "Oh, no. I had nothing to do with that. It is those terrible corporation people." That is the perception of the people in the country and in the workplace. They think that this idea of setting up corporations, apart from the fact that it might make some jobs for the boys----

Mr Hamill: You know better than that. You would be telling them the right thing.

Mr BOOTH: Of course, I would. I will tell them the right thing. I will tell them that I am worried about it. That is what anyone would tell them.

The other matter that worries me is the change in funding. It is all very well to say that funds will be paid into consolidated revenue and that funding will remain the

same. There will be problems. Earlier in the debate, one of the Opposition speakers in the debate pointed out that, when the Federal Government imposed the petrol tax, States were going to get a lot of it back. How much do we get back now? The terrible tax is still there. It is the reason why many people are unemployed. In some areas, people cannot pay that huge fuel tax and run a business successfully. That worries me. It worries me also that any change in the collection or distribution of revenue could result in some people wanting to get some revenue and perhaps impose another tax. I hope that that is not the idea of the change in funding, but I worry about it.

I mentioned earlier that the funding of roads is very important in the country. I am probably a bit biased, because I live in a road-junction town. If the roads were not good, that town would nearly cease to exist. It would lose a lot of its revenue. The many motels in the town rely on the roads, too. I am not saying that the Government will do the things about which I worry, but the opportunity might be there to do so. The matter that worries me more than anything is that, everywhere I travel, both within and outside my electorate----

Mr McGrady: You look very smart when you walk around with your trilby hat on--very, very smart.

Mr BOOTH: I am well aware of that. The honourable member does not have to tell me that.

Mr McGrady: We are most impressed.

Mr BOOTH: That is very good. I went to the honourable member's meeting. I did not show any bias. All of the local government people whom I talk to tell me that they will have less funding for roads and that road-funding has been cut. To some extent, they blame the current Government for that. Of course, they never received enough funding when the National Party was in Government, either. We would have liked to give them more.

Mr Springborg: They are getting less now.

Mr BOOTH: They think that they will receive less funding, and that worries them a lot. I do not think that their views should be down-graded. They are entitled to state their views. I am only doing what the people in my electorate want when I plead to the present Minister to try to give us as much money as he can to reconstruct roads. It appears that a lot more repairing of roads has been done than complete reconstruction. I will not say that that is a completely bad thing. If a road can be repaired for half the cost of reconstructing it, surely that is okay. In some instances, roads have been widened by placing a one-and-a-half-metre or a two-metre apron on each side of the road and filling it in with bitumen. It will take a while before we know whether that will work. If it works, it is okay. If a partial reconstruction can be done for half as much money as a complete reconstruction, that must be a plus. I will not knock it completely.

I wonder whether enough money is spent on research into roadworks. When aggregate or whatever foundation is laid for a road, one must know whether it will last. I wonder whether enough research is done. I have asked that question of Ministers, and they always assure me that enough research is done.

Mr Beattie: Your roads are a bit potty.

Mr BOOTH: They are not too bad but we do not want them to get any worse.

Mr Beattie: But you admit that you are wrong?

Mr BOOTH: I thought the honourable member's last remark was a lot of common sense. The honourable member for Brisbane Central referred to busy roads, expressways and freeways. I know that they are a problem because they divide the city and they divide suburbs, but we need a few of them now and we might need a few more in the future. The mug driver from the country finds it much easier to drive through Brisbane using the freeways and expressways than without them.

Mr McGrady: You mean you can't get lost?

Mr BOOTH: Not as easily. Signboarding has improved terrifically. I do not think it has gone downhill under this Government. It was bad 15 or 20 years ago and a driver could get lost just about anywhere, but it is much better now.

Mr Beattie: You don't get lost in Warwick, anyway.

Mr BOOTH: Some people do. Once the honourable member gets past Moorooka, he is lost. The Minister's second-reading speech was not bad--it contained some information.

Government members interjected.

Mr BOOTH: Some Government members will leave Parliament at the same time, but they do not realise it yet. I think they will get the message; that is, if they did not get the message last Saturday. Their boss was not too happy. I am happy because I know where I am going and when I am going. In his second-reading speech the Minister said--

"Drafts have been reviewed by the Bar Association of Queensland, the Queensland Council for Civil Liberties, the Criminal Justice Commission and the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission."

I guess they looked at it to see that it was all nice and legal and they must have approved it, but I do not think anybody connected with those bodies would have much sympathy for the country people of Queensland. They think that Queensland finishes at Moorooka on the south side of Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast to the north of Brisbane. One Government member referred to baby capsules. That has been a very successful idea.

Mr Elliott: A good idea, too.

Mr BOOTH: Yes. I do not think anyone would knock that idea. We are all grateful for having a better way of carrying a baby in a car. It is a reasonably cheap device. It is a breakthrough in safety. I do not know what to say about bike helmets, but many more riders are using them than previously.

Mrs Edmond: Thanks to the advertising campaign.

Mr BOOTH: Yes, that is right. Some riders are not using them but many are, and we should be grateful for that. Many people are worried about the overloading of vehicles. We do not like to see overloaded trucks. I am not saying I want to change anything in regard to the transport of cattle, but it is fairly hard for a driver on a property to weigh his truck. I would like the present system to be left alone as much as possible.

Mr Dollin: There has been about 80 per cent overloading.

Mr BOOTH: I do not think that 80 per cent would be right. I have had a look at some but I have never found any overloaded to that extent. Anyway, I want to get away from cattle and talk about ordinary freight. Who pays the fine for an overloaded truck? It is all right to say it should be the owner of the truck but, if somebody else has done the wrong thing, I do not know that making the owner pay is right. The truck-owner should be fined only if he ordered his man to put too much on the truck. That will cause some trouble. It has been claimed that the new penalties are quite in order. I think that the Minister made that point in his second-reading speech.

Mr Hamill: If I did, I stand by it.

Mr BOOTH: I am not suggesting that the Minister will not stand by it, but it might not be easy to administer it. People are worried that the penalties might be too severe. As many trucks from my area operate in New South Wales, I know that that State has severe penalties for overloading. The Minister said that the corporation is responsible for major roads which are termed declared roads. I can understand that. There was one part of the Minister's speech that I thought was very sensible. He said

there would be consultation with Telecom about the use of corridors for the installation of underground or above-ground wires. Cables are often damaged when roads are being repaired. This results in hundreds of people being without their telephones and huge bills being tossed around. Any consultation to reduce this problem is in the best interests of the people.

I agree with the thrust of some of the proposals outlined in the Bill, but I am not sure that I can see the necessity for making such a complete change. My opinion might be altered after a period, but presently I am concerned about change for the sake of change. The Premier said, "If we get beaten in Nundah, it will stall the reform program." There are many people who would like to stall the reform program, because to my mind it is change for the sake of change.

Mr Palaszczuk: Be specific.

Mr BOOTH: I cannot, because my comments must relate to the Bill.

Mr Hamill: What was the National Party's submission for the electorate of Warwick?

Mr BOOTH: I do not know. I think the Minister has a copy, but I have not had a look at it. It will not affect me personally. As the Minister has asked me about this matter, I would have to say that I would like to see the electorate of Warwick retained. It has been in existence since 1860 when the Letters Patent were granted to establish the State of Queensland.

Mr Hamill: It has been there almost as long as you have.

Mr BOOTH: Just a bit longer than that. However, when I was young, I used to read about things that happened a hundred years previously and I have since altered my opinion on those matters. The place in which a person lives and the time of his life have an effect on the way in which his opinions are formed. When a person looks back, he realises what a short period a life-time is. The aim of this legislation should be to try to improve the roads as much as possible. I hope that, whichever Government is in office, it will do exactly that.

Mrs SHELDON (Landsborough) (5.17 p.m.): I am pleased to follow the worthy contribution to this debate made by my colleague the member for Toowong and Leader of the Liberal Party. The inane comments directed at my leader by the member for Mount Coot-tha were somewhat typical of the poverty of content and lack of substantive matters of her speeches.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that one of the aims of this Bill was to simplify the legislation. It would appear that the Minister's ideas on simplification do not extend to the offices of other Government Ministers. On 20 February, the Caloundra City Council wrote to the Premier requesting information on the operation of the Sunshine Motorway only to be advised that the Under Treasurer had already responded and had outlined the Government's position in that regard. The actual letter from the Under Treasurer stated--

"The matters including the maximum debt profile are properly ones initially for the Department of Transport and Treasury . . . The information you requested . . . is the responsibility of the Department of Transport."

However, when the Minister for Transport attended a public meeting, he told the Caloundra City Council that it should write to the Under Treasurer for that information. Perhaps the Government is running its departments within the guidelines provided by the producers of *Yes, Minister*. The Sunshine Motorway's toll plaza debacle would seem to suggest this, and has proved to be a real thorn in the side of the Minister for Transport. A most vocal and energetic group of objectors, namely, the Tollbusters, certainly feel that the Minister and the Premier have been exceedingly stubborn and disparaging over the whole issue. Later in my speech I will refer to this matter when I illustrate to honourable members the extent to which the Tollbusters are willing to go and the hard work and expense they are willing to contribute to have the tolls removed.

Mr Santoro: They are good people.

Mrs SHELDON: They are indeed good people. The Mooloolaba toll plaza is more than a white elephant. It is a monument to political insanity and insensitivity. It must be removed and the whole question of road-funding by tolls in Queensland should be re-examined. "Ill-planned"--what an understatement! This story really started in 1970-71 when the Sunshine Coast was on the brink of a surge of prosperity and the Maroochy Shire Council was working on the original town plan. In that same era, the think-tank in the Main Roads Department--that mass of intelligence--had a power surge. The Sunshine Coast will need a coastal by-pass highway in the future. Forward-planning was the catchcry.

The Sunshine Motorway--the toll-road as we see it today--hides the true history and reason for its creation. Two events in the early and mid-eighties were significant. First, the Maroochy Airport was upgraded to handle jet aircraft. Secondly, the four-lane Bruce Highway to Caloundra was completed. The four-lane highway development put immediate and immense pressure on the region's internal road system which was further worsened by Expo 88 traffic. It was obvious that poor planning by the State Government left the roads system in crisis and unable to cope with the major influx of new traffic. The business community of Maroochydore saw the immediate need for a new bridge across the Maroochy River to provide an efficient and last link to new jet services. Government plans for a new bridge in 1986 were 15 years away. A group of local businesspeople put a proposition to the State Government through the former Main Roads Minister, Russ Hinze, for a privately funded toll bridge across the river at a toll of 60c. Hinze agreed, the Maroochy River Toll Bridge Company was formed, and tender documents were prepared. The political demise of Russ Hinze led to the former member for Nicklin, Brian Austin, reversing the decision, and the concept of the Sunshine Motorway was put in its place. The original motorway announced by Mr Austin had five toll gates, and a massive public outcry resulted. Public pressure forced Mr Austin to reduce the toll plazas one by one from five plazas to one plaza on the bridge.

In those days, with a high degree of economic wizardry, the cost was calculated to be \$45m to be paid for over 30 years at a toll of \$1.60 for full travel over Stage 1. After some concerned folks started asking questions, the Main Roads Department stated that local traffic would have free access to all the major road sections in accordance with the Main Roads Department Sunshine Coast Road Network Study 1984. This concession would potentially eliminate at least 50 per cent of the paying traffic, and added to that was a cost blow-out of \$22m, which took the predicted \$45m cost to \$67m. This was further increased to \$67.5m. In May 1988, the cost of the motorway rose to nearly \$84m. Through changes to the plans made midstream, \$42m was wasted. By the end of 1989, the rush to get the road completed before the election--at any cost--also raised the cost. Eighteen months after the toll-road opened, the debt--in accordance with evidence given to the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts by the motorway company--stood at \$107m. I wonder what that debt level is now?

For many years, the people who live in this region watched the Gold Coast receive new, beautiful internal roads with the promise and expectation that their turn would come. For years, they paid more than \$30m per year in motor vehicle registration fees of which approximately \$3m, on average, was returned for local roadworks. The rest was spent elsewhere, and some of it was spent on the Gold Coast. When their turn came, they got toll-roads. Of course, there is a need for the road, but I believe that there will never be any sunshine in the Sunshine Motorway because of past and present maladministration and political negligence.

The National Party Government was responsible for the concept and design of the Sunshine Motorway. It also imposed the motorway on the residents of the Sunshine Coast without consultation either with the people or with local councils. As originally announced, the motorway was to have five toll plazas. To give it credit, the National Party Government listened to the people and reduced the number of toll plazas first to three, and later to one only, on the Maroochy River Bridge. Had the ALP left it at that

after winning the last election, the present battle might never have developed. As it was, it could not let well alone. It had to take political revenge on the adjoining conservative electorate. Two years ago, the ALP, headed by Wayne Goss, campaigned on the basis that it would remove the toll on the motorway. Subsequent events revealed that that was nothing more than a blatant attempt to win votes. We were then faced with an election with the toll as one of the most important issues. Along came a knight in shining armour, the then Labor candidate for Cooroora, who claimed that he was the only one able to remove the tolls. Many people believed his promise--they have since found out that they should not have--and voted his party to power. Soon after Labor took over, his promise was withdrawn. He did indeed remove the tolls, from his own electorate down to the border of the conservative electorate to the south. The speed with which Labor moved to explain its retention of the toll after the December 1989 election suggested that it never had any real intention of removing it. Here we had a Government which had promised us no tolls on the road--in fact, it had announced no tolls as a platform--but it continued with building a toll plaza. Shortly after the Labor Party win, Tom Burns is on record as saying--

"I am sorry we made a promise to take the toll off in the first place. I am sorry we had to break the promise."

Again, at a later date he said--

"The people have got to know this. The toll will come off the bridge and there will be two tolls put down in Mike Ahern's electorate of Landsborough for him and his friends down there. People could protest all they liked. Let them go for their lives but let them get it clear in their minds we will not be changing that decision. The tolls will be on and the tolls will stay."

And indeed they have. Well, I am now the member for Landsborough and I assure the Government that I will continue to speak up whenever my constituents, because of the nature of the issue, demand that I do so. The people of the Sunshine Coast are the real losers. They are the ones suffering from Labor's despicable act of revenge. The toll was imposed by the Nationals and retained by the Labor Party. Only the Liberals have been consistent in their opposition to the toll. We opposed it when it was introduced by the National Party Government---

Mr McGrady: That's because you have not been in Government, and you will never ever be in Government.

Mrs SHELDON: Just give us time. Members of the Labor Party once comprised a cricket team. Under the Labor Government, we have maintained our opposition to the toll. The issue is quite simple: should certain Queensland taxpayers have to pay for by way of a toll essential services which other Queenslanders receive as a result of paying their taxes? It is intolerable that the Government should impose a new tax on local residents who want to travel on local roads. If a similar toll had been suggested in parts of Brisbane--say Brisbane Central--or Ipswich, or any other areas that vote Labor, the public outcry would have forced the Labor politicians to back off. There is no doubt that the toll is simply a punishment. People who live in areas that have not traditionally supported the ALP are sitting targets for Labor taxes.

At present, Queensland is the only State not to have a fuel tax, but the Federal Labor Government takes almost 32c from each litre of fuel purchased. In 1988-89, Commonwealth revenue from crude oil, natural gas, LPG and petroleum products was \$6.5 billion. Unfortunately, the toll issue has divided a community; it has hindered access from one end of the Sunshine Coast to the other. It is not only a barrier to free movement about the coast; it is a physical, economic and psychological barrier. It is a barrier between homes and schools of many Kawana children and it is a barrier between others who have to make the return trip twice a day. Many people who work north of the river live in Kawana and have to cope with this farcical situation on a daily basis. I hope that justice will be done, as the motoring public has for far too long been a milking cow, funding other Government projects far removed from roads and motoring. Tollbusters has welded together a community to defend democracy.

Mr Swarten: How did they go in the local council elections up there?

Mrs SHELDON: I imagine that the honourable member would not know the real meaning of the word "democracy". As the chairman of Tollbusters very succinctly put it--

"If politicians were honest there would be no need for an organisation like Tollbusters. If deceit is permitted to flourish then democracy suffers. When candidates make promises which they break once elected, the people have no solid basis on which to choose between candidates. On that choice rests the whole structure of democracy. Remove it and democracy collapses."

That is why most Sunshine Coast residents oppose the tolls. It is about standing up for a principle.

Mr Swarten: But they didn't at the local council elections.

Mrs SHELDON: I correct the honourable member. They did. The toll is not in the Maroochy Shire. The Caloundra City Council campaigned very strongly against the toll. As well, many members of the Maroochy Shire Council campaigned against the toll.

Mr Swarten: And they got done.

Mrs SHELDON: No. Notably, one member was Bob King, and he did not get done. A public opinion survey on the tolls carried out between 9 and 15 April 1991 showed some very interesting results. The survey covered an area from Caloundra northwards to Peregian. It revealed that only 0.9 per cent of the residents use the toll-road and pay the toll more than ten times a week, while 80 per cent use the road regularly but avoid paying any tolls. Tollbusters had an average support of 84 per cent. That survey shows a massive rejection by the population on the coast of tolls on the Sunshine Motorway and an equally massive support for Tollbusters in its ongoing fight with the Labor Government. Those people show their views on the tolls. They are voting with their steering wheels and by-passing the tolls. By their refusal to make the Mooloolaba toll plaza profitable, sooner or later the Government will realise that the present siting of that toll plaza just will not pay its costs. It will become politically embarrassing.

There is no clearer demonstration of the reason why people are becoming more and more cynical about their politicians than the Labor Party's backflip on the Sunshine Motorway. History shows that many wars have been fought over matters of very little honour or principle. Surely this motorway issue, however, can clearly be seen, by those who wish to see, as an undisputed and obvious matter of principle, a case of a blatantly broken election promise by those whom we should be able to respect and trust, namely the Premier and the Government of our State. To allow that broken political promise--that lie--to be victorious would mean that those of us with a conscience would forever feel the weight of guilt if we had not fought against it to our utmost. The people of that area by way of population, time and taxes have already paid for and now deserve those roads. When Premier Wayne Goss made the decision to break his election promise of no tolls, he not only lost his credibility, but he brought by his actions a renewed lack of confidence in politicians that is being reflected in polls Australiawide. Wayne Goss ducked for cover as soon as he realised he would lose his credibility and sentenced Mr Hamill to 12 months' hard labour. A boy on a man's errand, it turned out.

Mr Swarten: Ha, ha!

Mrs SHELDON: I am pleased that the honourable member liked that. Other factors have contributed to the problem. The tolls are not financially viable. One mistake after another has been made in locating the toll plazas. The road is overdesigned in some places and inadequate in others. The people least able to afford the tolls have been affected most.

The restrictions on free movement caused by the tolls are having an impact on the profitability of many local businesses. When this happens, employment prospects are

diminished and, in fact, jobs are lost. This has a ripple effect that is felt through the whole community. Despite almost weekly armed robberies on the Sunshine Coast, the Mooloolaba Toll Plaza has been left alone. This is not because of its status as the Fort Knox of the southern hemisphere but because every member of the general public knows that, through lack of patronage, the vaults are empty. The Armaguard vehicle does not have a role to play when it draws up. It must keep up the supply of wages to toll personnel--something the six lonely Mooloolaba toll booths have failed to do.

The Government has hidden behind one excuse after another. Not one of them has stood up to any test. Even the private company structure of the Sunshine Motorway Company has been blown out of the water by the Public Accounts Committee hearings. Only recently has any attempt been made by the Government at accountability when the Public Accounts Committee exposed the tender underbelly of all three motorway companies--Gateway, Logan and Sunshine. The Public Accounts Committee identified 44 Government companies, the existence of many of which Parliament had no knowledge. It is significant that half of the transcript proceedings of the inquiry was devoted to the worst culprits, that is, the three motorway companies. The Public Accounts Committee found that the Commissioner of Main Roads has an effective 90 per cent controlling interest in the motorway companies. It also found that the Government, through the Queensland Treasury Corporation, was the sole financier and now carries all the debt--Gateway, \$225m; Logan, \$104m; and Sunshine, \$104m.

The Public Accounts Committee found that not only had the State raised these loans without being subject to Loan Council constraints but also that the State had entered into agreements which included provisions for it to fund the financial deficiencies incurred. The operational risk of these companies has effectively been undertaken by the State. The committee found that there was no legislation to provide for these Government companies to have the Auditor-General draw attention to any deficiencies in the financial administration. It is a matter of concern that the authority of the Auditor-General to report on such cases to Parliament could be open to question. The Government should run its business the same as the rest of us--constrained by commercial reality. Throwing unlimited credit at a failed project is a recipe for financial disaster.

Even if the tolls were increased immediately to \$2 and even if there was no toll-avoidance by the public, the Sunshine Motorway Company would have no hope of paying its debt. User-pays is a catchphrase that is gaining acceptance not only in Queensland but also throughout the world. As applied to toll-roads, there is nothing wrong with user-pays, so long as the payer gets genuine advantage from the amount paid. A toll on a fast multilane highway between city centres or a toll on a new bridge which saves motorists time, distance and money is indisputably acceptable. A toll on a road or bridge which links two communities previously closely associated without tolls is, however, totally unacceptable. That is the situation on the Sunshine Coast. The toll is a tax on shopping, on taking the children to school and on working in one's own community.

It is about time that proper guidelines were laid down covering what constitutes a road suitable for tolls. Those within the community on the Sunshine Coast who resent the imposition of tolls on our local roads have been variously described by the Minister, Mr Hamill, as dishonest, cheats and liars---

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order. I understand that the honourable member is reading from a supplement in the *Sunshine Coast Daily*. Perhaps she could save the time of the House by tabling the document.

Mrs SHELDON: I am not reading from any document. This speech was prepared by me. It just shows that the Minister does not even read things of importance that happen on the Sunshine Coast.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): Order! The honourable member should continue.

