

NOTE: There could be differences between this document and the official printed *Hansard*, Vol. 321

WEDNESDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 1991

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. J. Fouras, Ashgrove) read prayers and took the chair at 2.30 p.m.

PETITIONS

The Acting Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

T. N. Theatre Company

From **Mr Foley** (88 signatories) praying for approved funding to the T. N. Theatre Company on an operational grant basis to 30 June 1992.

Capital Punishment

From **Mr Veivers** (14 signatories) praying for urgent legislation to introduce capital punishment.

Capital Punishment

From **Mr Veivers** (12 signatories) praying for action to include the question of capital punishment in the 1992 referendum.

Abortion Law

From **Ms Power** (18 signatories) praying that action be taken to ensure that the law prohibiting abortion on request be enforced.

Similar petitions were received from **Mr Booth** (300 signatories), **Mr Gilmore** (404 signatories), **Mr Beanland** (136 signatories), and **Mr Pitt** (140 signatories).

Child-care Legislation

From **Ms Spence** (172 signatories) praying that the Parliament will support the Child Care Bill 1991 and promote the development of associated regulations.

Pornographic Material

From **Mrs McCauley** (226 signatories) praying that Parliament enact laws which set standards for the presentation, exhibition, promotion and sale of "soft" pornographic magazines in newsagencies and other retail outlets.

Redland Shire

From **Mr Briskey** (8 797 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take the necessary action to preserve the democratic rights of the residents of the Redland Shire and reject the application for the proposed change of status of Redland Shire to a city.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Report of the Lang Park Trust for the year ended 31 December 1989

Reports for the year ended 31 December 1990—

Ipswich Grammar School

Brisbane Grammar School

Lang Park Trust

Report of the Queensland Tertiary Education Foundation for the year ended 30 June 1991

Report and Balance Sheet of the Greyhound Racing Control Board for the year ended 30 June 1991

Orders in Council under—

Superannuation (Government and Other Employees) Act 1988

Associations (Natural Disaster Relief) Act 1976

Gaming Machines Act 1991

Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act 1982

Jupiters Casino Agreement Act 1983

Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act 1990

Statute under the James Cook University of North Queensland Act 1970

Determination by the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission of the Queensland Legislative Assembly Electoral Districts, being a notification under section 3.7 of the Electoral Districts Act 1991 and maps.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Overseas Visit by Premier**

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development and Minister for the Arts) (2.35 p.m.), by leave: Today, I wish to report to the Parliament on an official visit that I made earlier this month to Tokyo, Japan, and Seoul, Korea. After becoming Premier, my first official visit was to Japan and Korea, which reflects the importance of the relationship between our State and these two significant north Asian economies. I believe that it is of vital importance that the Queensland Government maintain high-level contact with the leaders of business and industry in Japan and Korea. This was the essential reason for my return visit in November.

Apart from these meetings, I was also able to officiate at the opening of the new Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation office in Tokyo—an office which will be the focus of our increased efforts to attract a greater share of the Japanese tourist market. Overall, my visit to Tokyo and Seoul—although short, being some two days in each place—was successful and, I believe, cemented and built upon contact I had made previously, and also established new contacts. During my discussions, I sought to do two things: I confirmed and emphasised the commitment of the Queensland Government to close economic, trade and cultural ties between our State and Japan and Korea. I also pursued prospects for future relations, both generally and in specific instances.

It is obvious that there is still great interest in, and enthusiasm for, our natural resources, especially in commodities such as coal. There is also an increasing interest in

the purchase of agricultural products, particularly high-quality foodstuffs. Tourism was also a focus of this visit. I took every opportunity to promote Queensland as a tourist destination for Japan and Korea. I met with a senior executive of Japan Air Lines, which has just extended its direct services between Tokyo and Cairns. As I said earlier, an important aspect of the trip was to officiate at the opening of the Tokyo office of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation—the first time that the QTTC has had its own office in Tokyo, having previously worked through the general Queensland Government Office. We now have next to that office prime central Tokyo space for the QTTC. This new office will help us in our aim to take on what we see as our real rival market in Japan, that is, Hawaii.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the officers of the trade development branch of my department for the assistance they provided in organising this visit, and for assistance on the ground in both Tokyo and Seoul. Again, I would like to stress the importance that the Government places on its relations with Japan and Korea and its determination to ensure that there is continued regular contact at a high level. To save the time of the House, I seek leave to table and have incorporated in *Hansard* the remainder of my report, which consists of summary notes on meetings attended by me and representatives, and other aspects of the visit to Tokyo and Seoul.

Leave granted.

Report on Visit to Japan by the Honourable the Premier from 4-6 November 1991

1. General Comment

Japan is Queensland's largest export market and a major source of inward investment capital. This visit is part of the Queensland Government's trade and investment development strategy to consolidate the strong business relations already existing with Japan. Periodic visits at a senior level are considered a vital factor for success in doing business in Japan. Therefore, the purpose of this visit by the Honourable the Premier as head of the Queensland Government is to maintain and enhance Queensland's business profile among the Japanese business community. The Premier's last visit to Japan was in June 1990.

Specific objectives for this mission were:

- to reinforce and highlight the importance Queensland places on Japan as its major trading partner
- to call on senior executives of major Japanese firms conducting business in Queensland in order to consolidate our relationship with existing contacts
- to confirm to the Japanese business community that Queensland remains a beneficial place for investment
- to officially open the expanded and renovated Queensland Government Office in Tokyo
- to promote Queensland as one of the leading tourist destinations among Japanese people through a function to be hosted by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation at the Queensland Government office in Tokyo.

2. Briefing on Meetings

Idemitsu Kosan

Mr. Masao Suma, Senior Managing Director

Mr. J. Hayashi, Director/General Manager—Energy Development Department

Idemitsu Kosan is Japan's largest independent oil company. Following the oil shocks of the 1970's however, Idemitsu diversified into other energy resources, particularly coal. To this end, it has invested substantial resources in coal handling facilities, research and development and marketing strategies to promote coal not only as a viable commercial alternative, but also an environmentally acceptable

energy source. Idemitsu has interests in the Ebenezer and Ensham coal mines in Queensland as well as the Boggabri coal mine in NSW.

Separately, Idemitsu has donated \$150,000 to the Queensland Art Gallery and has sponsored various other cultural activities.

The Honourable the Premier's discussions with Mr. Suma and Mr. Hayashi centred on Idemitsu's Queensland coal interests and the company's efforts to promote the use of coal in Japan as a clean energy source.

Japan Airlines

Courtesy call—accompanied by Mr. Peter Laurance, Chairman—Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, on Mr. Mitsuo Ando, Managing Director

Japan Airlines (JAL) inaugural flights into Cairns (five services per week) commenced on 3 November 1991. JAL plans to use the Tokyo service on a hub and spoke basis i.e. flights will go into Cairns from Tokyo and then passengers going to other destinations will be flown by domestic carriers. It is expected that this service will further increase the number of Japanese tourists to Queensland, particularly to Cairns.

The Honourable the Premier expressed his thanks to JAL for its support for Queensland as shown by its decision to inaugurate five services per week into Cairns. Ensuing discussions covered JAL's expectations for future growth in its services to Queensland and the number of Japanese tourists visiting Queensland over the next 5-10 years, JAL's plans for the development of tourism infrastructure in Queensland and the potential for increased freight capacity on JAL's new services.

Mitsubishi Gas Chemical Co. Inc.

Mr. Wakichi Nagano, Chairman

Mr. Reiji Nishikawa, President

Mitsubishi Gas Chemical (MGC) is one of the leading chemical companies in Japan. MGC has recently formed a joint venture with MIM, C. Itoh and JAPEX (Japan Petroleum Exploration) to ascertain the extent of commercial reserves of coal bed methane gas in the Bowen Basin coal fields with a view to exploiting it for the production of methanol. Exploration is expected to take another 2-3 years. If successful, MGC is planning to construct a methanol plant in Queensland which would produce approximately 700,000 tonnes of methanol per year.

In their meeting with the Honourable the Premier, Mr. Nagano and Mr. Nishikawa reported on the progress of exploration work in the Bowen Basin and the outlook for methanol production and consumption.

Asahi Chemical Industry Co. Ltd.

Mr. Yukio Sawabe, Senior Managing Director

Mr. Takayuki Kobayashi, General Manager—Food Division

Through its subsidiary company, Asahi Foods Corporation, Asahi Chemical has established itself as an important player in the processed foods industry in Japan.

Asahi Chemical purchased Hans Smallgoods in 1989 and has invested millions of dollars to expand and modernize Hans operations. At present, Hans Smallgoods is producing over 120 products, more than 80 per cent of these being sold in Queensland. It plans to export some of these products to Japan in the future.

The Honourable the Premier's discussions with Mr. Sawabe and Mr. Kobayashi centred on the outlook for the processed food market in Japan and Queensland's role as a potential supplier.

Electric Power Development Co. (EPDC)

Kazuo Sugiyama, President

Mr. Satoru Murai, Senior Managing Director

EPDC was established by the Japanese Government in September 1952 as a special corporation to help implement the national policy of supplying wholesale electric power to the ten regional electric power companies operating in Japan. As of June 1991, EPDC owned and operated a total of 61 electric power generation facilities within Japan. It is also actively engaged in research and development work on new coal-related technologies. EPDC has equity in the Blair Athol coal mine in Queensland and has been importing coal from there since 1984.

The Honourable the Premier's discussions with EPDC covered the outlook for steaming coal demand in Japan, EPDC's research and development work on the environmental impact of coal utilization and Australia's role as a coal supplier.

Nippon Steel Corporation

Mr. H. Saito, President

NSC was created in 1970 as a result of the merger of Yawata Steel Co. and Fuji Steel Co. and has since risen to the position of the world's largest steelmaker. While steel production is NSC's core business, in recent years it has been restructuring and has expanded into such fields as electronics, data communications, new materials, biotechnology and urban development. Australia is the largest supplier of coking coal to the Japanese steel mills and NSC is the leading negotiator in the annual coal price negotiations with Australian suppliers.

The Honourable the Premier's discussions with Mr. Saito centred on the current state of the Japanese economy and the outlook for crude steel production.

C. Itoh and Co. Ltd.

Mr. Michio Kamei, Senior Managing Director

Mr. Kanji Morisawa, Director

Mr. Ichita Kosaka, General Manager—Steel Industry Raw Materials and Coal Division

C. Itoh is one of the leading trading companies in Japan and heads a corporate group comprising 760 affiliated companies. It is active in 87 countries throughout the world and its operations are divided among six major business sectors: machinery and construction, metal and ore, energy and chemicals, food and agricultural products, forest products and general merchandise and textiles. (In recent years, it has also diversified into information resources, high technology, real estate development and international communications). C. Itoh & Co. (Aust) Ltd's main business in Queensland involves: coal, machinery, methane gas, beef and woodchips.

The Honourable the Premier's discussions with C. Itoh covered power station development in Queensland, the Queensland magnesium project and the economic outlook in Japan and Australia.

Tokyo Stock Exchange

Representatives of Nikko Securities Co. Ltd. hosted the Honourable the Premier on a guided tour of the Tokyo Stock Exchange.

3. Briefing on Business Functions

Opening QTTC Office

The Honourable the Premier hosted a reception at the Queensland Government Office to mark the opening of the expanded Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Office in Tokyo. The reception was attended by representatives of most major Japanese travel and tourism related companies and agencies.

The aim of this reception was to officially announce the expansion of QTTC's presence in Tokyo and re-emphasize Queensland's determination to increase its share of the Japanese tourist market.

Queensland Government Dinner

The Honourable the Premier hosted a buffet dinner for approximately 40 senior representatives of Japanese companies with interests in Queensland.

The aim of this dinner was to highlight the importance Queensland attaches to its trade and investment relationship with Japan.

4. Media coverage

Press Conference at the Queensland Government Office with representatives of Australian and Japanese newspapers.

Report on Visit to Korea by the Honourable the Premier
from 6-9 November 1991

A. General Comment

The Republic of Korea (South Korea) is Queensland's third largest export market after Japan and the United States of America. This visit is part of the Queensland Government's trade and investment development strategy to consolidate and expand the business relations which currently exist with the Republic of Korea.

Specific objectives for this mission were:

- to provide Korean business leaders with a greater understanding of Queensland and build a foundation for bilateral economic and cultural ties
- to develop further awareness of Korea and its potential market demands in relation to Queensland
- to encourage Korean firms to establish their Australian branch offices in Queensland
- to attract Korean companies to invest in Queensland
- to promote the export of Queensland products to Korea
- to assist in the development of strategies for long-term publicity of Queensland in Korea.

2. Briefing on Meetings

Samsung Co Ltd

Mr Pil-Gon Rhee, Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

Mr Oh-Byung Chae, Executive Vice President—Marketing & Development

Mr Dong-Sung Shin, Executive Director—Natural Resources

Mr Chan-Wook Park, Managing Director—Overseas Division

Mr Tay-Buhm Jung, Director—Public Affairs Division

This firm is one of the top three Korean general trading companies. Its Sydney-based office (Samsung Australia) facilitated a steaming coal sales contract (\$400,000 per annum for 10 years) between South Blackwater coal mine and Korean Electric Power Company (KEPCO).

It is expected that Samsung Australia will become more involved in facilitating the export of Queensland products. In particular, Samsung is expected to develop more business opportunities in Queensland by commercialising technology. The company has also expressed interest in investing in the film industry.

KBS

Mr Ki-Won Suh, President

Mr Young-Ho Sohn, Vice-President

Mr Eun-Ku Kim, Managing Director—Corporate Planning

Mr Ryang Chung, Executive Director—International Relations

The Queensland Government and KBS will collaborate on facilitating cultural exchanges such as documentary film production in Korea and Queensland.

KBS arranged for the Honourable the Premier to be interviewed on national Korean television (see point 4. Media).

Daewoo Corporation

Mr Suk-Hun Yoon, Vice Chairman—Daewoo Group

Mr Se-Hee Hong, Executive Director—Primary Products

Mr Young-Gil Kim, General Manager—Resources Development

This firm is interested in becoming involved in a steaming coal project in Queensland.

Haitai Group

Mr Kun-Bae Park, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer

Mr Kook-Bong Jeon, Director

Mr Gyu-Chan Hwang, General Manager—Sydney Office

Haitai is one of the top ten food processing companies in Korea and their prime interest lies in importing primary products such as beef and agricultural products.

Haitai is interested in acting as a sales agent for Queensland suppliers. They have also expressed interest in, at a later date, becoming involved in primary production itself and export.

Ministry of National Defence

Mr Young-Hae Kwon, Vice Minister of National Defence

The Vice Minister briefed the Honourable the Premier about the present defence situation in Korea, comparing the military strength of North Korea and South Korea.

Mr Kwon proposed that the Premier facilitate defence industry joint venture programs between Queensland and Korean firms.

3. Briefing on Queensland Government Dinners

Attendees

Dong-In Stone

Mr Sung-Hyo Kang, Managing Director

This firm has obtained a mineral exploration permit from the Department of Resource Industries for the exploration of two granite quarries in North Queensland. Their aim is to develop five granite quarries in Queensland and set up a processing plant in Townsville (\$20 million project) in order to export value-added granite slabs. The company plans to establish its Brisbane office (Dong-In Queensland Pty Ltd) in 1992.

Daesung Group

Mr Young-Tae Kim, President

Daesung has an existing investment of \$10 million in NSW Drayton Coal Mine. The company is interested in high technology related manufacturing.

Jeil Farm

Mr Sung-Hwan Cho, President

Jeil Farm is a subsidiary of Miwon Group which is one of the top ten food processors in Korea. This firm will set up its Brisbane office (Miwon Australia Pty Ltd) and will initially acquire a cattle station near Brisbane. At a further stage, it plans to purchase an abattoir and a meat processing plant.

The Miwon Group is interested in developing a sugar processing plant to process molasses into MSG.

POSCO (Pohang Iron & Steel Company Ltd)

Mr Myung-Sik Chung, President

POSCO is the single largest Korean firm buying iron ore (\$250 million per annum) and coal (\$300 million per annum) from Australia.

The company is now aware of Queensland and is expected to buy more from our State. President Chung invited the Honourable the Premier to visit its steel works either in Pohang or Kwang Yang during the Premier's next official visit to Korea.

Hyundai Corporation

Mr Se-Yong Park, President

This firm has a 20% interest in Springsure Coal Mining Project and is also the Korean sales agent for coal from North Goonyella Mine.

We expect Hyundai to sell more Queensland coal to Korea.

4. Media Coverage

The Honourable the Premier appeared in the popular live morning show "Today" on 8 Nov 1991. The interview covered the purpose of the visit to Korea and introduced Queensland and its investment opportunities. This publicity exercise was arranged by KBS.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Police Training Scheme

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (2.38 p.m.), by leave: The Liberal Party's Police spokesman, who this month is the member for Nerang, has been quoted in the media recently as saying that Queensland's 360 new police officers who will be sworn in next month are not to be trusted with serious police work. He says they have been hampered by an outdated training scheme. This claim demonstrates his total lack of knowledge of the Police portfolio. Queensland's police recruits are the cream of Australia's young police officers, thanks to two innovative education programs which are the first of their kind in Australia. Far from being outdated, the new Queensland police training scheme is the envy of every other State police service. Queensland is leading the nation, and other States are copying its system.

The Queensland training scheme, as the member for Nerang should know, takes into account recommendations of Commissioner Tony Fitzgerald. Mr Fitzgerald made it very clear that he regarded higher education as one of the most important questions that the Government could address in improving the police service. He said police officers should not be seen simply as people who investigate crime and catch criminals. He recognised that while that remains a vital part of police work, the community now demands that police officers have an education that equips them with a sense of balance in both enforcing the law and serving the community. They must be able to cope with the traumas associated with police work. They need a deeper understanding of social, psychological and legal issues. The 360 new police officers who will join the Queensland Police Service in two weeks' time will have that understanding, as well as having a solid grounding in practical police work. Obviously, no training scheme can turn out police officers fully experienced in every facet of police operational duties. I believe the Government's program provides the best possible balance between practical and theoretical police education.

Recruits attend either Griffith University or the Queensland University of Technology for a semester of tertiary study. One semester at university exposes them to subjects including communication, law, sociology, and ethics and accountability. As well, recruits attend the Queensland Police Academy one day a week where they are exposed to

operational skills training, such as first aid, physical skills education, report writing and police computer training. The second semester extends their knowledge base and lays the foundation for their policing career. This includes police professional studies, foundations of crime and policing, personal and interpersonal relations in policing, management concepts, firearms and driver training and officer survival skills. There is also a three-week component where recruits go out into the field and take part in operational activities, designed to build on the knowledge base laid at the universities and at the academy. The program is designed to give recruits the ability to solve problems in policing situations by using teaching strategies such as role-playing and case studies drawn from actual police experience.

Recruits who meet the standard graduate with an advanced certificate in policing, which represents one-third of a Bachelor of Arts degree in justice administration. Following induction, the constables are allocated to a police district and assigned for eight weeks to a field training officer who has been specially selected and trained for the role. That field training officer personally supervises, teaches, trains and assesses the constable. He or she then enters a competency extension stage, working alongside more experienced colleagues and performing a wide range of operational duties. Current feedback from station sergeants, district officers and members of the community concerning the levels of ability, motivation and competency of the recruits while on station duty during their academy training has been extremely favourable. Far from not being able to be trusted with serious police work, Queensland's new policemen and women are head and shoulders above the quality of recruits in other States. They have taken the first step up the ladder of an occupation which is moving to the status of a profession. They understand the organisation of criminal justice, the theories and practices of policing, and the relationship between police and the community in terms of enforcement, peace-keeping and service. They have studied the main institutions within Federal and State Governments and how they shape the justice system; they have developed an appreciation of human behaviour relevant to policing and have developed interpersonal skills, and they will have learned to appreciate the need to display integrity and ethical conduct at all times. They will also have acquired basic job skills such as safe driving techniques, firearm-handling, operational skills and strategies for specific situations, bushcraft, first aid, computer knowledge and typing. All this, we hope, will lead to them studying for a Bachelor of Arts degree in justice administration, which will further extend their knowledge and personal development. They are trained, educated and professional police officers. I would back them against any police officer in Australia.

The Liberal shadow Police Minister and other opposition members have also been wide of the mark in recent claims about the attrition rate in the Queensland Police Service. I reject entirely the suggestion that poor morale has led to an increasing loss of experienced officers since the Government came to office. The loss of officers through medical or age retirements, resignations, dismissals and deaths for the 1990-91 financial year was 4.99 per cent of approved police strength. For the first four months of this financial year, the attrition rate was 4.49 per cent. In 1989, before this Government took office, the attrition rate was 4.24 per cent, and in 1988 it was 4.19 per cent. Any change in the annual "wastage" rate is insignificant, particularly when it is remembered that the Government has increased the size of the Queensland Police Service dramatically since it took office. I can inform the member for Nerang and his colleagues that when the police attrition rate was at its highest under the coalition Government from 1974 to 1976, it was well over 6 per cent for three successive years.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Accountability of Government**

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (2.45 p.m.), by leave: The hallmark of this Government is its commitment to accountability. One of the first measures set in place was the establishment of the Ministerial Expenditure Unit—now called the Ministerial Services Branch—in the Treasury Department. This unit, operating under clear guidelines, manages ministerial office budgets, purchases material for ministerial offices, makes payments for allowable expenses incurred by Ministers and their staff and controls assets in Ministers' offices.

A second reform relates specifically to the document that I will be tabling shortly. This document, which covers the period 1 July 1990 to 30 June 1991, details expenses incurred exclusively by Ministers rather than confuses the issue with expenditure for ministerial staff, as was the case under the previous Government. This Government believes that Ministers should be subject to that individual scrutiny, otherwise Ministers have the capacity to point to an entry when challenged and claim that the expenses were not theirs but that a substantial, although unidentified, proportion of the expenses related to staff. This more accountable system also means that there can be no suggestion that this Government is attempting to hide staff expenses. This document is also substantially different from those presented by the previous Government in that it includes a much broader range of ministerial expenditure. The most noteworthy additions are official functions, both domestic and overseas. I should make the point that audited aggregate ministerial office expenditure figures for 1990-91 were included in Budget Paper No. 3, page 29. The figures I am tabling today are that component which refers directly to expenditure by Ministers. I now table the document.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Electricity Connection in Rural Areas**

Hon. K. H. VAUGHAN (Nudgee—Minister for Resource Industries) (2.46 p.m.), by leave: I rise to finally end a campaign of misinformation being spread by the Opposition about electricity connection in rural areas. I am disappointed that the Opposition spokesman, having gone through the accepted practice of asking a question in the House and having received a full answer, has seen fit to seriously misrepresent the information supplied to him. I can say that never in my many years as an Opposition spokesman did I stoop to that kind of misuse of the parliamentary system. The subject of the misinformation is the conditions of supply which electricity boards apply to the connection of power to rural consumers. As of July 1991, an electricity board has required rural consumers to provide an annual guarantee equal to 22.5 per cent of the board's capital contribution to a connection. Previously, rural consumers had to provide a guarantee of 15 per cent of the board's capital contribution. The point on which the honourable member for Lockyer has seen fit to misrepresent the facts is on the initiative and responsibility for this decision, which basically puts farmers on the same set of conditions as all other Queenslanders.

The general managers of the State's electricity boards met on 16 October 1989 and decided to set up a working group to review conditions of supply. The general managers met again in May and June of 1990 and decided to amend those conditions. They then took those proposed changes to their boards—the boards appointed by the National Party Government, I might add—and the boards approved the changes. I was informed of

the boards' decisions in a memorandum from the Electricity Commissioner in October 1990. My role was to inform Cabinet. Cabinet then decided that it would be preferable for the boards to defer the increases to 1 July this year out of consideration for the possible impact during the rural recession. Clearly, the decision to increase the guarantee fee was one made by the boards exercising their role to manage their affairs as spelt out in the Electricity Act. Despite having had this spelt out to him in the Parliament, the honourable member for Lockyer has seen fit to embark on a public campaign to blame the Government for a decision made by statutory authorities. That may not have been the case under the Government of those opposite, and the honourable member for Lockyer should not tar our Government with their brush.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Register of Area Drought Declarations

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (2.49 p.m.), by leave: In keeping with my Government's policy, I wish to inform the House that I have approved the addition of a further four shires to the register of area drought declarations. The latest additions mean that 66 shires, with three part shires and eight rural towns and cities, are now declared. The latest declarations apply from 11 November 1991. The four shires are Bauhinia in the central Queensland area and three tableland shires near Cairns, which are Atherton, Eacham and Herberton. Assistance entitlements for primary producers in these shires are the same as those already extended to holders of individual droughted property declarations. Since the Drought Information Centre was established in Brisbane on 25 September with a toll-free hot-line number, the centre has received 4 266 telephone calls from rural producers, averaging 68 a day to 25 November.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

PSMC Review of Department of Education

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Rockhampton—Minister for Education) (2.51 p.m.), by leave: I wish to advise the House that the Public Sector Management Commission has recently completed its review of the Department of Education. It is significant that the PSMC made a point of commending the efforts over the past 18 months to restructure the department. In particular, it supports the thrust of *Focus on Schools* and reaffirms its main principles. Honourable members would know that the *Focus on Schools* report, initiated by this Government, was the most exhaustive and comprehensive study ever undertaken into Queensland education. The study and the PSMC review identified many problems within the department. The PSMC review made it clear that those problems were caused by practices left over from the days of previous Governments which had failed to give adequate priority to education. Indeed, the review notes that the department was handed a poisoned chalice as a consequence of past management practices and neglect. Major changes were needed. Class rooms, not bureaucracy, had to become the centre of our activities. I am well aware that these times of change have caused some uncertainty and apprehension. But this is a major review, and I am determined that the process of change will be done properly. I stress that the genuine concerns of people affected will be considered. I expect the process to be concluded in the near future, in time for the start of the new school year.

Teachers and staff are the department's greatest assets. When we came into Government, our teachers were among the lowest paid in Australia. Because we value

their professionalism, we made it a priority to improve their salaries and career structures. To consolidate these gains, our department must be efficient. The PSMC review notes that previous management practices fell far short of this. For instance, the PSMC notes that, among other things, our library system is uncoordinated. For a department that really should be based on knowledge and information, it is a shocking waste of resources. That is just one example of the need to overhaul the system. In short, we must get full value for each dollar.

These are the sorts of reforms the PSMC review has targeted. I am pleased to report that it reaffirms our general approach to change. We have already identified some problems, and will now work to overcome the deficiencies that the PSMC outlined in its review. Under the Goss Government, education is finally being given the priority it deserves, and the long overdue reforms are providing real improvements for Queensland's most valuable assets, the children of Queensland, who will be the ultimate beneficiaries of a better system. I thank the PSMC for reinforcing the direction of our reforms, and I seek leave to table a summary of the report and recommendations.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Absence of Ministers during Question-time

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (2.54 p.m.): I have to inform the House that the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development will miss some of question-time today as he has to attend the national trade strategy meeting in Canberra, and the Minister for Administrative Services will be away for the remainder of the week. He is expected back next Tuesday.

Mr BORBIDGE having given notice of a motion—

Mr BORBIDGE: I table the article in question.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (2.55 p.m.), by leave: This morning, in this Chamber, the Minister for Resource Industries indicated that I had misled the House and misled the public with regard to press statements. Never did I say that the electricity boards did not recommend the increases in capital contribution electricity extension work. I assert that the Cabinet approved the recommendations. I will stand by that statement. I can also assure the House that a National Party Government would not have approved any of the recommended increases.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Peak Downs) (2.56 p.m.), by leave: Yesterday, in this House, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services gave an answer, which he tabled, in relation to the Lakes Creek Police Station. I did not have the opportunity to read that answer until this morning. One could infer from the way in which the answer was couched that I had made no representation on the matter. Just to clarify the situation—firstly, I have been to the Lakes Creek Police Station—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Peak Downs will resume his seat. The honourable member must indicate to the House how he was personally misrepresented. I am not going to allow him to rise under the guise of a personal explanation to debate

something that was said yesterday in the House. I ask the honourable member to do that, otherwise I will have to ask him to resume his seat.

Mr LESTER: I did see Mr Pointing, who is the chief of police, and I made representations to him.

Mr Mackenroth: He is debating the issue.

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

QUESTION UPON NOTICE

Wet Tropics

Dr CLARK asked the Minister for Environment and Heritage—

“With reference to recent concerns by conservationists regarding the management of the Wet Tropics—

What actions are being undertaken by the Ministerial Council, Wet Tropics Authority and Agency to ensure the protection of the World Heritage values and proper management of this most important area of North Queensland?”

Mr COMBEN: The answer is somewhat lengthy. I seek leave to table it and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Commonwealth and Queensland Governments, through the Ministerial Council, have given high priority to the protection and management of the Wet Tropics.

Mr. Peter Hitchcock, an award winning conservation manager, took up duty as the Director of the Wet Tropics Management Agency in Cairns in June. Additional staff are being recruited to the Agency to enable it to oversee the essential policy formulation and management planning for the World Heritage Area.

The last Ministerial Council meeting in September resolved that work on the development of a strategic plan for the Wet Tropics would be accelerated and it is intended that a draft plan will be available in May 1992 for public review. Resources are being made available to the Agency to ensure that this essential task is completed as soon as possible. Work has also begun on the Ministerial Council's decision to develop a tourism strategy for the Wet Tropics and to undertake further wildlife research. Priority is being given to management planning work for two areas of critical importance in the Wet Tropics—north of the Daintree River and the Wangetti Coast from Port Douglas to Cairns—and \$120,000 has been allocated to the National Parks and Wildlife Service for the employment of temporary planners at Cairns and Ingham.

Legislation to implement the Wet Tropics Management Agreement between the State and the Commonwealth is currently being prepared and I anticipate that this will be introduced to Parliament early next year.

Under the joint funding arrangements set out in the Agreement, the Commonwealth will be contributing more than \$7 million in 1991/92 for capital works in the Wet Tropics and providing up to \$4 million to match Queensland's contribution towards on-going management costs. Capital works projects include \$1 million for road maintenance and more than \$1 million for a range of visitor facilities such as upgrading and maintaining walking tracks, signage and interpretive displays. It also includes a \$2.2 million acquisition program to ensure that sites of critical conservation significance are protected. Other management related projects to be funded include roadside rehabilitation, feral animal control, research into the flora and fauna of the Wet Tropics, the development of a natural resource database, visitor surveys, and interpretive and educational projects.

The conservation movement can be assured that the Queensland Government is totally committed to working co-operatively with the Commonwealth to ensure the highest possible

protection and management is given to the Wet Tropics to meet our international obligations to conserve this Area's outstanding World Heritage values.

I am personally satisfied that the past teething problems of a new Agency are now behind us and the way ahead is certain and successful.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Superannuation Funds

Mr COOPER: I ask the Treasurer: is he aware of the Premier's recent statements to the Business Council of Australia and other organisations that superannuation funds of ordinary workers, including our State public servants, should be gambled on ventures which cannot raise finance through normal business circles, as a result of which he has been severely criticised by the head of BHP, Mr Brian Loton, by insurance industry leader Sir James Balderstone, and by the *Australian Financial Review*? As the Minister responsible, can the Treasurer give this House a firm guarantee that the superannuation funds of public servants in this State will not be squandered on this weird and discredited proposal put forward by the Premier?

Mr De LACY: Good try! I am certainly not aware of any comments by the Premier such as those outlined——

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr De LACY:—by the honourable member. The Leader of the Opposition has never been noted for getting anything right, and he certainly did not get it right this time. In respect of the assurance which the honourable member sought that public sector superannuation funds in Queensland will be well looked after—I assure him that they will be. I can give the honourable member any guarantee he likes about the security of those funds. If he examines the way those funds are looked after and the way in which they are invested, he will see that they are the best-managed funds in Australia, and that will continue.

Fuel Tax

Mr COOPER: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to praise for the coalition's tax reform package by the Queensland Graingrowers Association vice-president, Mr Geoff Johnson, who, when paying tribute to the Queensland National Party for securing the abolition of fuel tax as part of the package, described it as being "impressive in its scope and detail". A spokesman for the United Graziers Association reportedly made the comment that the only problem with the GST package was that it could not be implemented immediately. I ask: does the Minister concede that the benefits of the GST package, including abolition of several hidden taxes, particularly fuel excise, will benefit the State's rural sector? Would the Minister support the introduction of such assistance at a Federal level?

Mr CASEY: I thank the honourable member for the question. Obviously, he was not in the House or was not listening too well yesterday when the Premier explained clearly what the real problem with transportation costs in Queensland would be under the GST. He referred to the hidden cost that could be imposed by an authority and not controlled by this State.

Mr Cooper interjected.

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

Mr CASEY: Let me put aside the part of the question that relates to the fuel tax issue, because that was answered adequately yesterday by the Premier.

Mr Cooper: That's the question.

Mr CASEY: It is the Leader of the Opposition's question. The remainder of the question related to what would happen to rural communities under the GST. I remind the Leader of the Opposition and other members that the important letter in that acronym refers to "services". It means that an additional tax of 15 per cent will be added to the high cost of goods such as foodstuffs, furniture, and household and farm items. As well, it will cost an additional 15 per cent to transport those items to rural areas. It will mean a 15 per cent increase in the cost of every farm input.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I cannot hear the Minister.

Mr Gunn interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member for Somerset under Standing Order 123A. I do not require his assistance. Honourable members, I am determined that the conduct of this House will not degenerate further. I want to hear the Minister, and I am sure that other members do, too. Those members who do not want to hear the Minister might have to go for a walk.

Mr CASEY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The other matter that we must consider about the GST that is being proposed by the Federal coalition is that every small business in every small town throughout Queensland will become a tax-collector for the Federal Government. In this House, we have heard honourable members opposite express concern about rural communities. I point out that the National Party does not have the sole prerogative to represent rural Queensland in this Parliament. Many Labor members represent rural Queenslanders. Opposition members have been claiming that commodity prices in the rural community are such that most rural producers and farmers in Queensland are struggling to make a living. As a result, very few of them are paying tax.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. We are being accused of putting this cost imposition on items. There is no cost imposition on business items. The Minister does not know what he is talking about.

Mr CASEY: It is amazing to see that the honourable member for Flinders has suddenly changed to being a proponent of the GST. Yesterday, he was running around this House most disturbed because his parliamentary colleagues, including his leader, were supporting it. I will return to the final point that I wish to make, because it is most important. Because of low prices, high costs and the drought throughout Queensland, rural communities are facing severe financial problems. Today in Queensland, because of their low income, very few rural producers are paying any income tax, but if the coalition ever gets control in the Federal sphere, rural producers will have to pay an additional 15 per cent tax on everything. They will be paying more tax than they have ever paid in their lives.

Alcohol Sales on Aboriginal Communities

Mr PREST: I ask the Deputy Premier: has he seen a recent coroner's report into the death of a person on Mornington Island, which recommended that alcohol sales on the island be banned? What is his response to that recommendation?

Mr BURNS: I thank the honourable member for the question, because it is very important. The coroner's report on a death on Mornington Island suggested that the sale of alcohol be banned and that the canteen be closed. That is not an easy answer to the

problem. I will draw the attention of honourable members to some of the matters that are involved. Mornington Island has a population of approximately 900 people, and an estimated 5 000 litres of alcohol are sold each week from the canteen. The canteen is open from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., Monday to Friday, and from 12 noon to 2 p.m. on Saturday. In that time, 5 000 litres of alcohol are sold. Previously, the sale of alcohol on Aboriginal communities was banned. The former Government introduced the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act. Section 36 (5) of the Act allowed the councils to make by-laws with respect to the sale, supply or consumption of beer from such premises. A by-law also gave them the power to ban the sale of alcohol. As honourable members know, the sale of alcohol has been banned at Aurukun, and the community now has a problem with sly-grogging. I have received a report from my departmental officers on what occurred in the days prior to the introduction of the legislation which allowed the sale of only beer from a canteen on Mornington Island. Prior to the canteen being established and the ensuing regulation governing the distribution and sale of liquor, hot alcohol was consumed by the residents. Alcohol was flown or shipped into Mornington Island both by individuals for personal consumption and by individuals for resale at a substantial profit. No member of this House who has visited those islands and those Aboriginal communities could deny that fact. Many people in those areas have made a fortune sly-grogging.

I believe that the previous Government was probably correct in allowing only beer to be sold from the canteens, because that provided alcohol to the community and left it to the community to decide whether it wanted to close the canteen or not. Under the Act, it is not a matter for the Licensing Commission; it is really a matter for the community. At Aurukun, the community has made the decision to ban the sale of alcohol and has thrown away a lot of grog. By doing that, the community has made a decision involving a substantial amount of money. Previously, that community used to make a profit of \$300,000 from the canteen; it is not now making that money. The Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, who is responsible for the Licensing Commission, has had his officers investigate the matter on a number of Aboriginal communities.

Mr Slack: You were going to support Aurukun. They're down \$300,000. Now what are they going to do?

Mr BURNS: We are not giving them money. If those communities make a decision to close down their canteen, they cannot turn around and ask the Government for \$300,000. I have told them that, if they make those decisions, they are cash decisions; but, if they make a decision to ban alcohol—which they have made—we will attempt to help them. The communities want the Act rewritten. Recently, the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs and I received a report from Aboriginal communities about the types of laws that should be provided for their communities, and we are addressing that problem. It is a problem that the Aboriginal communities themselves have to address. It is not a matter for a white Big Brother from Brisbane to say, "You can't sell grog" or, "You can't do this." It is a matter for the people on Mornington Island or at Aurukun to make a decision. It will be done in that way. The Government will allow the people in those communities to be like other Australians and have the right to make a decision for their own future.

Effect of Goods and Services Tax on Gold Coast Area

Mr PREST: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: is he aware of the concern on the Gold Coast about the impact of the Opposition's goods and services tax? Can he assure the House that he will do everything he can to keep people of the Gold Coast informed of the potential impact of the goods and services tax on that area?

Mr GIBBS: I am aware of great concern on the Gold Coast in relation to this issue. Since the package was revealed last week, numerous complaints have been made.

Mr FitzGerald: Have you been down there?

Mr GIBBS: Yes, I have. In fact, I have been there on a number of occasions. Numerous inquiries have been made of my office about the effect that this tax will have on the tourist industry. However, strangely enough, in the last couple of days the debate has hotted up even more. Following the Premier's revelation yesterday in the House that the Liberal Party has been organising its members to be able to receive complaints first-hand, additional concerns have been raised by people from the Gold Coast. I have been advised that those people have been ringing the office of the member for South Coast, Mr Quinn, and have been unable to get an answer in any shape or form because he simply has not been there. I wondered why this was. I took a bit of time to check it out. I found in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* an article headed "Fears of move to oust Quinn. Libs Whip faces fight". The poor chap obviously is not in a position to be able to deliver the kit to his constituents on the Gold Coast. The reason he is being sorted out is that, in the contest for the leadership of the Liberal Party, he chose to stick with the former leader. He has been——

Mr BEANLAND: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I refer you to Standing Order 70. The answer is not relevant to the question.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I was going to ask the Minister to get back to the question.

Mr GIBBS: I will, Mr Speaker. The simple answer is that I give an assurance to the people of the Gold Coast—particularly those in the electorate of South Coast who cannot receive this sort of a service from their local member because of his preselection problems—that they may feel free to ring my office at any time and they will be given the correct advice on the GST problem.

Premier's Support for Consumption Tax

Mrs SHELDON: I refer the Premier to an interview that was conducted with him and which was referred to earlier by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, published in the *Business Review Weekly* on 8 September 1989, in which he said——

"I supported the consumption tax at the tax summit because it is so efficient. That sort of tax could sweep away a number of inefficient and inexpensive ways to collect taxes such as the fire services levy."

I now ask: in the light of his past strong support for a consumption tax and tax reforms, will the Premier now concede that his attacks on the Federal coalition's "Fightback!" plan are the height of hypocrisy?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Even though I found the concluding phrase of the question to be a little bit political, I will do my best to answer it. Back in early 1985, I and many other people supported wide-ranging tax reform because it was quite clear that the taxation system——

Mrs Sheldon: 1989.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The tax summit was not in 1989. I know that the honourable member has been in politics for only a short time. The reference in the article, as I heard it quoted by the honourable member for Landsborough and a previous speaker, is to the opinion expressed by a number of other people and me back in early 1985 because it was obvious to many of us that the taxation system that had been inherited by the Hawke Government——

Mr Cooper: Now it's good, is it?

Mr W. K. GOSS: No. The taxation system was badly in need of reform.

Mr Stephan interjected.

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

Mr Borbidge: September '89.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The tax summit was in 1985.

Mr Borbidge: Did you say this in September '89 or not?

Mr W. K. GOSS: It was referring to my position at the time of the tax summit in 1985. It was clear that, in a couple of respects, the taxation system was in need of substantial and overwhelming reform. The first was in respect of the tax corruption, revealed by the Costigan commission and other inquiries, that had flourished under the Liberal/National Party Federal Government. Furthermore, it was quite clear to people attending the tax summit, namely bystanders or observers such as me, that there was a need for tax reform. Many views were expressed. If honourable members opposite look back, they will see that, depending on the circumstances and the system that was being examined at the time, various opinions were expressed. If they want to look at the position of people on the other side of the fence, they should look at the position——

Mr Dunworth interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: They should look at the position of the business——

Mr Katter interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: Honourable members opposite should consider the position of the Business Council of Australia in 1985. It did not support the consumption tax. The current situation is that, following upon the tax summit in 1985, there was wide-ranging reform in respect of the taxation system. I would refer honourable members to the taxation reforms undertaken by the Federal Government—reforms in relation to simplifying and flattening the taxation system and reforms in relation to wholesale sales tax that have been referred to by the former Treasurer, Mr Keating, and the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Mr Fraser. There now exists a situation——

Mr Coomber interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: As far as the member for Currumbin is concerned, I can only endorse the remarks made last night by the member for Surfers Paradise and the member for Southport as part of their harmonious coalition relationship. The comments made by the Governor of the Reserve Bank highlight——

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I would like to hear the Premier's answer. I warn the member for Surfers Paradise under Standing Order 123A.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I share the view of the Governor of the Reserve Bank, Mr Fraser, in relation to the effects of the goods and services package—not just the GST of 15 per cent, but the rest of the package. As Dr Hewson says repeatedly, one must look at the whole package. When one does that, one sees that the package is not an economic reform but an ideological reform designed to shift the tax burden to the average working person in this State. The Governor of the Reserve Bank, Mr Fraser, is correct—I share his view—that, as a consequence of the broad-ranging taxation reforms undertaken since the time of the tax summit, the introduction of this package would be politically divisive. It

is an ideological document that would have a very adverse impact on the Australian community.

I wish to make one final point about the need to look at the package as a whole. One aspect that the coalition has not mentioned is the cost. It does not talk about those parts of the package that do not suit it. In that regard, yesterday I exposed to the House the real position of the Liberals and Nationals. As to the con that they are trying to put over people in the north and the west in relation to road-user charges—the truth was confirmed last night. The National Road Transport Commission will implement a road-user charges system against people in the north and the west whom the Liberals and Nationals are trying to con.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. Constantly, things are being attributed to us that are very detrimental to us. That is totally incorrect. They are totally opposed to the ISC.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. I point out to the member for Flinders that a point of order must relate to procedures and should not be used to make a debating point.

Mr Katter: It is not a debating point.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has been warned. I will take note of that.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I will conclude with two sentences. The member for Flinders has hit the nail on the head. It is detrimental, and this Government is going to make sure that everybody in Flinders and Kennedy hears about it. As I said, I will conclude with two simple sentences that show the truth about the hidden coalition road tax—the hidden Hewson road tax. An article in this morning's *Australian Financial Review* states—

“The Federal Opposition has conceded it will introduce a system of road-user charges—an admission which raises serious doubts about the inflation forecasts in its tax-reform package.

The Opposition land transport spokesman, Mr Hawker, said last night that a coalition government would impose road-user charges to replace part of the abolished petrol excise.”

Mr Hawker said also that the road-user charges would be set by the new National Road Transport Commission.

Mr KATTER: I rise to a point of order. Truly, I am not being frivolous. I crave your indulgence in this matter, Mr Speaker. The things that are being said are very, very detrimental to people on this side of the House and are totally incorrect.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. I have already warned the member for Flinders under Standing Order 123A. He is now warned under Standing Order 124 for not accepting the directions and rulings of the Chair.

Mr W. K. GOSS: In conclusion, the Nationals and Liberals are supporting a body which has been authorised by Dr Hewson to impose road-user charges in Queensland with no power of veto and no political override. It is the hidden Hewson road tax, and Russell Cooper supports it.

Mr COOPER: I rise to a point of order. I find the last remark by the Premier offensive and untrue, and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I withdraw any suggestion that Russell Cooper supports the GST package.

Mr COOPER: This is ridiculous. Mr Speaker, the Premier knows very well what I was referring to. He said “Russell Cooper supports” the increase in road-user charges. I find that statement to be untrue, and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that he wants to say to the House that he does not support that?

Mr COOPER: I am saying that I want the Premier to withdraw the remark that "Russell Cooper supports" the increase in road-user charges. That was the statement the Premier made just before he sat down. I find that to be untrue, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am not going to allow Standing Order 119 to be used in that way. The Leader of the Opposition has made the point that he does not support it. I now call the member for Landsborough.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is not offensive.

Petroleum Products Excise

Mrs SHELDON: I thank the Premier for his confused answer. In directing a question to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, I refer to the proposals to abolish the petroleum products excise which will reduce taxation on fuel for business by 26c per litre, and I ask: is the Minister aware of the immense benefits that this reform will bring to the Queensland tourism industry, particularly in relation to coach travel and air charter? Is the Minister aware that this will represent a saving of nearly \$2m to Queensland's only remaining coach tour company? Will the Minister indicate why he believes that Queensland business and all its customers should not be relieved of this unfair tax burden?

Mr GIBBS: The simple fact is that any short-term benefit that may be gained by the tourist industry—particularly the aviation industry—will certainly be lost as a result of the 15 per cent GST that will be charged. I note the statement made by the Premier yesterday about the fact that international air fares are exempt from the GST. Although that is very true, the fact is that from an international point of view the GST will still have a major effect on our tourist industry. One of the great attractions of this State, particularly since the air fare price war began, has been the incentive for international tourists to visit Queensland because we have had cheap domestic air fares. This GST will certainly do nothing to keep those cheap air fares which have become an integral part of the burgeoning tourist industry in Queensland.

Further, the GST will have a disastrous effect on family groups and individuals who would normally prefer to holiday at home. Domestic air fares will be affected by that 15 per cent GST, and those people will take the option to leave Queensland to take advantage of being able to travel overseas because there is no 15 per cent tax on air fares for international departures from Australia.

Mr Dunworth interjected.

Mr GIBBS: The honourable member should go to Paris. He would look well in some of those little shops I have heard of over there.

Mr DUNWORTH: I rise to a point of order. I have been to Paris many times representing my country.

Mr GIBBS: Could it be true that the honourable member is oversensitive to the term "Gay Paree"? Those are the simple facts. The tourist industry gains a short-term benefit but, in the long term, the GST will have no effect other than the disastrous repercussions that the Government has already outlined in this House.

Better Cities Program

Mr PALASZCZUK: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier, I refer to the Federal Government's Better Cities Program, and I ask: will the Minister inform the House of any foreseen benefits to Queensland from that program and whether Queensland supports it?

Mr BURNS: I am surprised that Dr Hewson has said that a coalition Government would scrap the Better Cities Program, because I find that most of the Liberal councillors in Queensland are campaigning very vigorously to be involved in the Better Cities Program. I read with some interest comments made by a fellow by the name of Dawson who lives in the Logan area and who, I think, is seeking Liberal endorsement for a seat in that region. He said that it was scandalous that they had not been able to get their hands into the till, or get some of the money, for Logan. The Better Cities Program provides for the distribution of \$816m among the States and Territories over a five-year period. The level of assistance to each State will be determined through an evaluation of the target area funding proposals submitted to the Commonwealth, not on a per capita basis. As a guide to the level of funding, Queensland could expect to receive approximately \$140m over five years. If Dr Hewson has his way, that is \$140m that Queensland will lose.

The Better Cities Program will have some good effects on Queensland. It is not a tidy towns program. The Better Cities Program is not about tidying up little problems from town to town. At the initial stage of discussions on the program, the Queensland Government proposed the Inala-Ipswich corridor and the Cannon Hill urban village, which will be sited on the land that will become available for housing when A. J. Bush is relocated. That area of land will become fairly valuable. The Government also proposed the Fortitude Valley revitalisation, which Lord Mayor Soorley and the member for Brisbane Central have been pushing. We proposed aged care services at Hervey Bay and the inner city and Ross River projects at Townsville. Finally, the major proposal of the Government was the Gold Coast railway. In relation to that railway—the Government has the opportunity to make a number of major submissions on urban planning. That is what the Better Cities Program is all about. It is not only about capital works but also about urban proposals.

The highway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast carries heavy volumes of traffic. There are arguments about whether additional roads should be built to cope with the heavy volume of traffic on the roads. We are talking about 600 000 people coming to Queensland between now and the year 2001, most of whom will settle between Noosa and the New South Wales border. So we are looking at major problems in that Gold Coast corridor. One of the ways in which that problem can be addressed is by constructing the Gold Coast railway and, at the same time, by building urban settlements and transport interchanges at the various railway stations and by making arrangements so that we can practically plan a future for the region. No-one has talked regional planning or city planning in this State for some time. When the Labor Party came to Government, Queensland did not have a planning Minister. The Government is trying to work cooperatively with councils. The regional planning advisory group is working very well.

People who live on the Gold Coast are keen for the railway to be constructed but, of course, they want it to extend right into places such as Surfers Paradise and Southport. Members can imagine the problems and the costs involved in buying land extending from Nerang to, say, Surfers Paradise. The only way in which the Government can get those major projects under way is with a substantial injection of Federal funding. That will not happen if the Federal funding dries up, and those people on the Gold Coast who support Dr Hewson and say that they do not want funding for the railway and for those projects in south-east Queensland ought to think again. For the very short-term political expediency of helping Dr Hewson, they are throwing out the baby with the bath water. They are throwing away a great opportunity for the Government to build that Gold Coast railway and

to do something about modern transportation for the people who travel between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

Toxic Algae

Mr PALASZCZUK: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: in view of the concerns that are being expressed publicly regarding toxic algae in the Murray/Darling River system, will he inform the House whether the outbreak of that plant in Queensland rivers constitutes any danger to public health?

Mr CASEY: Firstly, I assure members that when we talk about algae in water, we should remember that they are a normal and natural occurrence in all streams and water systems everywhere. Many members would realise that algae will grow in their backyard swimming pools. We must concentrate on the discovery in Queensland of the blue-green toxic algae. Even that algae becomes toxic only at certain times of the year or under certain conditions depending upon whether it is in water. There has only been one confirmed discovery in Queensland and that is in the Lowden Weir at Dalby. The people of Dalby are drinking bore water rather than expose themselves to this algae.

The warning I would give all Queenslanders is simply this: if there is algae in their water system, they run a risk if they expose themselves to it either by drinking the water or allowing their children to swim and play in it. Problems can develop under certain circumstances. This algae can be treated out of the water in a number of ways. Recently, the member for Auburn made a public disclosure at a function I attended. He indicated to me that the favourite method of former National Party Ministers treating this water was to make sure that they put plenty of rum or Johnny Walker whisky in it. It certainly can be treated. Because of their occupations and where they live, a number of Opposition members have been exposed to the algae and it has had some effect on their health. Who can deny that at some time or other there must have been a problem with toxic algae in the Clermont region?

This Government is taking positive action concerning this problem. My department is working in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Heritage. At present, officers from those departments are returning to Brisbane by plane from an inspection that has been carried out in the Murray/Darling Basin region to find out whether any real problems have been experienced away from the settled areas. Yesterday, in conjunction with local authorities in Warwick, Toowoomba, Goondiwindi, St George and Charleville—just to mention a few areas—officers of my department rang around and checked whether there were any problems in these areas. There has been a report that there may be a problem in some part of the Albert River at the moment. My department is checking that out. There is no confirmation as to whether it is the toxic algae. I want to assure members about this. We have to undertake tests and go through the necessary special routines, because if the algae does get into drinking water, it can be cleaned up.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is trying to debate the issue.

Mr CASEY: My final point is an important one. As members opposite would well know, down through the years the practice of people in the pastoral industry has been to put watering points in paddocks rather than having open water points at major water holes. The simple reason for that was so that such an algae would have no effect on stock.

Harrah's Civil and Civic Casino Group

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer the Treasurer to reports that the Chairman of Suncorp, Mr Graham Tucker, has been approached to chair the Harrah's Civil and Civic bid for the Brisbane casino, and I ask: have either the Premier or the Treasurer discussed this matter

with Mr Tucker and has approval been given? In addition, does the Treasurer consider that such an appointment would give an unfair advantage to the Harrah's bid?

Mr De LACY: When Mr Tucker received an invitation to chair the Harrah's bid, he telephoned the Premier and me. I can speak in respect of the questions he asked me. He asked me whether I had any concerns about his accepting a position as chairman of the board. I thought about it for some time and took some advice. I replied that when he was appointed as Chairman of Suncorp, it was never intended that he relinquish other board positions or that he not accept other board positions. I said that I presumed he understood that by accepting that position there would be no advantage or disadvantage to his consortium. He replied that he understood that completely and that it would never be any other way. That is as far as it has gone. I understand that a similar conversation took place with the Premier. That is my position, and that is the way it will always be. Mr Tucker is a businessperson who has impeccable credentials and who has always acted in a very ethical way. I expect that he always will. I simply make the point that neither he nor anybody else will have any advantage because of any relationship that they have with any State Government board.

Harrah's Civil and Civic Casino Group

Mr BORBIDGE: I also refer the Treasurer to approaches made to the Chairman of Suncorp by the Harrah's Civil and Civic Casino Group and the possible involvement of Suncorp or people associated with Suncorp in that bid, and I ask: is it correct that the chairman of the assessment panel is the Under Treasurer, Mr Smerdon, who is also a member of the Suncorp board? Does the Treasurer not consider this a serious conflict of interest that places in doubt the integrity of the casino selection process?

Mr De LACY: I presume the honourable member is implying that Suncorp is going to invest in one of the consortiums. When any issue is before the board, it is up to the integrity of the chairman of the board and other members of the board to determine whether or not there is a conflict.

Mr Borbidge: What a scandal!

Mr De LACY: I would expect that people such as the Under Treasurer and the chairman of the board would act in that honourable way.

Mr Borbidge: I didn't say Suncorp were putting money in, you did.

Mr De LACY: I did not say that Suncorp was putting money in. I would imagine that those people would take all of those sorts of things into consideration and if there is any conflict of interest, they will act appropriately. The honourable member can take it from me that that is what will happen. The honourable member can stand up in this House—as has been his wont over the last year or two—and make all of the allegations or insinuations that he wants.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. I find the comments made by the Treasurer to be offensive. I merely asked a question. It is the Treasurer who is replying. I cannot help it if he takes offence at his own answer.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

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

Mr De LACY: I make the point that the member for Surfers Paradise interjected and said that it is a scandal. He did make insinuations. In fact, I would say that it went beyond the insinuation stage; it was an allegation. I simply make the point that the member for Surfers Paradise has a long history of standing up in this House and making

unsubstantiated allegations. His allegations are never right; they have never been right. His credibility is such that nobody takes any notice of him any longer.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I again warn the member for Surfers Paradise. He has already been warned under Standing Order 123A.

Mr De LACY: I do not think that I can allow that allegation to go unanswered. The honourable member said that the chairman of the selection panel is a member of the board.

Mr Borbidge: The assessment panel.

Mr De LACY: Yes, the assessment panel. He said that the chairman is a member of the board of Suncorp, but so what? He is a member of the South Bank Corporation as well. Suncorp has absolutely nothing to do with this. It is not tendering for one of the casino licences. As I said, the honourable member can make his allegations and he can make insinuations, but I give an assurance to the members of this House that that evaluation process will be done objectively and properly. I am certain that members of this Parliament will take my assurances before they will listen to any of the allegations that are being made by the member for Surfers Paradise.

Reef Line Fishery Review

Mr SCHWARTEN: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: is he aware that there is concern among charter boat operators regarding the reef line fishery review? If so, could he advise what measures he is considering to assist charter boat operators to cater for parties of amateur fishermen?

Mr CASEY: A very important question has been asked by the honourable member. The reef line fishery is one that has been under review now for some considerable period. The review began as a result of a discussion paper that was sent out by this Government to obtain responses from the fishermen and fisherwomen of Queensland so that they could have an input into what is going to happen in their own industry. Approximately 1 100 submissions from right throughout this State were received in relation to the reef line fishery, including submissions from representatives of the commercial fishing industry, the recreational fishing industry, and other interested groups. Consequently, I set up a working party review group to investigate those submissions and provide to the Government a response that could be further discussed with the industry. That stage has now been reached. As a matter of fact, this afternoon I will be having a meeting on that subject.

A number of points have been put forward relating to bag limits, closures and various other matters, but one point has become fairly obvious. Under previous Governments, no pattern had been set for charter boat operators. Particularly in the area from Bundaberg northwards, the charter boat operators are a very, very important part of the tourist industry because every year through their activities they bring millions and millions of dollars to this State. One of the major attractions they present to tourists is that they enable tourists to participate in fishing in Great Barrier Reef waters, which is a very enjoyable past-time. I was responsible for having two of the members of the charter boat operation appointed to the panel for the working review, and they are coming up with suggestions and proposals, including the most likely pattern for charter boat operations and the provision of an opportunity to obtain a special type of licence. Currently, those charter boat operators really have no fishing licence and they operate in the same way as do recreational fishermen. If the Government provides them with a special type of licence, they are prepared to undertake to use log books, which will give the department some idea

of the effect that their operations are having on the fishery resource. That is a very, very important factor, because no-one really knows the size of the resource and what part of the resource is being taken. As soon as the pattern is established, we will be able to sit down and have further discussions on their operations. But, Mr Speaker, believe you me, there is no truth whatsoever in the story that is being perpetrated around the State by National Party parliamentarians that this Government is going to wreck the charter boat fishing operations in Queensland. Far from it! This Government will enhance those operations and give the operators the opportunity to remain a part of the great tourism industry in this State.

Gold Coast Indy Car Grand Prix

Mr TURNER: In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to his undertakings given to this House in June in relation to tabling the financial results of the Gold Coast Indy Car Grand Prix. I ask: what is the reason for the delay? Will he undertake to table the details this week? Can he confirm that the Auditor-General has also expressed concern at his Government's financial management of this important event?

Mr De LACY: The results of the Indy Car Grand Prix were tabled with the Queensland Treasury Corporation's report. The tabling has been done. The Auditor-General never expressed any concern.

Firearms

Mr TURNER: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to a reported decision of the recent Premiers Conference in Adelaide in which it was decided to ban the sale of non-military self-loading rifles. As this decision effectively extends the previously proposed ban on military-style semi-automatics by Police Ministers, I ask: why did he agree to a measure which will severely disadvantage thousands of sporting shooters and primary producers in Queensland? What action does his Government intend to take in regard to the thousands of non-military semi-automatic weapons already held by responsible licensed shooters? Is this not another example of firearms control which is totally impractical but which is adopted simply as political tokenism?

Mr W. K. GOSS: This question is up to the standard of the previous one. The member has simply got his facts wrong. The decision made by the Premiers does not extend the decision that was jointly taken by the Police Ministers; it endorsed it.

A. J. Bush and Company

Mr ELDER: In directing a question to the Deputy Premier, I point out that earlier he referred in passing to the problems of A. J. Bush—problems that are very close to my heart and nostrils. I ask: is he aware of the challenges made to him and other Government members to fix the problems of A. J. Bush's meat-rendering plant at Murarrie? What has the Government done about this problem?

Mr BURNS: I thank the honourable member for his question. It is true to say that any member of this Parliament who represents a south side electorate and some of the north side electorates would have complained about A. J. Bush over recent years. This morning, I dug out some briefing notes on A. J. Bush. They state that A. J. Bush first established that rendering plant in 1971. I must have been dead unlucky, because I was elected to this Parliament in May 1972. In 1978, 1979 and 1983, A. J. Bush was given rights by the previous Government to significantly expand the capacity of that small plant. It was an old plant and it was unable to cope. A long list of Ministers—such as Mike Ahern,

Geoff Muntz, Bill Hewitt—and Sallyanne Atkinson visited the plant and they all said that it was bad.

Eventually, in March 1988, the former Government set up an IDC to look at the financial feasibility of relocating the plant. In April 1989, an independent consultant was appointed to look at the financial and technical feasibility of relocating Bush within 70 kilometres of Brisbane. Then in November 1989, just before the National Party lost the election, Cabinet approved a financial assistance offer of \$3m for Bush to relocate. The company claimed it wanted \$19m, and the consultants determined that the cost would be at least \$14m plus the IDC \$5m to relocate. So, it was up for \$19m. The other morning on television, the member for Surfers Paradise said to me that he had it all arranged to shift A. J. Bush for \$5m. When this Government came into office, the people from A. J. Bush just laughed. They said, "The previous mob were talking that sort of money. We want \$19m."

Mr Borbidge: You're building them a new factory free of charge—paying them off to get them out of your electorate.

Mr BURNS: The honourable member should listen, because then he will find out the facts. The Labor Government then asked its Treasury consultants to have a look at the problem. They assessed the net cost of relocation at between \$3.4m and \$7.7m. That depended upon offsets that would reduce the gross relocation cost. The Government then had two options: to relocate Bush with \$7.9m assistance; or relocate Bush with \$7.5m assistance plus the rendering of meat wastes from the Metropolitan Regional Abattoir. That proposal was unacceptable to the Government because rendering is the profitable arm of the abattoir's operations. It was finally resolved that a subsidy of \$9m was favoured as the more economical option for the Government.

I will tell honourable members how this was done. The \$9m was the least expensive option. Bush are good operators; one cannot take that away from them. It was considered that under this proposal the State would have some real assets to show for the expenditure, instead of just giving Bush the relocation money. The previous Government was prepared to give Bush \$5m cash in hand and to let them walk away. This Government went for site ownership. It bought the land, the services, and the basic infrastructure requirements and the building to house the relocated plant. The serviced buildings will be available for other uses if Bush decides to go. Those buildings will be returned to the Government. The \$9m represents a large reduction from the initial \$19m suggested by Bush and the stalemate figure of \$13.3m when the current IDC of directors-general was created in April 1991.

I have to say that the rendering operation of Bush is an essential service. The amount of wastes processed could not be handled by other existing renderers. It just cannot be dumped in paddocks as people have done previously. It is a major rendering operation for rural industry and for the processing industries, such as the poultry-processing industry, throughout the State. It is a major rendering plant that handles a lot of material from all over south-east Queensland. By relocating Bush, the Government ensures the provision of a continuing rendering plant. Queensland will receive a new plant. The Beaudesert Shire Council is to be congratulated because it clearly said that it wanted a good, new plant; it wanted the jobs; it wanted an environmental impact statement; and it wanted the meat processed properly. It will be processed properly.

Some work has to be done before Bush relocates to Beaudesert. It probably will not be fully relocated before March 1993. The relocation will mean that a whole area of land will be freed up. The decision was made in the 1920s to locate a meatworks complex on the side of the river, right in the best residential land in the heart of the town. People such as Robin Gibson have said that the cows have the best view—looking right out over the bay

and over the airport. This proposal represents a good investment. It gets rid of the problem and relocates it to another area, at the same time freeing up a whole area of valuable Government land that might be used in the Better Cities Program.

Financial Institutions Duty

Mr ELDER: I thank the Deputy Premier for his answer and for his endeavours to date. I direct my next question without notice to the Treasurer and point out that, in a recent newspaper advertisement, a leading financial institution advised its customers that the State Government's financial institutions duty would apply to security-plus investment account deposits from 1 December 1991. I ask: is a financial institutions duty levied in Queensland?

Mr De LACY: I have had this advertisement drawn to my attention. I must say that I was perplexed by it. The simple answer is: no, there is no financial institutions duty in Queensland. Queensland is the only State in Australia that does not have a financial institutions duty. In fact, there are a number of taxes that Queensland does not have——

Mr Stoneman: Who set that up? Who did that? Who put it in place?

Mr De LACY: I will take the interjection from the honourable member for Burdekin. Can he remember the days when the National Party used to say, "No new taxes, no new taxes"? All of a sudden the National Party is out there supporting a brand new tax, a GST—and a hidden road tax. My, how the National Party has changed over the years! Remember the good old days when Joh was here? There is no way that he would have been accepting a new tax, particularly a new tax imposed from Canberra. Let me say that this GST is not just another tax—it is the ultimate tax. It is a tax on everything. It is a tax on everything one does and everything one buys. Somebody said, "Except, perhaps, for one thing". That will just depend on the way in which the Government responds to the CJC recommendation. The National Party is now out there supporting a new tax. How the mighty National Party has come down!

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition! I am not raising a challenge. Fair go!

Rural Fires Division

Mr PERRETT: I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: with Queensland experiencing not only an extreme drought, but also a very high bush fire danger from the tinder-dry conditions, is he aware of the concern about rumoured changes to the Queensland Rural Fires Division which would see its responsibilities taken over by urban fire brigades? Are retrenchments and/or redundancies planned in the Rural Fires Division as part of this rationalisation? Does the proposed abolition of the Rural Fires Division not constitute a great threat to rural communities, particularly in the current climatic conditions?

Mr MACKENROTH: Yes, I am aware of the rumours. No, they are not true. No, there will be no retrenchments. Therefore, the third part of the question is not relevant.

Sales of Coal

Mr SMYTH: My first question is to the Minister for Resource Industries. I note that recent media reports suggest that the Japanese steel-mills will require less Australian coal in the coming year and that Australian producers may have to accept lower prices. I ask: how will this affect the Queensland producers?

Mr VAUGHAN: As honourable members would be aware, about this time each year the Australian coal-producers enter into negotiations with the Japanese coking coal users. Those negotiations go on for quite a long time. Last financial year, we exported about 41 million tonnes of coking coal. About 30 million tonnes of that coal went to Japan. In the lead-up to these negotiations, the buyers, who are very professional in the conduct of negotiations, embark upon a campaign of shadow-boxing to lay the foundations for the negotiations that will take place. They go to the press and start the softening-up processes by saying that the steel-mills in Japan will be cutting back on production, that things look grim and that there is a downturn. I am cautiously optimistic about the way the negotiations will go. A number of factors will impinge upon these negotiations. One is that, overall, according to the advice I have been given by the Queensland Coal Board and other sources, the world demand for coking coal has increased by about 3 million tonnes over the past year. That has increased demand and increases our capacity to drive a harder bargain.

There has been a slight resurgence in the United States steel-making industry. That industry will be taking more US coal and that will take the United States competitors out of the market. There is an indication of increased demand for coal from Brazil, Finland and Egypt. That augurs well for successful negotiations. To a lesser extent, there is an increased demand in Nigeria. Another significant factor which could impact on the negotiations relates to German coal-suppliers. The subsidies that previously applied to the former East German coal-producers are being phased out. Because of the significant size of those subsidies, the customers who formerly purchased from the East German market are looking for alternative supplies. It would only be natural for them to turn their eyes towards the very efficient Queensland coking coal industry. Another factor that will probably impact on the negotiations and our ability to sell our coking coal overseas is the Polish and Soviet supplies. There has been a very poor performance by those producers, and their customers are looking for alternative supplies.

I sympathise with our coal-producers who will have to enter into negotiations to sell their coal to overseas countries. It is a very exacting business. I have great faith in the ability of our coal companies which are among the best coal-producers in the world. We have high-quality coking coal, a very good port system and a very good rail system. All of that makes our coking coal very competitive. All in all, I believe that the negotiations will take place in the not-too-distant future, particularly in the Japanese area. I am sure that, notwithstanding all of the shadow-boxing by our customers, the result will be bright for the future of our coal-mining industry.

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

MATTER OF SPECIAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Tully/Millstream Hydroelectric Scheme

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I have to advise the House that I have received a proposal for a debate on a matter of special public importance pursuant to the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 16 July 1991. The proposal submitted by the Leader of the Opposition is for a debate on the following matter—

“The need to provide assured electricity supplies to meet North Queensland's future growth through the proposed Tully Millstream Hydro-Electric Scheme and rejects the contention that an interstate electricity grid will negate the need for this vital northern project.”

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (3.57 p.m.): I am pleased that this matter is being debated. It will be interesting to see how Government members approach it. This matter has been raised because of a recent suggestion in newspaper reports that the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric project could be put on hold because of the proposal that Queensland and New South Wales enter into an agreement to have an interconnected grid. I refer firstly to an article in the *Courier-Mail* on 21 November, which stated—

“Mr Goss said it was hoped the feasibility study could be completed by early next year and the actual scheme could be operating by 1998, when Queenslanders could benefit.

...

It was too early to say whether this would affect Queensland Electricity Commission plans to construct the controversial Tully-Millstream hydro plant.”

An article by John Stubbs on page 35 of the *Sunday Sun*, dated 24 November, commences—

“The controversial Tully Millstream hydro-electric project planned for north Queensland’s wet tropical rainforest may be abandoned.

Senior Government sources said yesterday that a proposed link between the electricity grids of New South Wales and Queensland had the potential to eliminate the need for the \$550 million scheme.”

This House should debate this matter and decide whether this scheme should go ahead or whether the interconnection of the electricity grids would be sufficient reason to stop it. I contend that it is not. I issued a press release indicating my views, and I intend to debate the matter today. The honourable member for Hinchinbrook will speak later in the debate and indicate the importance of this scheme to his area. I will deal with the more general issues. I will outline the facts and ask whether we need more electricity generation, whether we need more power stations and, if so, where they should be.

Queensland has an increasing demand for electricity. The forecast for electricity demand as outlined in the Queensland Electricity Commission’s annual report, which was tabled in this House, states—

“Forecasts of electricity demand in Queensland continue to be driven by growth in population and associated economic activity such as housing construction and retailing. With interstate and overseas migration likely to continue at high levels, the State’s population growth will remain high compared with the Australian average.”

The QEC report further states—

“The decline in economic activity through 1991 was foreseen and electricity forecasts continue to be based upon a partial recovery through 1992.”

The Minister, who is in the House, knows well that, last year, the growth in electricity consumption in Queensland was in the order of 3.5 per cent.

Mr Vaughan: It was 3.8 per cent.

Mr FITZGERALD: The Minister tells me that it was 3.8 per cent. I must have misread this annual report, or perhaps we are talking about slightly different periods. The annual report also states that there definitely is a need for an increase in electricity generation capacity. There is a need for this project to go ahead. It is a limited project, a small project in the overall scheme of things. I have been critical of the Government for not announcing plans for the next coal-fired power station and in fact calling tenders for coal. I believe that it should have done so.