Mrs SHELDON: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. While the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Bill appears to be a reform along the lines of the Goss Labor Government's reform-making process that we hear so much about, I fear that it may be yet another futile attempt by this Government that is so obsessed with process and not outcome. How can this Government expect the people to believe any new promises made by the Premier and the Minister for Transport when past promises were not kept, when written campaign material outlining the Labor Party's promises is referred to as "just a letter" and not to be believed. The people of the Sunshine Coast will not believe this Government again. In fact, they believe that not only does the Government break promises but also that it is uncompromising and exceedingly hard-headed. To this end, the Tollbuster group has sent a series of "coconutgrams" to both the Premier and the Minister for Transport, as they feel it is symbolic of their hard-headedness and uncompromising position in regard to the toll. It was also because neither the Premier nor the Minister for Transport has answered any of the group's previous paper-written correspondence. It was hoped that by sending the coconuts, their attention would be attracted.

The Tollbusters have been constantly stonewalled by the Government, and they feel--quite rightly--that they should at least be given the courtesy of acknowledgment of their plight and suggestions. After all, it is the people of the Sunshine Coast, not the Premier and the Minister for Transport, who have to pay for the use of their roads. I understand that the secretary of the Minister for Transport has acknowledged receipt of one bunch of "coconutgrams" but, other than that, it looks as though they are being ignored yet again. Their questions have gone unanswered for too long. The idea of the coconuts is similar to that of the picador in a bull fight. The Tollbusters seek to attract the bull's attention and prod him a bit. To this end, I have received my own coconut from the Tollbusters, with a request that I table it to draw the attention of all honourable members to the farce that now exists on the Sunshine Coast and was created by this Government. I now seek leave to table this coconut.

Leave granted.

Mr ARDILL (Salisbury) (5.36 p.m.): First of all I congratulate the Minister and the department on such a lucid Bill. It is a model of information for the House, and it is deserving of the congratulations of the House. As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, it replaces the Act that was drawn up in 1920 when there were very few privately owned motor vehicles in the State and when we had no highways. When I received my first motor vehicle driver's licence, the Bruce Highway was bitumen only as far as Eumundi. We certainly saw a lot of changes in the years that the Main Roads Department was in existence. It did some wonderful work throughout the State. I believe that the reorganisation of that department will be to the benefit of the State as a whole because now not only will there be emphasis on building roads but also on overall transport management. That is exactly what this Bill is about.

A lot of effort has been put into improving Queensland's road system, but it is still not in a good state. The Australian road system in fact is suffering from severe underfunding of the maintenance aspect of roadworks. Most funding has been allocated to the construction of new roads and the reconstruction of existing roads to a higher standard without putting in place the infrastructure to maintain the existing roads. This was borne out in the Taror report that was commissioned by the previous Government. It showed very clearly that unless there is a radical overhaul of the road-funding system, considerable difficulties will be experienced in the years to come. The unsatisfactory proportion of road-funding that is allocated to maintenance is most apparent on what is known as the farm to market town section of the road system. That sector has been severely underfunded for many years while Governments have concentrated on building highways which could be seen and used by the majority of the people. Governments have failed to put in place the infrastructure that is needed to get farm produce to markets and also to provide for country people.

The problem of overloading in this State, which the member for Flinders, from the way in which he treated it, considers to be of little consequence, has to be tackled. I

believe that the new Transport Department, together with its various constituent bodies, will be in a better position to do that than has been the case in the past where various aspects of transport have been fragmented, not only around the State but also within the structure of government. It is a very serious problem that just has to be redressed. It is all very well to say what fine fellows those overloaders are, but we all know that the damage that a heavy vehicle causes to the road each year exceeds \$32,000. That cost has to be taken into account and steps have to be taken to address that problem.

Honourable members have heard talk about the motorway on the Sunshine Coast. I was pleased to hear the member for Landsborough mention the previous Liberal Party Minister who changed courses during his time in Parliament and caused many of the problems that are now being faced by the people on the Sunshine Coast who have to pay the toll. He removed the toll from his own area and placed it on a bridge across the Maroochy River, which brought in the people from the adjoining electorate who used the shopping facilities in Maroochydore. The Labor Party very clearly said that that was not a satisfactory way in which to fund the motorway. That is how all of the confusion has arisen.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr ARDILL: When he introduced that Bill into the House, I pointed out to the former Minister, Mr Gunn, that what was being proposed was not what he thought the position to be. It was a toll not on the Brisbane leg of the motorway but on the Maroochy River bridge, with all of the impost being put on the people of the Cooroora electorate. The speech of the member for Landsborough obviously hinges on one clause in the Bill. Perhaps I can speak about a few matters other than the specific clauses in the Bill.

Reference was made to inadequate funding being provided to improve the black spots on Queensland roads. I do not believe that this is the case. I believe that the funding that is allocated to improve those black spots is very important. I had the privilege of looking at those black spots. Many of them were on western roads. It is significant that with some improvements, the road toll in western areas is considerably less today than it was two years ago. I believe that the provision of funding to improve those black spot areas will be a major and significant step in reducing the road toll.

One of the problems that crops up with road-funding is that whoever provides the most clout gets the most funding. The people of New South Wales have attempted to do that by seeking to upgrade the Pacific Highway to four lanes virtually from Newcastle to the Queensland border. As a regular traveller through northern New South Wales, travelling both locally and to and from the southern States, I have often been impressed at the very sparse amount of traffic on that road during daylight hours. I found it hard to accept that the two horrific overnight bus crashes justified the spending of an immense amount of money on that road at the expense of all other roads in Australia. I decided to check out just what sort of traffic volumes were travelling on that section of the Pacific Highway during daylight hours. The figures that I obtained were surprising. On an average day, 423 vehicles an hour travelled northbound between Murwillumbah and Ballina. Between Ballina and Maclean, the figure was down to 183; between Maclean and Grafton, it was down even further to 171; and between Grafton and Coffs Harbour, it was up again to 393. Quite clearly, large volumes of traffic travel on some sections of the highway but, apart from the very heavy transports and the bus traffic at night, the highway does not carry the volume of traffic that we see daily using highways in Queensland, such as the Cunningham Highway and the Warrego Highway.

Because of two accidents which resulted in horrific loss of life, New South Wales is putting in a claim for more road funds. However, those two accidents do not justify all of Australia's road funds being spent on the road on which they occurred. The best way of obviating such accidents would be to get the public off the road at night and

particularly to get overnight buses off that highway. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said about the Bill--

"It is a part of a strategy by the Government to provide the necessary legislation for the different arms of the transport portfolio to plan beyond their traditional boundaries"--

and other members have already mentioned this--

"and to seek the most cost-effective solution to the transport needs of the community. A major advantage of this Bill is that it does not limit options to road alternatives only, but provides a basis for formulation and implementation of other transport solutions."

I endorse those remarks to the greatest extent possible. Planning and management of transport is the most important aspect. A road should not be built only because pressure is being applied to do so. Consideration should be given to the planning of the overall traffic operation. That is what the Minister and the department are doing. It is very important to realise that that is what the Bill is about. It is not about the various aspects that have been mentioned, such as one motorway on the Sunshine Coast.

It is also very important that the technology of the Queensland Transport Department be upgraded. In Sydney and Melbourne, technology plays an important part in dealing with the volume of traffic. Without technology in the Sydney system, traffic would not move. In Sydney, it is not the building of roads or the construction of freeways that keeps the traffic moving--not flowing, but moving--it is the technology that is being used. Without the use of that technology in Sydney, there would be no movement of traffic at all. Sydney has such narrow streets and short blocks that it is impossible to upgrade the road corridors without totally wiping out the city. If the best technology possible were not employed in Sydney, it would have a traffic system similar to that in Los Angeles.

In Melbourne, a different technology exists. It is based on the same principle as that existing in Sydney, but it keeps the traffic flowing. Brisbane should be aiming for much better use of technology to keep traffic flowing. Brisbane's traffic light system is inadequate, because the cycle times of the lights are far too long. That causes drivers to become frustrated. It is one of the major causes of red light running. If a driver comes up against a red light, he feels that he will have to sit there for another two minutes. A lot has to be done in that regard. The overall management of traffic and transport is a very important consideration that this Bill enables the department to carry out.

Also, the amalgamation of the entire transport operation will have a very significant effect on road safety. The setting up of the Road Safety Division in the Transport Department was a great step forward by the Minister. I do not want to go on all night, but I do want to mention a couple of things. The criticism by members of the Opposition of limited access to roads is quite illogical. Limited access was introduced by the previous Government. It is here to stay. The Government cannot afford to allow access to everyone at any point on the highway. Factors such as traffic flow and traffic safety have to be taken into consideration. The person wanting access has to accept that. Compensation is included in this Bill as a consideration. Where access is limited without other access being provided, compensation will be payable. I think that is a good idea, too. As I said, this is a very good Bill. I congratulate the Minister and his department on bringing it forward.

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (5.51 p.m.): Today, I wish to take the opportunity presented to me by the passage of this Bill through the House to touch briefly upon an issue which is of considerable importance to people in my electorate and which relates very much to the Minister's area of responsibility. I refer to the issue of the construction of new roads and bridges in the Brisbane region. Prior to the last State election, much was made by so-called certain action groups in New Farm and, without in any way wanting to be provocative, by members of the ALP of an allegation that a system of roads complemented by bridges across the Brisbane River would be constructed and

affect in a fundamentally detrimental way the residents of New Farm, Teneriffe, Fortitude Valley and Bowen Hills. These spurious allegations found their genesis within a report titled the *Brisbane City Council Traffic Study*, which was released in 1989, obviously before the last State election.

This report was commissioned by the Brisbane City Council. As the then Lord Mayor, Alderman Sallyanne Atkinson, said at the time, the Brisbane traffic study was just that--an investigation into the traffic and transport problems of our city. It was the work of a committee of volunteers and experts from a wide cross-section of the community, and it took approximately two years to compile. The Brisbane City Council appointed the committee to carry out this very important task for one very simple reason, and one reason alone. For two decades, no attempt had been made to gather basic information on the travelling habits and needs of the people of Brisbane and surrounding areas. The committee was asked to identify the problems and suggest some solutions, and to recommend a strategy for managing Brisbane traffic into the next century. The study looked at what had happened during the previous 20 years, what the problems are, what they were then and what might be able to be done to solve them.

The study came up with many worthwhile conclusions, recommendations and options. Again, as the then Lord Mayor stated, they were only recommendations and options which were to be--and in fact were--assessed by the council, individuals and groups in the community and other levels of government before decisions were to be made. I recall attending several large community meetings that were attended by officers and aldermen of the then Liberal administration, and also Labor aldermen. At such meetings, one of the main concerns expressed by many of my constituents was related to one of the suggestions--in fact, one of the options--in the Brisbane City Council study for a freeway and river crossing to be located somewhere in the vicinity of New Farm Park with an alleged four-lane freeway hugging the suburb of Teneriffe. In fact, and in all honesty, the concern could be described really as overwhelming and hostile opposition to such a cross-river link and freeway. The then Lord Mayor, the local alderman and I, as the local member, got the message. We all got the message and assured the residents of New Farm, Teneriffe, Bowen Hills and Fortitude Valley that a bridge and freeway, as suggested in a very hazy option, were just not on. We made this decision not because it was politically expedient but because we genuinely believed that the residential amenity of the previously mentioned suburbs would be greatly compromised if indeed such a hazy recommendation were to be implemented. We also pointed out to concerned residents that the roadworks and bridge suggested in the traffic study could not go ahead without appropriate and necessary State Government funding and approval, which had been ruled out. We went into print in the mass media and in specific pamphlets. Together with the local alderman, I totally denied our personal or party support for any bridge or four-lane freeway. Yet there were people in the community--and I believe that some of them were politically motivated--who, right from the outset and up to the 1989 State election, sought to misrepresent my personal position and that of the Liberal Party on the issue.

On polling day in December 1989, placards dishonestly accused me of favouring a bridge and a four-lane highway and urged a vote for some other candidate. Surprise, surprise! It was the Labor Party candidate. Prior to polling day, a furious and intense campaign was conducted against me on the basis that I was in favour of a bridge and four-lane highway through the suburbs of New Farm, Teneriffe, Bowen Hills and Fortitude Valley. Today, I go on record again as being totally opposed to such a bridge and freeway. I oppose such a bridge and freeway because of the reasons that were neatly summarised in a letter that was forwarded to me at that time. Those reasons included the potential loss of character and amenity that would far outweigh any benefits to the communities that I represent in this place. They also included the impact of projected traffic volumes. Such traffic levels would increase local traffic congestion, local air pollution and local noise levels. This is especially relevant, because New Farm has the highest population density for a residential area in Brisbane. The infrastructure to support such traffic levels would seriously jeopardise the existing character of riverfront land, for

example, established trees, historic wool stores, quiet parks and proposed pedestrian riverfront pathways, which are currently in the process of being built. The proposed city and Fortitude Valley bypass would dissolve the character and attributes of New Farm and Teneriffe as inner-city suburbs, representing a loss in real terms to the whole city. Because of their inherent characteristics, such suburbs should be seen as a valuable commodity to this city.

It is interesting to note that, immediately after the 1989 election, all talk of such a bridge ceased and, as I expected, the issue faded away. However, it resurfaced again--surprise, surprise--before the recent city council election. As an example of that resurfacing, on 11 March 1991 the *Courier Mail* carried a report to the effect that 500 east-side residents and municipal ALP and Green Alliance members called on the then Lord Mayor, Alderman Atkinson, to rule out two proposed Brisbane River bridges. How convenient it was that the issue should be raised just before the Brisbane City Council elections. Again, the then Lord Mayor denied any intention by her council to build such bridges. The point of my speech is---

Mr Hamill: I was wondering about that.

Mr SANTORO: I am about to refer directly to the Minister. I respectfully ask him to help to clear up this issue once and for all. The residents in my electorate, particularly those in the suburbs of New Farm, Teneriffe, Fortitude Valley and Bowen Hills, have asked me to ask the Minister for an assurance that no further cross-river links will be built by the Labor city council or this Government, particularly in stretches of the Brisbane River that hug the above suburbs. I should be grateful if the Minister could give that assurance in his reply at the end of this debate. My constituents and I look forward to the Minister's assurances. I do not want to give the Minister an opportunity of having a go at me, so I point out to him that I probably will not be in the House after the dinner recess. Because I am required to attend an official reception, I have changed my place on the list of speakers. I am grateful to the member for Carnarvon for allowing me to change places with him. I look forward to reading in tomorrow's *Hansard* the Minister's assurance to my constituents. I promise him that I will faithfully circulate to all of them not only a copy of the Minister's speech but also his comments in response to the request that I respectfully make of him.

Sitting suspended from 5.58 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Carnarvon) (7.30 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise and participate in this debate tonight. I want to outline some of my concerns and the concerns of people in my electorate. Tonight, we are talking about the system of main roads in this State, the system of road-funding and any other aspect of roads that comes into the legislation, which is the ambit of what we travel every day whether we are coming to work or travelling around our electorates. Each day, many millions of Australians travel on the roads. This is an extremely vexed issue which unites passions and concerns many people. The Government is confronted by many people who want extra funding for roads and for other necessary public infrastructure. As a member of the Opposition, I recognise that it is not always possible to provide that funding. It is one of those matters with which we must come to grips. We must sit down and work out which areas are a matter of priority and which areas can wait a bit longer.

I continually come across a large number of people in my electorate who are concerned about the state of the roads in Carnarvon and around Queensland in general. I, for one, do not believe that we can judge what should be done with a road by the number of vehicles that travel on it. In Queensland, I hope that we are not moving towards that sort of criteria. I will not misquote the Minister when I quote briefly from a speech that he delivered to the Local Government Association conference in Rockhampton last September.

Mr Hamill: It was a good speech.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I was not there to hear it, but I will have to take the Minister's word. He said--
"Those declared roads in Queensland"--
that is, in relation to the new categories of roads--

"which are our responsibility will be grouped into just two sets. . . one set I will call 'State Arterial', and another set that I call 'Principal Local'.

Our road improvement programs will be aligned with these sets. In fact, the second set of roads may attract only ongoing maintenance and minor improvements. It is my intention to align the Federal and State categories during this reassessment."

As the Minister would be well aware, that move is creating some concern amongst local authorities and amongst people in general.

Mr Hamill: Everyone wants a State arterial.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes. Everyone wants the best quality road that can be achieved. I believe that it is my duty as a member of Parliament to espouse in this place some of the problems that exist in my electorate.

Mr Elder interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! If the honourable member for Manly wishes to interject, he should be so from his correct seat.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. I am sure that, without it, I would not be able to survive in this place. Three roads in my electorate are of utmost concern to me. Those roads would be included in the second category. They are the Stanthorpe-Texas Road, the Texas-Yelarbon Road, which is in an absolutely abominable state, and the Yelarbon-Goondiwindi Road. Nobody wants anything to do with those roads. The Department of Transport is quite happy for local authorities to take over the control and maintenance of those roads. However, in order to make those sorts of roads better and safer, increasing capital works are needed. I believe that drivers adapt to bad road conditions. Once one has driven 20 000 or 30 000 kilometres on bad roads with stutter bumps and loose gravel, one becomes adept at observing those conditions. However, it does not make it any easier.

Mr Smyth interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: One gets used to them. There is no doubt about that. However, it means that people who are not familiar with those sorts of roads come to grief on them. I accept that people in both city and country areas need good roads. I am not trying to deprive metropolitan or provincial members of this House of anything. One point that people do not seem to understand about country areas is that we do not have the ready access to public transport that people have in the cities, whether it be to the suburban road system, the rail system or buses.

Mr Hamill: Schoolbuses.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Tell me about schoolbuses. I will not enlarge on that. Those people become increasingly reliant upon their cars. Quite often, because of the damage that is inflicted upon their vehicles, they have to buy a new car every couple of years. I extend to the Minister an invitation to join me one day and survey some of the roads in my electorate. I suppose that the Minister gets those sorts of requests from every member of this Parliament, every local authority and every interest group. It is extremely important that we recognise those problems and that we provide the capital funding to maintain and improve those roads. Recently, I heard something alarming that I hope is wrong. I heard that there will be a cut-off point of 250 vehicles----

Mr Hamill: That was Vince Lester's story.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes. Quite a few other people have heard that. I heard that, if the daily vehicle movements on a road do not exceed 250, it will be deemed to receive

only maintenance and not any increased infrastructure. It is important that we get away from those cut-off lines, if they are ever considered. I do not believe that the effectiveness or the importance of a road can be judged by the number of vehicles that it carries during the day-time.

Mr McGrady: Who said this?

Mr SPRINGBORG: This is my opinion. Of course, a road that carries 10, 15 or 20 vehicles a day should not necessarily have the same funding as a road that takes 5 000 vehicles a day. However, we must sometimes go past the argument that there are not enough vehicles on those roads and consider the greater economic benefit to the area and the fact that mothers are running their children to school every morning and picking them up in the afternoon. Sometimes, life-endangering situations occur. One night, I nearly came to grief on the Yelarbon-Texas Road. I was unfamiliar with the ever-changing landscape of that road. That can catch people. I suppose that that is driving my passion towards getting those roads in my electorate improved. It is the same thing that drives the passions of all members of this place. We should get away from those lunatic cut-off points, if there are any. We should not be categorising roads so that they get maintenance only and very little, if any, improvement. There are, in my electorate, bitumen roads that would be entitled to increased maintenance and increased upgrading. I instance the Texas-Inglewood Road along which coal trucks travel every day to the Ashford power station. There are quite a few bad stretches on that road. This is one of the problems the Minister faces in being lobbied by members of Parliament. I ask him to understand our arguments and to understand that there is a world west of the Great Dividing Range, as some Ministers do, and to realise that sometimes the situation in the west is different. The importance of the west cannot be judged by its lack of population; other necessary criteria come into it. I look forward to the Minister's response.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich--Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (7.39 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their participation in this very important debate. The legislation is very important because it provides the framework by which a very important part of the program of the Department of Transport can be delivered. It refers to road programs specifically but, of course, there are other parts of the program, such as the provision of transport infrastructure. Honourable members have alluded to that during the debate. A number of issues have been raised and, whilst I do not propose to go through each and every issue raised, I do think it is fair to draw together some of the threads of the arguments and try to provide some illumination in relation to some of the comments made, although some of them strayed wide of the mark.

Some comments from Opposition members concerned the basic administration of the legislation. Again I was somewhat surprised that they had learned very little from their long period in Government. The legislation establishes a corporation sole as a legal entity. That corporation sole is the Director-General of the Department of Transport. Honourable members opposite are quite wrong in suggesting that that legal entity sets up some sort of statutory authority, which puts it at arm's length from the Minister. It does not. I draw their attention to the provision in the Bill that the administration of this Act is subject to the control of the Minister. The corporation is subject to the Minister's control. If this seems to be somewhat anomalous or if the suggestion is that this provision is somewhat at variance with what preceded it, I can only draw the attention of honourable members to section 5 of the old Main Roads Act, which was passed in 1920. It established the Commissioner of Main Roads as a corporation. This legislation, unlike the old legislation, actually guarantees the position of the Minister and makes it quite clear that the responsibility rests ultimately with the Minister.

The other theme that seemed to creep into a number of the speeches of honourable members opposite was the lamenting of the Main Roads Fund and, more particularly, the concern that registration moneys were no longer going to the roads program. Nothing could be further from the truth. In 1990-91, some \$337m was collected from Queensland

road-users through vehicle registration charges. Road-funding from the Queensland Government--not Commonwealth road money which passed through the Queensland Government--exceeded the collection from vehicle registration. In fact, some \$368m was spent on the road network in Queensland from Queensland Government sources. That means that other sources of consolidated revenue were in fact subsidising the vehicle registration money for the delivery of the road program.