What are the advantages of this hydroelectric scheme? It has two particular functions to fulfil. First of all, it is a hydroelectric scheme which will meet the peak

demands of the system, and from the annual report of the Queensland Electricity Commission it can be seen that electricity peak demands during the day rise and fall. During summer-time and winter-time, those peak demands vary. In winter-time, the peak demand is between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m., and 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. During summer-time, the peak demand is from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. The flow charts show where the generating capacity is and how it is being utilised. Hydroelectric schemes, such as the one at Splityard Creek on Wivenhoe Dam, are actually used during those peak periods. It is imperative that the Tully/Millstream project is a factor in that equation. We need extra demand capacity; there is no doubt about that. It will be a lot cheaper than building a coal-fired plant.

The other point I wish to raise is that the scheme is necessary to give security of supply to north Queensland. The other night, we heard the honourable member for Mulgrave speak about this subject in the House. We know what the peak demand is in north Queensland. By 1999, the forecast northern load demand for the area covered by the FNQEB and the NQEB will be in the order of 532 megawatts. I believe that those figures are reasonably conservative. At present, the hydroelectric schemes in the north, Kareeya and Barron Gorge, generate 72 megawatts and 60 megawatts of capacity respectively. The Tully/Millstream project will have a maximum capacity of 600 megawatts of electricity.

In regard to security of supply—north Queensland is at the end of a long transmission line that comes up from the coal-fired power stations in central Queensland. North Queensland suffers from cyclones, and a cyclone could possibly knock out transmission towers, as we saw happen in the Brisbane Valley a couple of years ago. Five major towers on the 275-kilovolt line were knocked out. If that happened in north Queensland, that area would be totally dependent on the remaining sections of the grid, which could all be put out at the one time. If those transmission lines were knocked out, only Kareeya and Barron Gorge would then be able to be relied upon, and only 16 to 20 per cent of the electricity needs in the north could be supplied from those two power stations operating flat out. If Tully/Millstream were there, it would have the capacity to operate not only as a peak demand station, but also as a mainstream station. I have been advised that if the dams were full—and I would presume that during a cyclone most dams would fill—there would be 120 days of continuous supply of electricity to meet that 600-megawatt limit capacity. It would supply all of north Queensland for 120 days. That is a tremendous asset to have. This House must now make a decision on whether or not it will support this project. The National Party Government was in favour of the Tully/Millstream project. When this Government came to office, it decided that a special task force would look at this project. The following statement was made—

“In February 1990 the Queensland Government announced its intention to have a review carried out of the future electricity needs of the State and the requirement for the Tully-Millstream Hydro-electric Scheme. An independent Taskforce”—

appointed by this Government, I might add—

“was established by the Government to conduct an inquiry and in April 1991 the Taskforce completed its work and presented its report to the Government.”

What did that task force say? It said—

“The major findings of the Taskforce included:

its forecasts of future electricity demand are similar to QEC's . . .”

So, QEC has got that right. I will not go through all the points, but other points raised were—

"new generating plant is required for 1998;

...

if the Tully-Millstream scheme is not approved for construction by July 1991, then arrangements should be made for the provision of alternative generating plant."

That was July 1991. I ask the Minister who will be summing up and responding, I presume, to these points that I raise: was the task force correct in its findings? Does the Minister agree with them? What has been done? I believe that we must have the Tully/Millstream project. I ask: where are the members on the Government side? I know where the member for Mulgrave stands. I ask: where does the member for Barron River stand? Has she made any commitment to assure the supply of electricity for north Queensland? Where does the member for Townsville stand? Where does the member for Townsville East stand? Where does the member for Mourilyan stand? Where does the member for Cook stand on this issue? Will he stand up in this House and say, "I support the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric scheme"? Will he say that? What about the member for Barron River? Will she say that? This is the question that must be answered by those members alone.

Time expired.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (4.08 p.m.): Only two weeks ago, I rose in this House to reaffirm my support for the Tully/Millstream hydroelectricity project. The view that it should proceed, and do so as soon as practicable, is one that has always been held by me. I understand that this view is also held by members of the Opposition. In that context, I was quite surprised to find that they have brought on this debate. Unfortunately, in their desire to make political capital out of the announcement of the possibility of an interconnection between the power grids of Queensland and New South Wales, they have somehow missed the point. The debate over the interconnection and that which is ongoing over the Tully/Millstream scheme are not related, and any attempt to establish some nexus is, at best, intellectually flawed and, at worst, a cheap political stunt.

Let us examine a few facts. Firstly, at the Premier's meeting held in Adelaide, an agreement was reached that Queensland and New South Wales would move towards the connection of the two States' power grids. Might I add that it is about time the parochialism was cast aside. The editorial in the *Townsville Bulletin* says it all—

"The wonder is that previous governments—and the 'experts' who advised them—were unable or unwilling to see these benefits years ago when electricity supplies were first moving into the grid system. The concept of State grids swerving into U-turns at invisible State boundary lines, like fleeing emus spooked by a fence, is patently absurd, a perfect example of the principle of States' rights gone made."

To have members of the Opposition using the proposed interconnection to prove some unrelated point is ludicrous. Everyone should take note of the fact that they had it within their power to effect this rationalisation of surplus capacity but were too blinded by their myopic view of the world which would see no further than the old tick gates. Secondly, although agreement has been reached in principle, the logistics of the exercise have not yet been addressed. As the Premier has said, next year a feasibility study will be carried out to ascertain whether or not such a proposal can be realistically achieved at an acceptable cost. The third point is that the feasibility stage is only just the beginning. It will obviously be some years before the grids could be joined and, during that time, the need for power generation cannot be ignored.

Queensland's capacity to generate power is geared to the needs of two major consumption areas. First and foremost, the QEC must meet the daily demand, and generating plant within the system is put to that purpose. In round figures, the State produces an output of some 5 000 megawatts, and 4 000 megawatts, or 75 per cent of that

output, goes towards meeting daily demand. The other 1 000 megawatts is reserve. This remaining 25 per cent is held over to cover such exigencies as break-downs or power failures in the system as power wends its way to the consumers, whether they be domestic or industrial. The prime purpose of the proposed interconnection is to facilitate the sharing of the reserve margin held by both States. In this way, the total capacity of both States can be reduced. The bottom line is that reserve power mainly will be shared. The interconnector will not provide the means of consistently sharing power for each State's daily requirements.

Members of the Opposition have failed to grasp the real role the Tully/Millstream scheme will play. The scheme is intended to perform a peaking duty to meet peak load demand and other high load demands to satisfy the requirements of the consumer in Queensland. Therefore, it should be patently obvious that, although the Tully/Millstream scheme and the proposed interconnector could be considered to be components of Queensland's power system, they have vastly different and inequitable roles. Their prime functions are different. The logical conclusion must be that they are not mutually exclusive, and to have both would best provide the lowest cost power to Queensland. I would conclude, though, that should the interconnector be used to provide the power for the daily requirements of Queensland consumers and were it to be in place by 1998, the Tully/Millstream scheme could be deferred by only 12 months. In reality, that period would provide only a breathing space. It does not in any way diminish the need for the Tully/Millstream scheme. In addition, it should be noted that Queensland would still need to maintain a reserve capacity at or near its present 25 per cent, with 20 per cent being held in this State and 5 per cent in New South Wales. A delay in bringing on line the Tully/Millstream scheme would only put off the capital investment for the project and, with that, attract a price escalation due to inflation and higher power fuel costs.

It is unlikely that an affirmative report from the proposed feasibility study would cause this Government to take any pre-emptive action to authorise a delay in the hydroelectric scheme. A go-ahead for the construction of the interconnector signals only the start of a drawn-out process to obtain easements for the required transmission lines. The experience in New South Wales is, unfortunately, not good in this respect. It has been suggested that it would not be unrealistic to expect delays of up to 10 years to finalise the granting of easements. That would render the suggested 1998 completion date somewhat tenuous. Those who have latched on to the proposed interconnector as some magic means of sinking the Tully/Millstream scheme are out of touch with reality. To suggest so is to believe that this State's power requirements will somehow remain static. That, of course, is a ridiculous proposition, taking into consideration the population growth of the State and the growth in demand for power by our ever-expanding industrial base. For the last decade, there has been a net gain through migration to this State, and that trend will continue, and accelerate, given this State's comparatively strong economic position. On the most reliable forecasting figures available to the QEC, it is estimated that, by the year 2005, Queensland will require an additional 2 700 megawatts of capacity to cope with expected growth. The commission has done its sums and, on those calculations, it is clear that, should both the interconnector and the Tully/Millstream scheme go ahead, this would account for meeting only one-third of projected additional requirements.

I would argue that we need to proceed with the Tully/Millstream scheme and the interconnector, as well as make provision for additional base load generation capacity. Unfortunately, there are members of the public, newspaper editors, environmentalists and, of course, some opportunist members of the Opposition who are claiming that the interconnector proposal has provided this Government with a way out of the need to proceed immediately with the Tully/Millstream scheme and, indeed, has allowed the Government to walk away from it. What arrant nonsense these people peddle! Let us first

of all deal with CAFNEC—the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre—whose coordinator was referred to in a recent *Cairns Post* editorial, which stated—

“Or perhaps the two-state electricity grid agreement between Queensland and New South Wales will, as CAFNEC coordinator Colin Hunt believes, give the State Government a ‘way out’, and cause it to abandon the project.”

This is the same group which has, in the life of this Government, had as many coordinators as the National Party had Premiers in its final two years in Government. I have news for CAFNEC. It is way out of step with the majority of people in far-north Queensland. Anyone would think that we are insensitive to the need to protect and preserve our precious environment. Most people in the far north are conservationists. At the same time, we are realists—we are pragmatic. The region is growing rapidly and extra energy is required to keep pace with that development. I have on another occasion quite extensively set out the balanced views that are necessary to come to grips with the situation, and I do not intend to repeat them today. However, I will refer to part of the editorial which appeared in yesterday's *Townsville Bulletin*. It stated that—

“ . . . the grid link should not be used as an excuse to defer the Tully-Millstream hydro-electric scheme, as the conservation lobbies are seeking to do. It is essential that North Queensland has a major power generating source of its own. Ours is an area prone to natural disasters and we must plan accordingly, with maintenance of at least emergency power supplies given top priority. When, as must happen, some time, a cyclone knocks down pylons and cuts the North off from the grid, it will be of no comfort to us that the southern Queensland and NSW grids are hooked into each other. Existing auxiliary generating plants cannot meet more than a tiny fraction of today's demands in the North and even Tully-Millstream will be able to provide only emergency needs as the North's surging growth continues.”

The *Cairns Post* editorial on the same day took a much more naive line on the issue when it stated—

“Far Northerners should not be shoved around any longer on this project. It should not be a matter for the Federal Government or Wet Tropics. The decision on the future of this area should be left to the State Government and it should be made promptly.”

Obviously, the *Cairns Post* does not have a full understanding of the jurisdiction which governs decisions pertaining to the Wet Tropics, which falls within the World Heritage area. It must be clearly understood that the decision on the future of the project lies fairly and squarely with the Federal Government which, under the international agreement covering World Heritage-declared areas, has final veto.

I wish now to address some of the comments attributed to Opposition members. I refer to an article in the *Cairns Post* of 22 November 1991, which carried the headline “Gilmore claims ‘lies’ on Tully-Millstream” and which stated—

“Member for Tablelands Tom Gilmore has accused the State and Federal Governments of lying about their intentions on the Tully-Millstream scheme.”

He went on to claim that some lunatic fringe was now in control. Like the member for Tablelands, I support the Tully/Millstream project; but, unlike him, I have no intention of resorting to emotionalism. I have great difficulty in identifying the lunatic fringe and I have even greater difficulty in accepting the fact that, should they exist, they would have any sort of control over the matter. In the past, the honourable member has argued his case most eloquently and most rationally. However, on this occasion he must be excused as his outburst can be attributed to overenthusiasm.

The Opposition spokesman on Resource Industries, the member for Lockyer, is quoted in the *Townsville Bulletin* as saying—

“North Queensland deserves an assured supply of electricity and, if Labor continues to look for ways to avoid this project, the North will suffer.”

An assured supply of electricity is paramount, but to assert that this Government is not addressing the power needs of the north is a gross distortion. Quite responsibly, the Government is continually monitoring, forecasting and planning for future demand.

Time expired.

Mr DUNWORTH (Sherwood) (4.18 p.m.): In rising today to speak in this debate on the Tully/Millstream scheme, I would like to put a few things in perspective. One of the most important environmental issues in which I was involved was the proposed hydroelectric scheme on the Franklin River. At the time, I actually travelled down the Franklin River to investigate the situation and I also read all the literature that was available on whether there was a demand for the power. I came away with the definite conclusion that that was a desecration of a pristine wilderness area and that there was no demand for the power. When I became a member of this Parliament, I took particular interest in the Tully/Millstream scheme. One of the first things I did was to personally inspect the area. When I tried to compare the Tully/Millstream hydroelectric scheme with the scheme proposed for the Franklin River, I found there were some similarities but there were vast divergences. Firstly, the Franklin was a totally pristine area. In the case of Tully/Millstream, it is a scheme that would piggyback an already existing hydroelectric scheme. Secondly, I looked at the power dimensions. From the magnitude of the literature that was tabled in this House in March 1991, I came away with the definite impression that there was a demand for power, particularly peak-load power, in north Queensland.

When a peak-load system is referred to, we all know that we are talking about a system that can start up and shut down very quickly. To a large extent, that eliminates coal-fired power stations. Also, there was the dimension that if power is to be brought from New South Wales, it has to be brought overland through forests and rural areas, probably a distance of in excess of 1 000 kilometres. Because of Queensland's climate and its propensity for cyclones and heavy rains, there is always the chance that power lines over that distance could be brought down. Experts in tourism predict that, by the turn of the century, the number of tourists visiting the north Queensland area will be approximately five million. Because of that, I think it is indisputable that there will be a huge demand for power in the north.

Firstly, I will refer to the alternatives to a hydroelectric scheme. In the 10 years to 1989, on a yearly basis the demand in power increased by 6.2 per cent. It is estimated that, from 1989 to 1999, that will increase again by a further 50 per cent. So the Tully/Millstream project was to be onstream after the completion of the Stanwell Power Station, which is due in 1996. I believe that 30 sites were considered in north Queensland. The alternatives were that there be a hydroelectric scheme, pump storage, a coal-fired plant or a gas turbine plant. Hydroelectric schemes in countries such as the Scandinavian countries continue their operations for in excess of 50 or 60 years. The only capital expenditure and maintenance required on them is in relation to their turbines. They have an extremely long life. As we all know, hydroelectric schemes do not have the same input into the atmosphere of CO₂ gases as other generating schemes have. When consideration was given to the type of scheme to implement, hydroelectric was No. 1 because it had a cost advantage and it was also much more lenient on the environment. The sites that were considered were Tully/Millstream, Burdekin Falls and the Herbert River. An examination was conducted of the cost advantages of the various sites. For the Tully/Millstream site, it was 3.7c per kilowatt hour compared to 4.6c for the Burdekin site

and 6.5c for the Herbert site. Obviously, there was a vast financial advantage with the Tully/Millstream site.

I turn now to the environmental considerations. The Tully/Millstream scheme was proposed in the early 1980s and the Wet Tropics were not considered for World Heritage listing until 1987. When the Wet Tropics were considered for World Heritage listing, the fact that an investigation was under way and work was being undertaken in relation to the Tully/Millstream scheme was also considered. Neither the International Union for the Conservation of Nature in its technical evaluation of the area, the World Heritage Bureau in its consideration of the proposal or the World Heritage Committee in deciding to include the area on the World Heritage list indicated that the Tully/Millstream scheme would be an unacceptable intrusion into the World Heritage area. As I said, as to the environmental considerations—it is estimated that the Tully/Millstream scheme will result in the release of 48.5 million tonnes less of CO₂ equivalent over the life of the scheme than would be released by a fossil fuel fired alternative plant. The estimated figures for Tully/Millstream are 5.5 million tonnes, and 54 million tonnes for the replacement power scheme. I believe that this is a major advantage for the hydroelectric scheme when one considers the implications of the greenhouse effect and El Nino. We should also take into account that only a very small percentage of that vast World Heritage area—approximately 0.02 per cent—is affected by the scheme. That can be partially compensated for by the addition to the World Heritage area of land from the Tully River ranch. I believe that the QEC has purchased 440 hectares of rainforest in the foothills of the Tully River Valley.

We are talking about a scheme that is valued at between \$700m and \$800m. It does not seem inconceivable to me that, if the Minister wished to pursue this scheme, he could set a condition that the QEC acquire an area equivalent to 20 times the area of rainforest that will be lost with this scheme. I believe that would put an infinitesimal additional amount on the total capital cost of the scheme. Only a small area will be affected. The actual area of rainforest to be affected is broken up into 18 scattered parcels, making a total of 135 hectares. I believe that land could be acquired to more than compensate for that. Of greater conservation consideration is the loss of the wet sclerophyll forest—tall, open forest—and dry sclerophyll woodland, which will be inundated by the filling of the Nitchaga and Wooroora reservoirs. I understand that, at the moment, that area is open cattle country that has been logged thoroughly. I believe that additional areas could be acquired to compensate for the loss of that land. The threat to wildlife must also be considered. I believe that there is some threat to wildlife. There is perhaps a threat to the Atherton antechinus and the yellow-bellied glider. From speaking to consultants, I believe that the antechinus and the yellow-bellied glider would not be threatened by this scheme. I believe that the Minister should consider that the Elizabeth Grant Falls could be affected by the diversion of the Koolmoon and Blunder Creeks. I was told that that diversion would result in an increase of 1 per cent in the total cost of the scheme. It would provide an additional 15 per cent of power. Perhaps the preservation of those streams should be considered. I believe that the scheme could stand alone without the desecration of those creeks and magnificent falls.

I turn now to rafting groups and whether the scheme will affect them. At present, the QEC releases water for rafting groups on a request basis. I see no reason why that practice should not continue. With a project of that immensity, it is really immaterial whether those groups are charged \$50 or \$100 per day. I believe that the scheme can cater for environmental considerations, the power needs of north Queensland and the business groups that will be affected. Overall, the Liberal Party supports the scheme. I have examined it in great detail. I am very sensitive to the environment, but after a great deal of discussion with the Rainforest Action Group, the Queensland Conservation

Society and the Wilderness Society—of which I am a member—I cannot be convinced that the scheme will be highly detrimental to the environment of north Queensland.

Mr Welford: Talk to the QEC.

Mr DUNWORTH: I have also spoken to the QEC.

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton North) (4.28 p.m.): I rise in this debate to try to put the whole issue into some sort of perspective. One aspect that has been lost sight of so far in this debate is that most of the hoops about which members have spoken have been gone through. At the end of the day, the matter is up to the Federal Government. In my view, for some time the Federal Government has been shillyshallying on this issue.

Mr FitzGerald: You lost one year with the investigation and found nothing.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I will get to Bluey in a minute. The fact is that the Federal Government has shillyshallied around on this. I am told that it will be something like March next year before it makes a decision. The honourable member opposite would have us believe that while all this has been going on, this Government, this Minister and the QEC have sat with their legs crossed, twiddling their thumbs. Nothing could be further from the truth. I will tell the House what members opposite would have done if they were on the Government side of the Chamber. They would have been in there. There would have been no task force, no independent survey and no environmental impact studies of any worth. It would not have been open to the public; it would have been rip, tear, bust and in there. Because the area was on the Federal World Heritage list, what would have happened then? Millions of dollars would have been spent on High Court challenges and so on to prolong the whole issue. It would have gone on for years and years.

Mr Hayward: The old States' rights stuff.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Yes, the States' rights stuff of which they were so fond. Members will remember Mr Muntz and his penchant for that. I do not know where he is now.

Mr Hayward: He used to take them to Paris, didn't he?

Mr SCHWARTEN: Exactly. Contrast that with what this Government is doing. The Government is considering other options, because the Federal Government may decide not to approve the scheme. I do not believe that either of the speakers from the opposite side of the House has contemplated that possibility. I can assure them that the Government has contemplated such a decision being handed down. It would be fruitless to go ahead with a program that may not come to fruition. It is as simple as that. The Government has been considering other alternatives.

One thing that the Government has done, which the National Party in Government failed to do, is to embark on an energy-saving campaign. I heard the honourable member for Lockyer say that, last year, there was a 3.8 per cent growth in electricity usage. The year before, the figure was 5 per cent, and the year before that the figure was 6 per cent. While we are evaluating where we are heading, we must also be aware of how much of that valuable resource we waste, which then requires more generation. The Government should be complimented for the initiatives that it has taken in that regard.

Dr Clark: The member for Sherwood said nothing about conservation.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I noted that the member for Sherwood made no reference at all to energy conservation, which ought to be part and parcel of the debate this afternoon. Energy conservation is what it is all about. Governments should not continue with the mindless attitude that they must build power stations simply because people waste power. There must be an end to it somewhere. According to the current figures, by the year 2005 approximately 2 700 megawatts will be demanded. No-one denies that. I have not heard anyone deny that. The fact is that we must look at our own practices. The QEC now makes available an energy audit. Surely, those sorts of proactive measures must go some way

towards curbing the problem that we have with electricity. Unless we wake up to ourselves, we will face the problem again and again.

What other options is the Government considering? It is looking at gas turbines. There is also some suggestion about Callide "A" being extended, as well as the old Collinsville Power Station. I freely admit that the whole issue of electricity generation, if nothing else, is an environmental problem. It does not matter which way one wants to look at it. The coal-fired power stations create problems with the greenhouse effect. If power to north Queensland were to be run by cable, think of the amount of electricity that would be lost by those cables. The Tully/Millstream proposal will also create problems. There is no question about that whatsoever. As I said at the outset, it is ultimately up to the Federal Government to make the choice. It would be totally irresponsible for the Queensland Government not to consider those other alternatives—a point that seems to have escaped members opposite.

I turn to interconnection—an issue raised by the member for Mulgrave. Interconnection is a step in the right direction, but it is not the answer to the maiden's prayer; it is not the panacea. We all know that. As I understand it, the reserves could be shared. There are two types of power: reserve power and generating power. The Tully/Millstream scheme, if it goes ahead, will be a generating plant. The interconnection is a reserve plant, and that reserve can be shared. To me, it is common sense for States to cooperate on the conservation of electricity. It is a wonderful idea. However, it also is fraught with dangers. It is not just a matter of getting out the stamp and saying, "We will do it." There are easements to consider. In New South Wales, it has taken anything up to 10 years to finalise some easements. So, that is not an immediate solution to the problem.

I fully acknowledge that, no matter which type of power generation one talks about, environmental problems will always arise. My answer to the problem is that we must consider alternative methods of generation that are more environmentally friendly. We have a lot of research to do on solar energy. The other day, I was at the University of Central Queensland, where researchers are developing excellent solar energy technology. That is the way we should go. We must look to the future rather than sit here and say, "We will use 2 700 megawatts of electricity come the year 2005 and, in the year 2055, we will demand 100 000 megawatts, or whatever the figure will be." We must try to curb the usage of electricity now. I applaud the Minister for the message that he continuously takes around the State. When he comes to my electorate, that is one of the first things that he talks about. When members opposite were in power, I did not hear them raise the matter once. That is evidenced by the fact that the member for Sherwood did not raise the issue of conservation, either.

Conservation is the fundamental issue. We must stop this continual, self-perpetuating view that we need more electricity—more power, more power, more power. At the end of the day, we must solve the problem because, as the member for Mulgrave has already pointed out, significant problems are associated with not proceeding with some form of power generation in north Queensland. We cannot resolve the issue other than to say that some power generation must be provided in north Queensland. If that method must be the Tully/Millstream scheme—if the Federal Government approves it—the Queensland Government will do as much as it can for environmental protection. That is the best that we can hope for. We cannot afford to say that we will develop at the expense of the environment. Unlike members of the former Government, this Government will not do that. The environment is always at the forefront of any decisions made by the Government. Even if the decision is made to go ahead with the Tully/Millstream scheme, the environment will be catered for in the best way possible. I do not think that the Government can offer anything better than that. People in north Queensland require

power generation facilities. Nobody could sensibly argue against that. Accordingly, I offer those comments in the interests of returning some sensibility to the debate.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (4.38 p.m.): One thing has become absolutely clear: if north Queensland is to have any notice taken of its particular needs—as witnessed with daylight-saving—then a bipartisan approach is required. There was a need for a change of approach concerning daylight-saving and a concentrated effort was very effective in turning the position around. After the redistribution of the boundaries and the loss of two seats north of Mackay, an even more cooperative effort will be necessary if the northern region is to get its slice of the cake. Every honourable member who represents a north Queensland electorate should be aware of this. We are competing with what happens down in the southern corner of this State. The Tully/Millstream project is now in jeopardy, particularly after the Premier's statement which indicated his intention to buy electricity from New South Wales and put off the building of this vital north Queensland project. The member for Lockyer has given this House a good resume of what this project is really all about.

The people in three towns in the new Hinchinbrook electorate are looking forward to the Tully/Millstream project getting the green light. These towns are Ingham, Tully and Innisfail which have had an extremely poor sugar season. Sugar is the major industry in the region, but, because of the situation on the world markets, the outlook for the foreseeable future is not good and the whole community will find it difficult. Engineering shops have no work and are closing down. One shop which 18 months ago employed 25 people now has a staff of only five, two of whom are the sons of the proprietor and are indentured apprentices. These shops have the capacity to carry out a range of work such as the repair of cutting and drilling edges. They would get a considerable amount of work repairing the earth-moving and tunnelling machinery used around the clock on the Tully/Millstream project. In addition, fuel and engineering supplies would be in great demand, together with vehicles and the servicing of equipment. A huge amount of equipment would be involved in the project and the servicing of that equipment and the supply of materials for that equipment would be absolutely vital. Almost daily, people ask when the project will start because they are looking for jobs on dozers, scrapers, graders and the wide range of equipment that would be used on such a project. I have spoken to the administrator of the Jiddabul community at Ravenshoe and those people expect the scheme to go ahead soon because jobs are extremely difficult to find after the timber industry debacle. The project will employ approximately 1 000 workers over a six-year period. Some 500 workers will come from the Tully region and the remaining 500 from Ravenshoe. In the past, the Cardwell Shire Council has made special provision for a site which would accommodate a workers' camp, and this would have some flow-on benefits for the shire. The multiplier effect of the group providing services to the workers on the project is recognised as being 2.5 to 1. This would stimulate the flagging economies of these rural communities.

At a time when there is a need for job-creating activities, the Premier of this State wants to make a deal with New South Wales to buy electricity and defer the Tully/Millstream project. Mr Goss has sold out north Queensland with his intentions to put this worthwhile and highly scrutinised project on the back burner. The people in north Queensland do not want the dole. They want opportunities to work, but it appears that the Government could not give a damn. The Premier is playing politics with the fringe greenie groups which support Labor and are against the Tully/Millstream project. The redistribution of the boundaries has resulted in a strengthening of the representation of the south-east corner of Queensland in this House and it is easier to distribute misinformation about the hydroelectric project in this area. Some of the information proliferated by these conservation groups is really fanciful. The two seats of Tablelands and Hinchinbrook are

held by the National Party and this is not likely to change. There is no point in the Labor Party attracting the wrath of the green movement, because that movement might be the narrow margin that could mean the difference between Government and Opposition for the Labor Party at the next election. The Premier has no regard for the virtues of a hydroelectric station that generates clean, efficient power and which would make north Queensland self-sufficient. The proposed station is a demand station which has the ability to cater for variations in energy requirements. This fact has been highlighted by a number of speakers from this side of the House. It is a demand station. The station will not operate 24 hours a day. It has the capacity to supply north Queensland's needs in the event of a calamity. If the feeder lines to the south were severed, the Tully/Millstream project would have the capacity to supply sufficient power to maintain the interim needs of north Queensland. This is a very important point. Without the Tully/Millstream project, the current generating capacities of the existing power stations at Barron River and Kareeya—which are both hydroelectric generation facilities—total 132 megawatts, which is barely enough to turn the lights on in north Queensland.

Tully/Millstream is the best option available for the structure of the Queensland grid. In the three-year period since 1988, the cost of the station has escalated from \$540m to \$630m. This was the time when the project would have commenced if the National Party had still been in Government. Of course, there are concerns about the Wet Tropics Management Authority, and I will deal with that at a later stage. The next best option was at Burdekin. The costs were similar but it generated 450 megawatts only and would have flooded an additional 47 000 hectares as against 4 200 hectares of the Tully/Millstream area. The task force employed by the Government found very little variation from the original assessment put forward by the QEC. Except for some minor variations, the proposals put forward by QEC were almost line ball in every respect, including the environmental concerns in the findings of the task force. Because some of the dam areas are Wet Tropics areas, World Heritage listing must be considered. There is a requirement for the Wet Tropics Management Authority to assess the project. Its deliberations are not yet complete, but they will be considered in the final analysis of the project.

I believe it is a matter of concern that the Premier has really jumped the gun by saying that Queensland will look at an interconnection with New South Wales well before any assessment has come into being on the part of the Wet Tropics Management Authority. The Koombooloomba Dam was built in 1955 and did not inhibit the surrounding area being listed in 1988. That dam has existed for more than 30 years, but there has been no problem whatsoever in relation to the World Heritage listing of the area. Support has been shown for the project in this Parliament by some members who represent northern electorates. The member for Tablelands has spoken to the proposal and the member for Mulgrave has also referred to it. I think that further interest needs to be demonstrated by members to show exactly what this project means to north Queensland. Many people in north Queensland would really like to know exactly where their members stand on this vital issue.

White water rafting has been catered for, though optimum water levels will have to be maintained in the Tully River. Presently the charges are \$3.15 per head but, by 1998, the cost will increase to \$10 per head. The principal reason for the charge is the necessity to compensate QEC and the people of Queensland for the inefficient use of water at a time when it is not necessarily required for generating power into the grid. There have been some differences of opinion in relation to the amount of water required because an indication has been given that the outflow of the three generators at Kareeya, which produces 54 megawatts, would be required instead of two generators producing 36 megawatts.

Time expired.

Hon. K. H. VAUGHAN (Nudgee—Minister for Resource Industries) (4.49 p.m.): In view of the references that various speakers have made—particularly those on the Opposition side of the House—to reported statements by the Premier regarding the interconnection between Queensland and New South Wales grids, I will begin my speech by referring to that particular topic. I had hoped that I would have sufficient time to deal with all the comments that have been made because I think they are very important but, first of all, let me say that the proposed interconnection is the result of the Special Premiers Conference that was held in July this year when a National Grid Management Council was established to look at the feasibility of the interconnection between Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. At present, Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia are already interconnected.

The National Grid Management Council made a recommendation for a feasibility study to be undertaken to examine not only the feasibility of connecting New South Wales and Queensland grids but also the proposed route and the obtaining of easements, particularly in New South Wales. I might just point out that for more than 10 years while the previous Government was in power in Queensland, the Queensland Electricity Commission and the electricity commission in New South Wales had been discussing the possibility of interconnecting the two grids. The reason for the interconnection was the desire to create a more efficient electricity grid system. At present, as the Premier has pointed out on a number of occasions, the Queensland grid system has a generating capacity of approximately 5 093 megawatts and the New South Wales system has a little over 12 000 megawatts of generating capacity, but that existed in isolation. In any system, there is a need to have reserve plant generating capacity which is designed to cover failures, break-downs and unforeseen circumstances. Presently, New South Wales has a substantial surplus of generating capacity, but that may not always be the case.

I believe the member for Rockhampton North pointed out that, in Queensland, the maximum demand recently went up to approximately 4 100 megawatts, which gives the Queensland grid system 25 per cent reserve generating capacity. While Queensland currently must have 25 per cent to 28 per cent reserve generating capacity to cover those failures or break-downs, so, too, does New South Wales. If an interconnection of the two electricity grids takes place, we will be able to rationalise that reserve capacity. In the unlikely event that a demand occurs because of failures or break-downs in both Queensland and New South Wales at the same time, the interconnection will be of no consequence. However, the idea is that when the interconnection takes place, it will provide greater flexibility in the system. In the event that a failure or break-down occurs in Queensland and this State loses two or three of its 350 megawatt generating sets at once, causing a drain on the system, Queensland would be able to call on the New South Wales system to feed into our grid. That can happen at any time of the day. The Premiers of Queensland and New South Wales signed this agreement so that some progress can be made towards this interconnection.

The member for Lockyer referred to the report by John Stubbs that was published in the *Sunday Sun*. The article referred to a State Government spokesman who referred to the potential of the interstate grid. I point out that if the interconnection of the interstate grid takes place and is used constantly in a transfer of power between the two States, that will reduce the system's reserve generating capacity, which will defeat the purpose. If the interconnection was used for that particular purpose, it could mean that the construction of additional generating capacity could be deferred by the amount of that available interconnection. As I say, at the present time the proposed interconnection is for 300 to 500 megawatts. It has been pointed out that the reason why the Government is looking at this now, and why the QEC and the New South Wales Electricity Commission have been looking at it for quite some time, is that it is a long, detailed process. Firstly, the feasibility

of such a project and the way in which it will work has to be looked at. Secondly, the Government has to look at easements. In New South Wales in particular, the obtaining of easements for a high voltage transmission line can take up to 10 years to plan and to put into place, so a long, detailed process is involved.

In relation to Tully/Millstream—the Government is looking at the possibility of getting it on line by 1998. There are three components in a generating system. The base load component comprises the Gladstone Power Station, the Tarong Power Station, the Callide “B” Power Station, the Swanbank Power Station, and in the future, of course, the Stanwell Power Station. A reserve capacity called a spinning reserve is built into those power stations. It meets power losses due to failures and break-downs, and/or replaces plant out on maintenance. Reference is also made to the peaking generating capacity. At the present time, peaking can occur in several different ways. There could be peaking by virtue of the spinning reserve and the coal-fired power stations turning over. But that is not an efficient method of operation.

It was pointed out by the member for Mulgrave that the Government is looking at conservation, reducing demand, and using all forms of energy as efficiently as it possibly can. At the present time, there is the peaking generating capacity as well as the spinning reserve which, as I say, is not an efficient way of running the system. Then we have the Wivenhoe pumped storage facility. During the day-time, if there is an urgent demand for power, water can be released from Split Yard Creek to run down through the power station into the Wivenhoe Dam to meet that particular demand, provided that it is not in excess of 500 megawatts. At night-time, that water is pumped back up, using the surplus generating capacity that is available at night-time when the load is down. The water is pumped back up into Split Yard Creek, which gives flexibility for the next time it is required. As has been pointed out, the Barron Gorge Power Station can provide 60 megawatts of power and the Kareeya Power Station can provide 72 megawatts of power.

The proposed Tully/Millstream project, of course, will allow much more flexibility into the system. In the lead-up to the 1989 election, the Labor Government gave an undertaking that it would look at the proposal to build the Tully/Millstream project. Labor has honoured its election commitment. I personally had a good look at the QEC feasibility study and its proposals in relation to the building of Tully/Millstream. Also, in order to ensure that this Government was making the right decision, having regard to the extent of the controversy the Tully/Millstream project created in the community and the possible impact it could have on the World Heritage area, it set up a task force to ensure that no stone was left unturned.

The member for Lockyer asked what the Government was doing about alternatives. The Government wanted to be absolutely certain that it was on the right track in relation to the building of power stations in this State. The Government wanted to get it right. It did not want to build a power station in a World Heritage area and cause all sorts of controversy in the community if it could find an alternative and more efficient method. This Government is looking, more so than ever before, at the efficient use of Queensland's energy resources. It formed a task force to investigate the Tully/Millstream project. It left no stone unturned. The report of the task force came down in favour of the construction of Tully/Millstream, provided that a couple of other measures were taken. As has been pointed out by the member for Rockhampton North, the bottom line is that because the Tully/Millstream is to be built in the World Heritage area of the Wet Tropics, the Government has to obtain Federal approval. Everyone knows that. The Government has submitted the task force findings—in which I personally have great faith—to the Federal Government. A joint committee of the two Governments is looking at that task force finding and is also looking at the range of alternatives. The committee is also looking at a whole range of various potential supplies of gas to run gas turbines. If the Federal

Government gives the go-ahead for the Tully/Millstream project, it will be built. It is currently in the hands of the Federal Government. The Government is trying to look at the whole range of alternatives so that when the final decision is made, it will be in the best interests of this State and this nation. Queensland's energy resources will be used to the best of this Government's ability.

Time expired.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! The time allotted for this debate has now expired.

CHILD CARE BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 26 November (see p. 3125).

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (4.59 p.m.): I rise to support the Bill. Quality child-care is really a quality-of-life issue. As the father of three young children, I can say that quality child-care is a quality-of-life issue. It is important for women, but it is also important for men. Women who are seeking to live full and satisfying lives, while at the same time ensuring the interests of their children are still paramount and important, need quality child-care. These days, an important balance is attempted to be struck between men and women living full and satisfying lives and, indeed, achieving the requisite quality of life for themselves and their children. Without quality child-care, that balance simply cannot be achieved. I think that all members of this House would be opposed to the days when women were often trapped—housebound—because of the lack of quality child-care. That was not in the interests of the mother, the children, or the father. With that background, I indicate my strong support for this Bill.

I congratulate the Minister on the process that she has gone through in introducing this Bill. I am delighted that it has the support of the National Party and the Liberal Party. The Bill heralds a new era for child-care in Queensland. Some 350 child-care centres and 415 kindergartens care for over 50 000 children. More than 14 000 children are cared for in family day care. There has been a rapid growth in the child-care industry over the last 25 years and a lot of that growth has been unregulated and ad hoc. This legislation seeks to overcome those difficulties and provides, in general terms, the following. It guarantees Queenslandwide standards of child-care. It provides consistency of standards for child-care. It is responsive to community needs and changes. It overcomes the current position where some welfare Acts cover child-care legislation, something which denies the proper place of child-care in the community. It provides an effective system of licensing of child-care services and a statutory basis for child-care regulations which will set the standards I referred to earlier. It ensures that child-care services are a safe, educational and positive experience for the children. That is something that is fundamentally important to the quality of life and of paramount interest to children. It ensures that programs look after the emotional, intellectual, social and physical development of children. In issuing licences, consideration will be given to the suitability of the child-care facilities provided. Safeguards will exist to ensure that only fit and proper people are involved in child-care.

In her second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“For centre-based child-care, these will set standards for such things as staffing ratios; group sizes; staff qualifications; indoor and outdoor space; internal physical aspects; equipment; programming; and health, safety and hygiene. For family day care schemes, standards will be set for the skills of coordinators and care-

providers; in-service training; numbers of children; health, safety and hygiene; and developmental opportunities."

They are all things that all honourable members would strongly support. The Minister continued—

"These changes will be phased in gradually for existing centres and care-providers to ensure that licensees have time to plan for the changes."

The provisions being introduced are sensible, are timed appropriately and they will work. Again I congratulate the Minister on the consultative process and the tolerance that she has demonstrated. During the discussion on this Bill, I received a number of submissions from people supporting the Bill. One came from the Kelvin Grove Community Early Childhood Centre, which is part of the Creche and Kindergarten Association. The letter from Narelle Shannon indicates not only strong support for the legislation but also a clear indication of the need for it. It states—

"Thank you for forwarding the information relating to the Child Care Regulations. Those of us who put children first in the bid for improved regulations are pleased to see the Government's move towards quality. Qualified staff, smaller group sizes and increased play space are essential to a quality service of education and care for Queensland's young children.

Parents and Staff at our Centre strongly support the proposed changes to the Regulations.

...

In my Position as Director, I am in contact with a great number of families each week who are seeking care for their children. The message I get from these parents is that they are looking for a quality service with quality staff and are prepared to pay for it."

That clearly indicates a strong position in the community. For the information of the House, I table that letter and a number of other supporting letters that I have received from community organisations and people involved in child-care.

Child-care is a quality-of-life issue. It has taken too long in our community to reach the stage where child-care has been given the prominence and importance that it deserves. I hope that what we are seeing today is the beginning of a greater consciousness in the community of how important quality child-care is. It really is about time that, at a Federal level, we looked at tax benefits and tax relief to assist people who desperately need assistance in the child-care area. If we are very serious about issues such as equality of opportunity and if we are serious about helping women enjoy life to the full extent that men can, there has to be tax relief for child-care and there has to be greater emphasis given to it in Government regulations. I congratulate the Minister. This is a significant improvement, but we have a long way to go.

Hon. A. M. WARNER (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) (5.06 p.m.), in reply: I welcome the supportive comments by all members on this Bill. It is indicative of the strength of this legislation that it has received support generally in the community. I welcome the support from the Opposition for this Bill, and I thank the honourable members opposite who acknowledged that the full consultation process has occurred on this legislation. Let me now turn to some specific issues raised in this debate and clarify those points. I commend the honourable member for Toowoomba North for his thoughtful comments and I thank the honourable member for Redcliffe for his focus on family day care. I thank all other honourable members on this side of the House who have brought out different aspects of the legislation. A number of honourable members opposite have been critical because they have not had a copy of the

regulations. The regulations have not been tabled with the Bill for an obvious reason. Until the Bill has been debated and passed, there is no authority for regulations to be made. The regulations require the power of the Act to allow their final formulation and tabling. Because I realised that there would be particular interest in the regulations, my department has issued two detailed papers outlining proposals for regulations. A third paper detailing what is intended for inclusion in the legislation has now been made available to the members to assist in this debate. Basically, it is a question of not putting the cart before the horse. All we can discuss are proposed regulations.

Mr Slack: You could still table the proposals.

Ms WARNER: I could table the proposals, but I think that is nit-picking somewhat because the honourable member opposite already has them. I seek leave to table the proposals.

Leave granted.

Ms WARNER: I wish to comment particularly on the accusation by the honourable member for Landsborough that this legislation was made on the run. I am sure that all who have been involved in this process would agree that it has been a very long and exhaustive marathon run rather than the quick sprint that the honourable member has been engaged in in trying to come to grips with this comprehensive and well thought out Bill.

To recap simply—the consultations with major child-care organisations began in November 1990. In May 1991, some 7 000 copies of discussion papers were distributed. In June 1991, over 1 000 people attended 23 meetings in 18 locations across Queensland. These were open public processes, and many members of Parliament attended. Twenty peak bodies and 12 Government departments were separately consulted, then 2 000 copies of a discussion paper outlining the proposals for change were distributed. In all, over 3 000 people signed petitions supporting the Bill. There were opportunities for the public to write or telephone. These consultations culminated in meetings of my ministerial advisory committee on child-care at which a negotiated position was agreed. The cost impact of any new regulations was discussed at those meetings. Of course, I fully understand the financial problems currently facing families. This Bill and the improved regulations will provide the best quality child-care that is affordable. Long lead-in times of up to 10 years will be allowed so that the improvements can be phased in. Should there be any cost increases, these will be spread over that period. I found it quite extraordinary that the member for Burnett would state that the Government has yet to prove itself in relation to child-care. This Government has provided more resources and support for child-care in this State than ever before. Considerable funding has been injected into child-care by this Government. This year \$13.4m will be spent on this area.

The Office of Child Care was established in my department in January this year. In this short period, the number of staff working in the child-care area has increased fourfold. These staff increases were well overdue given the massive expansion of the industry in recent years. Staff are also employed to assist special needs groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families, families from non-English-speaking backgrounds and families of children with disabilities, to have better access to child-care. Regionally based staff have been appointed to work closely with child-care services throughout the State. The benefits of the qualifications and experience of these staff can already be seen in the increased resourcing of the industry. They provide a teamwork approach with their backgrounds in early childhood studies and the social sciences. This teamwork is enhanced by the location of child-care within the Community Services Development Division. I make it very clear that the intention of the role of these staff is not to wantonly police the industry. Certainly, after this legislation is enacted, they will be entrusted with

the serious responsibility of licensing and monitoring child-care centres and family day care schemes, but their primary role is to ensure that quality care is maintained and that the interests of children are paramount. I suspect that, had the member for Toowoomba South read clause 4 of the Bill, which states the object of the legislation, he would appreciate that it is in fact warm and caring legislation. It is designed to promote and encourage safe, positive and nurturing care for children.

It is pleasing to note the support of members opposite for qualified staff in child-care services. Larger centres will need to employ an early-childhood teacher but in smaller centres—which may very likely include the Wallaville Kindergarten, which was mentioned by the honourable member for Burnett—a director with a two-year associate diploma in child-care will be sufficient. If no qualified staff are available, the department may approve other suitable staff. These are the specialist training courses which equip people with the skills and knowledge to provide proper care to enhance the development of young children. It must be remembered that many skilled and experienced staff members are already working in child-care. Many of these people may not have qualifications, and many are currently upgrading their qualifications. They will be given eight years in which to gain the necessary qualifications. I agree that we cannot afford to lose these valuable people, and that is why I am providing this long lead-in time.

The Opposition seems to have conflicting views on the need for experienced staff. On the one hand, the member for Callide spoke of the benefits of experience over youth yet, on the other hand, the member for Landsborough wants 16-year-olds employed in child-care centres. The care of young children is a serious responsibility. That is recognised in the new child-care regulations. Responsibility comes with adulthood. However, where qualified supervision is provided, 17-year-olds will be able to work as assistants if they are participating in a child-care traineeship or a child-care certificate course. Young people who have completed Year 12 will not be disadvantaged. They will be eligible to work as an assistant prior to attaining the age of 18 years. Nurses will continue to be employed in child-care. The member for Landsborough seemed to be confused when she said that nurses should be employed for groups of 0 to 2-year-old children, but later in her speech she said that nurses are not as capable as teachers. I believe that nurses are capable of working in all positions in a child-care centre, provided that some bridging study in early childhood training is undertaken.

Queensland is a diverse State with a whole range of child-care needs. The member for Burnett mentioned the plight of child-care centres in rural areas. This Bill and the proposed regulations will allow small rural child-care services in the form of limited hours care to be licensed for the first time. I recognise that these smaller centres cannot provide all the facilities that city child-care centres have and that they cannot always attract early childhood teachers. Small centres that are open for shorter periods during the week will now have regulations that are tailored to their needs. The regulations will be more flexible, with staff qualifications at the associate diploma of child-care level satisfactory for a director. In addition, a volunteer can assist under certain circumstances. I believe one member opposite asked what those circumstances were. They are that there must be qualified staff also taking overall responsibility at the time the volunteers assist, which I think is only fair and reasonable. There will certainly be exemptions when suitable qualified staff are not available. Flexibility and common sense will be used to allow existing community facilities such as halls and community centres to be licensed under this legislation. Because these services often do not comply with the 1973 regulations, in the past some have operated without a licence, putting children and service-providers at risk. In addition, this Government will be establishing over 30 new, small, community-based child-care centres as part of the current child-care strategy. Once again, the Labor Government has responded to the needs of country areas. I might add that the staff of my

department's Community Services Development Division are developing other pilot rural and remote initiatives.

I now turn to the matter of staff/child ratios, which are an essential ingredient in providing quality child-care. It is most pleasing that both Government and Opposition members recognise the importance of the improvements made in this area. The member for Callide pointed out that the maximum group size for 0 to 2-year-old children had been reduced from 10 to 8, and registered concern about the possible loss of places. I do not accept that there will necessarily be a loss of places for babies. In fact, the new regulations will enable easier access for centres to take on babies from 15 months onwards. Centres which currently only provide for over two-year-olds will now be able to take babies from 15 months of age without having to install all the fixtures currently required for babies. The member for Burnett was also concerned about staff/child ratios of 1 to 12 for school-age children. For the benefit of the honourable member, I point out that school-age children in child-care are not cared for in the same manner or under the same conditions as those in the school situation. In practice, school-age children are often mixed in with preschool children. These children are not confined in class rooms sitting behind desks. As with children going home from school to their parents, these children need someone to talk to about their day to sooth whatever crises have arisen. For these reasons, school-age children in child-care require more contact with caring adults.

The member for Landsborough queried the need for extra space for babies. Under the existing regulations, babies are often denied adequate space because cots are included in the allowable floor area. Consequently, babies have had to learn how to crawl and walk in quite confined conditions. And some babies have had to learn those crucial skills around and through the legs of cots and other furniture. Surely the member for Landsborough cannot be suggesting that such conditions are acceptable for young babies at this critical stage of their development. I am rather surprised that anyone could believe that babies do not need adequate room to move and explore. Babies should not be merely tied to their cots; they should be allowed to learn to crawl round from the age of six months so that they are fairly mobile by the time they reach 12 months. Therefore, space is a consideration. They need to be able to experience the things that they would be able to do if they were at home—to feel the fresh air on their faces, to watch the grass grow. Under the current regulations, there is no guarantee that this will occur. In some places, adequate outdoor space was sometimes interpreted as no space at all. I would have thought that someone with the professional background of the member for Landsborough would also readily recognise and support the need for sufficient indoor and outdoor space for babies.

On another issue, this Government has accepted its responsibility for the welfare of children. That is why the department will be checking to see if anyone coming into regular contact with children in child-care services has a criminal history that could place children at risk. However, I do not believe, as the member for Landsborough has suggested, that this responsibility rests with the department alone. Surely employers have responsibilities, too. Quality child-care can only be assured if licensees accept some responsibility for self-regulation. Members opposite have already argued that we should not be overregulating or overpolicing. If licensees do not accept their own responsibilities, how can overregulation be avoided? All that is required of them is to ask staff if they have a history that precludes them from working in child-care and to take appropriate measures if they have. The member for Toowoomba South was critical of the emphasis placed on penalties within the Bill. It is absolutely essential that the Bill is explicit and up front. The rights of licensees, parents and children must be spelt out—and so must the responsibilities that go with the provision of child-care. If those responsibilities are seriously neglected, then there must be a penalty.

I am delighted to hear of the support for the Child Care Tribunal. This new body is an essential part of this reform process. It will provide the necessary protection for licensees and applicants, and ensure public accountability for departmental decisions. The member for Burnett asked about the membership of the tribunal. That has not yet been decided, but I can assure members that it will have an independent and expert membership. Under clause 51, the tribunal is bound to act independently, impartially and fairly. In this context, the member for Landsborough asked about hearsay evidence being admitted. It will be admitted, but it will be dealt with fairly, as the tribunal is duty-bound to do. Clause 58 (2) provides that the evidence produced at a tribunal may be ordered to remain unpublished. However, a superior court may decide that it needs the evidence of the tribunal to adjudicate a matter in that court and may decide to overrule this. I understand that, in Western Australia, a similar review board has been in operation for two years. In that time, it has dealt with all matters coming before it at preliminary hearings. This Bill has similar provisions, and we would expect the tribunal to operate in a productive and efficient manner. The chairperson will, of course, allow representations at hearings in the interests of fair play and impartiality.

Let me now address the matter of the new child-care centres that are being established by the Government. This Government does not provide scarce resources to the community on the basis of short-term political gain. This issue was raised by the member for Landsborough. Many of the new child-care centres being established by this Government are, indeed, in Labor electorates. That is not surprising, given the shortage of services because of past neglect by the previous Government in those electorates, which include areas of rapid growth, with many young families. As well, following the last election, there are a large number of Labor electorates. It may, however, be surprising to those in the Opposition to know that most of the planning for these new child-care services was done in the term of the previous Government. That planning was done on the basis of comprehensive statistical data, consultations with communities throughout Queensland and attention to areas that had the greatest need for new child-care centres. We supplied the money so that those services could be placed in those areas. We did not choose the areas of high need. Demographics and independent people in the community determined the areas of greatest need, as did the numbers of kids on the ground. We provided the money. The support of the Opposition for this Bill pleases me immensely. I am surprised by the commitment of the member for Toowoomba South for industrial awards for the child-care industry. I must say that it is unusual for members of the National Party to display such an awareness of the needs of working people for a fair and just award.

Turning now to the matter of kindergartens—may I assure all honourable members that the Creche and Kindergarten Association has been fully consulted on this legislation. It is blatantly wrong to imply in any way that kindergartens are the regulatory responsibility of the Education Department and, therefore, should remain so. Since 1973, kindergartens have been licensed under the Children's Services (Day Care Centres) Regulations—the same regulations that apply to all child-care centres. The Creche and Kindergarten Association also provides an excellent advisory service. Nothing has changed nor will change because of this legislation. All concerns expressed by the Creche and Kindergarten Association have been addressed in the proposed regulations, including special regulations for their group sizes, structural facilities and mobile kindergartens. I would add that the Creche and Kindergarten Association is ably represented on my Child Care Advisory Committee. I have also reiterated many times that the excellent relationship that the Creche and Kindergarten Association has with my colleague the Minister for Education will not be affected in any way because of this legislation.

In conclusion, I congratulate the child-care industry on the manner in which it has contributed to the development of this legislation. The industry tackled this difficult task of finding a balance between quality and affordability and generously offered its advice to me and my staff. I thank it for this. I also wish to thank the many, many individuals who participated in the extensive consultation process and provided well over 250 written submissions. The efforts of the members of the ministerial advisory committee on child-care must also be placed on record. They made an outstanding contribution to the many complex and detailed issues relevant to child-care in Queensland. The interest and support shown throughout the development of this Bill by my legislation committee is also very much appreciated. The participation of such a wide range of groups, sometimes holding very different views, has meant that child-care for our children in the future will be quality care, affordable care and care that will be provided by qualified and knowledgeable staff. This legislation has balanced both quality and affordability considerations. It marks an important step for the families and children of Queensland. I wish to personally thank them for this and thank and acknowledge those from the industry who have been sitting in the gallery. I know that some of them have come back today to hear the remainder of the debate on this legislation.

I also wish to place on record my sincere thanks to the staff of the Office of Child Care who have worked tirelessly into the night on many occasions, negotiating quite often with people who are emotionally heated when they think that notice might not be taken of their views. The whole issue has been quite emotional. I know that the staff of the Office of Child Care have been very committed and have conducted themselves with a sense of humour, hard work and a very deep commitment to getting this legislation right. I think the proof of that has been in the wide support that the Bill has received.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. A. M. Warner (South Brisbane—Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Ms WARNER (5.26 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 2, omit lines 18 to 20 and insert—

‘ “care provider” means a person who is approved to practise family day care within a family day care scheme and is issued with, or whose name is endorsed on, a certificate of approval under section 80 by the licensee of the scheme;’.”

This amendment is introduced to allow other persons in the care-provider's household to be approved to provide care, usually as back-up care, without having to issue separate certificates of approval.

Amendment agreed to.

Ms WARNER: I move the following further amendment—

“At page 2, line 25, after ‘home’ insert—

‘or preschool education within the meaning of the Education (General Provisions) Act 1989’.”

This amendment is to make it absolutely clear that preschools that are run in conjunction with primary schools do not come under child-care legislation.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 4 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—

Ms WARNER (5.29 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 6, line 10, omit—

‘qualified to hold’

and insert—

‘not disqualified from holding’.”

This amendment is being made at the request of the commercial sector, which wishes to make it clear that licensees do not have to hold qualifications for that position. It felt there was some confusion about the use of the expression “qualified to hold”.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 12, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 17—

Ms WARNER (5.30 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 9, line 4, before ‘the’ insert—

‘if the chief executive considers it appropriate.’”

This wording allows for flexibility regarding what is specified on the licence of family day care centres. It could be difficult to specify a maximum number of children present at any one time rather than a number worked out on a formula for equivalent full-time children.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 17, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 18 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30—

Ms WARNER (5.31 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 14, after line 10, insert—

‘(7) The chief executive may, by written notice to a person, at any time, revoke a certificate of endorsement issued to the person.

(8) The holder of a certificate of endorsement, on receiving written notice of the revocation of the certificate, must immediately return the certificate for cancellation.’”

A person may apply to have a review of the decision revoking his or her certificate of endorsement, although it was understood that this clause did not state clearly that a certificate of endorsement could be revoked. This amendment just ties up any loose ends.

Mr SLACK: I envisage a situation in which a certificate could be revoked, for instance, in a country centre in which a certificate has been granted to a person who has not qualified under normal conditions to hold that certificate. A person who has the required qualifications could then move to the area. In those circumstances, the certificate of endorsement could be revoked and the person with the required qualifications appointed to that position. Would this apply in that situation?

Ms WARNER: I believe that the revocation is tied to the behaviour or performance of the person rather than the availability of staff at the time. Once a certificate has been given, it has been given. However, we must still have the powers in case there is some problem with that particular person's performance.

Mr SLACK: I just raised the point because that could occur in some country centres. I would not like to see a person's certificate revoked mid-term to allow another person to apply for the job. Does the Minister understand what I am saying? I have seen that happen in other areas.

Ms WARNER: That is certainly not the intention of this amendment. A right of appeal is also available. I do not believe that it could be done in an arbitrary manner. As I said, that is certainly not our intention. However, I do believe that the powers must exist, otherwise we do not have the regulatory control of that process that we otherwise need.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 30, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 31—

Mr SLACK (5.34 p.m.): Clause 31 (b) states that a licensee must not engage an individual who "is not a fit and proper person".

I refer to the Anti-Discrimination Bill which was introduced last night by the Attorney-General. I ask the Minister for a clear statement in relation to the issues that I intend to raise about this section of the legislation. According to an article that appears on the front page of today's *Courier-Mail*—and I admit that I am quoting selectively—the Attorney-General has said—

"In respect of lawful sexual activity, parents can have absolute rights to choose who is looking after their children."

According to the article, the Attorney-General stated further—

"The Government regards parenthood as conferring the right on those parents to make determinations as to what is good for their children."

The article states—

"Homosexual teachers of children up to 16 years could be sacked if parents believed the teacher's sexual activities could cause moral or psychological damage."

Is that going to apply in the case of this clause? For argument's sake, it could apply in this case. What is the Minister's attitude to the Attorney-General's statement? According to the article, the Attorney-General went on to say—

"Workers with the AIDS virus could not be discriminated against unless they presented a justifiable hardship on employers."

I ask the Minister for a clear statement on her attitude to an AIDS/HIV positive person being employed in child-care. Such a situation arose last July, and there was some feeling in the community that that person should not have continued to be engaged in that particular child-care centre. I raise this matter because such situations can and will arise in the future. What will be the position relative to an owner of a child-care centre or a licensee's position in these instances?

Ms WARNER: This particular clause relates to licensees making every effort to employ fit and proper persons. The legislation that the Attorney-General introduced last night relates to discriminatory behaviour which may be illegal. It contains an exemption for discriminatory behaviour in respect of people's sexuality and educational facilities. That exemption will still apply. We are not talking about that in this clause. We are talking about

the duty of a licensee to ensure that he or she chooses very carefully fit and proper persons to work in child-care centres. I believe that the honourable member opposite would understand that there is probably a difference between prejudice against particular groups of people and persons who may have harmful motives for wishing to work in particular areas where children are present. Unfortunately and sadly, that is a problem that all institutions must recognise. That is why this screening process is immensely important and, although it is difficult, the licensees must make some fairly careful judgments and have some duties and responsibilities in that respect.

I urge the member opposite not to get confused between a Bill that relates to the outlawing of discrimination and having exemptions from that anti-discrimination legislation and a Bill that calls for fit and proper persons to be engaged. As to the AIDS virus issue—I understand that, again, it is a question of there being no evidence to suggest that persons who have the AIDS virus place children at risk any more than any other members of the public place children at risk. There are some infectious diseases, but it is certainly my opinion that, if a child-care centre is engaging in proper behaviour and the staff of that centre are engaging in proper behaviour in that centre, there would be no way that children could contract AIDS from anyone who was HIV positive simply because he or she was a worker in a centre.

Mr SLACK: I understand what the Minister is saying and I relate my question further to the AIDS issue. No doubt, many parents would be unhappy, to say the least, if they were aware that an HIV-positive person was working in a child-care centre. I am completely sympathetic to the problems that an HIV-positive person may have and I am not making discriminatory remarks against such a person. However, I know that many parents could suffer some psychological trauma if they were aware that it was a possibility that an HIV-positive person would be working in a child-care centre. Some psychiatrists say that that particular person can also react to having that HIV-positive factor and that person, at times, can act out of character.

Ms WARNER: The situation is this: if a doctor attests that a person is medically fit to work in a child-care centre—and that, under the legislation, must be done—that person can work in a child-care centre. All workers must have certificates which state that and all centres must have adequate health and hygiene policies. The other aspect of which the honourable member ought to be aware, when he is considering the whole issue of HIV-positive workers, is that I understand that there is no duty of care, necessarily, for HIV-positive workers to be banned from working with patients in the Health Department, where the question of bodily fluids is much more prevalent than it is in child-care centres.

Mr Slack: It's a natural fear.

Ms WARNER: I realise that it is a natural fear, but I think that we should deal with our fear in ways other than by legislation.

Clause 31, as read, agreed to.

Clause 32, as read, agreed to.

Clause 33—

Ms WARNER (5.42 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 15, line 26, omit—

‘need not be in writing’

and insert—

‘may be given by an authorised person’.”

Again, that amendment comes after consultation with the commercial sector. People were concerned that authorised officers were being given too much discretion and that written

notices were desirable to avoid misunderstandings. This amendment provides for written notices under all circumstances; but, if it is urgent, notice can be given by an authorised person on the spot.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 33, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 34 to 39, as read, agreed to.

Clause 40—

Ms WARNER (5.43 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 19, line 4, omit—

‘qualified to be’

and insert—

‘not disqualified from being’.”

This clause relates to a problem that was raised earlier by the commercial sector. The amendment makes the clause consistent with the terminology in the use of the word “qualification”.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 40, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 41—

Mr SLACK (5.44 p.m.): Clause 41(2) states—

“If the chief executive fails to make a decision on an application mentioned in subsection (1)

(a) or (d) within the prescribed period, then, for the purposes of this section—

(a) the chief executive is taken to have refused the application . . .”

What happens if the application is lost? What happens if the chief executive, through some fault of his own, did not make the decision? Does the Bill provide a mechanism to overcome that problem? The onus is the other way round.

Ms WARNER: This clause simply protects the applicant. If the chief executive has not given any reason, then this clause allows for a right of appeal on the grounds of failure to respond. Not giving the chief executive more powers actually protects the applicant.

Clause 41, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 42 to 49, as read, agreed to.

Clause 50—

Mr SLACK (5.46 p.m.): Under this clause the tribunal chairman has to make the decision as to whether legal representation can be present at a proceedings. Is there a particular reason for that? This can affect a person's livelihood. Why cannot they have legal representation? I would have thought that they would have had the basic right to legal representation rather than giving the chairman that right.

Ms WARNER: If it was common for legal representation to be allowed at tribunal proceedings then the whole process would be longer and more expensive for both sides—the tribunal and the applicant. In semi-judicial proceedings before a tribunal it is common for lawyers not to be present. There is nothing to stop an applicant obtaining legal advice on his or her position. If the applicant feels it is a particularly weighty matter, the applicant can simply ask the chairman of the tribunal to allow for legal representation and I am sure it would be granted. We are trying to keep costs down and matters simple, and prevent the overlegalisation of what should be straightforward proceedings. If the matter

is not straightforward, there is leeway in the legislation for legal advisers to be involved. The honourable member must also remember that there can be an appeal from the tribunal to a higher court where the whole legal process can be conducted. This clause assists people because they do not have to spend a great deal of money on legal advice. The honourable member would understand that we constantly put ourselves in the hands of lawyers, which costs an arm and a leg, and in the end we often do not get any more justice for it.

Mr SLACK: That is the Minister's decision and interpretation, and she is entitled to that interpretation. This clause is included in the Bill and the Opposition will not divide the Committee on it. Really it should be a matter for the persons coming before the tribunal as to whether or not they wish to engage legal representation, because they are the ones who have to pay the bill. In most instances they would not wish to engage legal representation anyway because they are well aware of the costs that may be involved in engaging legal representation. However, some members of the community feel that their rights may be jeopardised by the way in which this clause is framed. I take it that the Minister has given an assurance that the clause will be sympathetically adhered to. The Minister's intentions may have been good, but this clause still negates what could be seen as a basic right. There is no doubt that the Minister has worded the clause this way with the best of intentions, but this is the position that could arise as a result of it.

Clause 50, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 51 to 73, as read, agreed to.

Clause 74—

Ms WARNER (5.49 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 36, omit lines 13 to 15.”

This is a proof-reading error.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 74, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 75—

Ms WARNER (5.51 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 37, line 11, omit—

‘Code’

and insert—

‘Law’.”

Again, this is a proof-reading error.

Mr SLACK: I listened intently to the Minister's reply in relation to this clause. She referred to the whole of the emphasis not necessarily being placed on the licensee. However, the basic inference is that it is being shared between the licensee, the department and the Commissioner of Police. Some owners or licensees of child-care centres have expressed concern about the implications of this clause. As I outlined in my response to the Minister's second-reading speech, the Opposition supports the intention of this clause and is not voting against it. I would like the Minister to outline just how it will apply and what responsibilities the owner or licensee of the child-care centre will have. Is he or she guaranteed safety under this provision? The Minister referred to a person asking an applicant whether he or she has a criminal record or has committed a criminal offence but, for argument's sake, if that person says, “No, I have not”, what recourse does the licensee have?

Ms WARNER: If it can be established that the licensee knowingly fails to disclose a criminal history, there is a penalty of 40 units. If the failure to disclose arises simply out of the licensee not knowing, there is no penalty. However, there is a duty to try and find out. The basic issue is that licensees are required to ask people. That is all we are asking them to do. We want them to ask applicants whether they have a criminal record and to make a note of it.

Mr SLACK: The real problem—and the Minister will appreciate this—is that if someone with a criminal record is asked, “Do you have a criminal record?”, and getting the job depends on whether or not that person has a criminal record, that person will automatically say, “No, I haven’t got a criminal record.” What happens then?

Ms WARNER: The department has a responsibility to try to check whether that person has a criminal record, but there are two levels of checks. The first is that the licensee must ask the person whether or not he or she has a criminal record. If that person says, “Yes, I have a criminal record.”, it may very well be that the offence would not disqualify that person from working in a child-care centre. Anybody who has a record of committing a crime at some stage will not necessarily be disqualified, but if the crime is pertinent—such as crimes of sexual abuse or assault—a check needs to be maintained on those people. All I am asking licensees to do is ask the question and keep records, and the department will undertake further checks.

Mr SLACK: I question also the legality of exempting the provisions of this Act from the application of the Criminal Code (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act. As the Minister would be aware, as soon as a 10-year period elapses, a person’s criminal record is expunged. The only way in which access can be obtained to that record is by procuring a court order. What would happen after the 10-year period has expired?

Ms WARNER: In the case of sexual crimes or crimes of violence, the record being expunged after a 10-year period has elapsed is exempt in this instance.

Mr SLACK: I guess——

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Hollis): Order! The member has spoken three times to the clause.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 75, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 76 to 79, as read, agreed to.

Clause 80—

Ms WARNER (5.55 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 38, line 20, after ‘person’ insert—

‘or endorse the person’s name on the certificate of approval issued to another person who is authorised to practise family day care at the same place.’ ”

This amendment allows other persons to be endorsed on the care-provider’s certificate of approval, usually to act as a back-up care-provider.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 80, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 81—

Mr SLACK (5.56 p.m.): This clause contains a very wishy-washy statement. When viewed from the opposite perspective, it takes on a particular connotation. The clause states as follows—

“While a person provides care of children for reward, the person must provide proper and appropriate care of the children.”

When considered from the reverse angle, it seems to indicate that simply because people provide care for reward, they may not have the proper prerequisite intention for looking after children. That clause contains a peculiar connotation. I do not believe the clause is necessary, because it adds nothing to the Bill. It is a nebulous statement that, basically, should not be there.

Ms WARNER: The regulations have been devised in respect of child-care. All I am talking about is child-care for reward in a regulated industry. I am not talking about people who mind a neighbour's child, children going down the road to be minded, or someone who has some kids over for the weekend. The distinction has to be made, and I think it is necessary for the principles of the Bill to be outlined.

Clause 81, as read, agreed to.

Clause 82, as read, agreed to.

Clause 83—

Ms WARNER (5.57 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 39, after line 16, insert—

‘(3) If—

- (a) a child care centre exists at the commencement of this section; and
- (b) the chief executive is satisfied that it is impracticable to require compliance with a provision of this Act specifying structural or other physical requirements for the centre;

a regulation may exempt the centre from compliance with the provision for a limited or unlimited period specified in the regulation.’ ”

This amendment is designed to allow for a variety of time-frames to occur in relation to exemptions, the most important of which are the permanent or the long-term exemptions for existing centres. Some fairly lengthy discussions were held with the child-care sector on this issue, and the representatives agreed that this amendment would give them some confidence that a degree of flexibility exists within the legislation.

Mr SLACK: As my final contribution to the debate, I place on record my wholehearted support for this amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 83, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 84 to 88 and Schedules 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Ms Warner, by leave, read a third time.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

CLASSIFICATION OF PUBLICATIONS BILL**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 24 October (see p. 2146).

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (7.30 p.m.): Yesterday evening, in responding to another piece of legislation, I stood in this place and said that that legislation was something of an act of faith with a number of people in the community. Tonight, this legislation is also an act of faith, because in many ways it is a return to the kind of legislation that has ruled this State since 1974. It is a return to an expectation of there being some decency within the community. In 1989, when the Goss Labor Government was elected, there was an expectation in the community that there would be a flood of pornography into this State. It was not an unreasonable expectation, given the things that had been said and done over the years. People had believed that there were people in the ruling branches of the Labor Party who were liberal in their views and that there would be available in this State pornography, gambling, and other kinds of civil libertarian ideas.

Mr Beattie: Civil libertarian?

Mr GILMORE: It is not to be taken in that context, but as a liberalising of these kinds of things. I must say that the community has not been disappointed in that expectation, because throughout Queensland today, at petrol stations along the road and various other places, there are for sale Category 1 publications. The Minister acknowledges that. I believe that it is unfortunate that the horse has bolted a considerable distance before the gate has been closed. It is a reflection, I believe, on the lack of responsibility by the Government of the day. Although I applaud this legislation for going back all that way and getting these Category 1 publications off the street, I believe that the Government did not need to go that extra yard. I do not believe that there was a need to make available on the street these kinds of publications that are offensive to women, and to some men in the community as well. Of course, these publications are also made available to young people in the community. That has offended me and also many other people, not only on the Opposition side of the House, but on the Labor side as well. Many people do not have such a liberal view. It is not a political view; it is a moral, ethical view. It is fundamental, in terms of decency and morality in our society. As I said earlier, there are people in the community—and, I regret to say, mainly resident in the ranks of the Australian Labor Party—who would liberalise things that people see and read to the point where anything becomes the order of the day. It appears to some of those people—and I understand that they include a small number of our parliamentary colleagues—

Mr Milliner: That is not right. In fairness, the Bill went through our party room unanimously. There was an amendment moved. The amendment was defeated.

Mr GILMORE: I understand there was some fairly trenchant debate in respect of that.

Mr Milliner: Then this Bill was accepted without dissent.