The honourable member for Toowong sought information as to the funds already delivered to the road program this year. As all honourable members would recognise, the extensive flooding in central Queensland and north Queensland had a very detrimental effect not only on the road network but also on transport infrastructure in general. The damage to roads within the province of the State Government and administered through my Department of Transport exceeded \$30m this year. That has had a very dramatic effect on our capacity to deliver the program. It has meant that a number of projects in the program that we sought to have in place cannot be put in place for two reasons. The first is that the flooding delayed the completion of works that were in train, and some \$23m worth of work was delayed because of the floods. We are seeking to catch up on that backlog. The second reason that needs to be recognised--and all honourable members need to show some forbearance in this regard--is that, in regard to the natural disasters that hit Queensland this year and last year, whilst a certain proportion of the funds that come through natural disaster relief goes to restoring the road network, the State has to bear some of the cost. There is no compensation under the natural disaster funding arrangement to repair damage that rain does to our roads. It is only where there is saturation and the pavement breaks up because of the action of the flooding, scouring and so on that natural disaster money is granted to repair that part of the road network. All we can do is restore the network to its condition prior to the natural disaster. It would be absolutely ludicrous to repair potholed pavement to its condition prior to the inundation. Consequently, the natural disaster funds have been used to restore effective parts of the network. Of course, other programs that were to come into effect had to be postponed to bring the pavement back to a satisfactory and usable level. Consequently, this year considerable havoc has been caused to this State's road program, and had been caused last year because of flooding. However, I give the assurance that the department is seeking to extend the available funds on very carefully prioritised programs.

The other issue that was mentioned several times during the debate was the ISC report. Some people are running around this State brandishing copies of last year's ISC report and have claimed that the document heralds some sort of Armageddon. Those people seem to have conveniently forgotten that no Government in Australia has endorsed the ISC report, which was superseded by the Special Premiers Conference that took place in the Legislative Council Chamber of this Parliament. At that Special Premiers Conference, agreement was reached by the Chief Ministers, the Premiers and the Prime Minister. Indeed, all political parties were represented. Agreement was reached in relation to a national system of heavy vehicle charges, and a heavy vehicle was defined as a vehicle under 4.5 tonnes. Extensive consultation had taken place with industry and that issue will be dealt with further at the next Special Premiers Conference. I must stress most particularly that the charges that were heralded in the first and, indeed, the second ISC report have not been adopted. In fact, in the discussions that have taken place charges are being considered that are in no way similar to those contained in the report.

Mr Springborg: They are still pretty severe, though, aren't they?

Mr HAMILL: I will take the honourable member's interjection. If I knew what the final outcome of the forthcoming Special Premiers Conference was to be and if I had a crystal ball and was able to foretell the future, I could answer the honourable member's question. Some of the critics of the process have failed to recognise that it is not simply a question of the charges on the vehicle. The most important issue is the net cost of running the vehicle. Some of the most detrimental consequences for the road transport industry do not come from heavy registration charges but, rather, come from a lack of uniformity in regulations and often contradictory regulations that apply across State

jurisdictions. The approach that has been adopted by this Government is one of cutting through the red tape. This Government is in favour of greater uniformity across the nation in terms of the plethora of regulations and charges that apply to the operations of the road transport industry. The bottom line is the issue in relation to this matter, and the bottom line is what this Government is concerned about. The road transport industry has been very much involved in the consultations regarding the forthcoming Special Premiers Conference.

Just as there was extensive consultation in the development of this legislation which is before the House, likewise the Government has maintained close consultation with the road transport industry with respect to the whole question of road transport reform. I was disturbed to hear some of the comments made by the honourable member for Flinders regarding the state of the Flinders Highway earlier this year. It was suggested that the road was totally impassable for three months. That is not true, and the honourable member should know that owing to the severe inundation that had taken place in that section of north Queensland, my department--the responsible custodian of the State arterial road network--ascertained that very severe damage would be incurred to that road if heavy vehicles were allowed to pass over it before the pavement had adequately dried.

Mr Beattie: Which is a very logical thing.

Mr HAMILL: It is a very logical thing. The options presented to the department, including me as Minister, were twofold: either the road was closed, or the road was left open. Quite frankly, neither was a terribly satisfactory option. Therefore, the approach adopted by the department was a far more reasonable one. In order to facilitate the maximum amount of movement of heavy freight in that region, the road was not closed. A limitation was applied to the extent of 80 per cent of the normal axle load able to be carried by heavy transport vehicles and there was a suspension of volumetric loading. In other words, consignments and vehicles could get through, but the department was not prepared to sacrifice a substantial investment by Queensland taxpayers in that very important section of arterial road.

Mr Katter interjected.

Mr HAMILL: For the information of the honourable member, let me say that last Saturday I had the pleasure of addressing the annual conference of the Livestock Transporters Association and I had the opportunity to thank its members for the letter of support that the association's secretary, Liz Schmidt, had sent me in relation to the flooding and in relation to the way in which the Department of Transport sought to meet the needs of the industry during those very difficult times. In particular, the association had referred to the situation on the Flinders Highway. Perhaps the honourable member would like a copy of that letter.

Mr Katter: You are going to take that back because Liz Schmidt, if that is true, is in very serious trouble.

Mr HAMILL: The honourable member may think that she is in very serious trouble, but last Saturday I acknowledged her and praised the association for that letter of support, and nobody seemed to point the finger at Liz Schmidt. I believe that that bears testimony to the confidence that industry has in the administration of this Government's roads program and shows that in difficult times when the system is under duress, the department can respond sensibly, reasonably and compassionately to the needs of industry.

Mr Katter: When are you going to take an interjection? There is no road system anywhere in the world where heavy transport has been cut off for three months. Name me one single instance.

Mr HAMILL: I take the interjection because, contrary to the assertion made by the honourable member, the Flinders Highway was not closed. He cannot get it through

his thick head that the Flinders Highway was not closed. The department applied restrictions to ensure that the pavement would be maintained. The heavy trucks could travel over the road, but with a restricted load. I hope that that takes a load off the honourable member's shoulders.

The member for Toowong was long-winded in a number of the comments that he made. However, one of the areas in which I felt he was on particularly shaky ground was the delivery of our road safety program. The honourable member had the audacity to say that the road safety program was strapped for funds. One wonders where he has been. This year, in very tight financial circumstances, we doubled the funding available for road safety measures and programs. More than \$13m was committed to road safety. We had the benefit of debate on this subject in the House not so long ago. However, perhaps to refresh the minds of some honourable members, let me run through just a few of the initiatives that we have put in place. I refer to the baby capsule hire scheme and the recent announcement of \$1m on a dollar-for-dollar basis for a pilot program to provide school set-down areas outside schools throughout the State.

Mrs Edmond: In Toowong.

Mr HAMILL: Even Toowong got one. However, the honourable member for Toowong would not know about that. The money was distributed without fear or favour, which is the way it should be, with the priority being road safety. We committed half a million dollars for bikeways. We initiated the black spot program and other programs for cyclist helmets, zero blood alcohol level, red light cameras, school safety--the list goes on and on. Those programs were a very proud achievement by this Government in the furtherance of road safety in this State.

In the context of the debate, I welcomed the very constructive remarks of my colleagues the members for Isis, Mount Coot-tha and Brisbane Central. I note particularly the comments of the member for Brisbane Central about sensitivity in the delivery of the road program, particularly the environmental sensitivities in the delivery of the road program in urban areas. We have certainly given that area high priority. Studies have been undertaken in respect of road noise in order to help us at long last to develop a policy in that area. However, the areas which received the lion's share of funding in our road program are not the urban areas. In my view, that is quite appropriate. Eighty per cent of the roads budget is spent outside the Brisbane metropolitan area. I might point out that approximately 60 per cent to 70 per cent of the State roads budget comes from the metropolitan area. Consequently, country and provincial Queensland are being subsidised by Brisbane for the delivery of the road program. The only way that we can do that is by providing for adequate passenger transport in south-east Queensland to allow people to get off the roads. It irks me when critics such as the honourable member for Flinders point to the subsidy for passenger transport as some sort of illegitimate process, when it is only one aspect of delivering a total transport program. I stand by the commitment that we have given country Queensland in terms of the road program. It is very important to those areas of Queensland--the regional centres and the remote areas--that a decent road network is in place to service the social and economic needs of those communities.

I would be remiss if I did not respond to the diatribe from the member for Landsborough--the Sunshine Motorway revisited. It was a bit like *Brideshead Revisited*: the story goes on and on. If anything could be gleaned from the discussion this evening, it is that the Sunshine Motorway is a saga of the sort of political interference which should never have been countenanced with respect to the determination of the priorities of the road program. When the previous Government stated that Treasury funding for Stage 1 of the motorway was arranged, we were all led to believe that the funding was in place, that it was a sound proposition. It was of considerable disappointment to me to find that the assurances that we were given, quite frankly, were totally fallacious. It was never funded. When the honourable member for Landsborough talks about principles, I only wish to remind her that the principle that bears down in all of this is the principal at the bank that has to be repaid. I want all honourable members to think about this

very carefully. As I said earlier, last year, approximately \$337m was collected from the motorists of Queensland in vehicle registration charges. From those State sources, we spent \$368m on the road network. A number of letters have come to me asking for more money here and more money there. We could have taken the easy way out with the Sunshine Motorway. We could have caved in and said, "Look, to hell with fiscal responsibility; to hell with the road program across the State. We'll bail out the irresponsible financial arrangements of the previous Government with the Sunshine Motorway and we will forget about the road program." If we were to forget about the road program, let every honourable member who represents a constituency outside the metropolitan area consider the point that 80 per cent of the road program is spent in their electorates. If they want to bleat and howl, back up the current member for Nicklin, who seems to have changed his tune about the Sunshine Motorway, and say that we should all be good boys and girls and take the tolls off and find the millions of dollars for that motorway out of that \$337m contributed by the motorists of Queensland, then so be it. However, I cannot subscribe to that view. I believe that such an action would derogate from our responsibility to deliver the program.

Mr Neal: You did before the election.

Mr HAMILL: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Balonne. Prior to the election, we thought that we could believe the statements of former Premier Ahern and former Finance Minister Austin, who told us that the road was funded--that the funding arrangements were put in place. We thought we could believe Bill Gunn when, as Minister for Main Roads, he told us the motorway would cost \$45m. We believed them, but we will not believe them again. The Sunshine Motorway is a sad and sorry saga of public deception by our predecessors in office.

As for the tabling of a coconut today--I think that that speaks volumes for the sort of activity that is taking place on the Sunshine Coast. The people of the Sunshine Coast had their opportunity to vote on the question of the motorway and the question of the tolls in the local authority elections earlier this year. The Tollbusters, who have been active over a period of time on the Sunshine Coast, ran a well-funded campaign. Their chairperson, Ms Connolly, ran for the Maroochy Shire Council and she got a drubbing in the area where she claimed to be carrying the public with her. I believe that there are enough people on the Sunshine Coast who see through the grubby tactics that are being given succour by Liberal Party and National Party representatives in the area--the same people who, prior to the State election, were quite happy to see the motorway go ahead. They can see through those tactics. Those people also recognise the fundamental issue here, which is the provision of the infrastructure. People want the infrastructure, and the Government will seek to provide it.

The population growth in some areas of the State is far outstripping the capacity of the Government to provide services. There is an extensive road network throughout the State. To provide some of the expensive infrastructure that people are clamouring for in the fast-developing areas, particularly in south-east Queensland, the Government would have to forget about the rest of the State. In my view, that would be totally irresponsible. The Government needs to look at other ways of funding this expensive infrastructure. I believe that if people want the infrastructure ahead of when it could otherwise be provided, the people of Queensland are prepared to make a contribution towards it. After all, they are getting the benefits now, not in 10, 20 or 30 years' time. The critical issue is to be able to plan for that infrastructure ahead of when it is required, ahead of the time when the congestion is so bad that the infrastructure, when it is constructed, is already overdue. The only way that that can be done is by adequately prioritising the Government's program.

The member for Carnarvon expressed concern that if fewer than 250 vehicles a day were using a particular road, it would receive no funds. That is simply not the case. However, clear priorities have to be established. The Government must ensure that the dollars that it has are spent correctly and give the best value for money. That is why I have announced that there will be a reclassification of Queensland roads. The Government's

funds will be directed to those roads that are very important for social and economic reasons. The work to upgrade them will be carried out. But it is not a cop-out for the rest of the State. There is a commitment to maintenance and to improvements, particularly in relation to safety issues--the sorts of issues to which the honourable member for Carnarvon referred. What this new legislation will allow the Government to do is to put in place a more flexible regime in which the road program can be delivered. Under the old Act, funds from the Main Roads Trust Fund could only be spent on declared roads. That meant that local authority roads could not receive funding from the trust fund. I envisage a new era being ushered in in which there is scope for cooperation in regard to road-funding arrangements between the Government and local authorities. That is something that local authorities are calling for. After all, they have been very pleased with the continuation of the matching grants program over the last 18 months.

Before I conclude, I want to pay tribute to the dedicated officers of the Department of Transport. The Department of Transport, the Roads Division and the Transport Technology Division pride themselves on and are recognised for the excellent service that they provide. The commitment in my department to research is very strong indeed. In fact, research budgets of some \$6m have generated local work. My department contributes to the Australian Road Research Board and the accelerated loading facility which is looking at pavement wear occurring at Beerburrum. In the next two years some \$1.6m of our funds will go towards the furtherance of road research. The department has in place a quality assurance scheme to ensure total quality management. All in all, it is a very professional outfit indeed. The quality of the work that is done is seen throughout the State. The Department of Transport is a very decentralised department. The regional operations, district engineers and regional officers do a very fine job of liaising with local members and local authorities, and ascertaining local views in the formulation of priorities. The work is ongoing. In times of stress, such as during the floods, it was officers of the Department of Transport who were out there in the floodwaters seeking to ensure that the road transport industry was not unduly affected. I believe that the work of the Department of Transport is well regarded throughout the State. I can give an assurance that as the department strives for continued excellence, it will have my strong support and, I dare say, the support of all honourable members. I commend the Bill to the House.

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

AYES, 42

NOES, 26

Resolved in the affirmative.

Committee

Hon. D. J. Hamill (Ipswich--Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1.1 to 3.5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3.6--

Mr KATTER (8.14 p.m.): I do not wish to take up the time of the Committee unduly, but the Minister's statement that I was totally incorrect in saying that that road was closed deserves reiteration and clarification. I said that it was closed to heavy vehicles.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is too much audible conversation. The Minister would like to hear the honourable member.

Mr KATTER: The Minister rejected the fact that it was closed to heavy vehicles, but then admitted that it was closed to only a particular type of heavy vehicle. If he had continued for long enough, the technicalities would have become so specific that the Minister's sweeping generalisation would have been referred to hardly anyone at all.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the honourable member for Southport to stop his conversation. He is interrupting the member for Flinders.

Mr KATTER: Mr Chairman, I would hate to differ with your judgment, of course, but I would very much doubt that that was the case. I do not wish to reflect upon the Chair.

Seriously, clause 3.6 considerably strengthens the hands of those people on the ground out there who really have a vested interest in considering nothing other than the condition of the road. The fact is that Mount Isa Mines had to start putting off people. The Minister is screwing up his face, but I was told that because the railway was out and the Minister put the heavy vehicles out, there was no way of getting a sufficient amount of product through to Townsville for processing and that, because of that, people at the refinery in Townsville and some at Mount Isa were laid off. The Minister set a limit of 80 per cent of capacity. Quite frankly, those vehicles cannot operate at a profit at 80 per cent of capacity. Therefore, they were not prepared to carry product at that loading level. Similarly, the livestock hauliers could not run at a profit on the terms and conditions which the Minister gave them. So, in effect the road was simply closed down for one quarter of the year.

My original remarks were that commercial operations on that highway were stopped for one-quarter of the year. The commercial operations on that highway are substantially--and there is hardly anything that does not come into this category--the carriage of cattle and products from Mount Isa Mines. Commercial operations involve the transport of products to the coast. For three months of the year, they were prevented from getting through. What sort of a road system is it that cannot take commercial vehicles for one-quarter of the year? I venture to submit to the Minister that the criteria that were being used were absolutely ridiculous and were rubbish. The only thing that was happening was that an instrument of oppression was worked upon the people in that area by some officer exercising extremely indulgent terms and criteria upon the situation that existed. In spite of the tough line that the Minister is using tonight, I do not doubt that he did endeavour to secure some sort of justice for us. I would be deeply disappointed in him if he did not. But having been told that, he is placed in a very difficult situation.

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr KATTER: The Minister will not be placed in a difficult situation this time because he will be able to say, "These people are independent of me. There is nothing that I can do." Because of that, some obscure officer out there on the ground will be blamed. We in the Opposition object in the strongest possible terms to subclause (5). In saying that, I cannot help taking into account the remarks that were made concerning the Tollbusters, who have a similar sort of problem in relation to the use of a road. In that case, the criteria for using the road centred on the imposition of a toll. Some very disparaging remarks were cast upon Suzelie Connelly and the Tollbusters, whom the Minister said did not have support. In fact, the figures are quite staggering. The support

indicates that an average of 84.3 per cent of the people are behind them. I am quoting from the results of the formally taken survey.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am afraid that the honourable member is not speaking to the clause. I would like him to return to the clause.

Mr KATTER: I defer to your judgment, Mr Chairman, and add by way of leaving the subject that 4 500 people voted for her and she was not even in a team.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the honourable member under Standing Order 123A.

Mr KATTER: I accept your ruling, Mr Chairman, with alacrity. I think that the matter has been dealt with more than adequately.

The Opposition will not divide the Committee on this clause. As the Opposition does not have the numbers to win a division, it seems to me to be fairly needless and opprobrious to do so and to take up the time of 70 or 80 members of Parliament. However, I state clearly that we on this side of the Chamber are totally and utterly opposed to subclause (5). We request the Minister to delete that subclause and see if it can be doctored up in such a way that it is not anywhere near as offensive as it is at present.

Mr HAMILL: The honourable member asked how we could justify this road and who could build this sort of road. The answer to that is that the road was built during the time when the National Party was in office.

Mr Katter interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister is replying.

Mr HAMILL: Our responsibility, from which we will not resile, is to protect the road pavement and the road network. As I pointed out to the honourable member during the second-reading debate, the industry recognises that. The Livestock Transporters Association wrote to me and complimented me on the action we took in relation to the Flinders Highway.

Mr Katter interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already warned the member for Flinders under Standing Order 123A. I warn him again.

Mr HAMILL: Contrary to the repeated assertions by the honourable member for Flinders, the road was not closed. The road was open to the traffic of heavy vehicles, but with load restrictions and a suspension of volumetric loading.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. There has been a misrepresentation of the phrases that I used. That most certainly reflects upon me because it looks like I have misrepresented the people. I have never at any stage said that the road was closed. It was never closed. It was closed to heavy commercial vehicles. That is in fact what I said. That is a fundamentally different proposition.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member has made his point. I call the Minister.

Mr HAMILL: The road was not closed to light commercial vehicles nor to heavy commercial vehicles. What occurred on the Flinders Highway--indeed, what occurred on many other sections of the road network during the time that it was inundated--was that the passage of vehicles was restricted. It was restricted to 80 per cent of the normal axle loading and the practice of volumetric loading of livestock was suspended. Therefore, it was quite clearly seen and recognised by the industry that the Department of Transport did everything in its power to ensure that the road network was kept open to traffic.

Mr Katter interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I warn the honourable member for Flinders for the last time. If I have to warn him again, I will order him to leave the Chamber.

Mr HAMILL: The department ensured that the necessary supplies could make it through to the affected centres. I believe that the communities in those areas appreciated the department's actions.

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member for Flinders has made particular reference to the overloading of heavy vehicles. I believe that interstate truckies are the ones who are most responsible for the damage to central and western Queensland's roads. Because of their violation of this State's laws relating to loading, overloaded road transports from the south are jeopardising the future of volumetric loading in this State. I refer to what happened earlier this year with the Thomson River at Longreach. No doubt the Minister is aware of that situation. The volumetric loading on the Flinders Highway was also cut to 80 per cent.

Mr Hamill: It wasn't, it was suspended.

Mr JOHNSON: It was suspended. However, I am aware of one particular transport that went through Longreach carrying 105 tonnes. That jeopardises the volumetric loading system. As I said earlier this afternoon, for up to six months some people in the electorate of Mr Katter did not sell livestock. I believe that the people who use that volumetric loading system are very responsible. They have the road network of this State at heart and understand the problems. Those other hungry operators who are jeopardising the system are wrecking our roads, not the people who use volumetric loading.

Mr HAMILL: The protestations of the Opposition are difficult to reconcile with its actions when it was in Government. There is nothing new about these provisions to restrict loads on roads in special circumstances. The existing Main Roads Regulation 87 outlines similar powers, which were exercised when the party that sits in Opposition sat on this side of the House. Furthermore, similar powers to regulate traffic exist under the Traffic Act, which was put in place by a coalition Government. What is all the bleating about? It is about posturing. Quite frankly, the powers under the legislation exist to protect the public investment of the people of Queensland from irresponsible actions of those who have no consideration for the welfare of local communities or, indeed, other road-users. Those people would be more than happy to plough ahead over a saturated pavement and to do massive damage in order to get their loads through, but to hell with the rest.

Mr KATTER: With all due respect, the Minister's remarks are quite spurious. Many people lost their jobs during that flood period. The Minister did not have the courage to stand up to the officers in those areas who were acting in a most excessive manner. During four flood periods that were far worse than the recent flood period, the highway was closed for no longer than three or four weeks. On this occasion, the highway was closed for more than three months. The Minister was responsible for people losing their jobs during that period. Many hauliers in that area have been pushed to the point of bankruptcy.

Mr Veivers interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! For the second time, the member for Southport is warned under Standing Order 123A.

Mr KATTER: The powers exist in a far more limited manner than is being proposed in this legislation. The Government is asking for far more excessive powers and greater ability for those people to do whatever they damned well please. The Minister has stated that the road was not closed. At all times the Opposition has stated that the road was closed to commercial operations. Quite frankly, operators in those areas need that extra

20 per cent to be commercially viable. The Minister might not understand it, but that extra 20 per cent represents the profit margin for the operators. If that profit margin is removed, they cannot operate commercially. That is why none of the hauliers carried anything during that period. Does the Minister believe that if they could have carried anything for a quid, they would not have carried it? Of course, they would have! If they could have turned a profit, they would have carried the goods. Mount Isa Mines took a very dim view of the people who were not prepared to carry that amount of freight during that period. The Minister's remarks are quite spurious. I am pleased that none of the people from that area is here tonight to hear what the Minister has said. I will convey to the livestock hauliers the Minister's comments about their secretary. If his comments are correct--and I suspect that they are not--what will happen inside that association will be most unpleasant. The Minister has publicly offered me the letter. I have accepted his offer. I require that letter.