Mr GILMORE: Nonetheless, there were some expressions of interest about liberalising these things in the community. I regret that. I think it is most unfortunate. However, I understand that there are people in the community who, for whatever reason, consider that we as adults, as sophisticated people, should be able to watch films of our own choice regardless of the content. During my fairly extensive research into this legislation—and I have carried out this research because I wanted to do this legislation justice, as it is fundamental legislation—I read numerous articles that came from various sources, including the Parliamentary Library. The library sought out research that has

been carried out in terms of violence against women and the introduction of pornography, the lack of pornography, and so on. Amongst that material there is some fairly clear evidence—and, interestingly enough, it emanates from Queensland—which indicates that there may well be—and I repeat “may well be”—a considerable increase in violence against women with the increasing availability of pornography. Obviously, I have taken the view that those people in the community who want the free availability of pornography are wrong. I take that view simply because in my own way, I am a moralist, but I am not a wowsler. I am not offended by this kind of material. I simply choose not to look at it. But I am a mature adult.

Mr Beattie: What about *Penthouse*?

Mr GILMORE: I will show it to the honourable member in a moment. I am able to make mature decisions in respect of those matters. I assure all honourable members that I do not allow myself to be influenced by that kind of material.

Mr Ardill: It is okay for you, but wrong for everyone else.

Mr GILMORE: I cannot help it if the honourable member needs pornography to keep him going at night. I cannot help that. If the honourable member wants to interject, he will come undone. This piece of legislation is very serious and it is not to be taken lightly at all. In attempting to place on the record of this Parliament my view and the view of the Opposition in respect of pornography and those kinds of things, I think it is fair and proper to say that there are members of the community who, on this broad spectrum of divisive issues, are at one end of the spectrum or the other. Those people can never be satisfied by a forum such as this. If this forum attempted to satisfy the people at the far ends of political opinion, it would be failing the vast majority of people in the middle of our society who do not need this kind of thing and who do not want to be offended by it.

One of the things that concern me greatly about pornography is the exploitation of people. It has been said often that pornography is the exploitation of women. That is true, but it is also true that all people involved in these kinds of productions are exploited for whatever reason—whether it be dollars, drug addiction or social impetus that causes them to be involved in this degradation of the human condition. It should not be tolerated in any way by this Parliament, this State or the community. I thank the Minister for what he is doing tonight. However, I must say once again that I reflect very seriously upon the way the Government has viewed censorship and pornography in this State in the last 20 months, because pornography has run rampant and it has been a most unfortunate period in this State's history.

The Bill tidies up the administration of censorship in this State but, interestingly enough, it continues a form of censorship. It continues a position that is established within the public service to review, on the occasions on which it is called to do so, the decisions of the Commonwealth censor or the decisions that have not been made because they have not been called for. So in fact, regardless of what it is called, what this Bill does is establish a State censor. I find that to be curious, given what has been said in this Parliament and outside it by the Australian Labor Party in Opposition over the past umpteen years. Labor members in Opposition said how dreadful it was to have a State censor and how we should follow the censorship imposed by the Commonwealth censor. I will have more to say about the Commonwealth censor when we deal with the other piece of legislation governing the regulation of films.

At this stage I foreshadow an amendment which goes some way towards changing the Bill. The amendment does not make fundamental changes to the words but provides an opportunity for the Government to make some real changes. Recently, a newspaper in this State published an article which contained the following—

"Mr Goss said displays of 'bare breasts and bottoms' on newsagent posters should be removed from public view and warned that government action might be taken if newsagents did not co-operate."

That would be difficult for the newsagents to do because of the structure of newsagencies. I do not want to lecture the Minister on something about which he has personal knowledge, having been a newsagent. He understands the way that newsagents come by their publications and their expectations to display those things and sell them even though they are personally offended by them.

The Premier said that he wants to see bare breasts and bare backsides off the street, away from public view, and tonight honourable members are debating a Bill which does not move an inch towards achieving that expectation. In making that suggestion the Premier is putting pressure on newsagents in this State to do something that they cannot do. They simply may not because of the structure of the organisation in which they work. My amendment will offer an opportunity for the Premier and the Government to make a very slight alteration to ensure that, firstly, the members of our community who choose not to be offended by this material when they walk into a newsagent's shop will not be offended and, secondly, that bare breasts and buttocks will be taken off the streets at no cost in terms of censorship. Those amendments will be circulated shortly. This is very important. Tonight, I brought some publications into the Parliament.

Mr McGrady: I hope they are not pornographic.

Mr GILMORE: It depends on the honourable member's point of view. I have more than this one. These are the ones that I thought most appropriate to bring into the Parliament. I do not intend to show them to honourable members because there is no way I will demean this Parliament. The Minister was kind enough to allow me access to departmental officers. I was given access to Mr David Cannavan who is currently acting as the censor in this State. He was kind enough to come to my office with another officer and to go through these publications with me so that I could understand the fine line of differentiation between what is considerably pornographic and what is not.

Government members interjected.

Mr GILMORE: Government members may laugh, but I can tell them that there is a very fine line between what is and what is not offensive. The magazine in my hand is a bikie magazine. It contains full frontal nudity. Its sale is unrestricted in Queensland, and I must say that its sale was unrestricted in Queensland under the previous Government's Act and regulations. This is the street version of *Penthouse*. It is a street version that was published under the Act and regulations that were in force when the National Party was in Government in this State. Those publications are available for sale on the streets of Queensland today and they have been in the past. Within these publications are some very offensive photographs indeed.

Mr Milliner: You are saying one was sold in your Government's era?

Mr GILMORE: Yes.

Mr Milliner: What year was that?

Mr GILMORE: That is 1988.

Mr Milliner: What year is the other one? 1991?

Mr GILMORE: I am sorry, both of these are 1991. The 1988 one must be still at my office.

Honourable members: Ha, ha!

Mr J. H. Sullivan: You are saving it until later.

Mr GILMORE: Don't worry! I have gone into this in some depth. I have no embarrassment about this, because I have a responsibility to this Parliament and to the people of Queensland. Tonight, we are doing something which is fundamental to decency in this State, and I am prepared to do it properly. This next item is a black label version of the same magazine, and I had that sent to me by *Penthouse* in Sydney, and that is a hell of a magazine. It is not the kind of thing one would want to find floating around in one's own home. I assure members that it is not. Truthfully, it is available only by mail order, and after this legislation is proclaimed, it will be banned in Queensland. I applaud that. But it was a useful magazine, nonetheless, because it achieved something that needed to be achieved, which was a clear understanding of what it is that makes this magazine I have in my left hand, which is banned in this State, different from this one I have in my right hand, which is not. The one in my right hand is freely available on the street for the Minister's children to buy; and after tonight, if the Minister does not accept my amendment, it will still be on the street for his children to buy. I can tell him that it is a pretty horrifying piece of material.

Mr Beattie: Tell us what is horrifying.

Mr Mackenroth: If he can be tough, you can be tougher.

Mr GILMORE: No, not at all. I would be delighted if the honourable member would sit there and keep his mouth shut long enough to listen to the amendment.

Mr Milliner: How long has *Playboy* been available at retail outlets in Queensland? I will tell you. It has been available for at least 16 years.

Mr GILMORE: Yes, I agree with the Minister.

Mr Milliner: What you are saying is that it should not be sold?

Mr GILMORE: No, not in the least. That magazine in my left hand has exactly the same classification as the one in my right hand—exactly. That is the *Australian Woman's Weekly*, which has the same classification. So, what to do? This other magazine has the same classification and, interestingly enough, so does the *Post*.

Mr Beattie: That is smutty; look at it.

Mr GILMORE: Dreadful, is it not? Fully clad! The point I am making is that we are now debating a piece of legislation which accepts this document as the basis for the classification of material for publication in this State. It is the same document that has been accepted, as I understand it, by other States. This legislation allows for "(a) an unrestricted publication". That means that this publication, *Penthouse*, that I have in my hand, would be unrestricted in Queensland. It also means that this other publication, the *Australian Woman's Weekly*, would also be unrestricted. There is also a restricted category, black label *Penthouse*. Of course it should be restricted. It will be banned by this legislation. Restricted Category 2 is the kind of publication which depicts explicit sexual acts, etc. That is the kind of thing that is also banned by this legislation. Then, of course, there is a "refused" classification, which includes child pornography and other things which all people find horrifying.

What is being proposed here tonight is a very small change to the legislation. I will be dealing with it in some detail at the Committee stage; but to be brief about it, I am suggesting that we expand the unrestricted category to allow for regulation of the sale of *Penthouse* magazine so that it is taken off the street and put where it cannot offend people who walk into places where it is for sale. It should not be gratuitously offensive to people. It would not, if my suggestion were adopted, in any way prevent it being sold. It would simply be put where it would not offend a reasonable person, nor would it be available to children. I think that is a most reasonable and responsible attitude to take. I must say that this has been a most interesting piece of research that I have had to do.

Honourable members: Ha, ha!

Mr GILMORE: I find it interesting, Mr Deputy Speaker, that Government members find something that is so fundamentally important to the decency of our community to be funny. I am prepared to bet that not one of those Government members has done any in-depth research into this legislation. They are coming in here to talk about their same old biases and the things they have had in the backs of their minds since birth. That is a shame, because it does not do justice to the legislation that the Minister has brought into this Parliament tonight, and neither does it do justice to the Parliament. As I said, I foreshadow that there will be amendments to this legislation. I take this opportunity once again to thank the Minister for giving me access to staff, because it was important that I have a clear understanding of why we are here and what it is that we are trying to achieve, and I trust that we can continue to work in such harmony into the future.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (7.52 p.m.): I support the Bill. I am sorry that I do not have any books with me.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: You haven't got a library like that.

Mr BEATTIE: No, I do not have a library like that, either; nor would I seek to denigrate the House by bringing such publications into the Chamber. I want to make a number of points right at the beginning, because when this sort of legislation is being discussed, I think one of the things we have to put to rest in the clearest possible terms is humbuggery—a term I use quite regularly in these sorts of debates. The National Party inspires that sort of response. Let us not forget the history of what the National Party has been responsible for in this State. One has only to read the Fitzgerald report and the Sturgess report.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I take that interjection. I am tired of the piousness that comes into debates of this sort. If honourable members consider history, under the National Party Queensland had more pornography, more prostitution, more police corruption, more exploitation of minors and more abuse of drugs than did any other State of Australia. That was the National Party legacy. They are not my words, they are the words of the Fitzgerald report. Because of the sort of behaviour they were responsible for, a string of National Party people are in gaol. When we debate Bills such as this, we must be realistic. That sort of pious nonsense must be put to rest.

I turn to what I consider to be an important issue, that this, that this legislation is designed to deal with certain categories of publications. The present law governing censorship of literature is currently scattered through a number of statutes. For the benefit of the honourable member for Tablelands, I point out that those statutes allow the sorts of publications that he was denigrating to appear in newsagencies and service stations throughout the State. They appear because of National Party legislation. They do not appear because of anything we did; it was because of what Opposition members did. Let us get rid of the nonsense. Previously, the law was scattered through a number of statutes. The Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act deals with publishing, distribution, etc. of obscene material. It is obscene and indecent material that is currently prohibited by initiatives by the police, and the matters then end up in the courts. Under the existing law, the process operates in this manner: the police must make a complaint based on literature being distributed or sold, and the matter then goes to court and is tested. The test of obscenity, which has been established by the courts, is whether the tendency of the matter charged as being obscene is to deprave and corrupt those minds open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of the type may fall. That is the test. Quite frankly, leaving such matters to the police to prosecute is not good enough. Even the police do not want to be put in that position. The existing law which this

Government inherited is in a mess, but it has taken this Government to deal with it. Prior to the introduction of this Bill, the judiciary was placed in an unsatisfactory position in which the courts had to make moral decisions clothed in legal jargon, to use the words of the Minister in his second-reading speech. This Bill replaces the Objectionable Literature Act with legislation establishing a more efficient administrative structure but at the same time ensuring that material offensive to most citizens will not be allowed to be sold or distributed in this State. The Commonwealth censor classifies literature as either unrestricted, Category 1, Category 2, or refused classification, to which the honourable member for Tablelands referred. Under this Bill, the decisions of the Commonwealth censor will be used, but only material falling into the unrestricted class will be allowed to be sold in Queensland.

As the father of three young children, I can say that I am strongly opposed to the sale of any pornography that exploits children and which would in any way lead to a situation in which they could be influenced by such material. I have constituents who are also concerned about that. However, when we debate this issue, we must consider a range of issues. I do not denigrate the civil libertarian argument that is put forward by some people. There is a credible side to that argument and there needs to be a balance, as there should be with all these issues. As legislators, it is our responsibility to deal with that balance. Contrary to the suggestion by my friend and colleague the honourable member for Tablelands that some people on this side of the House had not done any research—I take some exception to that remark from the honourable member, although I know he meant it in the best possible way—I did investigate some of the material and I did examine the issue of whether pornography incites violent crime. I found two strong arguments on both sides. I will offer some recent examples of the “Yes” case. I refer, firstly, to an article by Richard M. Read entitled “Pornography, Depicted Violence and Crime” in *Quadrant* of June 1991. Richard M. Read was a Victorian prosecutor, and he claimed to “have dealt with hundreds of criminal cases”. He believes that there is a link between the proliferation of increasingly violent and pornographic material and the fact that it is becoming more commonplace for rape cases to involve forms of assault other than conventional intercourse. He claims that “degrading acts are not uncommon. Not infrequently the victim will be raped in this fashion by a number of males at the same time”. Read’s answer to the academic work that claims there is no causal link between pornography and acts of violence is based on social science interviews consisting of experimental studies with university students in clinical surroundings or interviews with people who view X-rated videos, many of whom would be unlikely to admit to interviewers that the pornographic material they are using makes them imitate what they have seen. For the information of the honourable member for Tablelands, I instance that as one case of a person who supports the “Yes” case and contends that there is a link between pornography and crime.

Mr Gilmore: I have read the article.

Mr BEATTIE: It was a very long article. Another person who takes that view is Robert Manne, in an article entitled “The Silence of the Liberal Lambs” in *Quadrant* of June 1991, quoting from what is regarded as an indispensable book on the topic. Manne cites studies that have found that, of 35 000 sex criminals in Michigan, 41 per cent used pornography immediately before, or during, their crime. As well, an FBI study of 36 serial killers revealed that 29 incorporated pornography in their sexual activity. I hasten to add that Manne did not say to what extent it was incorporated. The third illustration that I will use in the “Yes” case is a gentleman called Mike Baxter, who wrote an article entitled “Flesh and Blood” in the *New Scientist* of 5 May 1990. He made four points. Baxter cites the result of an experiment conducted by the University of Indiana in which groups of students were exposed to varying amounts of pornography and then asked to take part in

a hypothetical rape trial. Those who had been massively exposed to pornography suggested a much lighter sentence for the "rapist". The artificiality of this experiment hardly needs comment, I should add.

Mr Gilmore: That's why I didn't use it.

Mr BEATTIE: The same researchers found that prolonged exposure significantly reduced the subjects' sexual satisfaction with their partners. Subjects are then found to attribute greater importance to having sexual intercourse without emotional involvement. I should add that implied, but not stated, is that this makes them more likely to commit acts which involve this.

The third point he makes is that a University of New Hampshire study attempted to plot the circulation figures of pornographic magazines in different States against the incidence of rape reports. The researchers found a strong relationship. On average, every increase of 2 per cent in the circulation of pornography was linked to a 1 per cent increase in the incidence of rape reports. I add that this assumes, however, that individuals who buy or hire a lot of material are more likely to offend than those who buy or hire none, a matter that could not be supported or, let me put it in these terms, established to the acceptable normal standards. Baxter's summation was—

"The weight of evidence is accumulating that intensive exposure to soft-core pornography desensitises men's attitude to rape, increases sexual callousness and shifts their preferences towards hard-core pornography. Similarly, the evidence is now strong that exposure to violent pornography increases men's acceptance of rape myths and of violence against women. It also increases men's tendencies to be aggressive towards women and is correlated with the reported incidence of rape."

That is the "Yes" case; that there is a link between pornography and violence.

The "No" case goes something like this: Augustine Brannigan and Andros Kapardis wrote an article titled "The Controversy over Pornography and Sex Crimes: the Chronological Evidence and Beyond" in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology* of December 1986. They make two points. The landmark work on the case against a link between pornography and violent crime was done by Kutchinsky, who examined the effects of the liberalisation of Danish censorship laws and found that there were sharp declines in the total number of sex crimes, although the number of rapes remained constant. The decline came about because of large decreases in the milder offences of criminal peeping, verbal indecency, exhibitionism and the serious one of physical indecency towards female children. Brannigan and Kapardis are critical of the work done by an Australian psychologist and one-time leader of the Festival of Light, Dr John Court, who has stressed the criminal effects of pornography and attacked the credibility of Kutchinsky's studies. According to Brannigan and Kapardis, Court's discussion of the modest increase in reported rapes in the UK between 1967 and 1974 omits to mention the massive increase in other types of violent crime for the same period.

The second person to whom I refer in relation to the "No" case is our own Dr Paul Wilson, who wrote an article titled "The Effects of Sexually Explicit Media Material: a Research Criminologist's Perspective" in the *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, No. 1 of October 1989 at pages 94 to 106. There are two points here. Wilson cites a study by Scott and Schwalm who found that rape rates are related to the general level of violence operating in a community, regardless of the amount of pornography that is circulating. Secondly, Wilson observed that in Queensland "where censorship has been ruthlessly imposed on sexual material" rates of rape have perennially been far higher than in the ACT, "the home of X-rated videos". However, in this instance Wilson stressed that he "did not wish to draw a cause and effect relationship".

There is other relevant data. Dr Satyanshu Mukherjee and Dianne Dagger in *The Size of the Crime Problem in Australia* have provided a table giving comparative data on the rate per 100 000 of population at which sexual assaults are reported or become known to police. The figures are given in six-month blocks. I will outline three of the points of interest in the table: firstly, the rapid decrease of such offences in the ACT after the second half of 1986—that happened statistically; secondly, the almost uninterrupted gradual increase of such offences in Queensland; and, thirdly, the Queensland figure for the first half of 1988 of 60.74 per 100 000, easily the highest incidence of any State for any six-month period.

I think that analysis gives some indication that there is a wide range of views on the relationship between pornography and whether it incites violent crime. That will be an argument that will go on in the community for a long time, and it will be some time before there is absolute—if indeed there is such a term as absolute in these things—evidence to establish the position one way or the other. My only caution in this debate is that we really need to look not only at who we are protecting but also at the considerations of the community. We need to look at community standards to see what is acceptable. We need to look at a range of measures, not only those protecting young people, which I strongly and fully support, but also civil libertarian issues. There is a whole range of complex issues. None of these social problems are ever easy to solve. I think that needs to be reiterated. However, I have to say that I do get a little tired when I find that, from time to time, a minute number of people in a self-righteous way—and this is not directed at any comments that have been made in this House and it is not related to anything that the honourable member for Tablelands has said—take a position on these matters. Over a period, I have received correspondence from a number of people, which reminds me of a quote in Matthew, Chapter 7, Verse 15, which says—

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

That can be quite appropriately applied to a number of people. There is one person in particular who regularly sends me material on this issue, a gentleman named Phillip Young, who lives in a Brisbane suburb. He is quite concerned about this issue. I respect his concern. He is entitled to hold his view. However, I find it a bit hypocritical that he spends a great deal of his work time and resources campaigning on these issues. I find that there is a significant double standard, bearing in mind that he works for the Education Department and is never hesitant to use its resources to go out and “propagandarise” his view. It is a double standard—and a very important double standard. He does not mind using public money by making phone calls during working hours and using public funds to espouse his views, but at the same time taking a moral position. It is hypocrisy of the worst kind. There are those who would perhaps use even less kind words than I have about his approach to using public facilities and public resources to espouse his view. No-one minds an employee making the occasional phone call, but to use the telephone and other facilities of the Education Department to espouse his view I think raises serious questions about his moral position and what he regards as appropriate behaviour.

Indeed, there is another campaigner who takes a strong view, a gentleman named Chuck Brookes, who has a segment called *Conservatively Speaking* on 4BC. He has spent a great deal of time denigrating people on that program without giving them an opportunity to respond, a matter which, in my view, the Australian Broadcasting Tribunal should examine closely. When 4KQ was owned by the Labor Party, it was made very clear that it could never be used for political purposes—nor was it used for political purposes—because it was contrary to the operation of the licence. However, 4BC does not seem to think that Chuck Brookes and his *Conservatively Speaking* has any such obligation under the ABT requirements, which of course is not true. I do not mention Chuck

Brookes in order to give him a free plug—and I have no doubt that he would take it in this way. He has spent a great deal of time attacking me, and I am big enough and ugly enough to accept that. But he has also taken the opportunity, in a very cowardly way, to attack my wife. He has also attacked female members of this Government. It is about time that 4BC started to realise exactly what its requirements are under the ABT and what its requirements are to maintain a balance in broadcasting.

That *Conservatively Speaking* program, which could have been written and authorised by the National Party, is so biased that, in my view, there needs to be a balance. No opportunity is given by that program for anyone else to put an alternative view. I know that it is a self-promotional exercise to go out and say extreme things—which he does—to get publicity and listeners. That is his right, provided that 4BC follows the ABT guidelines. I come back to where I started this contribution. I remember exactly what Matthew Chapter 7, Verse 15 says—

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”

I support this Bill. It disappoints me that there are humbugs and frauds who try to attack its moral position for their own self-aggrandisement. That parallels the behaviour of Howard Carter and the Logos Foundation, who had the audacity to write to all members of the Labor Party asking what their moral position was. We then discovered that he was committing adultery of the worst kind. Those are the sorts of humbugs and frauds who really ought to be exposed. In the final analysis, there can be only one verdict. As I said, I support the legislation before the House. I believe that it is important. I believe also that it is supported by the community. It is certainly supported by my constituents. I hope that those humbugs and frauds in the community who want to attack this legislation for their own purposes are exposed in the public mind for what they are—that is, humbugs and frauds.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.11 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Classification of Publications Bill. This Bill, and the Classification of Films Bill, have underlying principles which are similar. Consequently, when making a broad second-reading speech on the first Bill, in essence I am also speaking about the underlying principles of the second Bill. I do not intend to repeat this speech when the Classification of Films Bill is debated. I am sure that the Minister and other members will be happy about that. I do not want to take up the time of the House unnecessarily. The Liberal Party will support the Bill before the House and the other Bill which will be debated at a later time. In doing so, we recognise that there is a trade-off between the civil liberties of individuals in our society to read and to be entertained in ways which they find acceptable and the fundamental social and moral values of our society. At times, these social and moral values conflict with the rights of individuals to read and view in private what they wish.

In discussing the Bills, we are not in any way talking about political censorship. Rather, we are talking about elements of publications which may conflict with the fundamental social values of our society. Central to those values are, firstly, the importance of the family and the central role that the family plays in our society; and, secondly, the protection and education of our youth. We believe that it is our duty and responsibility to ensure that the protection and education is done in a way which develops the minds of our youth and instils in them the moral code on which our society successfully operates. Finally, we believe that the exploitation of our youth is not acceptable.

The central concern of the Bills is the publication of pornographic material either in a written or visual format. The issue of pornography goes to the heart of the appropriate

relationship between adults in our society. In our Judeo-Christian society—and this should not be interpreted as a sleight on any other religious beliefs that members of our society might have—the sanctity of the relationship between a man and a woman has been recognised as a central part of that ethic for thousands of years. Within that ethic we recognise and nurture appropriate sexual relationships. However, we also recognise that sexual relationships are part of a broader concern, one embedded in the personal affection, caring and commitment between two adults. This is not to imply that we bury our heads in the sand and pretend that relationships do not occur outside of marriage, but we do try to inculcate in our youth that, in order to be fulfilling, relationships must be part of a caring and long-term commitment. Such an appreciation is important not only to the individuals concerned but for the stability and development of our society. On the other hand, pornography views sexual relationships in a completely amoral and, in many cases, impersonal setting. In fact, one of the most frequent descriptions of pornography refers to the separation of the physical experience of sex from love and the degradation imposed on those who are involved in its production as well as those who view or read it constantly. There is little doubt that it is this separation of sexual experience from love and long-term commitment between individuals that causes many in the general public to feel offended or disgusted at the display of certain material.

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that it became an offence in the English-speaking world to publish explicit sexual material per se. The reasons are perhaps twofold. Firstly, with the development of technology and the ability to print and distribute material on a more economic and widespread basis, and later in the twentieth century with the development of photography and cinematography, it became clear that an opportunity arose for the unscrupulous manipulation of sexual excitement for profit. It is this manipulation of sexual excitement for profit which constitutes pornography or obscenity. And it was the judgment that pornography was undesirable for our society's development which led to its being legally constrained. The second reason is that more research has been undertaken and more information has come to light on the effects of pornography on human behaviour. Most of us would understand that the repeated viewing or reading of material does have an effect upon our individual behaviour and our belief structure. If that was not a generally accepted proposition, we would have no need for the well-developed and sophisticated advertising industry that we have today.

There is no doubt that advertising in the print media and on television has as its underlying belief the concept that one can influence the behaviour of people by supplying them with a particular kind of information a sufficient number of times. The same belief must also be held by political party machines because, at election-time, there is no shortage of information flooding into homes and impacting on the minds of people in an attempt to persuade voters to exercise their vote in a particular way. We also practise that belief when we design our education system, which, for example, introduces students to quality English and Australian literature and to fine plays, and develops an ability in students to critically appraise what they read. When much of our behaviour relies on our belief that we can influence others in the pursuits that our society finds valuable, it would be completely unreasonable to adopt a diametrically opposing point of view when it comes to the effects of pornographic or obscene material.

Despite what seems to be obvious from that analysis, there are, in fact, very few cases in which a causal connection between pornographic material and anti-social behaviour can be conclusively proved. That is partly because, in our kind of society, it is considered undesirable to use human beings in controlled experiments, which would be necessary in order to obtain a higher degree of proof. There seems, however, to be little question that the youth of our society can be influenced in particular ways. There is some understanding that pornography is at least dangerous to the vulnerable, particularly those

of a younger age, and is therefore not intrinsically innocuous. In his March 1985 report, the then Director of Prosecutions in Queensland, Mr Des Sturgess, said that he found—

“ . . . a very great increase in the number of sexual offences involving children and that a cause of such increase was the anti-socialisation by pornographers and panderers and the people who profit from the creation of sexual arousal and fantasy.”

In 1986-87, two behavioural scientists, Zillman and Bryant, gave evidence before the Commonwealth Parliament's Joint House Select Committee on Video Materials. They concluded the following—

“The long consumption of pornography—one hour per week for six consecutive weeks—besides confirming the results of their earlier research had a powerful adverse effect on evaluations of the desirability and viability of marriage.

Among the subjects of the experiments, endorsement of marriage dropped from 60 per cent in the control groups to 38 per cent in the treatment groups. The effect was comparable whether the subjects were males or females, students or non-students.

The most astonishing effect of prolonged pornography consumption on family values was the effect on the desire to have children. The desire to have male offspring dropped by 31 per cent and the desire for female offspring dropped by 61 per cent. Male respondents expressed little desire for female offspring altogether, and females' desire for offspring of their own kind shrank to one third of its normal strength.

Prolonged consumption of pornography markedly reduced sexual satisfaction and sex-related personal happiness. That is because consumers eventually compare appearance and performance of pornographic models with that of their intimate partners, and that comparison rarely favours their intimate partners. The result is dissatisfaction with intimate partners, hence the adverse impact upon marriage.”

Pornography appears to have two almost common effects: firstly, an ever-growing appetite for pornography until it becomes a positive addiction, leading to all sorts of deviant obsessions and actions which may or may not take a delinquent form; and, secondly, a deadening process, a diminished sensitivity and a ceasing to be shocked. That has the effect of blunting an individual's proper and instinctive reactions to what is socially or morally acceptable and seems to lead to a demand for harder and harder pornography. One suspects, of course, that the same thing is occurring with violence. Many people remark today that we seem to be becoming a more violent society. Perhaps that is not surprising when we understand that violence plays a much more significant part in the books that we read, the films that we see and the television that we all seem to watch. If advertising is built upon the assumption that what we read and see affects our behaviour, again it seems reasonable that we may be coming to accept violence as part of our normal life without really understanding or stopping to take notice of why that is occurring.

Pornography may be looked on as a social evil, doing harm to many and being a potential menace to the community at large. However, pornography cannot be assaulted in exactly the same way as an external affliction, such as war or plague, can be assaulted. The taste for it, however artificially stimulated, emerges at a given moment as an expression of human choice. Most people seem to dislike pornography. However, most people also dislike censorship as they understand or misunderstand that word. But in a democratic society such as we have, those two conflicting values must be tackled in a manner which is acceptable to public opinion but which is compatible with the essential

liberties we all wish to enjoy. That trade-off obviously reduces our options, although I must admit that it does not seem to diminish the urgency of action.

The Bills before the House attempt to make that trade-off in a way that is acceptable to the population of Queensland. The Bills clearly prohibit the sale, distribution or advertising of certain publications. They refuse to countenance depictions of child sexual abuse, bestiality, sexual acts accompanied by offensive fetishes or exploited as incest fantasies, extreme cruelty and dangerous practices and, of course, they refuse any classification for the promotion, incitement or encouragement of drug abuse, including do-it-yourself manuals. Within the material that is available to the public—in other words, that material that does not fall into the refused classification category—guidelines are adopted from the Commonwealth legislation for the classification of printed material and for the classification of films and videotapes. It is hoped that, by suitable classification, by providing information as to what those classifications mean and through the use of deterrents and penalties for selling, holding or displaying unsatisfactory material, the individual's right of access to material and the community's concerns for the effect of pornography on its youth and others are both satisfied.

It is a difficult trade-off to make. The Queensland Law Society has raised concerns with respect to clauses 14 and 25 of the Bill, which I am sure the Minister will address during the Committee stage. We will be interested in his answers. Earlier, the member for Tablelands raised additional concerns about the classification, which I believe are reasonable and considered suggestions. We in the Liberal Party hope that the Minister adopts those suggestions, and we will support the member in moving his amendments at the Committee stage. However, as I said at the beginning of my speech, as a general proposition the Liberal Party will support the Bills.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (8.23 p.m.): Tonight, I rise to speak in this debate on the Classification of Publications Bill, and in doing so I wish to congratulate the Minister and the Government on their response in this manner to what has become an issue of some concern within our community. People in my electorate have indicated to me their support for the legislation, in particular for those provisions which relate to the protection of minors. This legislation contains some of the toughest penalties in the country in relation to pornography generally and in particular to publications depicting child abuse. The Government's decision to ban Category 1 and Category 2 material was not taken lightly. It occurred as a result of constant requests from members of the community who have been offended by the open display of that sort of material. The Government has listened to the community and the Classification of Publications Bill reflects that.

I am quite concerned that the Council for Civil Liberties should take such an academic view of the legislation by expressing its opposition to it on the grounds that it somehow reduces the civil liberties of members of our society. As I understand it, there is no constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech in Australia, even though as citizens of a democracy we hold the view that individuals should be able to articulate their views quite openly without fear of the State. Inherent in the notion of free speech is the assumption that ideas and opinions held by individuals or groups may be expressed and balanced or, indeed, neutralised by others in our society who hold a competing point of view. It is further assumed that the State should not interfere in this open process as all views apparently have equal validity, with the exception that speech should always be subject to laws governing offensive language, libel and some vague notion of public interest. I put to the House that this theory of fairness and equality is little more than a convenient myth; a myth which fails to acknowledge the fact that freedom of speech must occur within the context of power relationships, which are in themselves also quite unequal. As we all know, the pornography business is a multimillion-dollar enterprise. It would be ridiculous to claim some equality between such a powerful, well-financed group and individuals or

groups who put the opposing view. Therefore, I believe the scales are tipped quite heavily in favour of the peddlers of pornography unless the State is prepared to intervene and restore some balance. Far from being neutral, free speech can be used by those who have the power and the financial resources to maintain their vested interests whilst at the same time disadvantaging those who lack similar power.

It is sometimes difficult to define concepts, and the concept of pornography is no exception. I read with interest in the 5 May 1990 edition of *New Scientist* an attempt to come to grips with this problem. Under the heading *Drawing the Line—Can we define Pornography?* it concluded—

“Images of nudity and sexuality are becoming more prevalent. They have become a feature of several tabloid newspapers and regularly appear in magazines that are not ostensibly sex-orientated. In a recent survey of American detective magazines, researchers found that 38 per cent of the covers depicted women in bondage.”

In trying to distinguish what is and what is not pornographic, the literal definition of pornography “the writings of harlots”, is no more useful than the eighteenth century suggestion—“books you read with one hand”. British legislation hinges upon the concept of “obscenity” and this is taken to be material that corrupts and depraves its viewer or reader. This has for many years been recognised as an outmoded concept, but the problem of finding something better has remained. An American lawyer, Catherine MacKinnon, recently proposed a definition that distinguished pornography from erotica. She suggests that pornography portrays women being physically abused in subordinate roles to men or dehumanised as sexual objects. By contrast, erotica shows men and women in equal power relationships that are based on emotional attachment. This distinction has the advantage of corresponding to the research findings that pornography, as defined, is linked to sexual violence whereas no such links have been found for erotica.

I know that civil libertarians will say, “But what about the rights of people in Queensland to read and see the same sort of material seen by other Australians?” The answer to that difficult question is, “What about the rights of people who want to visit their local news agency, petrol station or supermarket without being offended?” In effect, the legislation is about balancing the rights of those two groups of people. The minority who want access to that type of material will still be able to obtain publications through the mail, but those publications will no longer be available through retail outlets. I have no doubt that the stand being taken by the Government does in fact represent the wishes of the vast majority of Queenslanders. As legislators, we have a responsibility to reflect community standards. More importantly, we have a responsibility to protect young people from exploitation and reinforce family values in the process. As to being out of step with the rest of Australia, this is nothing new for Queensland. While it may be appropriate to seek uniformity on a whole range of issues, I doubt if it is considered appropriate to limit our standards to the lowest common denominator.

Those who would have us open the floodgates to pornography either make several claims as to why pornography can play a positive role in our society or more often than not assert that it is not the province of Government to limit individual rights as to what people read or see. I have a brief comment to make on two of those points. The first point concerns a safely valve. The claim that pornographic material performs a valuable social function by allowing the release of sexual drives which may normally result in socially disruptive behaviour, and perhaps even lead to violent crime, has never in fact been proven. I readily admit that the other side of the coin, that is, the argument that those who perpetrate violent crimes of a sexual nature have frequently confessed to the role pornography played in their actions, is equally unproven. I feel it is far better to err on the

side of caution and put in place responsible and reasonable restrictions while the issue remains scientifically unresolved.

Between 1973 and 1987, the reported incidence of rape in Australia rose to 15 per 100 000 from a base figure of 6 per 100 000. This dramatic rise occurred at a time when hard core pornography became more readily available. There are those who would claim that hard core pornography does not appease the sexual appetite but in fact only serves to excite it. The second point relates to the black market. Many people would also argue that placing restrictions upon the availability of such material serves to drive the problem underground. They attempt to equate such prohibition with the prohibition on alcohol in the United States earlier this century, which really gave rise to fertile ground for the establishment of organised crime. I reject such an equation because pornography attacks more than the health of the consumer. It strikes at the very heart of our social fabric and undermines values that are central to us, such as privacy and intimacy. In the most base way, pornography makes public what I believe ought to remain private. It de-personalises the individual and treats him or her more as an object, thus eroding his or her humanity. In particular, women are degraded because they are portrayed as being available for the purposes of sexual gratification, thus denying them their humanity and true value. It is interesting to note that many feminists who were previously in the forefront of those advocating the liberalising of laws relating to obscenity can now be counted among those who support tougher restrictions.