I point out to honourable members that all of that area is black soil plains. At least six weeks prior to the reopening of that highway, vehicles were moving over those black soil plains. Although operators could drive on black soil plains with impunity, they could not drive on bitumen roads. What absolute rubbish!

Mr HAMILL: By his own mouth, the member is condemned. He often denied that he said that the road was closed. However, on how many occasions during that last tirade did he say that the road was closed to commercial traffic? Indeed, the road was not closed to commercial traffic.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. I do not like to waste the time of the House. I said very clearly to the Minister---

Mr HAMILL: I rise to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I also remember clearly what was said. I will listen to the member's point of order, and then I will rule on it. What is the member's point of order?

Mr KATTER: My point of order is exactly the same as the previous point of order that I took. The Minister is claiming that I said things that I did not say. The Minister's misrepresentation reflects extremely badly upon me. I do not know on how many occasions the Minister will continue to make misrepresentations to the House.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is no point of order. I call the Minister.

Mr HAMILL: My point of order is that the member was trying to speak to the clause for a third time, when he is only entitled to speak to it twice.

Mr ELLIOTT: To take up the point raised by the Minister--and leaving aside the issue of volumetric loading--the Opposition spokesman is saying basically that if people who are carting goods for Mount Isa Mines or carrying produce, cattle, horses or whatever are told that they may carry only 80 per cent of their legal load, that effectively makes it totally non-viable for them to operate. Whether or not the Minister likes it, that is the bottom line. He is perfectly correct in saying that, when the National Party was in Government, it did close those roads for short periods. As was indicated by the member for Flinders, the Minister, upon advice, closed the road for months. That is what he said. The Minister is trying to misrepresent what the member for Flinders said and to make out that he said that the Minister totally closed the road. He did not say that at all. The Minister is misrepresenting the facts.

Mr JOHNSON: One aspect of the debate that I wish to bring to the attention of the Committee is the Flinders Highway. A couple of months ago, the Minister rightfully imposed the 80 per cent restriction on volumetric or livestock loading. At that time, the restriction was lifted on freight. As Bob Katter said, at the same time, Mount Isa Mines was carting on the Flinders Highway with special permits heavy loads, which would have been much heavier than those carted under volumetric loading. Livestock hauliers

in this country often travel on very, very unstable roads and sometimes in wet weather. As the honourable member for Flinders said, much of this country is black soil country. However, in the gulf country, when one reaches the Flinders Highway, there is definitely no black soil. Many of the roads there have very solid foundations. Much of the Flinders Highway has a very sound foundation. There seems to me to have been some victimisation in regard to volumetric loading.

Clause 3.6, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3.7--

Mr KATTER (8.32 p.m.): The Opposition is extremely troubled by this clause. It is excessive in its ambit. It is drawn far more widely than is necessary. It gives the power to make life very, very difficult for anybody. I notice that a large part of the Bill is taken up by the clause concerning access onto highways. The Opposition is not saying that access should not be controlled. However, it seems to me that the powers in the Bill go well beyond the ambit that should have been drawn. I submit to the Committee that the public servants ran amok with this Bill and that the Minister was too busy or could not care enough to apply himself to the Bill and to cut it down as he should have. The Opposition opposes clause 3.7. Fairly complex redrafting would be needed to cut down its ambit to an appropriate level.

Clause 3.7, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3.8 to 3.15, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3.16--

Mr KATTER (8.34 p.m.): This is a most unfortunate clause. Everywhere, we see the cost structures that are imposed by Governments increasing dramatically. I will not say that the clause will dramatically or greatly increase the price of land, but it will increase very significantly the price of land. For every single subdivision--not only onto declared roads but also onto roads that in the future may become declared roads--people will have to obtain permission not only from the local council but also from the Roads Division of the Department of Transport. That the Roads Division should decide whether a subdivision should go ahead seems to me to be wildly excessive.

Mr Ardill: They've been drawn already.

Mr KATTER: The honourable member should let me finish what I am going to say. The Bill could have been drawn to state "where it affects the flow-on to the highway in some significant manner", but that is not how the Bill reads. The Bill gives an arbitrary power. We will all be surprised at this: there is an appeal mechanism. That appeal is to the Minister, and his decision is final. That is an excellent appeal system, is it not? After his department has made the decision, we can ask the Minister, and whatever he says is final. We have Caesar judging Caesar--a classic example of no appeal system at all. It is the appeal system one has when one does not have an appeal system. The very right of young people to own their own homes depends upon the price of land. The land available in the marketplace will be held up interminably while officers who are supposed to be building roads involve themselves in subdivisions all over Queensland for not only declared roads but also roads that just might, at some future time, be declared roads.

Mr Ardill: That's not what it says.

Mr KATTER: The honourable member can have his say after I have finished. I would be happy for him to point out to me any holes in my argument. This is another classic case of an imposition being placed needlessly upon people. The Opposition has no difficulty in saying that there should be some input into subdivisions and access onto main highways. However, a blanket, across-the-board approval system, as the widening of the ambit of the clause provides, is totally unacceptable. It is a classic example of the way in which cost structures that are imposed by Governments will increase the price of commodities coming on to the market--in this case, subdivided land.

Mr Ardill: He doesn't know what he's talking about.

Mr HAMILL: I can only agree with the comment from the member for Salisbury, who said that the honourable member for Flinders does not know what he is talking about. This provision formalises the practice that is widely undertaken already whereby local authorities consult with the Department of Transport with respect to subdivisions. So they should. A subdivision could have a very considerable impact upon a declared road and the access or otherwise to that declared road. Contrary to the misguided assertions from the honourable member for Flinders, it is not a case of the department trying to stymie subdivision by effectively having an arbitrary power over all subdivision. The provision states clearly that it is in respect to land contiguous with a declared road, a road that is already declared or a road or land that the local authority has been advised in writing that it is intended become a declared road. It is not a case of some prospective, possible, future declaration in 5, 10, 15 or 20 years' time. The honourable member said that it might be an opportune time to poke a hole in his argument. I suggest that his argument is like a sieve.

Clause 3.16, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 3.17 to 7.9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 7.10--

Mr KATTER (8.39 p.m.): It has been my contention in this Chamber on a number of occasions since becoming spokesman on transport matters that the major causes of road deaths are car conditions, conditions on the road and ancillary conditions. Tonight I am pleased to be able to present some very hard evidence of what can be achieved by coming to grips with bad road conditions. This is very relevant to this clause, which deals with fencing declared roads. From 1983 to about 1986, the National Party Government proceeded to fence the Flinders Highway from Julia Creek to Hughenden, a distance of 300 or 400 kilometres. Prior to that, the highway was fenced in part and, in some places, on one side of the road but not on the other. A very large number of accidents occurred because of kangaroos in the main and, to a lesser extent, stock and other animals coming on to the highway.

Between July 1979 and June 1982, there were 116 accidents. The car count rose by 50 per cent during the period 1983 to 1986. Despite that increase, the number of accidents dropped almost by half from 116 to 72. The number of casualty accidents dropped from 67 to 29. The number of deaths dropped from nine to two. In a period when because of the increase in traffic the number of deaths should have increased by 50 per cent, to 13, there were only two. By fencing the highway it can be justifiably claimed that 11 lives were saved between 1987 and 1989. What I am trying to bring home to the Minister is that, even though the car count increased by 50 per cent, the number of deaths dropped to one third of what they had been before the highway was fenced. We achieved a very great saving in the cost of accidents and, most importantly, the number of serious injuries and the number of people killed dropped dramatically during a period when the car count increased by 50 per cent. This is why we object most strongly to clause 7.10. What we really would like to see is a sound and sensible approach. We would like the Minister to omit this clause and later substitute a more suitable one. We would like him to address the problem and fence the highways.

About 12 of the people with whom I went to the Catholic primary school at Cloncurry have been killed on the highway between Cloncurry and Mount Isa, and three of my football mates from my own team were killed on it. The fencing of that highway would save a large number of lives during the next five or 10 years. I plead with the Minister to address this problem of joint funding to fence the highways. That is not being addressed in clause 7.10; it simply provides that the Government will have nothing at all to do with fencing and that it is up to the owner of the land adjacent to the highway to fence it. We are not naive enough to believe that the Government has enough money to fence every highway in Queensland, either. The fencing about which I have spoken was financed jointly by Queensland Railways, the Main Roads Department, as

it then was, to some extent the local graziers and most certainly by the Department of Primary Industries. It was a joint funding arrangement and some sort of sound, sensible mechanism should be put in place to undertake further fencing. I seem to be wasting my time speaking about something that saved 11 lives while the Minister is sitting over there jeering. I know he will get up with his usual---

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member will keep to the clause.

Mr KATTER: I am trying to address this serious problem and the Minister is so interested in lives that he is laughing and jeering with the honourable member for Mackay.

Mr Elliott interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The honourable member for Cunningham does not have to make any comments, either.

Mr KATTER: The Minister will get up and call us fools and say that what we have said is rubbish. I am addressing the problem that exists. We would like the Minister to omit clause 7.10 and come back with a proposal for joint funding by the parties involved, because we have hard, objective evidence that lives can be saved if highways are fenced.

Mr HAMILL: I resent the comments made by the honourable member for Flinders. In fact, I was discussing the matter with the Minister for Primary Industries and asking him what contribution he might make to the fencing of highways throughout the State. He tells me that his budget is more strapped than mine. In response to the honourable member for Flinders, I point out that the clause that he finds objectionable is the same as section 26B (1) in the Main Roads Act 1920-1989. That is an Act over which National Party Ministers had charge for approximately 32 years. Given the time that members of the National Party had to direct their minds to the request made by the honourable member for Flinders, I find the Opposition's change of heart a little difficult to comprehend. I really do not feel like deleting this clause at present, and I do not really feel like bringing another clause back later.

Clause 7.10, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 7.11 to 9.16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9.17--

Mr KATTER (8.47 p.m.): This clause gives members of the Opposition cause for concern in respect to vicarious liability. It appears from our reading of the Bill--and members of the Opposition do not have expert legal advice that is available to the Minister, so perhaps he can clarify our interpretation--that this clause, which is headed, "Liability of owner for offence relating to use of vehicles", suggests that trucking operators can control their drivers to the degree to which they must be controlled in terms of this provision. I will not bore the Committee with the example I instanced earlier, but simply say that this provision is enormously unfair. If a driver goes out onto a highway and damages the highway, it would not be very difficult to run up a damages bill of \$1m. There is no doubt that someone should be punished for that damage, and I do not deny that the person responsible should be punished and that there should be an appropriate method of punishment. However, what I am saying is that the law of tort gives the department all the legal power it needs to pursue these people. This is the way that the system of British justice has worked for many hundreds of years, and I do not see why this clause should depart from that and effectively reverse the onus of proof.

Mr Hamill: It's not a reverse onus of proof.

Mr KATTER: It most certainly is. If a driver goes out in a transport operator's truck and causes damage, even though the transport operator has written a note stating that under no circumstances is he to drive after he has been drinking or under no circumstances is he to overload, because the driver wants to get home or back to the

coast, he decides to take a double load instead of having to come back. Anyone who has had anything to do with trucking knows the situation that occurs constantly and continuously, and knows that drivers simply go out and do it. Anyone who has employed people would know how many times an employer can get himself into trouble because an employee does something that he damned well should not have done and which he was told in written instructions not to do. The Minister is exposing every single trucking operator in this State to bankruptcy. There will be nothing a trucking operator can do to protect himself. Even if he takes every reasonable precaution, he will still be exposed to a danger to which, quite frankly, he should not be exposed.

The system of British justice adopts a very fair and equitable approach to the law of tort, but the Minister has thrown the accumulated wisdom of many centuries of British justice out the window and has decided that the poor beggar is guilty before he has even reached the court room. He will have to somehow prove his innocence. It seems to me that by virtue of this provision, the Minister has taken away the ability of the operator to prove his innocence. The Opposition is saying that this provision constitutes a reversal of the onus of proof and is the complete opposite of the principle of a man being innocent until proven guilty. The effect of this clause is that no matter how innocent a man may be, he will automatically be guilty. The Minister is applying the principle of vicarious liability. Without reploughing the same field, the Opposition points out that this is the type of clause that is leading tens of thousands of Australian businesses to close down. This type of legislation is the straw that breaks the camel's back. It is the last burden shoved onto the back of the businessman that is wrecking this nation. The Minister is participating in that type of action. Quite frankly, I do not think that I am overstating the position when I say that this provision is the type of legislation that has led Australia to where it is today.

Mr ELLIOTT: I wish to present a scenario to the Minister and ask him where the owner of a semitrailer would be if he were confronted by circumstances similar to those faced by the owner of the semitrailer driven by his employee into the bar at the old resort at Ayers Rock and ran over about seven people? The employee was charged with murder. Was the owner of that vehicle not liable for the actions of that driver if he authorised that driver to go on his way and take goods to or from the resort? By virtue of this clause, in similar circumstances an owner would be liable. Members of this Government do not know what they are doing. They have made an absolute mess of this Bill. They should admit it, and go back and redraft this legislation.

Mr HAMILL: The provision that seems to have generated so much heat in the Opposition is a provision similar to the one that exists in Regulation 92 of the Main Roads Regulations. A similar provision is already contained in the delegated legislation that the former National Party Government put in place over a period of many years.

Mr Elliott: No; no way.

Mr Katter: No way.

Mr HAMILL: I table the existing regulations for the assistance of the honourable members. Similar provisions exist in New South Wales and Victoria and contain a provision for shared liability. This type of clause gives a discretion in relation to prosecution in the case of offences. So often one hears the story of the driver who is ordered to drive an overloaded vehicle because the proprietor of the firm says, "You shall drive that vehicle." When the driver is picked up on an overloading offence, what happens then? The driver gets the fine, but the person who told the driver to do it gets off scot-free.

This provision allows a discretion by way of prosecution. In circumstances in which firms continually find themselves in breach, the proprietors should take notice that this provision gives the teeth to proceed against them. It is simply not good enough for the road transport industry to put all the onus on the drivers. In some circumstances, when a journey should take 16 hours, the proprietors might say, "We want the consigned goods at their destination in 12 hours." Others might say, "Although the limit is 42.5

tonnes, you will haul 47 tonnes." That is not good enough and we are not prepared to tolerate that sort of slipshod process in future. The legislation puts the industry on notice, the same way that the industry is on notice in New South Wales and Victoria, that that sort of practice is simply not good enough.

Mr ELLIOTT: I was interested to examine the document tabled by the Minister. Quite frankly, that is not a good analogy. It refers to the old section 42A which enabled us to change the braking regulations or the loading capacities. It has nothing to do with what the Minister is suggesting. It means that if I gave my semitrailer to a person and asked him to pick up a load, fully understanding the law----

Mr Littleproud: That's absolute garbage.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member is correct. The document tabled by the Minister is absolute garbage. If I allowed that person to use my vehicle knowing that it had a non-conforming axle which did not cater for load-sharing or that it breached provisions of the law, I would be liable. I accept that, because it is the law. That is similar to the claim that one cannot use a concealable weapon without obtaining a permit for it. However, the Minister is telling me that, if I send in good faith the member for Archerfield to pick up a load of grapes from his electorate and transport them to Toowoomba for sale and if he is so silly that he cannot count and puts twice the load on the truck, I am liable. Is that democratic? Is that what members of the Labor Party stand for? This place has reached a fairly low ebb, but I did not think it had sunk that low.

Mr KATTER: I do not think the Minister really understands what we are talking about. I cannot believe that, if the Minister knew what he was doing, he would be so callous and stupid as to proceed with this clause. I have to attempt to be nice to him by saying that he simply does not know what he is doing. I have said to many of the railway workers that I honestly think that the Minister does not know what he is doing. Many of them disagree with that, but I am trying to be nice to him. Clause 9.17 (2) provides--

"Subject to subsection (1) (a) and (b), it is immaterial to the liability of the owner for such offence that--

(a) the offence was committed without the authority or contrary to the instructions of that person; or

(b) the offence occurred independently of the exercise of the will of that person."

If the brake fluid is low, the owner of a truck should not have to put it in writing that a truckie should not drive the truck. However, it is possible that a truckie might pull up at a service station--where the evidence could be obtained--and the attendant might say, "Your brake fluid is almost empty." The truckie might say, "It is enough to get me home. I have to get home tonight, anyway", and he might drive off. Surely no owner would allow a half a million dollar rig to go onto the road with virtually no brake fluid in it. He would break a leg before he allowed that to occur, yet the Minister will put that poor beggar into bankruptcy--even into gaol--if that occurs. It would be totally contrary to everything that the man would believe in. The honourable member for Cunningham cited the case of the person whose mind snapped suddenly and who drove through the wall of a hotel. Under these provisions, the owner of the vehicle would be totally responsible for that. How can we blame someone who has taken every reasonable precaution to prevent breaches of the law? When people are subjected to that type of law, society reaches the stage at which it is today wherein the number of suicides has increased by 50 per cent.

Mr JOHNSON: I support the points made by the honourable members for Flinders and Cunningham.

Mr Palaszczuk: Aha!

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member might say "aha" all he likes, but the livestock and freight transporters throughout the State are on the verge of bankruptcy.

I point out to you, Mr Chairman, that this is not funny. I believe that the Minister is a responsible man. He should withdraw the clause, reappraise it and bring it back for debate. Clause 9.17 (3) provides--

"This section does not affect the liability of any driver who actually commits an offence."

As the honourable members for Flinders and Cunningham said, if some lame-brained idiot wishes to overload a truck or push it home quickly, the onus for that behaviour will be placed on the owner of the transport company. I give you the mail, Mr Chairman---

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: I will take that interjection. The honourable member should wait and see. I will give him the mail.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member for Archerfield!

Mr JOHNSON: The honourable member is an absolute joke. We are debating a very serious issue and he is making a mockery of it. He should wake up to himself and grow up.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr JOHNSON: I ask the Minister to give the deletion of this clause serious consideration.

Question--That Clause 9.17, as read, stand part of the Bill--put; and the Committee divided--
AYES, 43

NOES, 26

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clauses 9.18 to 9.24, as read, agreed to.

First to Third Schedules, as read, agreed to.

Leave to Move Third Reading

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich--Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (9.09 p.m.): I seek the leave of the House to move now for the third reading of the Bill.

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

AYES, 43

NOES, 26

Resolved in the affirmative.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr Hamill, read a third time.

BRISBANE AND AREA WATER BOARD ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 10 April (see p. 7088).

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (9.15 p.m.): The Opposition is gravely concerned at the reason why the Government has introduced this legislation into the House. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the way the Brisbane and Area Water Board is now operating. It is delivering water efficiently to the cities of Brisbane, Ipswich, Redcliffe and Logan, along with eight neighbouring shires. Very few organisations could make this boast, which can be found in the board's last annual report. Over the past three years, its charge for raw water supplied to local authorities has risen by only 1.74 per cent each year. This average increase is around one-quarter of the yearly inflation rate over the same period. The board has supplied over a quarter of a million megalitres of water to consumers each year while employing a staff of only 37.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber. If honourable members want to attend, they should return to their seats and be quiet; if not, they should leave the Chamber.

Mr HOBBS: Efficiency of that type should not be interfered with. However, this Labor Government has shown that it cannot keep its hands off anything for very long. Opposition members have the gravest suspicions about why the Government would want to waste the time of the House with rebuilding a structure which is already very sound. What this Bill does is deprive local authorities in the water board area of representation. It sets the scene for the Government to make changes to the board's operational area without reference to the Parliament. It also leaves it open for the State Government to claim local authority facilities in the name of the board. When the Minister introduced this Bill, he made a great song and dance about how the present 17-member board was too large to operate efficiently and was too costly for ratepayers to support. He also told the House that representation from local authorities served to encourage parish-pump politics.

I wish to refer to the Minister's claim about the cost of this overpopulated board that the Minister wants to reduce. Let me quote again from the board's annual report. In 1989-90, the board members' fees and expenses amounted to the princely sum of \$26,867. That is the yearly total for 17 people. Moreover, more than \$19,000 of that went to the chairman, who naturally spent more time on board business than the others did. So, knocking a dozen people off will save the ratepayers only a pittance. That is hardly enough reason for such an extensive series of changes to the legislation. The Government will save a few dollars, but it will be losing a great deal of influence over how the board performs. Of course, the Minister would not want to be seen to be undemocratic, so he has thrown local authorities a bone. With this Bill, he is legislating for a ministerial advisory committee. That committee may be appointed by the Minister and it will meet only when and if the Minister decides. This is really nothing more than window-dressing. The Minister is kidding local authorities that he takes them seriously. He wants to settle them down until the legislation is passed.

One of the reasons the National Party Government provided for such a board as exists at present was to give the ratepayers a proper say. The legislation that Labor wants to throw out ensures proper representation for the local authorities that the Brisbane and Area Water Board represents. We ensured that the people of that area had representatives whom at election-time they could hold to account for the board's actions. The Minister should realise that not all the wisdom resides within his Government. Local government is much closer to the people we are all elected to serve. The existing legislation provides for that sort of representation.

The Brisbane City Council has five nominees on the board. We think that is fair enough. After all, the Brisbane City Council is the biggest customer of the board. It built and owns the greater part of the headworks and trunk mains used for distribution. That network is used partly to supply some of the other board customers. Each year, Brisbane City takes 173 000 megalitres of water, far and away the largest volume taken by any customer. It pays the greatest part of the board's income, at over \$19m a year. We believe that the people of Brisbane deserve to have adequate input into the board's control. There are currently places on the board for nominees of all other local authorities which take water. Many of those local authorities also cover the catchment areas of the main storages operated by the board. We believe that all these local authority areas should continue to be represented in some meaningful way. That is not what this Bill provides.