As a society, we have experimented with a degree of permissiveness in the past. It is my understanding that the community at large now rejects the excesses of that period. There is a general acceptance that individuals can expect limitations being placed upon behaviour in the interests of society as a whole. In this instance, far from being out of step, Queensland is showing the way. Until now, the law regarding the censorship of literature has been contained in a number of statutes. The underlying principle is that persons are prohibited from selling or distributing publications that are indecent or obscene. As usual, the previous Government was reactionary when it came to moral issues. Members of that Government were incapable of coming to grips with a need for balance, and tended to take an absolutist and fundamentalist view that quite often bordered on the ridiculous. When speaking of Queensland's censorship laws under the National Party, the eminent criminologist, Dr Paul Wilson, stated—

“I think what really made me decide that censorship was something I found hard to come to grips with was the proposed banning of a book called *The Rape of our Land*, which turned out to be about soil erosion.

Nevertheless very serious consideration was given by the Queensland authorities to banning that particular book.”

This highlights the very real danger that exists when Governments legislate on moral issues. At the whim of politicians, human freedom at one end of the scale either can be shackled completely through a form of totalitarian censorship or, at the other end of the scale, can be totally lacking in restrictions resulting in a break-down in social propriety. Thankfully, this legislation does neither. It strikes a realistic balance, based on prevailing community standards. I doubt very much that the system previously in place really served a worthwhile purpose. It was a very reactive system which required people to complain about a particular publication before a determination was made. This hit-and-miss system put police in an invidious position because they were required to carry out the role of primary censors and they had to decide whether a publication was indecent or obscene.

I have great sympathy also for newsagents who perform a valuable service in our community, the like of which is not seen anywhere else in the Western World. It is unfortunate that those who wage the battle against pornography have tended to vent their

anger at these small-businesspeople who, by far and away, behave in a very responsible manner. In many ways, I would say that they could be considered to be victims of the trade in pornography because they are locked into commercial strictures which give them only a limited control over the material they have to market. The previous system also placed the judiciary in a very difficult position because, instead of interpreting a clear statutory requirement, judges had to make moral decisions clothed in legal jargon. As a result, the system left many loopholes allowing unscrupulous persons to take advantage of the sporadic enforcement process to sell or distribute material which may well have been obscene. In common with police officers, newsagents were unfairly required to assume the role of public censor. In addition, they were put under pressure by publishers to market products they may have found offensive, personally; but, as I said before, they were required to do so under contractual arrangements.

In future, the process will go something along the following lines: if a member of the public sees a publication and finds it objectionable, a complaint can be made to the State publications officer and that officer will then check to see whether the publication has been classified by the Commonwealth censor; if it has been classified as Category 1 or higher, the persons selling and distributing it may be prosecuted. In short, therefore, the Bill provides an incentive for distributors and sellers to abide by the law. In addition, it ensures that bona fide newsagents who operate through reputable distributors will not be subjected to prosecution. The Bill also makes allowances for some publications presently being used by health authorities for AIDS education and the like. This is as it should be. I accept the fact that some people may be offended even by the display of certain publications featuring tasteful nudity, but I doubt that a case exists for Government regulation in this area. Hopefully, moral suasion will encourage retail outlets to show some degree of responsibility and ensure that these publications are marketed in a more discreet manner. Such a process would not limit access to that material by adults, and would not confront impressionable young people as they browse through other merchandise.

I applaud the specific provisions designed to combat child pornography. The Bill makes it an offence for a person to have in his or her possession child pornography, and it is an offence to procure a minor for the making or production of a prohibited publication. The penalties have been drafted to ensure that persons responsible for child pornography receive the highest range of sentences. Possession of a child abuse publication will carry a maximum punishment of one year's gaol and a fine of \$18,000. Certain publications currently being marketed that display a degree of adult nudity have been accepted, by and large, by the community and will not be affected by this legislation. The Government is eager to stamp out exploitation and the open display of publications depicting deviant behaviour. This Bill will remove any doubts about what is or what is not acceptable. It will relieve the police and honest businesspeople, such as newsagents, of the task of being censors, but at the same time will ensure that the genuine concerns expressed by many people about publications that ought to be sold in Queensland are recognised. I place more value on human dignity and the development of young people than I do on the opinions of those who are interested only in the pursuit of personal gratification. I welcome the legislation. I support the Bill.

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (8.38 p.m.) I rise tonight to speak in support of the Bill. The Classification of Publications Bill sets out to do three things. The first is to get rid of the excesses of the Objectionable Literature Acts. The second is to get the definition and policing of obscenity out of the police force. The third is to outlaw child pornography. There is no need to labour the first point. It could be reasonably stated in this Parliament and anywhere else that the Objectionable Literature Acts failed to separate political censorship from moral censorship. Because many of those publications which espoused

radical moral ideas also espoused radical political and social ideas, there was always the possibility that an objection to the moral content of a publication was a disguised objection to its political content. It is time that the old Act was laid to rest.

The second point is what the Bill is largely about. The weakness of the current system is the uncertainty of its application, or what the Minister referred to in his second-reading speech as "nothing more than a legal lottery". Later, I will show that an important element of the lottery remains, and can work to the benefit of the community. As matters stand at present, a publication is a publication when it is available for distribution by sale or otherwise. A publication is an obscene publication if and when the police decide to take action against it. That, in turn, depends on which policeman is on duty, the day of the week, and what else has to be done. Even then, the outcome is not certain. A magistrate has to agree with the police, and he may not. It could also require a judge to agree with a magistrate, and he may not.

As the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, judges are not trained moralists and find themselves—

" . . . in a very difficult situation because instead of interpreting a clear statutory requirement, they have to make moral decisions clothed in legal jargon."

This, then, is the lottery: a police force that may or may not take action; a magistrate who may or may not agree with the policeman; and a judge who may or may not be a skilled moralist being forced to come up with a final decision.

What is proposed in place of this? At first sight it is disarmingly simple. I refer to the idea that everything that is formally banned by the Commonwealth Censorship Board plus everything classified by the board as restricted Category 1—items in plastic wrappers—and Category 2—items for sale on restricted premises—should be formally banned in Queensland. This preserves Queensland's status as a more censored community, which, incidentally, has done it no harm. In my opinion, it still will do no harm. It prevents Queensland going in the direction Labor Governments customarily take the States, as we saw Dunstan take South Australia and Wran take New South Wales. I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister and this Government on not travelling down that same path.

The Bill continues a policy of controlled access to certain types of literature. Mail-order access is not denied, and, I suggest, cannot be. All literature available elsewhere in Australia will be available to Queenslanders, with the exception of child pornography. This is understandable, but certain literature will be available to adults, or to persons who deliberately seek it out, that is, persons who have come to the decision that it is important for them to have the material. It is not available on impulse to influence accidentally a young person still forming his or her moral values. This limitation is in accordance with the key principle of the Sturgess report, where it states—

" . . . the first function of legislation in this area should be to insist upon children being allowed to grow up without pressure or interference so as to develop and claim their own sexual identities."

The second principle in this section is more difficult to judge, largely because it is so novel. This is the provision which deals with the large volume of literature unclassified by the Commonwealth Censorship Board. The intention, it would seem to me, is to create a class of approved distributors who are left to decide how the Commonwealth Censorship Board guidelines would have dealt with the matter had it been required to do so. Where the Queensland classification officer subsequently bans the material, that ends the matter. No retrospective prosecution follows. Approved distributors with a history of misjudgment and who are persistently at odds with the Queensland classification officer risk a loss of status as an approved distributor. I agree with the Minister that this should be the case.

Non-approved distributors do not enjoy any immunity from retrospective prosecution should they distribute unclassified material which is subsequently banned. Presumably, they are guilty of deliberately challenging the spirit of the Bill. Perhaps the Minister may wish to clarify if, indeed, that is what he believes is the spirit of the Bill. Who are these non-approved distributors? They are those people who apply for, but are denied, registration as approved distributors or who lose that status. But are they also other people? Who are they? Are they everyone else?

Throughout Part 3, which deals with offences, the legislation binds "a person". Does this mean that a person—and I am not suggesting that persons should do these things, I am just creating a scenario—who brings back three or four copies of a restricted Category 1 book for friends from, say, Tweed Heads and sells and distributes it to them for what it cost, has committed an offence under the Bill? Does it mean that a father of liberal or humanistic views may not distribute to his children literature of an explicitly sexual nature?

Mr Milliner: If he sells it, that's an offence.

Mr SANTORO: That is an offence. Fine. Does it mean that a husband may not display to his wife a picture of explicit nudity while travelling on a train, which is, presumably, a public place?

Ms Spence interjected.

Mr SANTORO: Come on, let the Minister have a go. The honourable member is being discourteous to him.

Mr Milliner: It would depend on whether a third party would be able to view it. If the male showed it to his female partner and she was willing to look at it, it would not be an offence.

Mr SANTORO: I was going to suggest that unless the notion of a non-approved distributor is cleared up, this Bill could be exposed and accused of being absurd in some of its implications. Perhaps that could be a marketing implication in itself.

The Bill provides for appeals against decisions by the classification officer. Some of these appeals are to be to an "appeal body" whose "constitution, practice and procedure" under clause 38 is to be decided by the Governor in Council. It is important for the Bill to disclose, as it does, who shall make the classifications. It is also important for the Bill to disclose the composition of the appeal body. There is a need, I would suggest, to have absolute confidence in the integrity and fairness of the appeal body since, in many matters, its decisions are final. That matter, I suggest to the Minister, needs to be cleared up. Again, I would be interested to hear his comments on that point.

Other appeals will go to the courts. At this point it becomes clear that the Bill does not necessarily remove the lottery the Minister referred to in his second-reading speech. The courts will still become involved. Instead of the police instigating a prosecution, it will be the office of the Queensland classification officer. This prosecution will still depend on such variables as: someone chancing upon the sale of the publication; someone being determined to take the matter to the office of the classification officer, or someone in the office of the classification officer deciding that it falls outside the Commonwealth guidelines for an unclassified publication. Of course, there are merits in the system where actions by enforcement bodies are appealed to higher courts.

Once an obscenity case comes before the higher courts, I suggest that it can and often does become theatre. Learned counsel argue about morality with a good deal of wit and humour in a way that disposes of the belief that morality is a simple matter. Public figures enter the witness box and disclose beliefs no-one ever suspected they held. Sometimes judges deliver learned discourses and produce a judgment that changes the

direction of a community. Publications once banned can be and are often made available; new writing appears along with new theatre and new art, and the local community realises it has matured and is able to handle what it previously feared. In so doing, the once guarded community becomes a little more like those parts of the world where civilisation is made. It is important to keep open, at all times, this course of appeals to the higher courts. I fear the Minister's forecast that this Act replaces the old legal lottery with a greater certainty and efficiency of action is not as true as he suggested, and fortunately so. This important area of appeals to higher and learned courts is a time-tested method of bringing about timely and restrained change.

The final and most important point I want to raise in regard to the working of the Act concerns the person who will be appointed as the classification officer. Enormous powers are given to this person. These powers will influence education and culture in all its diversity, and decisions made and implemented in these areas will shape Queensland's place in Australia and beyond. This is a world of mass communications. Making one place—whether it be Queensland, Alabama or anywhere else—different from elsewhere, and especially different from its neighbours, is more and more difficult as technology increases in its sophistication. Many would regard this Act as attempting the impossible. Whoever is appointed must be wise, temperate and realistic, and of sufficient character to resist all extremes.

The third aim of this Act is to outlaw child pornography. This has overwhelming public support, as has been suggested by honourable members who have preceded me in the debate. The support given it by the United Nations and the Australian Law Reform Commission simply adds to the authority of the initiative. Even so, it should not be overlooked that the Act creates a new type of offence in the area of printed matter, namely, for a person to be in possession of certain types of printed material. The offence is not to sell, display, exhibit or to distribute anything, whether graphic or in words, that is "a child abuse publication" but to have such matter in one's possession, subject to the exemptions outlined in clause 37 for publications of a medical, educational or scientific character. The analogy here is with certain drugs. It is important, however, given our tradition of liberty, to stress that this extreme measure is acceptable in this instance. I have been very pleased to hear previous speakers make that point and make it very clearly.

We note that our own sense of morality and justice towards defenceless or innocent children, or other young people, is backed up by the national and international conscience of such bodies as the Australian Law Reform Commission and the United Nations. If this Act sets Queensland apart from its neighbour, and other Australian States, it does so on the side of decency. I am not afraid to stand by that and say that in this place or outside of it. I am also aware that the benefits of the Act will depend on the choice of a very wise classification officer and an equally wise, humane, just and enlightened appeals body. The Act may easily slide into ridicule unless this is the case. It may equally well make Queensland a better place—decent for children, decent for adults, and a desirable destination for families. It is for this reason that, together with other members of the Liberal Party, I am most pleased to support the Bill.

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (8.49 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate. I particularly thank the honourable member for Tablelands for his contribution, although I do not necessarily agree with everything he said. This is a very complex issue and people have a very wide and diverse range of views on it. I respect the honourable member's right to have and to express his point of view. I repeat that it is a very complex issue.

He was correct in saying that many people thought that, after 2 December 1989, there would be a flood of this type of material coming across the border and that all sorts

of terrible things would happen in our society following the election of a Labor Government. Obviously, that has not happened. The people of Queensland are very fortunate to have such a caring and considerate Government, and I am sure that the honourable member for Tablelands would agree that that is so. A situation was developing in which people were being offended by this material. What we have tried to do with this Bill, and what we have done successfully, is to strike a balance. The material is still available for those people who want it, and some people do want it and like it.

I asked the question about *Playboy* and *Penthouse* because it was when I was running my newsagency business that those two magazines were first published. The response was unbelievable. The first edition was sold out within five minutes of my opening the doors. I could not get any more copies of it. It had a very wide circulation at that time. The gauge of the success of these publications is whether they are still around. These two have been in circulation for 15 years, so people are still buying them and reading them. Therefore, they still want them. I also accept that some people are offended when they go into a newsagency or service station and see this type of material. We have tried to strike a balance by making it available to the people who want it. All they have to do is buy a postage stamp and they can send away for Category 1 or Category 2 material that is available for retail sale. This is a very difficult area. With the passage of this legislation we will continue to phase two and sit down and talk sensibly to the newsagents and their association in an effort to come to an agreement about the display of the material that will be available. It is very difficult to draw the line. Where do we draw the line? The honourable member for Tablelands displayed a couple of magazines tonight. Different magazines offend different people in different ways. That is why it is virtually impossible to write legislation to cover every situation that could arise. That is why we want to sit down with the newsagents and try to come to a sensible, negotiated position concerning the display of the material that is available. People are complaining about the posters outside newsagencies. That is why we want to sit down with the newsagents and their association and try to come to a sensible arrangement so that people are not offended. I believe that we will be able to achieve that and it will be achieved by consensus, not by trying to write legislation to cover every conceivable situation. The passing of the legislation is phase one. We will then go into phase two, and that will be consulting the newsagents or their association. I believe we will be able to reach a very satisfactory arrangement with them.

The reason we have gone for the Commonwealth classification system is that it puts certainty into the classification system. Other States are using this system, and that is why we believe it is important that we use it—so that there is certainty. People who are distributing this material know and accept that system. It is important that we adopt it in Queensland so that we have uniformity with the Commonwealth classification system. That is why it is important that we stick rigidly to that system. As I say, different things offend different people, and I suppose it is up to the individual what does constitute an offence in his or her own mind. I believe that we have struck the balance, and we will get it right.

I thank the honourable member for Brisbane Central for his contribution. He has been heavily involved in discussions on the formulation of this legislation, and he obviously knows exactly what is contained in it. I thank the honourable member for Moggill for his contribution to the debate. He referred to a couple of points that were raised by the Law Society in a letter to me. I responded to the Law Society by letter, and I believe that we have allayed the fears of the Law Society regarding the two points which the honourable member for Moggill raised. One was the question of child pornography. I am quite happy to show Dr Watson those letters rather than read them into *Hansard*. There are about five pages, and I do not want to take up the time of the House. I will ensure that the honourable

member receives them so he can look at the answers, but I think they will satisfy the queries he raised. However, I thank the honourable member for his contribution.

I thank the honourable member for Mulgrave for his contribution. He has shown a keen interest in this area, and I understand that not so long ago he addressed a group of people in his electorate regarding this legislation. I thank the honourable member for Merthyr for his contribution. He did indicate to me that he was going to leave the Chamber, because he did have guests to meet. I will undertake to respond to him in writing and answer the points that he raised in his contribution.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. G. R. Milliner (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

Mr GILMORE (8.57 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 3, after line 24, insert—

‘ “regulated publication” means a publication—

(a) that is an unrestricted publication; and

(b) depicts or describes nudity or sexual activity in pictorial or other form;’.”

As I said in my speech during the second-reading debate, I believe this amendment which is offered to the Government tonight does exactly what the Minister intends to try to do by negotiation with the newsagents. As I said earlier, I do not intend to try to lecture the Minister on how it is to be a newsagent. He is the professional, and I am not; but it seems to me that by trying to do these kinds of things by consensus one is simply putting newsagents in a difficult position because there is a lack of certainty. The Minister has said tonight, “I am trying to bring certainty back into the legislation. We are trying to tidy up the administration.” I admit that it has. We have done all that, and it is great. It is good legislation; but can we just go this one little extra step?

This is a sovereign State, and while I recognise that what the Minister is attempting to do is adopt that set of regulations as being real, I am not asking that he in fact should change that very much. The amendment that I have proposed fits very neatly into the structure of the legislation. It does not alter anything within the structure of the legislation in terms of the voluntary agreements or the voluntary code that is structured within it. It sits very nicely, and it is a very comfortable amendment, to put it that way, insofar as it provides all the things the Minister and I have spoken about in the past, the things the Minister's staff have spoken to me about, and the things the Minister has spoken about in the Chamber tonight. This is what we are trying to achieve.

We want to stop offence. We want to make sure these things are provided to the community properly. We are not trying to take them from the community. Later, I intend to move a consequential amendment. With this amendment, I am simply trying to make sure that it is done in a way that the material is not readily visible or accessible to children, or offensive to a reasonable adult. That is a simple amendment to the legislation, and I believe there is nothing in this amendment that the Government should be afraid of or run away from. Tonight, six members have spoken to this legislation. Not one of them failed to support the legislation or what the Minister is trying to do.

I suppose that I took a role different from other speakers, because I was using the material that was available to me to try to illustrate that at the cutting edge there is a very fine line when we change from classified to unclassified material or when we move from an unrestricted category to restricted Category 1. The people who publish these magazines are very clever. They understand what the censor will allow them to get away with—a little bit of shadow here and a slight twist of the body there. The magazines are still extremely explicit; however, there are fine nuances in understanding the way in which the censor does his job. I recognise that he has limitations on what he can do. I am merely suggesting that we can broaden that fine line and make it, first of all, easier on the newsagents, who will not have to worry that they might be committing an offence. At present, people can be walking into a newsagency to buy chewing gum, a casket ticket or a *Courier-Mail* and they can view on the footpath a sandwich board with naked ladies on it. As a result of this amendment, those newsagents will not have to make decisions about that material. I suggest that, if material depicts or describes sexual nudity or sexual activity in pictorial or other form, it should not be so readily available. That is a simple way in which we can handle this matter.

I ask the Minister to contemplate this amendment in terms of the practical application of what is essentially good legislation so that tonight, when we walk out of here and this legislation goes forward to become the law of the land, we can all be extremely satisfied that there is no question that we have achieved what we set out to achieve. I ask the Minister to consider that request.

Mr MILLINER: I have considered the amendment, but I cannot accept it. I return to what I said earlier about consulting with the newsagents. We will not be able to cover every situation. I know what the honourable member is trying to achieve with his amendment and I will tell him why it will not work. He is adding an additional category in relation to regulated publications. He is including in the legislation a description of a regulated publication, which is described as material that depicts or describes nudity or sexual activity in pictorial or other form, and he is proposing a consequential amendment which relates to the display of that material. If he is not careful, he will finish up not making available for retail sale a number of books such as the James Bond books by Ian Fleming. Many of those publications describe nudity and sexual activity in another way. This amendment will not be able to cover every situation. I know what the honourable member is trying to get at. His amendment is aimed at publications such as the *Penthouse* magazine and other similar magazines. However, by restricting those magazines, he will bring into question a number of other publications that he does not intend to bring into question. That is why we are saying that we must sit down with the newsagents and come to a sensible agreement on what can be displayed and what cannot be displayed.

I have great sympathy with what the honourable member is saying. Some of these magazines do offend people. Obnoxious magazines such as *Pix/People* have been around for years. They are affectionately described as the poor man's *Penthouse*. Although they have been around for years, they do offend people, and they are not necessarily depicting nudity. They depict girls in swimwear and relatively brief bikinis. Although those girls may be clothed, the objection is to the suggestive poses. We want to talk to the newsagents sensibly about those magazines. We do not desire to cover every magazine with this legislation, because that would be impossible. Although I do not disagree with what the honourable member is trying to achieve with his amendment, I point out that it will not achieve the desired result, and that it will put at risk other publications. Newsagents will have to have large counters that take up the whole shop so that they can put all the restricted publications under the counter. The fact is that newsagents will be selling those publications and books. We want to be sensible about the matter. We want to talk to newsagents and reach consensus on the matter rather than try to cover all

situations in the legislation. We believe that we can achieve the best results by negotiation.

Mr GILMORE: I understand clearly what the Minister said, particularly in terms of paragraph (b) of the amendment which refers to "activity in pictorial or other form". I accept that the "other form" wording might be a problem. However, I have spoken to the person responsible for censorship in Queensland and I have looked at some of the words that are available on the street already in the "Forum" section of *Penthouse* and in motor bike magazines. The articles in some of those magazines would take the hair off one's head. In fact, the Minister must have been reading them! I stand to be corrected on this point, but only one publication has been taken off the shelves because of the words contained in it, and that was *American Psycho*. In fact, virtually anything that is written——

Mr Milliner: It was violence.

Mr GILMORE: Yes, but it was the words that were contained in it that were offensive. It contained no pictorial matter; it was purely words.

Mr Milliner: But what your amendment says—"describes nudity or sexual activity in pictorial or other form". The stuff in that *American Psycho* was violence.

Mr GILMORE: Yes.

Mr Milliner: It had nothing to do with nudity or sexual activity.

Mr GILMORE: Yes. I would be perfectly happy to remove "or other form" from my amendment. However, I understand what the Minister is saying. The point I was trying to make was that the Minister raised the suggestion that James Bond books and other similar books would have to be taken off the shelves. If it came in that form, it may be the case that it fitted within the definition of "or other form". But the intent of this amendment is simply to ensure that in a legislative form we put certainty into the matter and we do not have to go to the newsagents tomorrow and say, "Look, we are now going to have to talk about this thing." With that approach, it will have to be done by goodwill and so on. I believe this is excellent legislation. I would be perfectly happy to change my amendment to try to encourage the Minister to recognise that, yes, there is a way of achieving this. I could well have put into that amendment—in fact, it was my intention to do so but I was talked out of it by the draftsman—a consequential provision that some of this material should be displayed in a sealed plastic bag. Today, many publications in sealed plastic bags are already on the shelves. The intention of this amendment is good, and I ask the Minister to reconsider it, even if it comes to the point at which "or other" has to be deleted.

Mr MILLINER: Again I get back to the fact that the honourable member is casting the net far too wide and there is the potential that other publications could be caught up unintentionally in this amendment. I can cite an example of that. I do not want to be flippant about this, but one could arguably say that the Bible could be caught up in this particular amendment.

Mr Gilmore: But what if I took out that "or other"?

Mr MILLINER: I think it is far better that we go down the track that we intend to go down so that negotiations can take place with the newsagents and then we can see how it works. I am confident that it will work. That is why I ask the honourable member to accept this code of conduct and code of ethics for newsagents. They are honourable people. The newsagents want this legislation to work. They want certainty and they also want sensible legislation. I believe that having the code of conduct and doing it by way of discussion will be the sensible way to go. Although the honourable member is trying to put into the legislation the aspects that he wants to cover, he is casting such a wide net that he will unintentionally pick up a lot of other publications. I do not think he wants that to happen.

Mr Gilmore: No.

Mr MILLINER: No. But this amendment will mean that those other publications will be picked up. I do not disagree with the honourable member's intent. However, I cannot accept the amendment because the net is far too wide. I believe that we should go down the track that we intend to go down and try it, because I am sure that it will work.

Mr GILMORE: A number of newsagents have come to me and said that they are personally offended by some of the material that is provided to them. Some of those blue series of magazines are quite frankly obscene. I am glad that the Premier is in the Chamber to hear this because he was responsible for the debate in the press recently when he suggested that these publications should be taken off the street. I agreed entirely with what he said. However, the Newsagency Council gave the Premier a bit of a touch-up and said, "Look, why are you getting into us? Do you want us to act as censors? You are giving us a hard time." Newsagents were offended by what the Premier said at that time.

I have heard what the Minister has said. However, I believe that the intent of my amendment can be fulfilled here tonight. I believe it can be done well and sensitively and I think it can bring to fruition all of the things that the Minister is attempting to do, all of the things that we want to do and all of the things that the Premier and his entire Government obviously want to achieve from this legislation. Regrettably, in that respect, the Opposition will divide the Committee.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted—put; and the Committee divided—

DIVISION

Resolved in the negative.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Hollis): Order! For all future divisions on this Bill the bells will be rung for two minutes.

Clauses 4 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11—

Mr GILMORE (9.21 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 7, after line 23, insert—

'(7) The appeal body is to consist of 3 members appointed by the Governor in Council.

(8) A member of the appeal body—

- (a) holds office for such term (not longer than 3 years) as the Governor in Council specifies in the instrument of appointment; and
- (b) may be removed from office in accordance with the regulations; and
- (c) holds office on such terms and conditions not provided for by this Act as the Governor in Council determines.' "

In moving this amendment, I suggest to the Minister and to the Government that this legislation fails to provide for an appeal body. It is my understanding that it is intended that the appeal body ultimately will be the Administrative Appeals Tribunal or whatever, but that is some way down the track. It seems to me wholly appropriate to move this amendment simply to provide immediately for the appropriate appeals mechanisms. The amendment is worded very carefully so that the Government cannot take offence at the way that it is structured. The Opposition in no way attempts to influence the Government in who it should appoint to such a position or how it can go about hiring or firing those particular people. This is done in good faith. I believe that this is a very sensible amendment that would ensure that the appeals mechanisms that are provided for in the legislation are made whole in the one move tonight.

Mr MILLINER: The Government will be putting an AAT in place fairly quickly. On that basis, we do not believe that it is necessary to include this particular amendment in the legislation. We do not believe that there will be any problems until such time as the AAT is in place. As I said, when the AAT is in place there will be a body to which to appeal.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 12 and 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14—

Dr WATSON (9.24 p.m.): I thank the Minister for providing me with a copy of his answer to the Law Society in relation to clauses 14 and 25. Having read that answer, I have no problem with what the Minister has done. The answer which he gave the Law Society was very convincing.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 15 to 26, as read, agreed to.

Clause 27—

Mr GILMORE (9.26 p.m.): This is purely a question for the Minister. The legislation does not provide for a register of telephone warrants. Having read the clause, I recognise that it does contain some safeguards and that certain things must follow the issue of a warrant of that nature. However, some concern has been expressed to me that, if we are going to have telephone warrants, it might be reasonable to allow for a register of telephone warrants so that the matter is tidied up. I would like the Minister to answer that.

Mr MILLINER: It cannot be enforced unless there is evidence. The member is talking about a register of telephone warrants.

Mr Gilmore: A register of warrants issued by telephone. It provides a record of what has happened and why.

Mr MILLINER: That could be done administratively. That would not need to be included in the Act. In any event, those sorts of records would be held in the courts so that they would be available if anybody really wanted to get them. It could be done administratively. We will have a look at it.

Clause 27, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 28 to 40, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

CLASSIFICATION OF FILMS BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 24 October (see p. 2151).

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (9.28 p.m.): In rising to speak in the debate on the Classification of Films Bill, I intend to take very little time. I am comfortable with the legislation. It is competent in a number of ways. However, a number of comments need to be made. Firstly, both pieces of legislation that are before the House tonight have come with the assumption that the regulations set down by the Commonwealth censor are appropriate and, certainly, that the actions of the Commonwealth censor on all occasions are appropriate. Regrettably, I cannot come to the conclusion that that is so. I tender the evidence to the House. It is not to be tabled because, quite frankly, I do not believe that it is the kind of material that requires tabling in the Parliament. It is demeaning of the Parliament, but I want to refer to it. It is a videotape called the *Lovers Guide* that I purchased from Brashs recently for \$29.95. Recently, that videotape was the subject of an interview on the Channel 10 news between a reporter and the Commonwealth censor. At that time, the Commonwealth censor in discussing the legislation said that the videotape would normally have had an X rating. He made no bones about that. He said that, under the guidelines, that videotape qualified for an X rating. Having seen the video, I agree with him entirely. However, he said that the videotape was a worthy production in terms of educational potential. It therefore got an R rating. The videotape is on sale at Brashs and other stores for our kids to buy. It is an explicit sexual video. The front cover states, "This video contains scenes of a sexually explicit nature".

I raised that subject only to point out that what we are doing tonight is not in itself a panacea. The system does contain flaws. A few moments ago, I tried to amend another piece of legislation to recognise that the Commonwealth system is not necessarily the ideal and that, as a sovereign State, Queensland is able to and probably should from time to time make its own rules and regulations in respect of the matter. As I said, I viewed that videotape. I cannot describe it. It is a horror story. It is not the sort of material that should be available on the streets with an R classification. If the videotape had been given an X classification, it would have had to be ordered by mail from Canberra and would not be available over the counter at Brashs. I question that. It indicates to me and to a number of people out in the community that the legislation that we are debating tonight is flawed in a number of ways.

I do not intend to move any amendments to the legislation. I simply want to point out to this Parliament that people are fallible. Ultimately, people who are involved in censorship must become desensitised themselves one way or another. Ultimately, they

must change their view. The honourable member for Brisbane Central spoke at some length about the arguments for and against censorship in our community. He said that there are legitimate arguments on both sides. There is the argument that pornography itself increases the number of attacks on women and desensitises people in their views towards women. There is also the argument that there is empirical evidence from Denmark and other places that that is not so, and together with those arguments is the argument that individuals are subject to desensitisation.

As honourable members consider this legislation, they must be aware that simply because the person who made this video is a doctor does not mean that he is not himself a voyeur. He wrote the following on the video cover—

“Love and sex play are an important part of most people’s lives but it can be surprisingly difficult to obtain reliable information. Direct observation is often how we learn things best and yet actually witnessing the sexual lives of others at first hand is almost impossible.”

I think that is an appalling statement to print on the cover of a video that is for sale in the main street. This video was allowed into Queensland because it was said to be an educational video. People have been on the face of this earth for 40 million years, but now we need an educational video! How did we all get here? There is no necessity for this video, and I suggest that the Commonwealth censor erred in giving it an R classification.

I wish to make one other point. This is not an original thought, but it is one that I have been enamoured of for some time. Long before I came to this place, a person in South Australia made a suggestion regarding the way in which these videos should be displayed on shelves and how individuals could determine very quickly their content. At that time, he suggested that there should be three words printed across the front of the video—“language”, “sex” and “violence”—and that underneath each word should be a number rated from zero to nine. Therefore, a person walking into a video shop could clearly see that the video contained vile language, gratuitous violence or whatever else, because it was clearly indicated on the dustcover. That is an important thought, particularly for parents who take videos home for their children. One has no way of knowing from the dustcover what is on the video. I understand from having spoken to people involved in censorship that there are ways of determining the contents of videos and that is taken into consideration. Unfortunately, this information is not on the dustcover for all to see. It should be displayed in inch-high letters.

Mr Milliner: There’s a warning on that dustcover, isn’t there?

Mr GILMORE: Yes, there is a warning. It says “scenes of a sexually explicit nature”. There is no question about that, but I suggest it would be very easy to display that kind of additional information. I am not suggesting that we do this by way of amendment to the Bill, but I would like the Minister to consider it. Once the Minister is less enamoured of the Commonwealth way of doing things, he might be able to achieve this. Perhaps in some of his consultations with both his interstate and Commonwealth colleagues, he may be able to convince them that this would be a sensible amendment to this legislation in the long term.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (9.36 p.m.): I rise to indicate—as I indicated during the debate on the previous Bill—that, on my reading of this Bill and the previous legislation, the underlying principles are the same and I do not intend repeating what I said before. I simply indicate that the Liberal Party will be supporting the Bill.

Hon. G. R. MILLINER (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) (9.37 p.m.), in reply: I thank the honourable members for Tablelands and Moggill for their contributions, particularly the member for Moggill. There are a couple of points I wish to

raise that were mentioned by the member for Tablelands in his contribution. I have seen the video to which he referred and I can understand that the Commonwealth censor is in a dilemma. I admit that it is a borderline case. One of the matters he took into account was that the videotape is a well-presented, sex education film that is generally informative on a range of issues and is pitched at an adult audience. That is why it is R-rated. R-rated videos are available to persons over the age of 18 years. It is not as black and white or as clear cut as that.

Mr Gilmore: No. It's in full colour.

Mr MILLINER: I know it is in full colour. It is a difficult one. It can be classified as educational material. The other night I happened to tune in—by mistake—to a television show about sex.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr MILLINER: Yes, it was a send-up of sex, as I understand it. It referred to sex education films in which people are shown how to put on condoms. The sex education film showed condoms being put on carrots. When the young couple on the TV show eventually got into bed, they put the condom on a carrot and went ahead and had sex. Maybe videos of this kind will overcome those sorts of problems because they are educational.

This is a serious issue. The other matter raised by the honourable member was the issue of identification of the material on video dustcovers. The legislation makes it compulsory for the videos to carry warnings on the front of the dustcover. There is a warning on the front of the dustcover of the video to which the honourable member has referred, but the honourable member suggests that there should be a rating in relation to sex, violence, or whatever. Again, I point out that the problem is who will identify where, between 1 and 9, the video should fall. The honourable member may think that a particular video warrants a rating of 6, but someone else may think that it warrants a rating of 8. This is a very difficult area, and it is important that the dustcovers for these particular films carry a warning to inform people that the content includes explicit nudity. If the honourable member were to walk into a video store, I do not believe that the particular dustcover to which he refers could in any way shape or form offend him at first glance.

Mr Gilmore: Well, no. It is the contents.

Mr MILLINER: That is right, but there is a warning on the dustcover. If anybody picks it up, looks at the dustcover and examines it further, the first thing he will see is the sticker that is on the front that obviously warns them of certain material contained in it. A prominent classification label appears, and I believe that that is sufficient to warn people. If people want to buy pornographic material, they will do so. It is as simple as that.

Mr Gilmore: The point I was trying to make is that the whole thing is a farce in that there is not another R-rated video with that particular material in it for rental in Queensland. That really is an X-rated video.

Mr MILLINER: As I said, it is a very fine line. When the censor viewed that particular video, he deemed it to be educational.

Mr Gilmore: Like I said, who needs the education?