The Minister is proposing a much smaller board that he can stack the way he wants it. He is proposing a five-person board of which only four represent local authorities. Two of those will be there to speak for the Brisbane City Council and one will be an Opposition member. Obviously, this legislation was written before the surprise result in the Brisbane City Council elections. That is right; even the Labor Party could not believe that that was going to happen. Maybe the legislation will now be amended to cut out the Brisbane City Council Opposition. We will have to wait and see. But, straight away, the Minister guarantees at least one Labor member on the board. He gets two more by the curious way in which members are selected to represent the other three cities in the board's area and the eight local authorities. According to the legislation, each of the Cities of Redcliffe, Ipswich and Logan will put forward a name. The Minister will pick one. There is no prize for guessing which one will get up. How about Ipswich? There is really a good chance of picking up a Labor alderman there.

Mr Livingstone: I hope so.

Mr HOBBS: That is about right. The same bodgie approach can be counted on when it comes to picking the single representative for the eight shires in the board's area. The chairman of the new board will be another Labor stooge. Why should the Government change its modus operandi now? As the Government has moved through any authority or body on which it can get its hands, we have seen a steady stream of Labor people queued up for plum jobs. So we can count on that to continue.

The people living and paying rates in the area served by the Brisbane and Area Water Board deserve a lot better than the job this Government is doing for them. They deserve to have a real say, through their elected representatives, in how such an important utility operates. They deserve to be able to expect that an efficient operation such as the board will not become just a plaything of the Labor Party. They deserve an explanation from the Minister as to why he is making these changes. The Minister must have a touch of schizophrenia. When he introduced amendments to the River Improvement Trust Act, he wanted to build up boards and give more representation to minority pressure groups. Let us have a bit of consistency. I ask the Minister to drop this crazy scheme to cut local input to the board. The issue of the size of the board could well be talked about between the Minister and the local authorities that will be losing representation on the board. If the Minister makes out a good enough case, the local authorities might agree to a smaller board, with ironclad guarantees that their voices will be effectively heard. Various methods come to mind, such as keeping the ministerial advisory board going and bringing it in on discussions when a city or shire would be adversely affected by a decision of the new, smaller board. It would be better for all concerned if the make-up of the board related to the water needs of the areas that it will service.

Brisbane has by far the largest population in the region, but it is growing very slowly. Logan City has well over 140 000 people. During the three years to 1989, it had a growth rate of 5.44 per cent. The big mover in the region is the Albert Shire, which in 1989 had a population of over 118 000 and a three-year growth rate of 11.85 per cent. By way of contrast, Ipswich has a population of only half that of Logan City and a growth rate of almost zero. Redcliffe has only 48 000-odd people and a growth rate of 1.5 per cent. The Opposition suggests that the Minister should have another think about representation on the board and consider how demographics will look further down the track. The Opposition suggests a board of about 11, with a chairman appointed by the Minister and biased to the areas with growth potential. In that case there would be two representatives from Brisbane, one each for Ipswich, Logan and Redcliffe Cities and one each for the Albert and Pine Rivers Shires. Three more members could represent the six remaining shires in the board's area of coverage. The Opposition suggests that pairs of those shires could alternate the representation on each occasion that the board comes up for reappointment.

Mr Livingstone: You would still have the numbers then, you reckon?

Mr HOBBS: That is not the point. The Opposition would be happy to talk about alternatives, but it does not believe that the Minister's proposal in this legislation provides adequate representation for the people who will be the clients of the board and paying the bills. Proposed new section 24 of the Bill has very serious implications for local authorities in the area served by the board. It seeks to put in place powers for the newly constituted board to snatch assets away from local authorities. Proposed new section 29 allows the board to assume control of any headworks, specified treatment works or trunk mains in the board's area. The same applies to any property used for, or in connection with, those assets. By way of compensation, the board will be obliged only to assume any current liabilities associated with the asset.

Mr Gunn: Robbery!

Mr HOBBS: As the member for Somerset said--it is highway robbery. Anything that is already clear of debt will simply be hijacked. What a rort for the Government that could turn out to be! I would bet that the provision was written before the council result was known. It is probably contained in the legislation so that the State Government could walk in and grab assets from a conservative council. Come to think of it, Labor probably still wants it there in case the albatross at City Hall goes as badly as everyone believes that he will. Sequestration by the State Government might be the only thing that saves the assets that Brisbane has paid for over the years. Maybe that is why the Labor heavies fell over themselves on election night to move in Clem Jones. Perhaps that is also why they moved their favourite minder, Graham Staerke, to look

after the new Lord Mayor. Because they took him away from the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, that must mean that she is now only the second-biggest headache for Labor.

Every local authority in the region of the Brisbane and Area Water Board must be quaking at the thought of having its assets hijacked by a greedy Labor Government. It is worth remembering that large local authorities have water distribution systems which, over the years, have cost them millions. They do not want to lose control of community assets. Of course, Labor is relying on getting this legislation through the House before the councils wake up. The councils do not know much about this legislation. Prior to the 1989 State election, the Labor Party talked about consultation. But there has been no consultation. How could local authorities respond to this legislation? In the early stages, it was difficult for the councils. Most of them had new members who were trying to settle in. This Government did not advise them that it was going to bring this legislation before the House. Most councils--new or old--heard about this legislation only when it was introduced into the House. The Labor Government has blown hard and long about how it does things properly and takes everyone's views into account. The Premier and his colleagues talk about the extensive consultation that goes into every proposal before it comes into the House. The Labor Government's own Cabinet handbook points out the need for wide consultation. It insists that such consultations be listed on the title page of each Cabinet submission. I do not believe that that was done on this occasion.

The Local Government Association was not consulted on this issue, which affects the largest local authorities in the State. The Government is asking the House to approve a proposed new section 6, which would allow arbitrary changes to the boundaries covered by the newly named South East Queensland Water Board. The Government proposes that the boundaries be changed simply by regulation rather than proper consideration by this Parliament. This is not some minor administrative detail that is being taken away from the province of Parliament; it is aimed at giving the Minister absolute power to blackmail local authorities either by giving them water at a reasonable rate or taking it away. That can all happen at the whim of the Minister or whatever Labor faction happens to have the upper hand at the time. At the stroke of a pen, the Government could bring to bear any of the obnoxious provisions of the new Act. Communities must be wary of being drawn into the water board. They should be aware that the board, which is funded by the proceeds of water sales to local authorities, is bearing the major share of the costs of a major blunder by this Government. In an ongoing arrangement, the board carries 70 per cent of the cost of the review of sites for the next water storage. That is a scandal. The victims of Labor's grubby deal to kill off the Wolffdene dam are now paying the cost of looking for alternatives. They have to pay for the fruitless search for dam sites, all of which will yield less water at a greater cost than Wolffdene.

Just as importantly, local authorities that are rapidly running out of water have to pay while they wait. The areas south of Brisbane in particular are growing so fast that their need for a new source of water is becoming desperate, yet they are being asked to cough up money to get this Minister off the hook--a long way down the track. The ratepayers of the Albert Shire have already shown what they think of that. In March, at the local government elections, Labor's hero of Wolffdene, Fred James, tried to take over the Albert Shire. He had his team behind him and a well-funded campaign with the Labor machine in the background. However, all of that counted for nothing. The people of the Albert Shire knew at whom to point the finger for the hard, dry times that they will face in the coming years. They sent Fred James and his mates packing to political oblivion, which is where they belong. We can be sure that the Albert Shire's nominee will not make it on to the Minister's short list for the new board.

It is an absolute scandal that, almost a year and a half after it killed off the Wolffdene dam, this Labor Government still has not confirmed the sites of new storages to provide water for the people of the south east. A great deal of money was spent on site acquisition, and the Government is still sitting on that land. There is still time for it to heed the message of the local government elections and to go ahead with what is

clearly the best option available to ensure adequate, cost-effective water supplies for south-east Queensland in the future. The Opposition sees no justification for the legislation. It is nothing more than an attack on a body that was working well and providing a least possible cost service to the people of the south east. We believe that the Labor Government is setting the conditions for its mates to control another important public asset.

Mr ARDILL (Salisbury) (9.33 p.m.): The member for Warrego made a number of assertions that do not bear up under any investigation or scrutiny whatsoever. If ever an elephant was brought in to convey a flea, it is the Brisbane and Area Water Board. What does the Brisbane and Area Water Board do? Firstly, I will outline what it was set up to do. The first function of the board is to construct and manage dams and, where appropriate, trunk mains and treatment plants, to store water, allocate and sell untreated water and, in certain circumstances, treated water. Other functions of the board are to investigate and plan future dams, to look after the quality of present and future supplies of water, to administer and manage land under its control and to provide, operate, protect and maintain recreational facilities. What dams has the Brisbane and Area Water Board constructed? None. The dams that service this area were constructed by the then Co-ordinator-General's Department and the Brisbane City Council. Other dams were constructed by local authorities such as the Gold Coast City Council.

In relation to the function of the board to investigate and plan future dams--the present board certainly has not provided evidence that it is capable of doing that. The evidence that was produced by that board before the Public Works Committee investigation into the proposed Wolffdene dam was both contradictory and ridiculous. It was contradicted by almost every other witness who appeared before that committee. Another function of the board is to look after the quality of water, but the Brisbane City Council looks after the quality of water. The water board is responsible now for the operations of the dams. To that extent, it provides some protection of the raw water quality. Another function of the board is to administer and manage land under its control--that is, the peripheral land around the dams--and to maintain recreational facilities. Why do we need a board of 17 people to carry out its very minor duties? The Minister is reducing the board to a sensible size for its very meagre duties, which it could not even carry out efficiently at the time of the Wolffdene investigation. Its figures were wrong. Its attitude to the community was wrong. It was wrong--wrong all the way. The board will now operate with proper representation from the people who are doing the work--the Brisbane City Council and, to a minor extent, the other local authorities.

An important aspect of the legislation is the setting up of the Technical Advisory Committee. It certainly has duties to perform. Under the Bill, the Minister will be assured that the best people available are there to do the job. The five members of that committee will be the crux of the whole operation. As I said, the board itself is of very minor concern. It only manages the dams that were already built by other authorities. The second committee that is mentioned in the Bill may have to be set up at some time in the future if the Minister decides that that is necessary to carry out additional works. The Bill sets up the structure that will enable, at some time in the future, the scope of operation and membership of the board to be widened. That is quite a good idea. A lot of planning must be done for the future of water resources in this area, but the present board was not in a position to do that, as demonstrated by the fiasco of the Wolffdene dam. Thousands of people were to be cast off their land and millions of dollars in compensation was to be provided for a dam which is not needed now and may not be needed in the future.

The first consideration of the new board will be to look at recycling of water and at conservation of our water resources. The Minister's department is quite capable of providing, through this Technical Advisory Committee, the additional back-up services and the Minister has the expertise within his department to assist there. The additional people on that board include the manager of the Brisbane City Council water supply department. He is a very efficient officer and one in a long line of excellent, efficient

officers whose reputation is known around Australia. They are people who are expert at their job and do not come up with shonky reports.

The other suggestion from the honourable member for Warrego concerned the clause which will allow the area of the Brisbane and Area Water Board to be extended where necessary. That will have to be considered very carefully by the Minister of the day. I do not believe that areas should be forced to join the Brisbane and Area Water Board unless they are actually taking water from the area controlled by the board. Areas such as the Gold Coast, which have effectively and efficiently managed their water resources and have provided the capital for the water resources, should not be forced to join in with this board. The same applies to other areas on the periphery of the board area. If Caboolture, Albert and other areas want to take water from the board, those areas should certainly be extended and brought into the board and have to contribute to it. The Bill makes quite a number of very important changes, the most effective being to lessen the size of the authority so that it can manage the job it is set up to do.

Mr COOMBER (Currumbin) (9.40 p.m.): The Brisbane and Area Water Board Act Amendment Bill sets in place a regionalisation of the water supply criteria for south-east Queensland. For a person living in Gympie, Toowoomba or on the Gold Coast, water supply responsibility will soon be part of this new board or authority, the renamed South East Queensland Water Board. The Labor Party is a promoter of boards, statutory authorities and committees because it takes the opportunity to politicise the appointments to such bodies, and I see the same happening here again with the restructured water board. Today, the bureaucrats are again flexing their muscles with the dream of a Water Resources Commission being realised as an integrated water system for south-east Queensland. I have no problem with this concept, but the idealistic plan must come forward with a pricing policy that complements the water distribution strategy.

South-east Queensland is the major growth area of Australia, and Governments must plan for the infrastructure needed to sustain the growth that will occur within the next 100 years. However, the current policies of the Water Resources Commission ignore the relative responsibilities taken by local authorities in dealing with growth in their own regions. The growth in the corridor between Brisbane and the Gold Coast has been more than the growth predictions stated, but the local authorities have continued to cope and to plan for the water needs of consumers and still maintain the growth potential in their system. The proposed name change of the Brisbane and Area Water Board is a clear signal, along with legislation, that the control area is to be expanded to include existing water supply areas not under the control of the Brisbane and Area Water Board, with the jewel being the Gold Coast and Albert system, including the Hinze Dam. Governments are about supplying services and, in this instance, the inclusion of the Gold Coast into a south-east Queensland network would be a major benefit in providing cheaper water to all south-east Queenslanders, but at the distinct disadvantage to Gold Coast ratepayers who have contributed to the infrastructure of the truck main, treatment plant and Hinze Dam, Stages 1 and 2, construction. The plain fact is that water on the Gold Coast is far cheaper than water produced under the old board system in Brisbane. This benefit could be carried into an enlarged system to lower the overall water costs to other areas of Brisbane and south-east Queensland. If the Minister supports the thrust of his department, I suggest that he consider the provision of water and the pricing structure as two separate issues.

There is a need to take a regional view of the provision of headworks, particularly dam storage areas, but this issue should--and I repeat "should"--be separate from the pricing structure. I give one example. People living in the Albert and Gold Coast areas, which are serviced by water from the Hinze Dam, have recently funded the raising of the Hinze Dam to Stage 2. The cost was close to \$43m. The raising of the dam was not to meet immediate needs of the residents but to plan for growth and development. The two councils have always been able to accurately monitor the need for water and plan positively for the future. The dam should cater for existing and future needs up to the year 2020. There is an inbuilt factor for growth of the dam. The present is paying for

the future. Interest payments for funds invested in the future are being met by the current ratepayers as an investment for their future. If the Water Resources Commission expands its area of control to include other areas under its umbrella, the benefit of having a growth potential available in the headworks of the local authority is lost to the system. In other words, the ratepayer has paid for a resource which has now been taken by the State. This is sure to happen because the Hinze Dam is the jewel in the network to provide water to the growth area of the Brisbane to Albert corridor. I suggest that a regional approach to infrastructure is necessary, but why not a differential pricing system in tandem so that individual local authorities, which have bitten the bullet and provided for growth, are not disadvantaged financially?

This amending Bill is curious in a number of ways. The Government has been consistent in its restructuring of statutory boards and authorities in that the restructuring has always provided the Government with the opportunity to place someone from the trade union bureaucracy within the authority. I can only assume that the chairperson will be the Minister's appointee from the union movement, or, perhaps, Fred James from the Wolffdene dam fiasco. The reduction in the number of representatives on the new board is an insult to the local authorities of south-east Queensland and, in particular, to the non-Labor dominated local authorities. One member will represent the Labor Ipswich City Council, and no doubt a Labor appointee will come from the Cities of Logan and Redcliffe. One member will represent the existing eight shires in the operational area, and that is yet another insult to local government. One could guarantee that the nominee will not be Bill Laver or Rob Akers but some Labor sympathiser. Hence the restructured South East Queensland Water Board will consist of three Labor members, one Liberal member from the Brisbane City Council and a chairman who will never have to declare his political sympathies because the circumstance of his using a casting vote will never arise. The Minister has had the audacity to declare that the construction of a smaller board can result only in improved efficiency. I agree with that, but the Minister has not declared the hidden agenda for existing local authorities in south-east Queensland. I challenge the Minister to place a representative from the Albert Shire Council on the board to indicate the independence and non-politicisation of yet another statutory authority. An urban water supply is a responsibility of local government and not State Government. Regional planning is, however, a dual function of local government and State Government. The correct representation should reflect a regional approach and not a political view.

These issues are important. I fear strongly that the process of restructuring is designed to allow this Labor Government to disguise the real motives behind the restructuring of the Brisbane and Area Water Board. With a Labor South East Queensland Water Board, the Minister can, and will, distance himself from the dilemma facing this Government in respect of water storage areas in south-east Queensland. The Wolffdene dam fiasco was an election exercise incited by Fred James--who, I suggest, expects to be appointed chairman of this board--and remains an unresolved problem for this Government. The claim has been made repeatedly that Wolffdene will not be built. I ask this question: why has not the land acquired for the dam been returned to the marketplace? Why are Brisbane ratepayers paying interest and redemption on loans provided to buy land that is now not needed? Why does not this Government make the hard decisions? I guess that we are all still waiting for the first decision made by this Government. The old saying, "Seeing is believing", applies to this Government. With 18 months of its term gone, the people of the Albert Valley have not seen any evidence showing that the Wolffdene dam proposal is dead. The real problem is that if large water storage dams are to be used for water supply, Wolffdene is the answer. The new board will quickly expand the board's area to include the Hinze Dam to meet a short-term demand in the Logan/Beenleigh area, hence stalling the need to decide the Wolffdene issue once and for all. The new legislation will enable the operational area to be altered quickly in response to need--unfortunately, a political need.

A major change to the existing legislation will allow the new board to control the treatment of water and the sale of treated water, the trunk main network, and the treatment works. This provides an advantage for local authorities that have not planned water supply augmentation. It also provides an advantage for local authorities that have stripped and misused trust funds. It disadvantages and destroys future planning of local authorities because the thought will always remain that as soon as major capital works are undertaken and trust funds moneys are used as part of that funding, the board will move in, acquire and take over existing loans. Hence, the Government or the board will receive a bargain at the expense of all ratepayers of that local authority. I cite the example of the Molendinar treatment plant on the Gold Coast, which is planned to be duplicated in 1994. Funding for the capital works will come from three areas: the trust fund, revenue and loan funds. In the light of this legislation, my advice to the Gold Coast City Council has been to build that treatment plant using loan funds exclusively. Existing trust fund moneys should be applied to upgrading and augmenting distribution networks downstream of the treatment plant. This Government is committing local authorities to irresponsible actions because of the unknown.

I question several functions of the board. Why is it a function of the board to concern itself with flood mitigation? Any flood mitigation control that is built into a water storage dam reduces the performance of the dam in relation to its prime purpose, which is to store water. I question also the ability and responsibility of the board to monitor water quality. The current board has an abysmal record in dealing with manganese-related water pollution and the problem of hypomicrobium in trunk mains. The Brisbane City Council receives a thousand calls a day about manganese-related dirty water. The council's reply is, "It is not our problem but it is the problem of the water board." A couple of years ago, a similar problem on the Gold Coast resulted in a complex study being undertaken by UniQuest and the University of Queensland, which was funded by local authorities. This research has been useful to all local authorities throughout Queensland. However, because a board does not have to answer to the people, it does not have the same motivation.

The question of fluoridation of the water supply has been raised. Some local authorities fluoridate their water supplies, but others do not. Is it that all local authorities now have to fluoridate, or what is the position? The Liberal Party notes with some humour that the Minister intends to set up and put in place a ministerial advisory committee. This committee will have a representative from each local authority in the board's operational area. To my way of thinking, the function of the advisory committee is hamstrung. It has been created purely to engender the perception that the community is being consulted. The City of Brisbane should be upset with the changes contained in this amending legislation because the city will lose its treatment plants, its trunk main and the revenue base of its water fund. It will also lose the trunk main strategy control that the council had in place to support its town plan and the proposed development. When the power of resource management is transferred to a board or statutory authority, along with the resource--in this case, water--goes the power to plan. Development is now faced with a further hurdle. Furthermore, the strategy can be changed. Funding priority changes will provide an advantage for some areas over other areas, and in this case politics is most important. I am deeply concerned that trunk main strategies for southern Brisbane and the Albert Shire will be changed to push water west to Toowoomba.

With any monopoly, control of pricing is dangerous. The Gold Coast can look forward to subsidising works outside the city because Hinze water is cheap water--the cheapest water available in south-east Queensland. I remind the Minister that, following the south-east Queensland water distribution study, he gave the Gold Coast autonomous control of its water. Today, he is covertly reversing that decision. The South East Queensland Water Board will immediately need to address the Water Resources Commission's proposed 100-year strategy for water supply in south-east Queensland.

An immediate problem to be addressed by the board is the community group known as Teviot Residents Against the Dam. I quote from their submission--

"In view of the fact that the proposed dam site on the Teviot Brook is not anticipated to be needed for at least seventy years, it is difficult to understand the urgency to make a final decision on this part of the strategy with insufficient information."

The group is critical of the water resources strategy for several reasons, the least being that Goss lost gloss when his Cabinet strategy planned to flood land and homes which are among the first built in Queensland. Most of the properties date back to the 1870s and 1880s and really belong among the heritage provisions which are currently law in this State. Most of all, residents are upset at the lack of professional data to justify the location of the dam at Teviot. There is not an in-depth, all-encompassing analysis of all relevant issues pertaining to dam construction and need.

I agree with many of the group's accusations. Some of TRAD's concerns should be placed on record. The Water Resources Commission study fails to evaluate the potential impact of a successful water conservation program--user-pays schemes, excess water pricing structures and the need for compulsory metering. The group questions the methodology used for population projections. It lists alternative water sources such as desalination, reverse osmosis and recycling. Those are real alternatives and should not be dismissed. The technology is available and reverse osmosis, in particular, is becoming more cost-competitive. The group raises pertinent technical questions relating to water quality, environmental impact studies, loss of productive and heritage land, the land value costs used in evaluation and the infrastructure relocation costs. Water quality is of real concern. The catchment area of the proposed Teviot Brook dam includes significant areas of intensely farmed land as well as the Boonah township. No consideration has been given to water quality in the dam, particularly in respect to sewerage effluent produced by Boonah township.

One aspect which concerns the Liberal Party is that the people of Teviot are now living on a day-to-day basis. Resumption of land is to be fast-tracked. Why, we will never know, as the dam is not required for another 70 years. That is surely unjust to every person affected by the dam. It is also unfair to ratepayers, who have to tie up capital through local authorities for 70 years. If the commission had consulted the community, more accurate information would have been available. However, community consultation in this planning process was practically non-existent. It is scandalous that conclusions drawn by the Water Resources Commission are largely invalidated by omissions and errors. The strategy needs to be looked at again.

In respect of the Technical Advisory Committee, local authorities to whom I have spoken have expressed concern that the majority of members are nominated by the director-general. Only two local government employees are included on the Technical Advisory Committee. The majority of members--not the minority--on the Technical Advisory Committee should be from local government. After all, local authorities are providing all the funding for the operation of the board. In conclusion--the Liberal Party believes that this new legislation will erode the present effective management of resources. It is a move for more control and power and is part of a State planning authority which includes water, sewerage and town-planning. In the past, through representation, local authorities have felt that they did have some impact on the management of the board. However, that confidence must be completely undermined by this legislation. This is another example of Goss centralising control of local government to the detriment of all who live in south-east Queensland.

Hon. W. A. M. GUNN (Somerset) (9.58 p.m.): Mr Casey will go down in the history of this Parliament as the Minister who took more away from country areas than any other Minister in this State. We have lost our advisory services in the farming and pastoral industries. Our dairy inspectors, stock inspectors and agricultural advisers are also gone. Now we are to lose our representation on the area water board, in spite of the fact that we own the catchment area and the water. We own the ponded water, yet

we buy our own water for our country towns. Most of the shires in south-east Queensland have objected strongly to the changes introduced by the Bill. They were satisfied with the former board. Water was cheap enough. The Minister said that the changes introduced through this legislation will save money. In the past, we have had some of the cheapest water in Australia. The Minister is also offering a lame duck advisory committee to take the place of the board. If the committee is ever set up, I presume that its members will be paid. If it is set up, the advisory committee will have no power whatsoever. In the 20 years that I have been in Parliament, I have found that advisory committees are absolutely worthless.

The people will not be fooled by the Government, which has earned the wrath of a great number of shire councils. One would think that a Government that has had a 15 per cent swing against it in a city electorate would take heed of the voice of the people. Instead, it has adopted the arrogant attitude that it will do as it wants to do and that is all there is to it. The people of this State are fed up with the arrogance of the Government and will register their objection at every opportunity, as they did at the by-elections on Saturday and at the recent referendum. I can only presume that the Minister is taking advice from some of the bureaucratic fat cats in his department who want to centralise power in Brisbane. That is what this Bill is all about. That has always been the policy of the ALP. The Minister should go out into the country areas and talk to the people. There comes a time when people become very important. Members of the Government seem to find their way into country areas when elections are on and forget about country people after that.

Mr McGrady: That is not true.

Mr GUNN: I am talking about people who at one time supported the Labor Party. The honourable member ought to go out into the country now. I was at a show last Saturday and I will attend another one next Saturday. The honourable member should come with me---

Mr Livingstone: What about the show the week before? They supported us then.

Mr GUNN: It was in the honourable member's electorate, but I had a great day. I met a lot of people and ran into a lot of friends. I was in this Chamber when the original Bill was introduced. I fought very hard to get representation for the shires in my area that had produced this water.

Mr Livingstone: And didn't pay the bill.

Mr GUNN: They paid the bill.

Mr Livingstone: Brisbane and Ipswich paid 80 per cent of the bill and got 50 per cent of the say.

Mr GUNN: But Brisbane and Ipswich had the water. It was on the basis of user pays. That is Labor policy.

Mr Livingstone: We didn't get a say. We just paid the bill.

Mr GUNN: No. The honourable member got cheap water, and he knows it. When Clem Jones was Lord Mayor, the water came from Somerset Dam. The Ipswich City Council was given a lousy allocation, which it resold at a profit to Moreton Shire. Moreton Shire was bled for that water. That is part of the reason why that dam had to be built. The Ipswich City Council was making a profit from selling water from Somerset Dam to another shire.

In our case, land had to be resumed. I went through that from 1972 when I entered this Parliament. Properties and homes had to be taken away from people. They did not want to sell, and they had to fight to get whatever they could. That was the sad position. Those same people are now being ignored by this Government. At the time, I thought to myself, "Surely these people are entitled to some representation." Wherever there are

dams that produce water for human consumption, great restrictions are placed on pastoral industries. Fertilising, spraying of herbicides and tickicides and so on cannot be carried out in those areas. Therefore, the livelihood of the people concerned is affected in no small way.

At the time, the Brisbane City Council wanted to distribute water. It had Somerset Dam. Of course, that dam was built by an agent of the Government. I just cannot think of its name. It was an agent of the Government similar to the Coordinator-General's Department. It was handed over to the Brisbane City Council, and the Brisbane City Council took control. Of course, that dam is in Kilcoy Shire. When a major drought occurred and Kilcoy was getting its own water from a little creek which went dry, the Kilcoy Shire Council approached the Brisbane City Council to see whether it could buy some of its own water. The price charged by Clem Jones at that time was so exorbitant that the council could not afford it, and that was all there was to it.

The catchment area, the ponded area, that I have spoken about is in Esk Shire. Esk, of course, does draw some water from Wivenhoe Dam. What Mr Ardill said was not quite correct. Mount Crosby refines all the water that comes to Brisbane. There is also a plant in the Lowood area and a pipeline--for which, I might say, I was responsible--that goes right through to the Gatton agricultural college and Laidley. In the case of Somerset Dam, the council refused to let anybody have water apart from Brisbane and Ipswich, which received an allocation. The member for Ipswich West may recall this. At that time, the Brisbane City Council had the say over development in every area. It was not until Wivenhoe came on stream that Moreton Shire developed. It was able to develop because it had its own water supply. The Ipswich City Council had its own supply then. It had an allocation. Of course, Ipswich went ahead accordingly. However, before that, Ipswich was hampered because it could not get sufficient water.

The country areas that provide the water have always been disadvantaged, in spite of the fact that they have had representation on the board. The Brisbane City Council always voted en bloc, and of course it was supported by the city areas. But at least the country areas could put forward their point of view and, in most cases, obtain some satisfaction. Now, country areas have no say whatsoever in the amount of water that they will get or the price that they will pay for it. This could mean that development could be stopped in areas that are developing very quickly and need to develop very quickly. Local authorities are also extremely worried about headworks. Mr Hobbs has already mentioned that. If that is not a steal, I do not know what is.

Mr Hobbs: It's piracy.

Mr GUNN: It is. I think it was the Logan City Council that rang me and said that that council has spent millions of dollars on headworks, which, in some cases, are almost paid off. In effect, this board will now steal them. That is the only way to put it.

In conclusion, I point out that the many shires that have been ignored by this Government have expressed their objection to this Bill. The Government has treated those areas with utter contempt. Of course, at present the Government has the numbers to do whatever it wants to do. However, I am sure that, in time, country people will get the opportunity to pass judgment on the way in which they are being treated. I think that that will duly occur.

Mr LINGARD (Fassifern) (10.07 p.m.): I wish to convey to the Minister the opinions and feelings of three local authorities, that is, Logan City Council, which is in my electorate, Boonah Shire and Beaudesert Shire. I know that in the next few days the Chairman of the Local Government Association, Mr Jim Pennell, will be seeing the Minister. I have no doubt that he will convey exactly the same message as the Opposition is conveying tonight. Those local authorities are saying, "Why should the Government belittle us to this extent? Why should the Government do this to us?"

The Minister in his second-reading speech spoke about the functions of the board. They are to--

"(1) construct and manage dams and, where appropriate, trunk mains and treatment plants . . ."

The Local Government Association states, "But we are involved in that. Surely we are involved in that and surely we can request that at least one member of our councils goes on to this board to represent our views." The second function of the board is to--

"investigate and plan future dams, trunk mains and treatment plants."

Which shires and which cities would not be more affected than Boonah Shire, Beaudesert Shire, Logan City and Albert City in that move to investigate and plan future dams? The third function of the board is to--

"look after the quality of present and future supplies of water."

Surely, once again, that is a joint concern of, firstly, the board and, secondly, each of those individual shires and each of those individual councils. And yet the Minister wishes to belittle them by saying that each of those groups cannot have a representative, that the Government will select one from a group of eight or one from a group of three and that they can then represent their views.

The fourth function of the board is to--

"administer and manage land under its control."

How ridiculous it is to state that the Minister does not want each of the shires to represent their opinions. The fifth function of the board is to--

"provide, operate, protect and maintain recreational facilities."

How can the Minister dare to say to each shire, especially shires such as Boonah and Beaudesert, that they might not have a representative on the board, that they might not get a representative for the first three years and that they might not have a representative for the next three years. In other words, for six years those shires might not be able to make a direct contribution to this new board which the Government is introducing. Yet, for centralisation, such as the member for South Coast mentioned earlier, the Minister is supposedly saving, as the member for Warrego said, between \$7,000 and \$8,000 after the chairman has been paid.

In his second-reading speech, the reason given by the Minister for the introduction of the Bill was that, because of the spread of the current membership, each member relates to his or her own local authority area, leading to difficulties in establishing a broad regional perspective on important issues. Yet the Minister is trying to say that, if each of these eight boards or shires presents one person, that person will not also represent specific ideas and specific thoughts. The Minister is saying that a person from Pine Rivers Shire can represent the thoughts of Boonah Shire or Beaudesert Shire. He is saying that the people from Pine Rivers know exactly what is going on in Boonah and Beaudesert. The Minister knows as well as I do that that is absolutely ridiculous. Those councils and I know that the Chairman of the Local Government Association, Jim Pennell, will be saying that to the Minister. Well may the Minister think that he can put some of those people offside; well may he think that he can put a person such as Jim Pennell offside and that he does not matter. The Minister knows as well as I do how strong those people can be, especially when they represent 134 shire councils. If the Minister upsets them, it will take a long time to get them back on side, simply to save, supposedly, between \$7,000 and \$8,000.

Other honourable members have referred to aspects of this legislation which concern the Opposition, such as the assuming control of or acquiring headworks, treatment works and trunk mains. All of those installations and facilities are owned by the local authority in whose area they reside and are often subject to joint arrangements of mutual benefit between adjoining authorities. They have been paid for by ratepayers and contributions within the shire or city and are an integral part of the local authority's legitimate operation.

If the Minister begins to fool around with the Local Government Association, as the Minister for Local Government found out recently, and attempts to change their boundaries, whether they be internal or external, the Minister should consider the reaction that he will receive. Just recently at Greenbank, a meeting was attended by 534 people. Honourable members may not consider that 534 people live in Greenbank. Yet 534 people met at Greenbank to say, "How dare the Minister start to fool around with, number one, our local authority external boundaries or our internal boundaries." Similarly, if the Minister starts to play around with something that they believe is solely their own, then he will receive their reaction.

I am very concerned about the legal implications of what this board can now do to the local government associations, because there are many legal matters that this board already has control of. However, the Minister is saying to the local government associations that the Government is going to do this but they cannot have representation. Section 18 of the Water Act 1926-1987 provides that the Governor in Council may constitute any part of Queensland as a water area under such name as may be directed. It includes the power to constitute any area as a catchment area for works of water conservation and water supply. The Minister is going to tell areas such as Boonah and Beaudesert that they do not need a person to represent them on the water board.

Regulation 11 under the Water Act 1973 refers to catchment areas and expands upon the provisions that may apply. Those provisions include a requirement that subdivision of land which would create an area of less than 16 hectares cannot be made without the prior approval of the Commissioner of Water Resources. In this context, the commissioner may fix conditions relating to surface drainage, sanitation facilities and any other conditions considered necessary to avoid the pollution of the reservoir within the constituted catchment area. The Minister says that those local councils can do those sorts of things, yet they cannot have a member on the board. He is saying that a person from Pine Rivers can represent Boonah and Beaudesert.

The regulation further provides that a local authority shall not approve a plan of subdivision of land in a catchment area without the approval of the commissioner. Once again, the Minister does not give those councils direct representation. It provides that land-owners will not establish a piggery or any beef cattle feeding enterprise, any noxious industry or engage in any land use which could cause pollution of the waters of the reservoir within the constituted catchment area. Again, the Minister says that the Government will not give those local councils any representation on the board. It can send someone from Pine Rivers or elsewhere to represent the Shire of Boonah.

Under the provisions of the enabling Act, the Brisbane and Area Water Board Act, the Minister can control activities such as subdivision and the erection and use of buildings for various purposes. These powers also provide for the registration of town-planning schemes within a specified catchment area, and still the Minister is saying that one person may be able to represent eight shire councils. The Minister knows that he will receive a lot of criticism over that matter. He has already been criticised. That criticism will come from the Local Government Association. When speaking on this Bill, maybe it is incorrect to talk about some of the problems of the Boonah and Beaudesert areas. Some of the problems relate to the existing Brisbane and Area Water Board and to whatever the new water board will be called. The Minister has still not given the correct answer, or any answer, to my criticism that previously, under his control, the figures for the dam sites were tickled.

On the Thursday and Friday before the Minister announced in this place that the two dam sites would be Glendower and Braford, the figures relating to the population at Tilley's Bridge were changed. A member of the Minister's department went down there and said, "The figures just are not good enough for Glendower and Braford. We need more population in the Tilley's Bridge area. We are a Government that is supposedly saving people from leaving their homes." As yet, the figures at Tilley's Bridge do not add up. As a result, those figures were changed. All the Minister can do in this House to answer me is to say that he did not have any direct involvement. He says that he

was not spoken to. Of course, anyone knows that the Minister was not spoken to but that a member of his office went down there. The Minister knows as well as I do that the figures were changed from within the fifties to the high nineties. So, Tilley's Bridge did not look quite as good against Glendower and Braford.

Let me refer now to how Braford was named. A member of the Minister's department was down there and as he was walking around in the outlook area he saw a red and white cow. He said, "That's a Hereford." Another bloke said, "No, its a Braford." As a result, it was decided to call the dam the Braford dam. The word "Braford" is not mentioned in the whole of the Boonah and Beaudesert areas. One bloke who had never seen a red and white cow thought it was a Hereford, but it was not. So the dam in the Teviot area will be called the Braford dam. That is how it got its name.

I refer now to the Glendower dam. Yesterday, I met with the people in the Glendower dam area. The Minister and his department have promised those people that, by the end of 1991, they will be bought out. They think that they may get \$10,000 to \$11,000 an acre. They believe that, by the end of 1991, they will be bought out. So not much criticism is coming from the Glendower dam area. I say this to Government members, because the Minister does not have the decency to listen to what I am saying. I do not know why Mr Deputy Speaker does not pull him up. I do not know how the heck a person can sit there and allow the Minister and others to talk in the manner they are without reprimanding them. They think they are smart by sitting there talking. I will talk to the members on the back bench.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Fassifern is reflecting on the Chair in the remarks that he has made about the way in which the Chamber is conducted.

Mr LINGARD: I ask you, Mr Deputy Speaker, as a point of order: are you going to allow the Ministers to sit there talking?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Fassifern has asked me to intervene to ascertain whether the Minister is listening. I would just say that I am sure that the Minister and his advisers will be listening to all the relevant comments that the member for Fassifern is making.

Mr LINGARD: I say to the members of the Government that the people in the Glendower dam area are now convinced that they will receive possibly \$10,000 to \$11,000 an acre. They are convinced that, by the end of 1991, they will be bought out. The Minister has already been approached---

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Somerset wants to interject, he shall do so from his own seat.

Mr LINGARD: The Minister has already been approached by a person who desires that his land in the Glendower area be acquired, not necessarily resumed. The Minister has already refused to acquire in the Glendower dam area the land of a person who is suffering personal hardship. I know what will happen. The Government will continue to fob off people in the Glendower dam area. It will continue to say that it has not made a definite decision. It will continue to say that Cabinet has not made a definite decision. It will say, "We can't acquire land from people yet." The Government will continue to fob off the whole issue. The Minister knows as well as I do that the Government does not have the money to acquire the land of the people in the Glendower dam area. Those people are living under false hopes because, firstly, the Government cannot acquire their land and, secondly, it has no intention of acquiring it in the immediate future. They are living under false hopes because the Minister and his department have led them to believe that, by the end of 1991, they will be bought out.

The same situation exists with regard to the people in the Teviot dam area. The Minister knows as well as I do that the Teviot dam site--or the Braford site--has been

changed already. That is an indication of how good the Government's research was in the first place when it decided on the Teviot dam site--the lower dam site, or the Braford dam site. Since the Minister's initial announcements that the Teviot dam would be built, the site has been changed. That is how good the initial research was. The site has had to be changed. The Minister knows as well as I do that he also has no intention whatsoever of building on the upper Teviot dam site in the near future. The Minister can abuse Boonah Shire councillors as much as he likes, but he knows that neither of those Teviot dams will be built. He is being completely dishonest to the people of Boonah and Beaudesert. As I said previously, he is being most dishonest to the people at the Tilley's Bridge dam site.

I ask the Minister: will he investigate very serious claims which are presently being made in the areas of the Glendower dam and the Wolffdene dam? At present, there are in the hands of solicitors and before the courts complaints against the Brisbane and Area Water Board by people who are leasing the 60 sites in the Wolffdene dam area. Unfortunately some people who undertook leases in the Wolffdene dam area thought they would have at least nine years in which to grow crops such as strawberries and to undertake pottery activities. Now what has happened to them? They are under a real cloud because they do not know whether their sites will be taken away from them. It has already been mentioned in this place that 60 sites are still held by the Brisbane and Area Water Board and none have been sold. Look at the people who are so discontented. Look at all the claims that are presently in the courts and in the hands of solicitors. Those claims are that members of the Brisbane and Area Water Board are pocketing money from leases and that they are receiving cheques and giving false invoices and false receipts. Those sorts of issues must be questioned. The Minister knows as well as I do that many unhappy people are leasing some of those 60 sites. Those people believed that they would be able to remain there for up to nine years. They have now been told by this Government that there can be no conditions. It takes at least two or three years to set up a strawberry farm. How can those people act with any confidence? The Minister knows that some of those cases are already in the hands of solicitors. The Brisbane and Area Water Board has a lot to answer for to some of the people in that area.

The Opposition believes that the Wolffdene dam site, especially the lower site, should be reconsidered. There is no doubt that the area was taken out of contention by the Minister's saying that the Government will not investigate anything to do with the Wolffdene dam. The Glendower dam area contains magnificent agricultural land. The people of that area are being conned by the Government. They believe that they will get an excellent price for their land and will be able to move out by the end of 1991. That is completely untrue.

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (10.24 p.m.): I reiterate this Government's commitment to the people of the Wolffdene area that the dam proposal is dead and will not be resurrected. Last year, the Minister for Primary Industries gave that commitment to the people of the Albert Valley. One problem relating to the Wolffdene dam proposal was that the National Party cooked the books. This Government did not cook the books. Following the last study that was undertaken in relation to the Wolffdene dam area, the National Party told the people of the Albert Valley that the dam would cost only \$250m. I am in possession of figures that indicate that it would cost about \$350m to \$400m. Those who sling mud should watch out, because it comes back.

As far as I am aware, this Government has purchased only 5 per cent of the dam area at a cost of \$10m. It is not a massive site. The figures cited by the member for Fassifern are wrong. I am not sure where he got them from. He probably dreamed them up in his sleep last night. This Government should be congratulated on cutting the membership of the Brisbane and Area Water Board from 17 to five. The board was formed after the 1974 floods and the construction of the Wivenhoe Dam. Who was the chairman appointed to that board? By any chance was it Carl Robertson, a mate of the National Party on the Gold Coast? Members of the National Party should consider their past appointments before they start slinging mud, because their ghosts will always come out of the closet.

The Minister should be congratulated, because he is considering a regional approach to water resources in the south-east corner of the State. I represent one of the fastest growing areas in the south-east corner, with a growth rate of over 10 per cent. After last Christmas, for two days the people of Beenleigh were without water. They rang me to find out why they had no water. I told them that it was not my responsibility, but that of the council and the Brisbane and Area Water Board to supply that water. I suggested that they ring Mr Laver and ask him why money had not been spent on infrastructure in that region. In 1988, I was living on the Gold Coast when a severe drought occurred during the building of Stage 2 of the Hinze Dam. At that time, there was only about 30 days' supply of water left for the Gold Coast. If it had not rained, we would have been up the creek without a paddle. The Minister should be commended for long-term planning in that region. During the next 10 to 15 years, the region will grow dramatically. One particular project will involve 30 000 to 50 000 people in the corridor between the Gold Coast and Beenleigh. We must start planning on a regional basis and not on the basis of individual shires. We must consider the broad picture and not solely the interest groups that we represent.

The Minister should consider buying water from New South Wales. A massive amount of water from the area of the Clarrie Hall Dam spills out into the sea. Perhaps we could tap some of that water and use it. During that severe drought in 1988, a pipeline was built down to New South Wales. The pipes were laid, and all that was needed was to install the pumps to bring up the water from New South Wales. The interests of Queensland should not stop at its borders. If we can help New South Wales and it can help us, we should not waste that precious resource. The majority of the rainfall in this country falls along the coastline. That rainfall should be saved. The Government should consider augmenting the trunk lines, which presently do not extend from Brisbane to the Gold Coast. The Government should consider an integrated system of pumping water throughout the south-east corner, not only in one area but also from the Hinze Dam upwards. Because the resources are available, I do not believe that the proposal would cost a great deal.