Mr MILLINER: It is a fine line, and I will grant that; but those fine lines will always exist in an issue as complex as this, no matter what anyone does. As I said, this is not a clear-cut issue. However, overall, I think that the Commonwealth censor does a very good job. We do not receive the number of complaints that one would expect in relation to videos. All in all, the industry supports and follows the Commonwealth's classification system because it makes the picture theatre industry more certain about what can be shown in cinemas. I believe that the direction taken by the Government in relation to this legislation will benefit everybody.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. G. R. Milliner (Everton—Minister for Justice and Corrective Services) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 54, as read, agreed to.

Clause 55—

Mr MILLINER (9.42 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 29, after line 23, insert—

‘Maximum penalty—50 penalty units’.”

This amendment arises as a result of a typographical error that appears in the Bill. The penalty units were omitted when the Bill was printed, so this amendment is very minor. It fixes up a technical fault that occurred during the printing of the Bill.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 55, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 56 to 67 and Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

Third Reading

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

ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT BILL**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 14 November (see p. 3002).

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (9.44 p.m.): I preface the remarks I wish to make on this Bill by indicating that the Opposition will be supporting this legislation. We support the principle of energy efficiency labels being attached to electrical appliances that are offered for sale in Queensland. I understand that this practice is compulsory in three other States, namely, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. I note that many manufacturers have included these efficiency rating labels on items that are for sale in Queensland. I share the concern felt by the Government that Queensland may become a dumping ground for inefficient items that have to be sold off in Queensland because they cannot attract ratings in other States. As consumers become more aware of the cost of electricity, the efficiency of appliances will become more important. States such as Queensland that do not have a compulsory rating system in operation run the risk of having substandard appliances being dumped onto their markets.

I believe that there has to be more consumer education. There is a saying, “Let the buyer beware.” Although I am a great believer in that adage, some buyers do not want to become educated. It is a major problem. I believe that electricity-consumers need to be provided with proper services by the electricity supply industry. They have the right to know the electricity consumption rate of a particular item. The situation can be compared with the buyer of a motor car. A person would not buy a car without ascertaining its fuel consumption, that is, how many litres of fuel are used per hundred kilometres. One looks at the price of a car, its size, the fuel consumption rate, the maintenance costs, the availability of spare parts, and then makes the purchase. I think that many buyers of electrical items do not go to the same trouble as they do if they are buying a car. They probably change cars every four or five years. Some people might even keep them for

only three years. These people would most probably hope to have an electrical item in their homes for 10 to 15 years. Anybody buying a large refrigerator certainly would not think that he would have to replace it every three or four years. Perhaps people have either bought a new home or modernised their kitchen and have reached the stage at which their old fridge is ready for the proverbial great scrap heap and they have decided to buy a new refrigerator. Really, they would hope to keep a refrigerator for at least 15 years. Not only should people examine the performance of the refrigerator, the clothes drier, the washing machine, or the dishwasher; they should also have some idea of what that machine is going to cost by way of consumption of electricity during its life. That is one of the reasons why I support this legislation.

I notice that the rating system extends to a maximum of six stars. I also notice that there is a big variation in the performance of some machines. I took the trouble to look through the energy information centre in Mary Street. I would like to congratulate the people who have been involved in the setting-up of that centre. With imagination, it could be improved and made larger, but it is a start. Somebody who is really interested can go and have a look at the various appliances. I was interested in all the items, but I was particularly interested in those items that can assist people, from an architectural point of view, in maximising the benefit of bringing solar rays into their homes. We all like to have a nice warm spot in winter and a nice shady spot in summer. I think a lot of common sense comes into it. I am absolutely amazed that some architects forget that Queenslanders live in a climate that is rather sunny in summer and quite cool in winter. I think that the use of electricity can be reduced in homes if particular care is taken in the design of homes so that people have not only a much more comfortable place in which to live, but also a much cheaper place in which to live.

One of the reasons why the electricity industry is interested in the demand side of the industry is that in winter domestic consumers place the maximum load on the system in the morning and in the evening. It is in the interests of the industry to make sure that in winter those domestic consumers do not use quite as much power as they do at present so that a flatter demand curve can be achieved. I raised some of these issues during a debate on another matter today. Everybody knows that it is costly to build power stations. It is very costly to build coal-fired power stations that are to be base-load power stations to meet peak demands. Today, in a previous debate, I mentioned that I thought the growth in electricity consumption in Queensland was 3.5 per cent. The 1990-91 annual report had an annual growth figure of 3.5 per cent for the previous year. It was indicated that at present the rate of growth was up to 3.8 per cent. That growth will continue, and it is in the interests of the Government to make sure that that peak demand curve is flattened off as much as possible.

I notice that last year, there was a slightly reduced demand for electricity per consumer compared with the previous year. That has happened once before. It is rare that domestic consumers use less electricity than they did the previous year. In fact, in 1991, it was only three kilowatt hours per consumer more than consumption to the end of June 1990. It is a little bit hard to say what the energy use was per household. No doubt, one can say that gas connections have increased throughout the State and some electricity-consumers have converted to gas. So, one does not know whether total energy consumption has really been reduced or whether people are actually using more. I suspect that people continue to use more energy all the time. One of the other things that I noticed at the energy information centre was the amount of information that was available on electric lights. Those low-power, modern light bulbs that are reasonably costly—I think they cost about \$30 for a seven-watt fluorescent tube that has an output equivalent to about a 40-watt globe——

Mr Welford: You can get them for about \$20 now.

Mr FITZGERALD: One can get them for \$20? That is excellent, because when I actually calculated the mathematics, I found that if one wanted to use the equivalent of a 75-watt bulb, although I do not know what the cost was, it was substantially more than the \$30 that I have quoted. I found out that with the life of that bulb, one was going to save approximately \$48. If one used an ordinary 75-watt bulb for three hours a night, one would be using about 1 000 hours per year. The life of one of these globes is about 8 000 hours. A person buying one of them for \$48 would save \$6 a year, but a housewife pushing a trolley through a store would not have \$200 or \$300 to buy some of those bulbs. I am glad that the price is coming down, because that will make these energy efficient globes more affordable.

A microwave oven is also energy efficient because it uses a lot less energy than the conventional hot plates and ovens. But even though people have these energy efficient items in their homes, they are still demanding more energy. The biggest consumer of energy is air-conditioning. Air-conditioning is not used very much in low-rise houses in the country, but high-rise buildings are sealed off and use an enormous amount of power for air-conditioning. The annual reports of the Queensland Electricity Commission contain energy demand curves which show high consumption in the middle of the day during summer. I believe that a large proportion of that would result from the high demand for air-conditioning in office buildings.

This Bill also covers the labelling of domestic appliances, the registration of efficiency labels, the cancellation of registration and the stealing of electricity. An article in the *Courier-Mail* today reports that bandits are stealing \$20m worth of electricity a year from the Queensland Electricity Commission. Unscrupulous people are selling instruments called black boxes so that people can rob the system. The Bill will make it easier to prosecute those people in court. It certainly will not help catch these thieves—the inspectors will have to do that—but the commission will not have to prove that it is the owner of the electricity. All honourable members would support that. Everybody would know that the electricity in the wires outside a building belongs to, for instance, the South East Queensland Electricity Board. This provision in the Bill will remove the red tape and save a wastage of court-time in proving who is the lawful owner of the electricity.

The Opposition supports the proposal in the Bill to allow for permanent part-time employees to receive benefits. By and large, I support the concept of having permanent part-time employees in industry. I think that this will come about in many more industries. I know that it will come about in the teaching profession because teachers want to have job-sharing.

Mr Schwarten: It's there now and it's working well.

Mr FITZGERALD: I know, and I welcome it. It is an excellent idea. Not everyone wants to work full-time because of family commitments or other priorities and they should be able to enjoy some of the benefits available to permanent employees. The Opposition supports the Bill. We will be monitoring what is happening and, if need be, we will make suggestions regarding future necessary amendments.

Mr PEARCE (Broadsound) (9.57 p.m.): I am pleased to join in this debate on the Electricity Amendment Bill. My contribution in part is directed to the introduction of a compulsory energy efficient labelling scheme for domestic electrical appliances. I support the Government's commitment to encourage the efficient use of energy. I congratulate the Capricornia Electricity Board in particular for its initiatives in public awareness programs aimed at educating the people of central Queensland on the use of electricity.

I understand that Queenslanders already benefit from energy labelling requirements on electrical appliances that find their way into Queensland from southern States. We

must be concerned that Queensland could become the dumping ground for appliances that do not reach the standards required in southern States. The introduction of compulsory labelling will bring Queensland into line with South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales. It will be mandatory to display stick-on efficiency labels for household appliances such as dishwashers, washing machines and refrigerators so that the public will have a better understanding of the appliance, its energy efficiency rating and its energy consumption rate. I recognise that the community will need educating, and I am confident that once the labelling scheme gets under way the Capricornia Electricity Board will be active in consumer education in my electorate. We are most fortunate in central Queensland because CAPELEC is already heavily involved in the promotion of wise and efficient use of electricity. As the most recent annual report shows, a promotion of off-peak hot-water tariffs, launched by the Minister in Rockhampton in June, resulted in more than 500 consumers taking the night-rate tariff. The benefit of taking this tariff is that it contributes towards decreasing the peak loads. CAPELEC also began an energy audit campaign in January of this year. The honourable member for Rockhampton North touched on this in the House this morning.

The energy audit campaign involves a booklet which directs the householder on how to improve energy efficiency around the home. I noticed some interesting points in the booklet. I have been a great user of electricity in my time. I was surprised to learn some of the information used to guide families about the efficient use of electricity. For example, a single 100-watt bulb gives more light than two 60-watt bulbs and, of course, is a lot cheaper to run. A swimming pool filter permanently wired in and qualifying for a special reduced rate slashes running costs. A clothes-drier ducted to the outside atmosphere keeps the laundry cooler, and increases the drier's efficiency. The booklet contains lots of hints. For example, how many housewives would consider the more efficient use of the refrigerator? A number of ideas are set out. One interesting point, for example, is to check the location of the refrigerator. The refrigerator should not be placed adjacent to the cooking range or against uninsulated walls facing the sun. Refrigerators should not be built in. Quite often one sees a refrigerator unit that is actually built in. According to the booklet, that does not allow the air to circulate around the refrigerator and creates heat, and therefore causes inefficient operation of the unit. Foods should be placed slightly apart on refrigerator shelves for correct air circulation. Heavy wrapping paper should be removed from cold meats, for instance, before such foods are stored in the refrigerator. Hot foods should be cooled slightly by letting them stand before placing them in the refrigerator. Placing hot food in it would obviously cause the unit to operate less efficiently.

Free circulation of heat within an oven should be allowed. Pans and containers should be positioned so they do not touch each other or the sides of the oven. The oven should be preheated only if necessary. Those are interesting hints for people who consider themselves to be handy in the kitchen. They are ideas which should be considered in an endeavour to use electricity more efficiently. Hot-water systems should be located as close as possible to the point of the most frequent use of hot water. Long hot-water pipe runs waste energy. The hot-water system should be enclosed in its own housing if possible. Short showers should be encouraged, taps should always be turned fully off, and worn tap washers should be replaced. An interesting point is that 60 drips of water per minute waste 1 200 litres of water per month. I was interested in that statistic, and while we do have a lot of drips here at times, I am sure we would not be wasting that much energy over a month. This booklet goes on and on, and certainly contains a lot of information for the consumer. I recommend that publication to consumers. It contains information on how to read electricity accounts and electricity meters, and a guide to the rating of electrical items as far as household electricity consumption is concerned. CAPELEC has provided excellent information for the general community.

I understand that energy audits were carried out for 18 commercial customers in the Rockhampton area. I am sure those businesses are a lot more efficient as a result of those audits. CAPELEC did not confine its activities to Rockhampton headquarters. As should any organisation which services country customers, CAPELEC took its services throughout its area, attending annual shows at Biloela, Gladstone, Emerald and Barcaldine. CAPELEC also provides a toll-free number for the customers advisory service so consumers from as far away as Birdsville can call for advice. During the past financial year more than 6 400 customers made use of CAPELEC's advisory services seeking information on the efficient use of electricity for appliances, air-conditioning, building design and water heating. CAPELEC also reorganised internally and passed more responsibility to its three regional managers. This is one of the principles of the regionalisation policy which a number of this Government's departments have been implementing. The Department of Resource Industries has opened an office in Emerald and expanded facilities at Rockhampton, providing a broader service to the local mining industry, including the Bowen Basin coalfields. I believe that because he was brought up in the west, the Minister takes a strong interest in regional areas. During the past year, he attended the opening of the new CAPELEC depots in Mount Morgan, Longreach and Blackall.

Part of CAPELEC's mission statement is to aggressively support regional development, and this echoes the Goss Government's policies. The results of those policies are clear in central Queensland where, in the two years since Labor came to power, new projects announced include—

- the extension of the State gas pipeline;
- the \$200m Q-Mag joint venture at Parkhurst;
- the Gordonstone coal mine, which of course is Australia's largest underground coal mine;
- the north Goonyella coal mine, which is Australia's second largest mine; and
- the magnesium metal pilot plant in Gladstone.

The provision of energy, be it gas or electricity—or in some cases, both—is vital to these sorts of developments. For instance, CAPELEC is providing electricity supply to the Kunwarara magnesite mine, while the State gas pipeline provides natural gas to the Parkhurst plant where the magnesite is being processed. That is a combination of resources, and companies are being helped to benefit from both those resources in the processing of their products. The extension of the State gas pipeline was integral to the development of the \$200m Q-Mag project at Parkhurst. The Goss Government is also playing a major role in the progress of another magnesia project, that is, a pilot magnesium metal plant at Gladstone, using more of the rich resources at Kunwarara. With the Federal Government, the Goss Government is providing funds to joint venture partners Queensland Metals Corporation, MIM and Japan's Ube Corporation for the development of technology associated with the production of magnesium metal. That super-light metal has an expanding market in the automotive industry because concerns about greenhouse gases are increasing pressures for light, fuel-efficient vehicles.

Mr FitzGerald: You're getting a fair way off the Bill, aren't you?

Mr PEARCE: No, I am not. I certainly do not claim to know a lot about electricity. However, since I have been interested in politics and won the seat of Broomsound, I have certainly caused a few shocks in the area. The biggest construction project in the CAPELEC area and, indeed, in the whole of Queensland, is the 1 400-megawatt Stanwell Power Station. After the next election, thanks to EARC, I will be representing that area.

Mr FitzGerald: No. You'll be a candidate for the seat.

Mr PEARCE: No. After the next election, I will be representing that seat. The National Party has not yet nominated anyone for the seat. I am aware that Mr Lester ran to the coast and that the member for Auburn has not indicated an interest in nominating. I do not have too many worries. Many people who are involved in the coal industry in that area like what I am doing for them.

Mr Smyth: Did you know that you can get power from onions? I think that is why Mr FitzGerald has contributed today. He's an onion-farmer.

Mr PEARCE: I will not accept that interjection about growing onions because it is probably a bit on the nose, anyway. The \$1.6 billion Stanwell Power Station is scheduled to provide its first commercial load of electricity to the State grid in March 1993, and it will reach full production by 1996. It is an important project for central Queensland and for the Rockhampton area, in particular. The construction work force is expected to peak at around 1 200 people, which will be of great benefit to Rockhampton. The Stanwell project has meant jobs for hundreds of local people, many of them provided under the Stanwell Skills Development Program. That program is supported by industry, unions, contractors, the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training and its Queensland counterpart. The program is providing jobs for graduates from specialised TAFE training and means that those people have skills and experience which will benefit them long after the Stanwell Power Station has been commissioned. That is important. Unfortunately, because of the tough times that we are facing, many young people are not receiving an opportunity to become skilled so that they can gain jobs in the workplace. This program is training many young people, who will in the long term benefit Queensland. Stanwell Power Station will be powered by coal transported by rail 180 kilometres from Curragh. After the next election, that coalmine will also be in the electorate that I represent. I know that the coal-miners are looking forward to continuing the supply of coal to the Stanwell Power Station. The 1 400 megawatts it generates will be used to meet the base load demands of Queensland's domestic consumers, as well as the demands of industry and commerce—all of them prospering under a Labor Government. I congratulate the Minister on bringing these changes before the House. I support the Bill.

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.12 p.m.): In speaking to the Electricity Amendment Bill, let me assure the Minister that the Liberal Party will be supporting it. I also thank him for allowing me to talk last week to Nev Bradford and Max Blackburn, who are in the lobby. I appreciate their input. The Bill consists of two major policy initiatives with which the Liberal Party has no problem. The first policy matter is the introduction of compulsory energy efficiency labelling. I must admit that I was surprised that this was not already compulsory in Queensland. I was surprised that the labelling that I had seen on electrical appliances, washing machines and refrigerators was put on interstate rather than in Queensland.

Mr Smyth: Do you use the washing machine?

Dr WATSON: Of course I use one.

Mr Smyth: You've got a mouthful of pegs.

Dr WATSON: In my household, we have a good distribution of duties. Having inspected those types of electrical appliances and having found the energy labelling on them, I admit that I was surprised to find that that type of labelling was not compulsory in Queensland. In trying to compare electrical appliances, I have found that labelling useful, and I believe that most consumers would find it useful. This is an initiative that the Liberal Party actively supports.

The second important policy initiative in the Bill relates to the question of permanent part-time employment. Again, this is consistent with Liberal Party policy. In fact, it has supported it for some time. The Liberal Party would go further than the Minister would in

terms of adding flexibility to the labour market. It would try to broaden the flexibility in the labour market, not only in the electricity industry but also right across industry in Queensland. In addition to improved provisions for permanent part-time employment, the Liberal Party would allow negotiations to take place between employers and employees on an enterprise basis.

Despite the fact that we would go further than the Government is going in these areas, we do support this particular move. It is important for the development of our State and our country that flexibility is put into the labour market. This legislation is an exceptionally important part of gaining that flexibility. As I said at the outset, they are the two major policy initiatives in this Bill. They are consistent with the policies that we in the Liberal Party have always adopted. We have great pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (10.16 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to join in the debate on the Electricity Amendment Bill. The purpose of this Bill is to provide for permanent part-time employment in the Queensland electricity supply industry and to enable the introduction of an energy efficient labelling scheme for new domestic electrical appliances and to make other miscellaneous amendments of a machinery nature.

The first of these policy matters is the introduction of a compulsory energy efficiency labelling scheme for domestic electrical appliances. Introduction of a mandatory labelling scheme in Queensland will have two benefits: firstly, in consolidating the effect of the southern States' labelling programs and, secondly, in protecting Queensland from becoming a dumping ground for appliances which have poor energy efficiency ratings. The Queensland scheme will be similar to the schemes already operating in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. In those States it is mandatory for new, large household appliances such as refrigerators, dishwashers and washing machines to have displayed on them stick-on labels indicating their energy efficiency rating and energy consumption rate. By introducing compulsory labelling in Queensland, the Government will help consumers make the right decisions when they buy appliances. Of course, an intensified public awareness campaign will be necessary to alert customers and retail sales staff to the significance of the labels. Research is under way into the structure and targeting of this campaign. Compulsory labelling will have the added benefit of encouraging manufacturers to improve the energy efficiency of the particular appliances they are manufacturing so as to remain competitive in the marketplace. This will enable consumers to choose the most economic appliances and allow them to make savings in their electricity accounts. However, looking at the bigger picture, the overall effect is much greater than just the money saved in the household budget, though that is a very worthwhile consideration. It means protection for our environment by reducing the amount of coal burned for electricity generation. This Government is very serious about energy efficiency and care of the environment and has achieved more in those two areas in the last two years than the previous Government did in the past 32 years.

I am proud to say that the Wide Bay region has the lowest electricity consumption per capita in Queensland. This indicates that citizens of this region are careful and thrifty in their usage of electricity. But it should not be forgotten that, under the Goss Labor Government, the Wide Bay region is going ahead in leaps and bounds, as is the rest of Queensland, with population growth figures well above the national average. As people come into this low-tax State to take advantage of excellent investment opportunities, they will want electricity in their factories and homes, so Queensland's electricity demands continue to rise even with energy efficiency programs in place. That is precisely what is happening in my own local electricity board area, the Wide Bay/Burnett region. The Wide Bay-Burnett Electricity Board is now the fastest growing regional board in Queensland. Growth in electricity usage in Wide Bay is related mainly to rapid housing development in

Maryborough and Hervey Bay, irrigation sales in the Isis irrigation scheme, and the rail electrification.

Hervey Bay is now one of the fastest growing regions in Queensland, ahead of Cairns, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast. Total growth in electricity use in the Maryborough district alone, including Hervey Bay, is 9.4 per cent. This is not bad for a region that the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable Russell Cooper, the former Leader of the Liberal Party, Denver Beanland, and his sidekick the member for Sherwood, David Dunworth, tried to convince us was doomed. What a joke! All the figures for this region are proving that those honourable members either did not know what they were talking about or that they were deliberately trying to talk the region down. To further prove that the doom and gloom merchants are wrong, I point out that, over the last 12 months, the number of customers in the region has increased by 5.3 per cent, the greatest growth being in the domestic sector. Of interest is that 30 per cent of householders in this area are receiving pensioner electricity concessions. That is the highest rate of any community in Queensland. In the past two years, the number of customers in the whole board area using time-of-use or off-peak irrigation tariffs has grown from 300 to 900. This shift to off-peak usage further utilises power-generating equipment and assists greatly the economics of power generation. The introduction of an electric rail service between Brisbane and Maryborough has reduced the travel-time by 20 per cent, with a two-way day-time service now operating. This is a great service, and I recommend it to all honourable members travelling to our region.

I turn now to another policy matter, that is, part-time employment. This legislation will make available to part-time employees in Queensland's electricity supply industry benefits such as long-service leave and superannuation. This will be of great benefit not only to the employees but also to the employers. Part-time employment is becoming commonplace in industry today and is recognised and accepted as an important facet of the work force, giving both employees and employers flexibility. For instance, staff employed by the Wide Bay-Burnett Electricity Board will be able to stay at home a couple of days a week to look after young children or ageing parents, or work fewer hours a day, thus enabling them to deliver their children to school and pick them up in the afternoon and still maintain their work skills and an income. It will be particularly beneficial to people planning families and to board staff wanting to undertake further studies. For the board, it means that it does not lose people whom it has trained or who have special skills and who are required to keep operations running smoothly. I am sure that honourable members can see the benefits of this legislation to both employees and employers. It provides ongoing benefits such as long-service leave, locality allowances and superannuation. This will make part-time permanent work an attractive proposition in the Wide Bay-Burnett Electricity Board by providing greater flexibility and just rewards and benefits which were enjoyed only by permanent staff prior to this legislation.

What a stark difference there is between the way that this Government treats its workers and the manner in which the previous Government treated them. Tonight, we are passing legislation that will make the lot of the workers in the electricity industry a little easier and more pleasant through a proper democratic process. What a contrast to the previous Government! I am sure that all members would remember how it handed out justice to the electricity workers—with a corrupted police force that looked and acted like Hitler's SS, and batons, boots, dogs, bashing and brutality were the order of the day. That is what the previous Government did to the workers. If it could get back into power, would it do that again? Thank goodness that it lost Government when it did, or we would all be suffering under a fascist type of Government.

I would now like to touch on the licensing of electrical contractors. This Bill clarifies the right of the Electrical Workers and Contractors Board to require all applicants for

electrical contractors' licences to complete a competency test. By removing the requirement for electricity boards to prove their ownership of electricity, the Bill will also make it easier for prosecutions for electricity theft to be brought. Members will note that the Bill also proposes clarification of tendering procedures for electricity boards. This follows the recent observation of Judge Byrne that the Act was not clear in certain cases. He was referring to cases in which boards call tenders in a three-stage process: taking expressions of interest, selecting from them a number of parties to submit tenders, and eventually selecting the successful contractor from those tenderers. This Bill will ensure that the Act is very clear on two points: firstly, that the tenderers must be chosen from the initial group which submits expressions of interest and, secondly, that in turn the successful party must come from the tenderers selected. I support the Bill.

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (10.25 p.m.): I do not want to speak for too long. After reading the excuses for the introduction of this Bill, one could be excused for thinking that motor vehicle manufacturers will be obliged to have a fuel compensation labelling scheme. It seems to me—irrespective of what anybody else has said—that this Bill appears to regard the people of Queensland as slow-witted, perhaps even slightly dumb, and not bright enough to listen to the words of the sale agents of the manufacturers. This issue could perhaps be left to the marketplace to sort out any problems. In fact, the honourable member for Moggill alluded to the forces in the marketplace that would be brought into play by the implementation of particular Liberal Party policies. It does not need Big Brother to intrude yet again. I suggest that the manufacturer who can produce a comparable product which uses less electricity will use this as a competitive edge, and the Queensland public will quickly realise the position and act accordingly. I suggest also that people are not stupid. This Bill will simply add more regulatory control in an area in which it is not as necessary as the Bill makes out.

I wish to ask the Minister some questions, and perhaps he may provide some answers to them in his reply. What will be the extra cost of the labelling scheme to manufacturers? Who will bear that extra cost? Will it be the consumer? What bureaucratic costs will be and have been involved in the development and application of the proposed legislation? What is the cost to date of administering the labelling provision? Why are millions of dollars committed to consumer education on the use of energy? How many millions of dollars are committed to that? In view of this commitment, how does the Minister justify the extra moneys that will be involved? Surely the Queensland public who use electricity are not so stupid as to use more power than they have to. I suggest to the Minister that people watch their electricity bills very closely. I ask the Minister what evidence he has that the consumer education program is or—as some members have suggested—is not successful? Or is it all simply talk?

I wish to touch on a couple of points that relate to the electricity industry. I am sure that they are and have been of great concern to members opposite. I am sure that all members would agree that the Queensland electricity industry has had quite a chequered past. Who could ever forget the on-again, off-again electricity supply situation in the 1970s and the early eighties? Who could ever forget the horrors of power rationing, the tragedy of businesses going broke because they could not get the power to run essential machinery, and a community held to ransom by a greedy industry obsessed with its own importance? The history of the Queensland electricity industry is a story of unions gone mad, industrial relations——

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Dr Clark): Order! The member will return to the Bill.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Broadsound certainly got way off the Bill. By way of interjection on a number of occasions, I drew that to the attention of the Deputy Speaker, but that honourable member was allowed to wander all over the place. The rules should apply to both sides of the House.

Mr SANTORO: I very much appreciate the point of order taken by the honourable member. I am trying to talk about the electricity industry. I was listening to this debate on the monitor in my room. I have taken cognisance of the broad and wide-ranging aspects of the remarks that have been made. Madam Deputy Speaker, if you wish me to desist from this discourse, I am happy to respect your wishes. However, I ask you to consider previous rulings that have been made.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Perhaps the member could make his history lesson brief.

Mr SANTORO: Yes, certainly. I am trying to get to a very current point that was raised only a week or so ago in relation to the electricity industry. As to that history lesson—the situation finally came to a head in 1985 with the crippling SEQEB dispute. In 1985—a year that will go down in Queensland history—1 000 SEQEB electricians refused to cooperate with a measure that would guarantee the supply of an essential service, namely, electricity. The result was monumental chaos. Those 1 000 workers refused to sign a no-strike clause which would give Queenslanders the confidence to know that when they turned a switch they would have lights and heat.

This is the point in which Government members will be interested. The union representing those workers was the Electrical Trades Union. The workers who were directed by the union not to sign the clause eventually lost their jobs, and the dispute dragged on for months, destined to become a watershed in Queensland industrial relations. Members can read about that in the archives. Out of respect for the ruling of Madam Deputy Speaker, I will leave out the historical perspective that I wanted to include in my contribution. However, what members will not read in the archives—what they were not meant to learn about but what is coming out now—is the much murkier side to the dispute. As the SEQEB dispute dragged on, money became tight for the families of the striking workers. The ETU set up and widely advertised a strikers' survival fund, the proceeds of which were to help feed and clothe the families of those workers—an admirable undertaking. The concept of mateship in Australia is very well developed. Despite the circumstances that applied in that case, I applaud that concept. I think everybody applauds the idea that people look after their own. The strikers' survival fund had the support of the Trades and Labour Council, which also collected for it. The slogan of the fund was: they shall not starve. Money came pouring in, often from pensioners and people who could not really afford it. I have heard Government members talk in glowing terms about the sacrifices made by fellow unionists within the industry. Dedicated unionists believed that they were helping their brothers in arms. Workers thought that they were supporting their mates. No doubt, the strikers themselves slept a little more soundly at night in the knowledge that their union was standing behind them.

My point is that allegations were made recently before a Senate select committee of inquiry into political broadcasts and political disclosures. It was revealed that what really happened to the money in that fund was not what should have happened according to the people who made the donations. A witness alleged under oath that \$40,000 that was collected on behalf of the wives and kids of the strikers was hijacked by the TLC and handed over to Con Sciacca's campaign for the 1985 Redlands by-election. According to the person who made the allegations, never at any stage was the union rank and file consulted.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: You don't change, do you? It's still the same story—a half-truth that becomes a lie.

Mr SANTORO: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Nundah and acknowledge, as I have been doing in my speech, that it is only an allegation. I say to the member for Nundah that, to date, the people who are responsible—those who are in the

know—have not denied that allegation. That is why I raise it in this place. The allegation has been made, but it has not—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Merthyr is now getting into a lengthy discourse about the trade union movement. It does not relate to the electricity industry.

Mr SANTORO: I will come back to the point.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please do. The honourable member is testing the patience of the Chair.

Mr SANTORO: I respect the ruling of Madam Deputy Speaker. I will return to the Bill. I just wanted to clarify for the honourable member for Nundah why I raise this issue. It is an allegation. That witness alleged that the \$40,000 collected on behalf of the wives and kids of the strikers was used to fund a campaign. Remember that the money was collected on the undertaking that it would be used to help struggling families of the SEQEB workers and not for political purposes. The few unionists who have since learned about that alleged betrayal are livid. One of the reasons why I was prompted to raise the issue is that two SEQEB workers, one of whom lives up the road from me, have approached me and said, "I do not know whether this is true but, quite frankly, I am concerned about it. Will you raise it?"

A Government member: That is pure crap.

Mr SANTORO: I take the interjection from the honourable member who said that it is pure crap. It is not. I put that on the record.

Mrs Bird: It is hearsay.

Mr SANTORO: I take the interjection. Whether it is hearsay or whether it is an allegation, I am simply saying that the allegation was made and I have not heard the ALP campaign director, the Premier, who has come into the Chamber—for what reason I do not know, because we so rarely see him in this place—or anybody else deny that point. If there is an explanation for it, I will be very, very happy to cop it.

Mr Ardill: It has nothing to do with the Bill. Read the Bill.

Mr SANTORO: I take the interjection. I have read the Bill. I have referred to the Bill and I have asked the Minister some pertinent questions, which I sincerely hope that he will address in his reply. Those questions relate specifically to the Bill. I have also made relevant comments about people employed in the electricity industry, which was certainly not done by Government members who spoke before me in the debate.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I rise to a point of order. This is well off the Bill. Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask that you give consideration to ruling in relation to that matter. Indeed, in relation to the issues raised by the honourable member—the campaign director was his colleague the Chairman of the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. As I understand it, he has already denied the force of the allegations, which are effectively made against Mr Beattie and which are an unjustified slur against his good name.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I rule that the member does take advice from the Chair and does return to the Bill.

Mr SANTORO: I was about to finish before the Premier took that point of order and sought to provide an explanation in defence of his colleague the honourable member for Brisbane Central, for whom he seems to have so little sympathy except on occasions such as this. I have not heard the remarks made by the campaign director.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! This has nothing to do with the Bill. The member for Merthyr will return to the Bill or resume his seat.

Mr SANTORO: I am trying to conclude, but I am constantly interrupted. I will seek the comments that were made——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have asked the member for Merthyr to return to the Bill. Please return to the Bill.

Mr SANTORO: Effectively, I have completed my speech and I look forward to reading somewhere in the media Mr Beattie's statements as suggested by the Premier. I very much look forward to it and I hope that I find those statements.

Mr SCHWARTEN (Rockhampton North) (10.38 p.m.): The Bill before the House deals with the Queensland electricity supply industry—an industry that provides a safe, reliable source of energy to a million Queenslanders. The Queensland Electricity Commission is responsible for providing the generating capacity, that is, the power stations, whilst the electricity boards are responsible for distribution within their own areas. The QEC is continually monitoring the performance of its assets and modernising where necessary and advisable. This brings about the need to refurbish or decommission old power stations and build new ones to replace them. This occurred in the City of Rockhampton with the former Glenmore Power Station which was recently demolished.

I am aware, as are members opposite, that the company responsible for the demolition of the Glenmore Power Station is before the courts on a matter relating to the conduct of that demolition. What I have to say tonight in no way breaches the sub judice convention, because the pending prosecution deals with different issues. I have taken this action because of the continuing, baseless allegations made by the member for Sherwood, who has deliberately flouted the convention of sub judice and attempted to create a public scare about this issue for his own political purposes. Tonight, I will restrict myself to dealing with claims that the Government has not investigated allegations about material located on the bank of the Fitzroy River adjacent to the Glenmore site.

Dr WATSON: I rise to a point of order. Given your previous ruling with respect to the relevance of comments made by members, Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to draw the attention of the member who is speaking at the moment to the same rulings.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I will. Leniency has been shown. I will allow the honourable member to talk on this matter for no more than three or four minutes.

Mr SCHWARTEN: It will only take me three or four minutes. On 10 October, the circulating water pumphouse on the riverfront at Rockhampton was demolished and work commenced on breaking up the concrete for reclamation work on the riverbank. Use of the pumphouse and power station concrete rubble for fill on the riverbank was discussed in detail with the Rockhampton city engineer and city health inspector, and the council gave approval for this in a letter dated 4 September, which I will table. On 11 and 12 October, some concrete rubble from the riverfront wall of the turbinehouse was deposited on the riverbank. I add that the asbestos and plant had been removed from the pumphouse some weeks earlier. On 4 November, a group consisting of a member of the Capricornia Conservation Council and local media was seen filming on the riverfront demolition site. They were not wearing safety helmets or boots and were asked to leave. Later the same day, the conservation council contacted an inspector with the Workplace Health and Safety Division alleging that material containing asbestos was on the riverbank. The inspector went to the area with a council representative and found no trace of asbestos. The Queensland Electricity Commission spoke to Denivel about the allegation and, as a result, daily morning inspections were instituted in the area. On four following occasions foreign material was found which was not there previously, suggesting that it may have been deposited in the area. One of those items may contain asbestos and this has been forwarded to Brisbane for testing.

On 20 October, more rubble from the power station walls was added. The area was then thoroughly inspected and nothing was found. Again the next morning foreign material which was not there the day before was found. As a result, the QEC has instructed Denivel to extend the security fence to the river's edge to ensure that unauthorised people are not entering the site. I prefer not to speculate as to why material is mysteriously appearing on the riverbank. I wish to go on public record and state that it must be noted that this Government recognises the potential hazards to health associated with the improper handling of asbestos and has taken appropriate action in this case to investigate the matter. I support the Bill before the House.

Hon. K. H. VAUGHAN (Nudgee—Minister for Resource Industries) (10.42 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for their contributions to this debate. As has been indicated by most speakers, this is a pretty straightforward Bill and does not require a great deal of response from me. However, I wish to deal briefly with the comments made by the member for Lockyer and thank him for his support for the Bill. As he has indicated, one of the significant thrusts of the Bill concerns labelling. It is part of our program to educate electricity-consumers throughout the State on the need not only to conserve energy, but also to be conscious of the fact that any electrical appliance they purchase should be energy-efficient.