I thank the Citizens Against the Wolffdene Dam, with whom I was involved from the beginning of their fight against the previous Government. They considered the facts that were put forward, pulled that information to pieces and used it to fight the Government. I would not want to see Fred James as the chairman of the Brisbane and Area Water Board. The person who was the technical brains behind their fight was Dave Milligan. He lived that fight for a long time. He had the necessary technical knowledge. He lived and breathed that fight. He knew all of the facts and figures. In their fight against the National Party Government, the members of that association had inside information on the facts and figures that the Government used at the time. They were very, very well organised. They turned the Government's facts and figures against itself. I thank the Minister and I support the Bill.

Mrs SHELDON (Landsborough) (10.31 p.m.): The Brisbane and Area Water Board Act Amendment Bill will regionalise water supply in south-east Queensland. If one lives on the Sunshine Coast, in Gympie or in Nambour, the odds are that one's area may soon be part of the new board to be named the South East Queensland Water Board. Councils such as Caloundra City and Maroochy Shire will be stripped of their autonomy to control their own destiny. I have no problem with the concept of regionalisation, but the proposed amendment to enlarge the board area by regulation is Government by deception and is really centralising the control of water distribution for south-east Queensland.

The growth in the corridor from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast has been more than predicted, but the local authorities of the Sunshine Coast have continued to cope and plan for the water needs of their consumers. Very obviously, the real plan is to open the way to include existing water supply areas that are not under the control of the Brisbane and Area Water Board. Obviously, a prime target will be the Baroon Pocket Dam and its copious headwaters. The dam was conceived and built by cooperation

between the Caloundra City Council and the Maroochy Shire. They funded that enterprise. With their forward planning, they provided a water source that would supply the ever-expanding population of the Sunshine Coast. They deserve to have the control of that major resource. The people of the Sunshine Coast demand it. If the Government includes the Sunshine Coast in a south-east Queensland system, that would supply cheaper water to all of south-east Queensland to the detriment of the Sunshine Coast ratepayers. They have already contributed through their rates to the infrastructure and the building and maintenance of the Baroon Pocket Dam, the designated treatment works and the trunk mains. Water at the Sunshine Coast is now much cheaper than that produced in Brisbane. I ask: why should that change? Interest payments for funds already invested to provide adequate water to the residents of the Sunshine Coast are being paid by the current ratepayers. The Government obviously intends to grab that lucrative asset and to try to meet its own inadequacies in supplying water to residents of south-east Queensland since it axed the Wolffdene dam. The people of the Sunshine Coast are paying through their pockets for the political promises of the Labor Party.

The new board is to be reduced in number. If the Government changed by regulation the existing area of operation, what sort of representation can councils on the Sunshine Coast expect? The number proposed for the new board is five. A chairperson will be appointed--no doubt, a Labor appointee from the union movement. Again, jobs for the boys. Two representatives from the Brisbane City Council will be appointed.

Mr Nunn: Come on. We have heard it before.

Mrs SHELDON: I am sure that the honourable member has heard it before. Let us face it, all along, as far as the Government is concerned, it is jobs for the boys.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! If Government members wish to interject, they shall do so from their correct seats.

A Government member: We have heard it all before.

Mrs SHELDON: The honourable member should listen and hear it again.

A Government member: You are pretty good at repeating. It is all you have done since you have been here.

Mrs SHELDON: That is a little more than the honourable member has done. We have not heard much at all from the honourable member. A chairperson will be appointed--no doubt, a Labor appointee from the union movement. I will repeat it for the benefit of those members who did not hear me the first time. Again, it is jobs for the boys. There will be two representatives from the Brisbane City Council; one from the Labor councils of Ipswich, Logan and Redcliffe; and one from the eight shires already represented. Where will a representative from either Caloundra City or Maroochy Shire fit in? On the balance of probabilities, the people of the Sunshine Coast will be unrepresented.

If the Government wishes to change the area of operation, it should have to come back to the Parliament and should not be able to get in via the back door by regulation. Then members could debate the issue in this House and bring to public notice the fact that change was going to happen, and see that the interests of their constituents were looked after. I say to the Minister: hands off the water of the residents of the Sunshine Coast.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

AMBULANCE SERVICE BILL 1991

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth--Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.36 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move--

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to establish the Queensland Ambulance Service and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth--Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (10.37 p.m.): I move--

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

Last year, the Parliament appointed a select committee to inquire into the provision of ambulance services throughout Queensland. That select committee's substantial report was delivered in December and provided 96 major recommendations to improve Queensland's ambulance services. The Ambulance Services Bill 1991 is the vehicle to implement the major thrust of the select committee's report. The Bill proposes the creation of a single ambulance service for Queensland as a division of the Bureau of Emergency Services. The Ambulance Service will be under the day-to-day control of a commissioner, who will be charged with the responsibility of providing high quality, standardised ambulance services throughout the State. The rights of existing employees of the Queensland Ambulance Service board and the ambulance committees will be preserved and protected. Those employees will be transferred to the employ of the new Queensland Ambulance Service without loss of entitlements. Further, the creation of a single ambulance service will provide enhanced career opportunities and promotional prospects for ambulance officers.

The value of honorary ambulance officers is recognised in the Bill. Honorary ambulance officers appointed under the existing Act will continue in their role. The new ambulance structure being created will benefit honorary officers through the provision of enhanced training and personal development to assist them in their valuable work for the community. The Bill also recognises the important role that has been played over the years by ambulance committees. On the day of enactment, the existing ambulance committees will continue as local ambulance committees. Their function will be to provide advice to the ambulance commissioner, liaise between the community and the Ambulance Service, and raise funds for the local Ambulance Service.

The Bill provides that the property currently owned by the Queensland Ambulance Services Board or ambulance committees, including land that is held by the board in trust for committees, will be transferred to a corporation to be known as the corporation of the Minister for Emergency Services. The corporation will be a holding body to hold land and property on behalf of the Ambulance Service and to ensure its effective usage. I wish to make it clear that the Government has made a commitment that no ambulance centre in the State will be closed, or have its resources moved. As a result of persistent scaremongering around the State, some sections of the community fear that the Government intends to close some centres and seize all the assets. This is not the case. Funds and assets that have been raised locally will remain under the control of local ambulance committees. Contrary to the view that the Government intends closing centres, in fact we have approved to tender stage a total of 18 new centres or extensions to existing centres in the past 12 months. These projects are valued at more than \$6.5m.

Another misconception is that local ambulance committees will lose their local identity. In fact, local community representation will be increased. The executives of local ambulance committees formed under the Act will be elected by a general meeting of subscribers, who will elect the office bearers. The other members of each local committee will be appointed by community interest groups, service clubs, the CWA or other local community groups. This may vary from centre to centre, depending on the interest of local community groups. Under the new system, the community will have

greater local representation. It is worth noting that the select committee reported that some local ambulance committees had never held an election and others had not held one for about 40 years.

Of particular interest to ambulance officers will be the clearer definition of roles and functions of the Ambulance Service that is provided in this new legislation. There is also a clearer statement of the powers and responsibilities of ambulance officers in respect to their role of providing patient care. Ambulance officers will now be able to see, in legislation, a clear indication of their roles and the part they play as members of the emergency services community. The Bill is a significant step towards the restructuring of Queensland's ambulance services into a single, standardised Ambulance Service capable of meeting the challenge that is faced by today's emergency services. It also brings the Ambulance Service more closely to the emergency services community, as a division of the Bureau of Emergency Services. The Bill recognises the roles played both by ambulance officers and ambulance committees, and will facilitate the continued improvement of the State's Ambulance Service. I commend the Bill to the house.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AVERAGING OF VALUATIONS) BILL

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton--Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.43 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move--

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to authorise the averaging of valuations of land by Local Authorities for rating purposes, and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton--Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.44 p.m.): I move--

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

The purpose of this Bill is to give each local authority, including the Brisbane City Council, the discretion to use averaged valuations as the basis for making and levying rates. Under the Local Government Act and the City of Brisbane Act, local authorities make rates on the basis of the valuation effective for the year in which the rates are to be levied. For the 1991-92 financial year, all local authorities will base their rates on new annual valuations. The system of annual valuations has replaced the old system under which a general valuation took place only every five to eight years or longer. While annual valuations were introduced to overcome the large changes that invariably occurred with general valuations, annual valuations can still reflect sharp changes where significant growth is occurring or the demand for land in a particular locality is high.

I am disappointed that some local authorities have unfairly blamed the State Government for above average rate increases because of changes in valuations. I have made it clear on numerous occasions that I expect councils to stand on their own feet and accept responsibility for their actions and decisions and not blame the State Government for any adverse reactions. However, I have also made it clear that, if councils felt that they did not have enough powers to keep rates down, I was prepared to consider any reasonable proposals. This Bill is one such proposal. In essence, the Bill enables a local authority to use the average valuation for the last two or three years as the basis for rating, rather than the current valuation. The reason for the two or three

year option is that not all local authorities will have had three years of annual valuations by 1991-92. There are 31 local authorities which will have had only two annual valuations, and 22 local authorities which will be rating on their first annual valuation. Another 79 local authorities will have had annual valuations for three years. Local authorities wishing to use averaged rateable valuations can therefore select the number of years appropriate to their area. However, irrespective of the option a local authority chooses, that option must apply equally to the whole area--that is, a local authority cannot average valuations over two years for part of its area, and over three years for other parts.

If a local authority has decided to use the new powers and has selected the preferred option, the averaged rateable value of each parcel of land is calculated by dividing the sum of the valuations used by the number of years selected. If rateable land does not have the required number of years of valuation--for example, because it was recently subdivided and has only existed for one year--the averaged rateable valuation is calculated by a prescribed method. The purpose of this method is to relate the current valuation of such land to the overall change to all valuations for an area that has occurred over the relevant period. For instance, if the total averaged rateable valuation in an area is 80 per cent of the total current valuation for the area, the averaged rateable valuation for a particular parcel that does not have the required number of valuations will be 80 per cent of the current valuation of that land. In all cases, the current valuation of a parcel of rateable land will continue to be the basis for rating of that land if the averaged rateable valuation turns out to be equal to or higher than the current valuation. This ensures that ratepayers will not be disadvantaged.

I anticipate wide approval for this Bill. At its 1990 annual conference, the Local Government Association of Queensland supported the use of averaged rateable valuations as an optional basis for rating.

The Brisbane City Council also supports the proposal. It is unclear at this stage how many local authorities will want to take advantage of the options available under this legislation. In 1981, legislation was passed to enable councils to average two general valuations and 17 local authorities used that power over an eight-year period. However, unlike the 1981 legislation, the current Bill does not require local authorities to obtain State approval for average valuations. This is consistent with the view of the Government that local authorities should have autonomy in such matters and be accountable to the local people for their decisions. I would also add that the draft Bill has been the subject of a number of discussions with representatives of the Local Government Association and various local authorities. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gunn, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL 1991

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton--Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.48 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move--

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Local Government Act 1936 and the City of Brisbane Act 1924"

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton--Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (10.49 p.m.): I move--

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

The primary purpose of this Bill is to give each local authority, including the Brisbane City Council, the discretion to limit the increase in rates levied on properties to a percentage or percentages determined by the local authority. This legislation complements the Local Government (Averaging of Valuations) Bill which I have just introduced in Parliament. In common with that legislation, this Bill also reflects the Government's commitment to giving councils the power to keep rates down to a manageable level. The Bill provides a simple mechanism for a local authority, when making a rate, to limit the increase in the amount levied on a ratepayer to the amount levied in the previous year, plus a percentage specified by the local authority. Different percentages can be applied to different classes of land and to different types of rates. This affords enormous flexibility to local authorities in targeting relief to those affected by increases. This new power, when coupled with the other rating powers of local authorities, will give Queensland councils the most flexible, discretionary powers that have been granted to local authorities anywhere in Australia. Consequently, they should be used wisely, with equity and with sensitivity. Nevertheless, I point out that these two Bills might not be the end of the road in terms of rating and valuation systems.

The Government is continuing to look at this entire area as part of the overall review of the Local Government Act and other examinations being undertaken by my colleague the Honourable the Minister for Land Management. The Bill also contains two other amendments to the City of Brisbane Act. The first amendment will enable the council to set different salary levels for the Leader of the Opposition and for the chairperson of the council. At present, the Leader of the Opposition has no statutory recognition and consequently is paid at the base rate for an alderman. This arrangement does not recognise the increased duties and responsibilities placed on the Leader of the Opposition in the council. The amendment will enable the council to fix a separate level of remuneration that is appropriate for the position. Currently, the chairperson of the council is paid at the same level as the chairpersons of standing committees. The legislation will enable the council to fix a separate level of remuneration that is commensurate with the responsibilities attached to the role of chairperson of a council. The second amendment places in the City of Brisbane Act a head of power for the council to fix fees and charges for the provision of goods and services. Currently, the council draws on the Local Government Act for the power to fix such fees and charges. The incorporation of these provisions in the City of Brisbane Act is part of an ongoing consolidation and modernisation of the financial and audit provisions of that Act. As is the case with the Local Government (Averaging of Valuations) Bill, this Bill was discussed with representatives of the Local Government Association and with various local authorities. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gunn, adjourned.

GRAIN INDUSTRY LEVY POLL BILL 1991

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay--Minister for Primary Industries) (10.52 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move--

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act relating to the conduct of a referendum in connection with the grain industry."

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) (10.53 p.m.): I move--

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

The purpose of this Bill is quite straightforward. It is to authorise a poll or referendum of all grain-growers in south and central Queensland on the question of whether there should be a compulsory levy to fund the industry service activities of the Queensland Graingrowers Association. The association is the recognised voice of the grower sector of the Queensland grain industry and is currently funded by growers on a voluntary subscription basis. This is in contrast to the situation in certain other industries--notably the sugar, pork, dairy and fishing industries--where the relevant grower organisation is funded by a compulsory levy on all growers of the particular commodity. In those industries, it is well accepted that growers benefit through contributing equitably to the funding of their organisation which is set up to protect their interests. The Queensland Government strongly supports regular and effective consultation with industry through grower organisations.

With regard to the moves under way to restructure Queensland's grain industry--it was originally proposed that the association be included in the proposed new Queensland Grain Cooperative which will result from the amalgamation of Bulk Grains Queensland, the State Wheat Board, the Barley Marketing Board and the Central Queensland Grain Sorghum Marketing Board. However, the association has decided-- and I strongly support this decision--to stand aside from that restructuring exercise in order to retain its important role as an independent industry watchdog. To do that job properly, a secure funding base is essential.

In February this year, representatives of the association approached the Queensland Government with a proposal, which has the strong support of the association's State council, for the introduction of a compulsory funding levy for a period of five years. The Government is prepared to accept this proposal--subject to a poll or referendum of growers in the first instance. This, of course, is only fair and reasonable. If growers are to be expected to pay a compulsory levy, they must have the right to vote on the subject. The association readily accepted this requirement, as have growers throughout the full spectrum of the Industry, and this legislation simply provides the mechanism for this to happen.

It should be stressed that this Bill does not actually provide for the implementation of any levy. The Bill deals only with the poll of growers. No arrangements will be made in regard to implementing a levy unless the poll produces a result in favour of the levy. A new piece of legislation will then be necessary to put the levy into place. If the poll is successful, the levy will be applied to fund only the grower representative activities of the association. It will not be used to fund any part of the association's commercial operations, such as crop insurance, as these must be financially self-supporting. The poll will be conducted by the Department of Primary Industries. An officer of the department will be appointed as returning officer and will compile a roll of growers which will be available for inspection at selected DPI offices for three weeks. Growers whose names are not initially on the roll will be able to request inclusion on the roll by signing an application. Once the roll is finalised, the ballot papers in the form shown in the Bill will be sent to all eligible growers in south and central Queensland with a four weeks return period. North Queensland grain-growers will not be included in the poll, as it is not proposed to include northern growers in the compulsory levy. All growers in south and central Queensland who are currently eligible to join the association will be entitled to vote on the levy proposal. A simple majority of the valid votes cast will determine the poll either way. It should be noted that the outcome of the levy poll will not affect the implementation of the broader industry restructuring arrangements.

In introducing this Bill, I take this opportunity to compliment the Queensland Graingrowers Association on its efforts on behalf of the grain-growers of this State. In particular, I pay tribute to Don McKechnie, a man well known to members on both sides of this Chamber, who will be standing down as general president of the association at the end of July. Mr McKechnie has had a long and distinguished record of service to the grain industry and this State and, indeed, to primary industries generally. Although Mr McKechnie and I may not have seen eye to eye on every issue, I believe that, over the past 18 months, we have been able to develop a valuable and mutually beneficial

working relationship with the common objective of advancing the grain industry of this State, and I acknowledge his dedication and strong advocacy on behalf of the grain-growers of Queensland. I look forward to continuing that relationship with his successor, whomever that may be.

In conclusion--the Queensland Government supports the need for strong, responsible and financially viable grower representative organisations. The Queensland Graingrowers Association meets the first two criteria and this Bill allows the grain-growers of south and central Queensland to decide whether they want to secure the financial viability of the association. It is, after all, their organisation and their industry. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

ACTS INTERPRETATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba--Attorney-General) (10.57 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move--

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Acts Interpretation Act 1954 to facilitate Plain English drafting and the reprinting of legislation, and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba--Attorney-General) (10.58 p.m.): I move--

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

There are three main objectives of the amendments--

- (1) to affirm the purposive approach to statutory interpretation and thereby allow, in certain circumstances, the use of extrinsic material to discern the statutory purpose;
- (2) to assist the transition to simpler legislation by facilitating the Parliamentary Counsel's Office to adopt a plain English style; and
- (3) to provide for gender neutrality in all legislation.

A number of other amendments are designed to tidy up, correct or update the Acts Interpretation Act.

The interpretation of statutes and subordinate legislation in Queensland is governed by the common law as supplemented or modified by the Acts Interpretation Act. A number of rules to construe legislation have evolved over time. These include the literal rule, the golden rule and the purposive approach. The literal rule requires statutes to be strictly construed, thereby possibly defeating the intention of Parliament. The golden rule is a variation upon the literal approach attempting to avoid any absurd result arising from a literal interpretation. However, a progressive legal community and a reforming Government will strongly prefer the purposive approach. The amendments will settle this doubt by affirming that the interpretation which best achieves the purpose of an Act is to be preferred to any other interpretation. Similar legislation has been introduced in five other Australian jurisdictions--the Commonwealth, New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory. However, in each case the relevant enactments only provide that an interpretation which promotes the purpose of the Act is to be preferred to one that does not. In the recent High Court case of *Chugg v. Pacific Dunlop* 1990 (170 CLR), the provisions of the Victorian legislation were

considered. It was held that those provisions will not necessarily mean that the best interpretation will prevail. Queensland's best purpose test is an innovative approach. It breaks new ground having regard to the decision of the High Court.

The amendments further provide that, if material extrinsic to an Act is capable of assisting in discerning the purposive meaning of a provision of an Act, consideration may be given to that material in interpreting the provision. However, it is not intended that extrinsic material should be used to overturn the ordinary meaning unless there is ambiguity, obscurity or the ordinary meaning would lead to a result that is manifestly absurd or unreasonable. Further, in determining whether consideration should be given to any extrinsic material, regard must be given to the desirability of being able to rely on the ordinary meaning conveyed by the text, the need to avoid prolonged legal proceedings and other relevant matters.

A move toward the use of plain English has occurred throughout Australia and New Zealand over the last decade. Almost all Governments in Australia have now adopted such a policy in legislation. The Commonwealth Education Minister recently distributed Australiawide a Reader-Friendly Kit to promote the use of plain English. The Victorian Law Reform Commission has issued two reports on the use of plain English and access to the law. The New Zealand Law Commission has issued a similar report entitled *A New Interpretation Act to avoid "prolixity and tautology"*.

The Queensland Parliamentary Counsel's Office has been pursuing a plain English style of drafting for some months now. That office is keen to have legislative support for this policy. The proposed amendments include a number of initiatives facilitating plain English. The Bill provides for a simpler single-year citation system for Queensland legislation. To allow the transition to plain English drafting techniques without fear that the courts may interpret the use of simple language as indicating an intention to alter the legal meaning, a general provision will be inserted to the effect that a mere change in style should not be taken to convey a different meaning. The proposed legislation will also facilitate the use of examples in Queensland legislation. Whenever an Act is reprinted, the reprint will be updated in a version adopting the new drafting techniques such as single-year citation of other Acts, gender neutrality and omission of certain legal jargon. This will allow a gradual transformation of all Queensland legislation to the new style.

It has recently come to light that certain anomalies arise by the use in some legislation of gender specific language. For example, the Judges Pensions Act uses gender specific terminology in certain provisions and, as a result, the two recently appointed female judges to the District Court are technically in a less advantageous position with respect to their pension entitlements than their male colleagues. The current provision of the Acts Interpretation Act only provides that words of the masculine gender shall be construed as words of the feminine gender but not the reverse. The proposed amendment corrects this oversight by providing that all words indicating a gender include the other gender.

In summary, the cumulative effect of these proposed amendments will be to eventually make all Queensland legislation easier to understand for the lay person and lawyer alike. The legislation allows the true intent of Parliament to be discerned. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Littleproud, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba--Attorney-General) (11.03 p.m.): I move--

"That the House do now adjourn."

Proposed Land Fill Hazardous Waste Dump at Gurulmundi

Mr NEAL (Balonne) (11.03 p.m.): The matter that I wish to raise tonight concerns the Government's proposed land fill hazardous waste dump at Gurulmundi in my

electorate. Apart from any political implications concerning the site, there are a number of fears that I wish to express and a number of questions that I intend to pose which I believe the Minister has a moral obligation to answer. I believe that the present method of disposal by land fill is no longer acceptable. It is wrong for the Government to state that land fill disposal of hazardous waste is secure. It is wrong to state that land fill of hazardous waste is an accepted practice not only in Australia but also overseas when countries such as the United State of America, Germany, Sweden, Finland and England no longer consider that method safe and are in fact now finding major problems with leaching of the poisonous substances into underground watertables.

It is a well documented fact that, owing to the dangerous nature of the waste and the difficulty of controlling substances placed in land fill, scientists cannot give 100 per cent guarantees as to the safety of land fill. It is also a well documented fact that some toxins remain dangerous for hundreds of years. It has been countered that human error was responsible for the failure in the United States of some 10 land fill dumps. That is precisely the point that I wish to make. That occurred as a result of human error. There is a human error factor in the fixing of the toxins in solid form, its transportation, its burial and its monitoring. We are told that it could take 1 000 years for water to move one metre through the clay. The question I ask is simply this: how much work has been done with the Gurulmundi clays to determine whether they are in fact impervious to the various toxins that are contained in the wastes to be dumped, given that it is admitted by the Government that the toxins can leach out of the solids in which they have been placed?

Land fill is used because it is the cheapest method, based on the assumption that it is secure and, therefore, safe. No guarantees can be given in regard to the long-term safety of land fill. All the Government can really guarantee is that all care will be taken, and that is no guarantee at all. Under the land-fill method a time bomb will remain under the ground, ticking away ad infinitum. Land fill is currently the method used at Willawong. However, it is reaching capacity, hence the search for another site. The Government is looking in the wrong directions. Land fill of hazardous waste cannot guarantee safe disposal in the long term. It can only guarantee short-term financial savings. Two wrongs have never made a right. The Government must look to incineration, which is the method used in New South Wales. Whilst there is an ash residue to be dealt with by land fill, the amount is infinitely less than the thousands of tonnes of material produced in solid form for land fill disposal under the current methods. The various toxins can be incinerated separately and the ash segregated for storage in impermeable containers.

I believe that in the not-too-distant future scientists will perfect existing technology, which will ensure even safer methods of disposal. The risks associated with land fill of these toxins are too great. Gurulmundi is situated virtually on top of the Great Dividing Range and is at the top of the watershed of the eastern and western fall. No guarantees can be given that toxins will not leach out and permeate into the underground aquifers or directly into the catchment areas of tributaries of the Dogwood, Condamine, Balonne, Darling and Murray River systems and the Dawson and Fitzroy River systems. This alone has horrendous implications owing to the importance of our underground water supplies and the fact that the river systems involved provide water for irrigation purposes and stock and domestic use and are also a major source of water supply for the many towns situated along those rivers. The transportation of the hazardous waste also poses a threat along the entire route. An accident on the Toowoomba range section during a storm could well guarantee that Brisbane would get the toxic waste washed back down to it. Other towns, districts, watersheds and underground aquifers are put at risk because it is proposed to transport the waste for hundreds of kilometres.

Another question that I believe needs answering concerns the exact nature of the substances proposed to be dumped. Various chemicals have been named, but what of the future should the Government proceed with the Gurulmundi site? Will the Minister give cast-iron guarantees that heavy metals will not be dumped there a few years down the track? What of polluted soils that have to be treated and dumped or the debris of

a burnt-out chemical plant? It is a safe bet that Gurulmundi, once settled upon as the site, will cop whatever is going. I believe that the Government should commence now the provision of incineration facilities to dispose of toxic waste and forget about the unsafe land fill methods.

Time expired.

Twenty-fifth Anniversary of *North West Star*

Mr McGRADY (Mount Isa) (11.09 p.m.): The media plays a very important role in the life of any community. It plays a very vital role in the life of remote country areas and it is all the more important that these areas are serviced by competent journalists and media people who understand the concerns of country people. Mount Isa is serviced by the ABC, radio 4LM, North Queensland Television and, of course, the local newspaper, the *North West Star*.

On Mothers Day this year, the *North West Star* celebrated 25 years of bringing the news to the people of Mount Isa and the surrounding district. Twenty-five years is a very significant milestone in a person's life, a couple's marriage or indeed a company's history.

On 25 August this year, my wife and I will be celebrating 25 years of married life. I hasten to add for the benefit of members that 25 years ago I had to obtain a special licence because of my age. Tonight, I want to inform this Parliament that, in my home city of Mount Isa, we are celebrating the twenty-fifth birthday of our newspaper. Over the last 25 years, this newspaper has for five days a week reported the news to the people of Mount Isa and also the people in the surrounding district. Because their local papers may have been in existence for over 100 years, some members in this Chamber tonight may say, "So what!" But for an outback city in a remote part of Queensland to have such a vibrant newspaper is, I believe, a great achievement.

A newspaper is a living part of any community. It is not just a building or sheets of printed paper; it is an integral part of the town, city or State. The *North West Star* is one of the few family-owned daily newspapers in this nation today. In an age when the media of this nation is in the hands of a relatively few people, it is refreshing to come across a truly independent paper. This newspaper provides work for a great many people and, over the years, it has been an excellent training ground for journalists who today occupy prominent positions in the newspaper industry. The newspaper is regarded as being fair and balanced in its reporting of local, State, national and international news. There have been many times when I have not liked what the *North West Star* has printed but, in retrospect, it has been fair. At every election, whether it be local, State or Federal, the paper has gone out of its way to give all candidates and all parties equal space and equal time. I believe that the manager or the owner of a newspaper has the prerogative to write his editorial as he sees fit. This has certainly been the case with the *North West Star*. However, on all occasions, the reporting has been fair to all people concerned.

Today, this newspaper is owned by Sir Asher Joel and his son Michael Joel. As I said before, it is one of the few newspapers in Australia today which is still a family-owned concern, so much so that it has appointed recently its first woman editor in the person of Miss Liz Corbett, whom many members in this House would know. All of the staff who work for this newspaper, from the receptionists on the telephone, Robyn or Evelyn, right through to its reporting staff, certainly go out of their way to be friendly. It is regarded by its peers as one of the best regional dailies in the country today and, on regular occasions, wins prestigious awards throughout the State. In July this year, the regional dailies conference will be held in Mount Isa. I just want to say congratulations to the *North West Star*. It has been with the people of Mount Isa and the surrounding district for 25 years. It has been with us for the good news and the not-so-good news, but at all times it has been the champion for outback people and the industries from which we come. It has always been prepared to bring confidence to the district. I certainly hope it is with the people of Mount Isa for another 25 years.

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr McGRADY: I am sure that my colleague on the other side of the Chamber will have something to say in the *North West Star* in the next few days.

ALP Activities, Nundah By-election

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (11.14 p.m.): Tonight, I wish to briefly discuss the issue of ALP stooges. Prior to the Nundah by-election, honourable members heard the puerile and juvenile campaign director, whingeing Wayne Swann, the very doubtable Wayne Swann, state that an anti-Labor conspiracy had been hatched in the electorate of Nundah and that, behold, a number of anti-Labor independent candidates had been organised with a view to directing preferences away from the Labor Party.

The ALP campaign director pushed this issue hard, ignoring the fact that the National Party and the Liberal Party have traditionally always exchanged preferences and the fact that the major independent candidate had allocated the Liberal Party as second last on his how-to-vote card--a funny way indeed to maximise the flow of preferences to the Liberal Party. The Liberal Party totally denies that any preference deals were organised by it or on its behalf. This claim, however, cannot be made by the ALP because on polling day it became immediately apparent that Hugall was a stooge for the Labor Party based, I suggest, on the following evidence. Firstly, booth workers of the Australian Democrats, the Liberal Party and the National Party complained to party officials that Hugall's booth workers were almost exclusively Labor Party members. Secondly, it was even alleged that the booth captain for Hugall on the Virginia booth was in fact an executive member of the ALP branch of the candidate Terry Sullivan. Thirdly, the how-to-vote card distributed by these workers--I am holding up one of them--was huge and totally out of keeping with the how-to-vote cards of the Greens and obviously designed to capture the green vote, although Hugall is totally unknown to executive members of the Wilderness Society and the Queensland Green Network, many of whom worked for other candidates on the day. When challenged by members of these groups as to why he had the audacity to adopt a green label, Hugall avoided the question and said that he was moving house shortly, anyway. He told the mailing list coordinator of the Queensland Green Network that he was just passing through.

At about 11 a.m. on polling day, Mr Ian Rowland, the Democrat candidate, challenged Hugall at the Kalinga polling booth and asked him on what authority he was using the name "Green" as, to the best of his knowledge, the term was copyright in relation to political parties and he knew of at least two people who held this copyright. According to Mr Rowland, Hugall avoided all questions, mumbling constantly, "I am not a politician." He proved that, didn't he! At about 1.45 p.m. on polling day, Ian Rowland was at the Hendra polling booth and took exception to one of Hugall's workers accosting voters with how-to-vote cards proclaiming that they were for the "Green" candidate. Mr Rowland challenged this female worker and asked to see her specified site permit for distributing the Hugall material. She could produce no such permit, so Rowland took the matter to the officer in charge of the polling booth, who told him to take the matter to the police as it was their concern. Rowland immediately contacted the duty officer for the North Brisbane Police District, who advised him to call back after he had a chance to check the records of permit applications for the poll.

Rowland telephoned back at approximately 1.55 p.m. and was advised that there was no record of Hugall applying for a permit to distribute how-to-vote cards in his name; that the permit section would be closing down at 2 p.m., as was usual on a Saturday, and there would be no officer on duty until 6 p.m. that day; that only a superintendent or an inspector could sign the required permit; and that he could offer no assistance to remove the offending Hugall people from the sites without referring the matter to the mobile patrols. Rowland again returned to the Kalinga booth to confront Hugall, but he had left. Rowland left his mobile phone number with one of Hugall's workers with a message for him to contact him urgently. At 2.40 p.m., he received on his mobile phone a call from Hugall about the unauthorised people handing out his

material. He terminated the conversation but rang back a few minutes later to say that he, Hugall, was unaware of the provisions of the Traffic Act and that he did not realise permits were required.

Rowland then advised Hugall that he, Hugall, was a fraud, as was his whole campaign, that he was a Labor Party stooge, and that he took great exception to his presence in the poll and was appealing to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission and the Criminal Justice Commission as he believed that there was involved not only political dishonesty but also possibly conspiratorial fraud. Rowland next saw Hugall at the Northgate booth at about 3 p.m. and told him that he would be taking up the matter of permits on 20 May 1991. Hugall replied. "It's okay, I've got one of those permits now."

This was a strange statement, indeed, from which the following serious questions arise: if such a permit was issued, which superintendent or inspector issued it? Who authorised the recall of such a senior officer to duty? Who is to pay for the overtime involved? Who made application for the permit? What is the number of the permit? If no permit was applied for or indeed issued, will Hugall be charged under the Traffic Act for the breach which has occurred? If Hugall is not to be charged, does this open the floodgates for any group to use polling booths to distribute any material no matter how unfair, dishonest or misleading it is? I know that Ian Rowland does not intend to let this matter rest here as he believes a precedent has been set which will allow richer, less principled parties in Queensland, such as the Queensland branch of the Australian Labor Party, to run limitless numbers of designer candidates whose aim it is to capture votes from unwitting electors who seek guidance at polling places on how to vote for a candidate who represents their particular views. I suggest that the ALP in this place and outside it has a lot to answer for.

Time expired.

Criticism of Minister for Family Services by Bishop Kelly

Dr FLYNN (Toowoomba North) (11.19 p.m.): I am not particularly happy to have to rise in this Adjournment debate tonight to answer unfair and unbalanced criticism of the Government and in particular the Family Services Minister, Anne Warner, by Bishop Edward Kelly, the Catholic bishop of Toowoomba. I am a member of the bishop's flock and in this Parliament represent a large part of the Toowoomba diocese, so I have the responsibility to answer his criticisms in this place and in Toowoomba.

The front page of today's *Toowoomba Chronicle* leads with the heading "Bishop blasts Govt over hostel funding". The article criticises the Government for failing to fund a children's hostel run by the St Vincent de Paul Society for abused children between the ages of 8 and 15. In the article, the bishop said--

"Such treatment of this youth hostel seems to me to be a continuing and unpardonable blot on the reputation of the Department of Family Services under the direction of the Minister, Mrs Anne Warner.

It seems to me a travesty of justice."

That is very strong stuff. His criticism is unbalanced for two reasons. Firstly, he fails to acknowledge or praise the efforts that Ms Warner is making now or has made in the past to help homeless children and youth in Toowoomba. The most notable aspect in that regard is the Fatima Home. Fatima Home is another Catholic home in the Toowoomba diocese which houses children and teenagers from broken homes. Frequently, these children are under the care and protection of the Department of Family Services. For a number of years, it has been chronically underfunded, as more staff have been needed to provide appropriate supervision for often increasingly difficult cases. Earlier this year, it was on the brink of closure. The Minister, Anne Warner, managed to find \$53,500 from her heavily committed budget to keep Fatima Home going until July this year, and she has given a commitment to maintain this increased expenditure in future budgets.

Our Government has also increased funding to the Toowoomba and District Youth Service, which provides supported accommodation and counselling to older street kids. Recently, when I talked to the director, Mr Kevin Saide, he told me that resources in Toowoomba were adequate to meet the present demand for this group of people. Ms Warner has also provided ongoing funding to DARN--the Downs Abuse Response Network-- which provides counselling to victims of sexual abuse. This program is bulging at the seams, but at least we have ended the uncertainty about the future of the program by putting it onto the recurrent funding program.

However, Bishop Kelly's comments are unfair for an even more important reason. The St Vincent de Paul children's hostel in Toowoomba applied for funding under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme. Last year, only 6 of 60 applications were funded under this scheme. Toowoomba and 53 other applicants missed out. The guidelines of the Burdekin report were used to identify the areas of greatest need in choosing the successful applications. The bishop says that it is "a travesty of justice" that the Toowoomba scheme is unfunded. Presumably, he would be willing to extend his comments to most, if not all, of the other 53 if he was aware of the details of their applications. Obviously, there is a shortfall in resources. There are gaps in the services provided.

But the bishop needs to realise that a Government--any Government--cannot be more compassionate than the community will allow. While self-interest and the hip-pocket nerve remain the prime determinants of Queensland voters, there will always be gaps in Government services. If he is going to make basically political statements, the bishop should also address fundamental issues such as these. Does he think we should increase taxes? If not, what other departments should decrease services to allow for more growth in the welfare budget? Or should we cut existing outmoded welfare programs of lower priority to make room for new services? If so, which ones? These are the questions with which the Minister has to deal daily. I know that there are no bounds to Ms Warner's compassion when she is dealing with children from broken families, but she is constrained by the budgetary process and, ultimately, the level of compassion in ordinary Queenslanders. I believe that Ms Warner occasionally deserves a few words of praise. Her well-known feminist views make her a frequent target of many conservative Queenslanders such as Bishop Kelly.

Another particular problem with the youth hostel in Toowoomba is that the children it cares for are between the ages of eight and 15. Referrals are often made by the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, but those referrals relate to children who are not currently under the care of the department. Therefore, an additional problem that arises with the funding of that particular hostel is: who has the legal responsibility for those children? Recently, I was rung by an angry father whose daughter left home, ran away and was helped in that hostel. Although she received good help from the hostel, she ran away from it. That man asked me, "Who is responsible for my daughter?"

Time expired.

Current and Former Members of Parliamentary Labor Party

Mr VEIVERS (Southport) (11.24 p.m.): In common with many people throughout the State, I am really very concerned about some of the recent social behaviour of some Government members and some former ALP members. In maintaining public faith in the institution of our Parliament and the propriety of its members, I suggest that the Premier take steps to keep the Goss goslings--who are really trying to grow up to become geese--in total check. I realise that the Premier would probably rather be somewhere else. One factor that comes to mind immediately is that he would probably rather be running in the ultra marathon in Victoria than trying to keep this particular bunch of guys in order. I just might be able to help the Premier.

Recently, I was cleaning out my garage and found a few items that I believe the Premier could use very easily. The first item was a dog chain. It was a bit late to find

it, but the Premier could have used it to keep Mr Heath in check and kept him tied up in Nundah. Unfortunately, he missed him. Mr Heath bolted and there was a by-election. If Mr Terry Sullivan happens to fall across the line--which I doubt--to save holding another by-election, the Premier will be able to chain Mr Sullivan in Nundah. He can make sure that he never moves and does what he is told by Wayne Swan and Kevin Rudd. Another item that I found in the garage was a pair of boxing gloves. Although they are a bit worn and have suffered wear and tear, they would be just the shot for Mr Ken Smyth.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! I remind the honourable member of Standing Orders 119 and 120, which state that honourable members must not make personal reflections. The honourable member will respect those Standing Orders.

Mr VEIVERS: I am respecting them.

Mr De Lacy: It doesn't sound like it to me.

Mr VEIVERS: I am. From what I can gather, I reckon that Mr Ken Smyth has to take boxing lessons. I do not know who his opposition was, but he certainly had a few stitches in his nose. We cannot have politicians coming into this House with stitches in their noses and black eyes. They must come in clean faced and looking as fresh as daisies. In that case, I believe that Mr Smyth definitely needs a few lessons. He is welcome to my boxing gloves.

I also found a very interesting flying helmet that could be used by Terry Mackenroth, who takes flying lessons. I understand that he receives those lessons from the man called "Biggles"--a Government member, Mr Milliner, who is the member for Everton. Mr Milliner is giving him those lessons, and they have come across a scholarship. Mr Milliner knows about the flying scholarship. He obtained his licence through that scholarship, and he is endeavouring to get Mr Mackenroth the very same scholarship. When Mr Mackenroth gets his licence, he will be able to fly anywhere in Australia to pick up ailing ALP members, fly them back and give them succour.

Mr Turner: Isn't Mr Mackenroth now known as the flying psychiatrist?

Mr VEIVERS: He is the only metal-fabricator, flying psychiatrist in the world. Unfortunately, when the jet was used to fly to Western Australia, the patient was too far gone. He had been declared politically dead. It was a bit late for him.

Another object that I found in the garage was a bike helmet. The first person I thought of who could use it is a former Labor member who is now the Mayor of Ipswich, Mr Dave Underwood.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr VEIVERS: You are taking up my time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member will remain seated while I am on my feet. I believe that the honourable member's speech in this Adjournment debate is really out of order. He has done nothing other than make personal reflections against former members and current members of the Government. I believe that that is out of order. If he has something constructive to provide to the House, I am sure that honourable members would like to hear it. If he wants to make a constructive comment, he may continue with his speech.

Mr VEIVERS: As I was saying, I also found a bike helmet in my garage. I believe that, if Mr Underwood were to wear that helmet, he could save himself from severe head injuries. I am thinking only of him. On the next occasion that he has visitors or goes calling on his neighbours, he should wear that helmet. Incidentally, I wonder if Mr Underwood is able to get hold of that saucepan that he was slammed with, because it would come in very handy for another member, Mr Matt Foley, to put gravy in on the next occasion when he takes a train ride anywhere in this State.

Another useful object that I found in the garage was an old baseball bat. My first inclination was to suggest that the Premier give it to Mr Bill Prest. However, I doubt whether the charismatic charm school member would be able to lift it, let alone swing it. Probably it would be better suited to give it to the man on his right, namely, Mr Bob Gibbs.

Time expired.

Death of Mr N. Fatnowna

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (11.29 p.m.): The death of Noel Fatnowna on 27 February will be mourned by many people in the Solomon Islands and Australia, particularly in Fataleka on Malaita in the Solomon Islands, but more importantly in the Mackay district. As some honourable members would be aware, Noel Fatnowna was the best known among the 5 000 Australian descendants of the 18 000 Solomon Islanders who joined the labour trade to Queensland between 1871 and 1908. By their sheer number and prominence in the local community, the Fatnownas are undoubtedly the major South Sea Islander family in the Mackay district and, through Noel Fatnowna, in this State and nation. Noel Fatnowna was the grandson of a Kanaka who was kidnapped in the Solomon Islands in the late 1870s and brought by ship to the Mackay district of north Queensland to work in the cane fields. Noel was born in Mackay in 1929, and was raised and educated there. He grew up hearing tales of the Solomon Islands. Raised in the Solomon Island tradition, from an early age Noel slept in the boys house away from his mother and sisters. He was taught about the ancient taboos and customs of his forefathers.

His childhood is described in his book *Fragments of a Lost Heritage* as a happy time spent in a half-traditional and half-European life-style centred on the family's large blady-grass houses on the farm, school and church, with plenty of expeditions to the beaches and creeks. Noel's father was a lay preacher in the Anglican Church and later the prime mover in the introduction of Seventh Day Adventism to the Mackay Islander community in the 1920s. As many people in Mackay would know, Noel was a great ambassador for the QATB. At 21, Noel joined the local ambulance as a bearer. He was preceded by his brother, Norman. For many, many years, they were the only black ambulance bearers in Queensland. Noel spent 41 years in the Queensland Ambulance Service at Mackay, then becoming a senior bearer. He was well known throughout north Queensland for his dedication to the Ambulance Service. Locally, in the latter part of his career he was involved in fund-raising and publicity for the Ambulance Service, which, with work for his church within the local South Sea Islander and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and his work as an historian, made him as well known as anyone in the whole of Queensland. At State level, he had long involvement as an adviser to the Queensland Government on indigenous health. From 1977 to 1983, he was Commissioner for Pacific Islanders. In 1982, he was awarded the British Empire Medal for his work in those fields.

Noel Fatnowna was my best friend. In the 1970s, Noel, his wife, Minnie, and their family went to Malaita to search for their roots. It was largely that voyage that started the relinking between the Solomon Island community in Australia and the Solomon Islands' citizens. Those relinkings in the 1970s were of great importance to the future of the Solomon Islands in strengthening ties with Australia. His remarkable book *Fragments of a Lost Heritage*, which was published in 1989, tells the story of those findings, the reuniting with his family and his childhood at Mackay.

In May 1988, 22 Solomon Islanders, led by the Minister for Post and Communications of the Solomon Islands, took part in a total re-enactment of the first arrival of those Islanders in 1867 at Mackay. Noel Fatnowna masterminded the event down on the banks of the Pioneer River where his grandparents first waded ashore so long ago. The re-enactment was an emotional time for all--Kanakas and Queenslanders alike. Noel

Fatnowna was a compassionate, hard-working human being. More than that, he was an ambassador for the Solomon Islanders and the Kanakas. He will be missed by all, but his book lives on. Please take the time to read it.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 11.34 p.m.