Having regard to the comments made by the member for Merthyr, I advise that Queensland is the last State to implement an energy labelling system. It was felt by the industry that, if Queensland did not adopt such a labelling system, it would become the dumping ground for electrical appliances from throughout Australia. We already have an energy labelling system in place because manufacturers realise that it is in their interests, and in the interests of the consumers who purchase their appliances, to adopt this system. The industry knew that the Government would implement such a labelling system. Manufacturers saw the writing on the wall and that is why they introduced labelling. I thank members for their contributions and commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 14, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

SUGAR MILLING RATIONALISATION BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 31 October (see p. 2570).

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (10.46 p.m): In rising to speak to this Bill, I assure the Minister and other members in this House that the Opposition will not be opposing it. Members of the Opposition have studied carefully its implications and have consulted fully with the people who will be affected most, that is, the cane-farmers of this State. We have spoken to the farmers who have indicated that they are happy to have the legislation proceed—as it must—and the Opposition will be happy to facilitate that process. However, the National Party will be putting forward some amendments because I believe

that the legislation can be improved. I have in my possession letters indicating that changes should be made, and I have received many telephone calls from people who are urging members of the National Party to try to effect some improvements to the Bill. At the appropriate time, I will be moving those amendments. In the meantime, I wish to make some comments about the Government's treatment of the sugar industry and the effects its policies have on cane-growers, particularly the way in which those policies can directly influence changes in the industry that can lead to the closure of mills referred to in the Bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! I will be lenient and allow the member to make some general comments, but other members will be expected to stick to the Bill which relates to sugar-milling.

Mr Casey: And rationalisation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: And rationalisation.

Mr RANDELL: I take the point that you make, Mr Deputy Speaker, but there are many aspects related to mill closures that impact on cane-farmers. I respect the fact that you are giving me liberty to discuss those aspects. In the Minister's second-reading speech, he made the point that this legislation is part of the Government's so-called reform of sugar industry legislation. This legislation must be looked at in the context of the whole situation in which the sugar industry finds itself at present. At the moment, the whole picture is not very encouraging—a fact with which anyone who is in close contact with the sugar industry would agree. I believe that the sugar industry is in worse trouble now than at any other previous time I can remember—in fact, at any time since the beginning of the industry in this State. Prices have dropped, the drought has drastically affected production, and costs have gone through the roof. Of course, costs will directly affect the ability of cane-growers to supply cane to mills, hence the recent closures of some mills.

The ALP's move towards deregulation has failed miserably. Every cane-grower to whom I have spoken has expressed outright resentment and hostility. I believe that the Premier's rural task force will be told in no uncertain terms about the plight of the sugar industry when the members of that team visit Mackay later this week or early next week. I have been told that it is their intention to visit Mackay, but I have not been informed officially that they will be visiting my electorate. I believe that members of the task force should have visited the Mackay area much earlier, but I congratulate them on at last recognising that a sugar industry crisis exists and that many cane-farming families are faring very, very badly. I ask that task force to make certain that it gets out among the grassroots cane-growers in the Mackay area who have been so badly affected by the present difficult economic conditions.

I believe that the sugar-producing areas of this State just about exemplify a definition of the word "depression". If anyone doubts what I am saying, he or she should listen to the figures I am about to mention. Let me examine the price obtained for sugar. I will draw a parallel between the price of cane 10 years ago and today's price to illustrate the point I am making. Ten years ago, the No. 1 Pool price was \$34.59 a tonne, and the No. 2 Pool price was \$37.82. The anticipated final price this year is \$26 a tonne, compared to \$34 a tonne 10 years ago. I wonder how many union leaders in the community would cop a wage decrease of that magnitude. Those very same union leaders were to the fore many years ago when the sugar industry had a brief period of higher prices. At that time, a prosperity payment of \$30 a week was imposed on cane-farmers, but I have not noticed any sympathetic treatment being given to those same cane-growers who are suffering the most severe economic down-turn in prices in the history of the industry. In the past 10 years, wages have increased from \$216.35 to \$380 a week. The employer has to contribute \$12.40 a week to the employee's superannuation entitlement, which means

that the real wage bill paid by the grower is now \$392.40 per worker per week compared to \$216 10 years ago. Having said that, I might say also that, in comparison with other workers, most people who work on farms fully earn their wage. Mr Deputy Speaker, as you would know, they are more or less friends of the farmer and work side by side with him. They should be congratulated on the work they do because they work hard and certainly earn their money. It is sad but true that because of present economic conditions, many of these workers have had to be laid off. This has not happened because there is no work for them; rather, farmers can no longer afford to keep them on.

Wages are not the only costs that have risen during the past 10 years. A five-tonne load of urea has increased from \$959 to \$1,842 per tonne, which is nearly twice the price it was 10 years ago. This increase should be compared to the increase in wages to which I referred earlier. Moreover, the cost of diesel fuel has increased from 28.9c to 60.7c a litre. Farmers who pay such high prices for a production input commodity simply cannot wait for the coalition to take over Government in Canberra. It is a pity that it might be another year before that happens. A cane-farmer to whom I have spoken recently—a man who lives in Walkerston, which is one of the premier cane-growing areas in the Mackay district—has said that his rates have increased from \$1,780.90 per annum, which is what it was 10 years ago, to \$2,798.82 currently. The prices and costs of just about everything have nearly doubled over that period. Is it any wonder that so many cane-farmers are going under? Is it any wonder that rural businesses are going under? Is it any wonder that the policies that flow on to the sugar industry in some way contribute to the closure of mills and the further loss of jobs?

The plight of the sugarcane-growing areas can be appreciated when unemployment statistics are examined. If mill closures take place, the effects will flow on to every district in Queensland. In my electorate, where nearly one-third of this State's sugar cane is produced, the real unemployment rate is approximately 10.1 per cent, which means that 10 people out of every 100 are out of work. In the Mackay, Fitzroy and central western areas, there are now 14 500 hard core unemployed people, and I believe that that figure will increase. Moreover, in a couple of months' time, there will be a whole new group of school-leavers to add to the unemployment total. These are people whom Labor has thrown out of work.

Let us not make any mistake about the fact that Labor has had a decade in power in Canberra and has been in Government in Queensland for almost two years. It is Labor policies that have brought the nation and this State—particularly the sugar industry—to the position they are in today. The combination of all things Labor has done has put many cane-farming families off their land and onto the dole queue. Labor policies are killing the towns that service the needs of cane-farmers. All the businesses in those towns are struggling—for example, the machinery dealers, the fuel agents and the supermarkets. All those businesses have felt the effects of farmers tightening their belts. Right throughout this State, businesses are closing their doors or cutting down on staff numbers. The number of unemployed people grows every day, and it will continue to do so. Unemployment is a tragedy that Labor has inflicted on the community, and Labor is apparently incapable of coming up with an answer to this problem. I ask members of this Labor Government to give some encouragement to people involved in the sugar industry. If that support was forthcoming, I have no doubt that farmers would begin to employ workers once again. Mills will need a boost in their work forces. As a result of increased employment opportunities, money will start flowing into the economies of towns, and businesses will prosper. However, Labor policies will ensure that unemployment—and all the misery it brings with it—will continue for a long time to come. Let me now turn to consider some of the Labor policies that are being touted as part of Labor's reform of the sugar industry. At the national level, Labor has given us the flat earth policy with respect

to tariffs. I would like to take the Minister back to his support of the breaking-down of the tariff barriers. On 13 March 1991, in reply to a question asked by Mr Prest, the Minister said—

“It is true that it will have a direct effect on Queensland's sugar industry. Depending on the fluctuation and variation in sugar prices for the rest of the season, during that period the tariff reduction could represent a total of \$40m in direct income for the industry.”

Mr Casey: You are straying a bit from the Bill.

Mr RANDELL: I am saying that the prices, the barriers, and the tariff reductions have an impact on mill closures. I can go through all this. If the Minister wants me to table this information, I can do so. He knows the answer. I do not want to pick out certain phrases, but towards the end of his answer the Minister said—

“The cane-growers both in Queensland and throughout Australia ought to be very, very happy with the Hawke Labor Government.”

I think Mr Casey has been around long enough to know that these people are not very happy.

Mr Casey: They will be.

Mr RANDELL: Some of these mills are closing probably because of those policies. Of course, Labor calls it the level playing field, but that is just as silly. One has to wonder what Labor thinkers have in their coffee, especially when they come up with ideas like knocking off assistance for the sugar industry and getting rid of the sugar embargo. They reckon that the rest of the world will have to follow our lead, but they forget we are an insignificant player in world trade.

Mr FitzGerald: He will not be speaking for a further 81 minutes.

Mr RANDELL: I am only going for another hour. The rest of the world just laughs, and turns the screws a bit tighter.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): I can assure the honourable member that he will not be speaking for another hour about the general sugar industry.

Mr RANDELL: Well, I will have to—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have allowed the honourable member great leniency.

Mr RANDELL: Mr Deputy Speaker, I greatly respect that, and I am coming to the point, if you will just bear with me. I think that the Government has to look at the things that have such an impact on the industry and, in turn, on the cane-farmers, the sugar-mills and sugar-mill closures. The lowering of tariffs certainly has an impact. I have been to Tasmania, and I am aware that Cadbury-Schweppes is using imported sugar in its Australian plants. I am told \$57m worth of sugar products has been imported into Australia in the last 12 months. Certainly, that has an impact on factories and on the work force in the sugar industry. That is Labor's policy at work in the sugar industry! It must be good stuff it uses. What about Labor's policy on interest rates and the exchange rate? They have been a real boon to the sugar industry! With costs going up, and sugar being dumped on the world market, growers have had to contend with macro-economic policies designed to send them to the wall. It is working. Growers are walking off their farms or being sold up every day, and mills are closing in the name of efficiency.

Let us get to the sugar industry “reforms” that the State ALP Government likes to boast about. Maybe the Government wants to boast about this new Sugar Industry Act which takes real control of the industry out of the hands of the industry itself. Maybe the Government wants to boast about the new Sugar Industry Tribunal, which was set up as a nice cushy job for a Labor lawyer with no knowledge of the sugar industry. Maybe the

Government wants to boast about starving the Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations, which has conducted research into all aspects of cane-growing, of the funding it needs for urgent research work. It has an impact on mills and mill closures. The Government should look at the thousands of acres of ratoons that have failed to come away in the dry seasons cane-growers are experiencing. More research is needed to come up with drought-resistant varieties, such as the old NCo variety. I think the Minister has had past experience of that. Perhaps if cane-growers had access to drought-resistant varieties, there would be no need to follow the unlimited expansion on which the Minister has embarked. The Government might even want to boast about raising the cost of water to cane-farmers who must irrigate in the worst drought this century.

I have no doubt that the Minister will refer to his wide consultation with the sugar industry on all these issues. He will be wasting his breath. Farmers know their leaders would not go along with the Minister if they had a choice. They know consultation has a special meaning for this Government. In essence, it amounts to the Government telling people to thank it for the damage it plans to do, or risk even worse damage. If this Government does bother to consult at all, it is with a few disgruntled people who call for change. I said "change", because I will not dignify what this Government does with a word such as "reform". The Government is happy to oblige when a few people call for change. It calls in the industry groups and sells them a few broad concepts, backed up with threats, then ignores them when the detailed work is being done. That is why I have so much representation in this Bill. The result is rarely what the people involved in the industry really want. It is rarely what will work for the particular industry involved.

The Sugar Industry Act is a case in point. There were features of that legislation with which the Opposition and the industry agreed. Many of them came from the Sugar Industry Working Party. That group made one very important recommendation that the Minister chose to ignore when he prepared the Sugar Industry Act. I am talking about the recommendation that would have led to greatly increased funding for the BSES. The working party was well aware of the alarming drop in sugar yield from the cane being harvested. It is recommended that the Government provide 14c per tonne of cane to be matched by industry contributions. That would not be too much to ask for research into serious problems faced by an industry which contributes so much to Queensland's economy. Of course, this Government was too miserable. On 22 August, just a few months ago, I reminded the Minister of the need for more research funding. Let me remind the House that on that occasion the Minister said—

"... a submission on future funding for research in the industry has been prepared for Cabinet's consideration."

I would like to ask the Minister what happened to his submission to Cabinet? Was the Minister rolled again? Has the Government appointed another inquiry to save it from making a decision? There has been plenty of time for the Minister and Government to do something if they wanted to. One can only conclude that they have no intention of helping the sugar industry find a solution to a very pressing problem.

The Opposition recognises that this legislation is meant to cover mill closures down the track, as well as to clean up remaining matters related to the closure of the Hambledon mill near Cairns. That mill closure provides a good example of why mills could be forced to close in the future. I refer honourable members to the spread of urban development in coastal Queensland. The member for Barron River and at least some other members opposite would know that coastal land in the north of this State is sugar country. It is also very much tourist country. It is very often the case that when urban areas expand, or when tourism projects are being planned, they come up against cane farms. With the sort of returns cane-farmers have been making lately, it is little wonder that developers are able to purchase prime caneland. That is fine for the individual property-owner, but it has

the inevitable result of reducing the amount of cane available to the local mill. Less cane results in a less viable mill, and something has to give. The mill has to close and the farmers left in that area are left to find somewhere else to send their cane. We have had some classic examples near Cairns. The first was in about 1989 when the giant Japanese company Daikyo spent \$23m buying one of the State's best cane farms just a few kilometres south of Cairns. Every cane-farmer in Queensland was horrified about that purchase, because no-one had ever heard of that sort of money being paid for a cane farm. The farm was purchased from the Cannon family to allow Daikyo to build a subdivision to cater for about 1 500 homesites. That is what everyone was told. There was a great deal of controversy at the time.

Mr Gilmore: It hasn't been built.

Mr RANDELL: I will get on to that. Much of the concern was about foreign domination of the real estate market. I make no comment on that aspect of the deal but I do want to say something about the other major aspect, that is, taking prime caneland out of production. That farm has not produced a stick of cane for the 1990-91 crushing. I understand that perfectly good cane was ploughed in that could have been sent to the mill and I understand that, since the time of purchase, there has not been one move to develop that area. What I am saying is that they took that prime caneland out of production to develop residential blocks and they have not done one thing. That single deal probably helped seal the fate of the local mill, but it was not the only case of its kind.

In the same year, 1989, Dalgety's manager in Cairns was quoted in *Country Life* as saying that almost every cane farm between Cairns and Edmonton had gone the same way in the past 18 months. What we are seeing is unrestrained and unrestricted development of tourism in that area. If something was being done with the land we would have no objection, but we do object to prime caneland being purchased and not being put to good use. We cannot believe that the Japanese or any other developer could buy the land, take it out of production and just sit on it. This is a continuing problem for literally hundreds of primary producers throughout the State, yet they are the people who are producing a range of things we all have on our tables every day. The major problem, however, is for the cane-farmers, because their farms are in the areas most likely to be wanted by developers, particularly in the Cairns/Mossman/Edmonton area. Things have gone so far that it is time we started thinking seriously about ways in which to protect prime agricultural land from urban expansion. I am not talking about a simple ban on the sale of agricultural land for development. That would be most unfair. We cannot tell a land-owner that he has to forgo big offers for his land. That is most attractive, and I do not think that anyone in this Chamber would want to let such an offer go. We have to make primary production an attractive use of land. We have to make it worth while to keep land in production. There are several ways we can do that and they involve commitment on the part of both State and Federal Governments. Irrespective of their political persuasion, Governments must make some commitment to helping our primary industries. The most important thing to do is to increase the returns to producers. One way we can do that is by putting adequate funds into research into productivity. We do not need to increase the area of land devoted to cane. We do need to get productivity back up to acceptable levels. That is why I said we need to put more money into the research area. If productivity could be increased, there would be no need for unlimited expansion. That takes money. The industry is willing but, on its record, the State Labor Government is not willing.

We also need to make more funding available to help farmers over the current depression and drought conditions. We need to target funds that will ensure there are cane-farmers around and that they are able to produce cane after Keating's recession is over and after the drought has run its course. The average age of cane-farmers is 57 years. The young people are leaving in droves. They do not want to go back onto the land

because there is no incentive for them to do so. We have to make it attractive for them to do that. Governments should start doing something. We need to cut the costs involved in producing cane. If this Labor Government will not undertake that task, I can assure it that the coalition will do so after the next election. There will be cuts in fuel and transport costs. There will be real cuts in the costs of production. We need a Federal Government that will stop actively encouraging the dumping of sugar in Australia and in Australian export markets. The policy of reducing tariffs and removing the embargo on sugar products in this country is incomprehensible and is the height of stupidity. Indirectly the Federal Government is affecting the very people it should be helping.

Mr Casey: Part of the GST package you support is to do away with tariffs.

Mr RANDELL: Yes, but not in as short a period as the Minister is supporting. He supported taking away the tariffs. In four years' time, every tariff barrier will be taken away by the Hawke Labor Government.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! The Bill does not refer to GST or tariffs. I ask the honourable member to return to the principles of the Bill.

Mr RANDELL: I understand that, but I am pointing out that tariffs will be taken away by the year 1997, and that should be condemned. Everybody in the Federal sphere should be condemned for doing that. When the things I was speaking about happen, there will be a reason for people to stay in the sugar industry. We will see reasonably young people stay in the industry. We have to encourage them to stay. We will see young people actually wanting to continue on the family farm, which they do not want to do today. We do not see that at the moment and that is one of the real tragedies about what is happening in the sugar industry.

I have not attempted to cover every aspect of this Bill. That will be done by some of my colleagues later in this debate. I have attempted to paint the broad strokes in the dismal picture that is the current sugar industry. I plan to discuss some of the more specific problems in Committee. At that time, I will move a number of amendments which I believe will ease the way for the industry in the event of future mill closures.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I allowed great leniency to the spokesman on sugar industry matters. I now ask all other honourable members to keep to the principles of the Bill.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (11.07 p.m.): It is indeed a great pleasure to rise to speak on the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill. I must take up the point that the first 15 minutes of the address delivered by the Opposition spokesman was a simplistic attempt to somehow or other shift the problems of the sugar industry onto the well-known whipping horse, the Federal Government. The Queensland Government has put in place new structures that are better able to help this industry withstand the economic storm that we are now experiencing. I can understand that the honourable member would be upset because, in the past, the National Party in Queensland has had the sugar industry as a captive constituency. I think that things have now changed. We are now finding that the industry is working with the Labor Government and is understanding that the procedures this Government has put in place are procedures for the future, not relics from the past. I must agree though with comments made by the member for Mirani in respect of the Daikyo purchase of the Cannon farm just south of Cairns. I agree with the honourable member. I think it is a sheer travesty that that particular group should purchase that farm, take it out of production, and deny the people of the area the opportunity to put cane through that mill, thus hastening the demise of the CSR mill. I take offence at the fact that the same organisation is in the process of applying for permission to proceed with further projects in the area, and has done nothing whatsoever to start on this one particular and important project.

The Bill before us tonight is designed to provide a framework for the efficient resolution of a number of issues. These issues arise in the sugar industry when a closure of a mill is brought about through the process of rationalisation. I wish to place on public record my appreciation, the appreciation of the former owners of the Hambledon mill, which is the CSR company, and that of the board of directors of the Mulgrave central mill. Although this legislation has industrywide relevance, it is most welcomed by those involved in the sugar industry in my electorate. As a matter of fact, had this Bill not been introduced, and had the Minister and his department not been so cooperative, the very important smooth transfer of the cane assignment from Hambledon to Mulgrave would never have been able to proceed. Any delay would have had serious legal and financial repercussions, which may indeed have placed this much-needed rationalisation in jeopardy. Prior to the introduction of this Bill, the issue of mill closures was dealt with on an individual basis, requiring a series of legislative amendments to be introduced into the House over a period of years. This may have been appropriate many years ago when the occurrence of mill closures was quite a rare event. Recent events, however, would indicate that the process of rationalisation which has commenced over the last decade will, in all probability, continue into the future.

There are many reasons for mill closures. The sugar industry has always been on the leading edge of technology. It has always had the capacity to make changes in the interests of efficiency, and this in many ways accounts for the fact that the industry in this country holds a premier position in the world scene. New methods of transportation, improvements in harvesting procedures and technological advances in crushing and milling have all required a movement towards a position best served by economies of scale. This has prompted the absorption of smaller milling operations by larger mills.

Members would be aware that the sugar industry in this State, on the milling side at least, is in the hands of three large corporations, those being the Mackay Sugar Cooperative, the CSR company and, of course, the most recent player in the game, Tate and Lyle, which recently took control of Bundaberg Sugar. The Mulgrave central mill is representative of that 25 per cent of the milling operations which have not yet been absorbed by the three corporations I have just listed. Its ownership rests in the hands of the growers themselves. As such, its destiny has been controlled by the local industry and, as a result of that, it has become highly regarded for its efficiency and its profitability.

With the encroachment of urban residential development upon the quality arable land in that area, it has been obvious for many years that both the Mulgrave central mill and the Hambledon mill could not continue to exist as viable operations, given the fact that their throughputs were in a steady decline. It has never been a secret that most people involved in the industry have always considered it inevitable that the CSR company would close its operations at Hambledon and relocate, most likely to the Burdekin district. In the 1970s, the Hambledon mill was able to draw upon 10 600 hectares of land assigned to the growing of cane. This year, that figure has declined to 8 000 hectares. The crush at the Hambledon mill in 1991 was a low 465 000 tonnes compared to 570 000 tonnes last year, and an all-time high of 694 000 tonnes in 1988. This year, Mulgrave also had a bad crushing year—as did all Queensland mills—and it finished with a crushing figure of about 587 000 tonnes. This compares quite unfavourably with last year's figure of 706 000 tonnes.

The last attempt by the previous Government to facilitate a mill closure in far-north Queensland was an unmitigated disaster. When the Goondi mill near Innisfail closed down, the beneficiaries were two mills, one at Mourilyan and one at Babinda. The issue was handled poorly, and I doubt that anyone would be brave enough to deny the damaging effect of the unashamed political interference that occurred at that time. To process this

closure, three Bills had to be considered by this House. This legislation will not require that level of legislative and bureaucratic input. Although there will be some negative social impact brought about as a result of the closure of the Hambledon mill, I can assure members that it will in no way approach the bitterness that engulfed three communities when the Goondi mill closed. Unfortunately, the decisiveness of that procedure impacts on those communities to this very day.

Complex issues such as this need to be discussed in a rational manner. Emotional and illogical argument only serves to delay resolution, and in the process it promotes disharmony. Quite rightly, the Minister has seen fit, through this legislation, to advance a mechanism which will allow such events to be dealt with in a most expeditious and efficient manner. This Bill is a logical extension of the Sugar Industry Act which was debated earlier this year in this House. That Act—which incidentally has been widely acclaimed by the industry—did not provide for circumstances other than those which could best be described as emergent when one carefully reads section 10.12 of the Act.

Although mill rationalisation by redirection orders, and by ongoing exemptions and other devices of a similar nature, is possible, it is quite obvious that this process is administratively complex and requires several bodies to take part in the process of reaching a decision, thus laying the foundation for unnecessary conflict, as I mentioned before. In addition, the Sugar Industry Act 1991 did not include any provision by which easements and rights of way subject to the Real Property Act could be transferred from one mill to another. As I understand it, at the time, the Queensland Cane Growers Council and the Australian Sugar Milling Council did not wish to vest in the corporation the authority to rezone assignments. This was because, at the time, there was no current proposal for mill closures, and it is quite understandable that this was the position that might have been adopted. With the benefit of hindsight, it is now obvious that such a provision was necessary. There is also the question in the minds of many that the transfer of easements subject to the Land Act or the Real Property Act entered into under previous arrangements may not have had full legal recognition. This Bill provides for the transfers to be registered in such a way as to give them legal status. To maintain the integrity of the mill transport system, all easements and rights of way, irrespective of the manner in which they were created, are protected. If they were used or required by the owner of the mill at the time of closure, they will be preserved and transferred to the new owners. What was needed, therefore, was a clearly defined set of procedures which would enable current and future closures to be effected with the minimum of disruption. Additionally, speed—as we have seen in the case of Mulgrave and Hambledon—can, in the real economic world, be of the essence.

The procedure that this legislation will establish requires the mill-owner to apply to the corporation for consent to close the mill. It will place an onus on the corporation to take a number of factors into consideration. The corporation must consider the impact of the proposed closure on growers who hold assignments to the mill for which closure is sought. It goes without saying that the corporation must satisfy itself that the nominated surviving mill is capable of crushing the additional cane that will be available as a result of the closure. In my area, that is definitely the case. Over the past 12 months, the Mulgrave mill has spent a significant amount of money to upgrade receiving and handling facilities to ensure that it is able to cope adequately with the greater throughput. If next year's cane season is anywhere near what could be considered to be a normal season, the Mulgrave mill will be in a position to crush between 1.2 million and 1.3 million tonnes of cane. That greater throughput will give the Mulgrave mill a new lease of life and maintain its viability for decades to come.

Provisions exist for the corporation, in certain circumstances, to make a determination when conflict arises as to which mill would be vested with the business of

manufacturing sugar in a particular area. Of course, there will be occasions when a determination on the part of the corporation may be challenged by one or both of the parties concerned. The Bill, quite clearly, does not in any way reduce a party's right to appeal, which is very important. That will still be handled by the Sugar Industry Tribunal, which is the appropriate forum in which to debate such issues. Points of law and matters of administration are best handled in this quasi-judicial manner. This legislation has been carefully drafted after considerable consultation with the Australian Sugar Milling Council, the Queensland Cane Growers Council and, quite importantly, the owners of the two mills in the far north, namely, Mulgrave and Hambledon.

In conclusion—the sugar industry in this State has all the hallmarks of a true survivor. Under legislation introduced by this Labor Government, it is unified as never before. It is streamlined to take advantage of changing circumstances. It is forward-thinking and firmly placed on solid foundations. This Bill is further evidence that a Labor Government, contrary to the wild claims of our predecessors, is quite capable of effectively representing all aspects of the sugar industry. As I said earlier this year when speaking on the Sugar Industry Act, it was Labor Premier T. J. Ryan who brought a rational approach to sugar production in this State, and it is again a Labor Government which has been able to restructure the legislative background to the industry in a way which sets it on a stable course. I support the Bill.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (11.19 p.m.): The Liberal Party supports the legislation. However, it is concerned about a number of clauses, which I will mention later. This Bill relates not only to the Hambledon sugar-mill but also to the future closure of mills. It is clear that, with the unrestricted urban development of many of the towns that border on the sugarcane areas, over a period we will find that more and more cane fields will be taken up by urban development. Urban sprawl is occurring. One cannot help noticing that, in recent times, the Government has been encouraging the development of sugar in the Burdekin area through its major irrigation scheme in that area. No doubt, when we talk about these closures, that project is in the back of the Minister's mind. Although we are closing down areas which have served the State for more than 100 years—in the case of the Hambledon mill, it was 110 years—the Government obviously believes that sufficient canelands are available elsewhere to allow for expansion of one of our major agricultural export industries. After many years of encroachment from the Cairns/Edmonton area and with the consequent deterioration in tonnage for milling, the Hambledon mill has been steadily declining. I understand that, last year, that mill had the smallest crush of any of the eight CSR mills, and the figures have been dropping for some time. It is clear that for some time that mill has been feeling the effects of urban sprawl, which has resulted in its closure.

The Hambledon mill will be closed and assignments will be transferred to the Mulgrave mill. What is more, the transport system has been transferred to the Mulgrave mill. The transport system is a most important facet of cane production. This closure is occurring at a time when many of the sugarcane areas of the State are faced with major droughts, low prices and also, in the foreseeable future, sugar imports and the possibility of dumping on our home market. The sugar industry is in a precarious position. In the past, it has faced similar positions, but it has never been in such a precarious position. What is more, the industry and the mills are facing increased costs. That cost structure must be tackled. It is quite clear that that problem has not been tackled by this State Labor Government, and it certainly has not been tackled by the Federal Labor Government. I have heard a great deal from Ministers about the Hewson Liberal reform package and about GST, but I have not heard anything about the reform and improvements that will occur in the cost structure of the sugar industry to make it internationally competitive. Nothing will be affected more than the sugar industry. I am sure that the Minister realises

this. The package will hit hard at labour market reform. The Hambledon mill has one of the lowest productivity levels of any of the sugar-mills, crushing some 266 tonnes an hour compared with the crushing rate of more than 400 tonnes an hour achieved by most other mills. Its productivity is certainly well down.

Mr Casey: That is because it is only a small mill.

Mr BEANLAND: The Minister is concerned about small mills? There are a number of small things around, and he is occupying one of them. It is not small mills that the Minister wants to be concerned about, it is the productivity, which is something that his Government has overlooked time and time again. Only 12 months ago, the Minister was a party to reintroducing compulsory unionism and throwing out the labour market reform that had been started by the previous Government. They are the sorts of things that the Minister needs to be looking at when he talks about improvement in productivity and the cost structures of the sugar industry. It is an important area that has been totally overlooked, in the same way as the Government cares to overlook payroll tax, petroleum products excises and the training guarantee levy, all of which will be abolished by the Hewson Liberal reform package. It will mean significant achievements in improving productivity for mills. As a result, there will not be the closure of so many mills as would otherwise be the case.

Mills are affected not just by urban sprawl. That is a nice, easy way out for the Government to be able to encourage greater assignments from the Burdekin basin. There is more than that to the problems of the sugar industry. It is continually confronted with a cost structure that needs to be reduced, something which for some time the Minister has failed to appreciate. There are hard times ahead for the industry. That has been brought home to me in some of the concerns expressed to me by a number of industry groups. They have expressed concern to me about productivity, the need for labour market reform, what the Hewson reform package will mean to the industry and about a couple of sections of this legislation. They are not all gung ho and think that everything in this legislation is in order. For example, one of the things about which they are concerned is the need for more notice to be given when sugar mills are being closed. Insufficient notice is given to enable growers to prepare for the changes that will occur. I will touch more on those matters when the clauses are dealt with during the Committee stage.

I look forward to this Government bringing in some reforms in relation to the cost structure in the industry. If the industry is to remain competitive, such reform is very important. The milling area is a very important area. All of us know that our primary producers are the most efficient in the world, but that is so only until they get to the front gate. After they get to the front gate, things start to deteriorate, with a whole range of costs coming into effect. Involved in all of this is the milling area, which is an important part of the sugar industry. If improvements, which are so urgently needed, are not made in the cost structure and in productivity, over the coming years the Government will be confronted with a whole series of mill closures.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (11.27 p.m.): The sugar industry is of great importance to the economy of Queensland. Recently, drought has devastated it. From a forecast crop of 28 million tonnes of sugarcane at the start of this year, the crop will realise less than 20 million tonnes of cane altogether. Businesses are reducing staff levels, with many on the verge of closing their doors. As a result of the drought, coupled with the recession that we did not have to have, enormous pressure is being placed on communities in country areas. Although the tonnages through the mills are down, sugar levels are very high at close to 14.5 c.c.s., which is extraordinary. That will help to compensate for the \$19 per tonne of sugar ripped off the industry by the Federal Government when it broke its commitment and reduced tariffs. Raw sugar prices and the

higher value of the Australian dollar have been other elements that have depressed returns.

In 1985, Queensland had 30 sugar-mills which made 3.171 million tonnes of 94 net titre sugar. During the middle eighties, when world prices hit bottom with growers receiving returns for the No. 2 Pool of less than \$10 per tonne, many growers were forced out of the industry. A number of mills throughout Queensland were crushing insufficient cane to enable them to survive during that period. In 1985, Quanaba, which had been producing 49 200 tonnes of sugar, ceased operations. In 1986, CSR decided to close down Goondi mill at Innisfail. With the need for the survival of Babinda mill, the allocation of Goondi's assigned areas became a controversial issue. With the formation of the Mackay cooperative, North Eton and Cattle Creek followed in 1988 and 1990. Now, the Hambledon mill is to be closed owing to the lack of available land to allow for throughput that would keep it a viable operation. Like so many other mill areas, it is facing a reduction in area following the urban spread that is taking over viable farmland. A number of previous speakers have referred to that problem.

The sugar industry is Australia's second most valuable export crop and is ranked third in the world behind Cuba and the European Community. Some 19 000 people are involved in the harvesting, milling, growing, storage and marketing of the crop. Indirectly, the raw sugar industry employs about 26 000 people. The sugar industry now works under the legislation passed this year and is administered by the newly established Sugar Corporation. The Sugar Industry Act placed the control of the corporation in five people nominated from outside the industry, with the full complement of the corporation being made up of two grower representatives and two miller representatives. While these five members of the Sugar Corporation may from time to time be eminently qualified in their particular fields of expertise, they are not subject to the hip-pocket nerve. Even millers who have been fully supportive of the legislation in the past now have reservations about this representation. There is one very sound business culture: a great deal more care is taken spending one's own money than if one is spending someone else's money. While the corporation is finding its feet, no doubt the industry representatives will have their hands full when grappling with the deficiencies of the new legislation and acquainting new industry members with how the growers and millers in the Queensland industry—which receives accolades from the rest of the world—got this far. Despite the indifference that the National Party felt about the Sugar Industry Act, the poor response that the Goss Government has given to the badly needed research funding—

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

Mr ROWELL: Gee whiz, I hardly deviated from it, Mr Deputy Speaker. I believe that you are being particularly tough.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I allowed the Opposition spokesman to give a very broad speech about the sugar industry. I have allowed the member some leniency. I now ask him to come back to the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill. If he does not wish to do so, I will ask somebody else to speak to the Bill.

Mr ROWELL: Okay.

Mr BOOTH: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, you are well aware that when this House abolished first-reading speeches, it was said that some latitude would be given.

Mr Mackenroth: Sugar milling rationalisation.

Mr BOOTH: So nothing else can be spoken about? I think that you are wrong, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I extended that leniency to the Opposition spokesman. I am now asking all speakers in this debate to speak directly to the Bill, which is the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill.

Mr ROWELL: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will continue. Generally, the intake to mills is highly geared, requiring a great deal of coordination with the transport system. While I do not disagree with the need for Queensland to increase production in line with consumer demand, at this point in time it would be better to obtain the growth through productivity gains rather than an increase in area.

The 13 Queensland Water Resources blocks offered for sale in the Burdekin gave a clear indication of the present capacity to expand. Only three received any interest. Much the same situation prevails in the Herbert River district, with land being offered by the Lands Department. Although farmers are willing to take up land, the economies of the exercise are making it difficult. In the past, price rises have occurred when stocks relative to consumption have fallen below 30 per cent, with dramatic slumps——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am asking the member to come back to the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill.

Mr ROWELL: I would have thought that, as Australia is in the world arena as an exporter of sugar, a rationalisation of the mills is of vital importance. If we are not going to expand on that and look at those aspects——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am not going to debate the issue with the member. If he does not come back to the Bill, I will ask somebody else to speak to it. That is the last warning that I will give to the member.

Mr ROWELL: Thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will try to concur with your wishes.

Mr Hayward: Chuck that page away.

Mr ROWELL: Yes, it looks like I will have to. Because the industry is comprised of a mixture of large and small areas, the effects will be different in the event of closures. Because of their isolation, single mill areas could encounter problems if the closing mill does not adjoin a mill area that wants to increase its milling capacity to service the assignment-holder in the area where a closure is imminent. The legislation does not provide for sufficient time for those affected by an application for closure. Single area mills would be most affected. There is no intention that a specific date be given in the application for closure. It is only reasonable to expect that those affected by the closure should be afforded the opportunity to make a written submission. It would also assist the corporation in its deliberations if a hearing was conducted with those who were affected and had a grievance regarding the closure. The transportation arrangements regarding moving the cane to the mill could require consideration. Neither the growers in the closing mill area nor the growers in the new mill area should be disadvantaged by arrangements being made. While the Act mentions reasonable efficiency, the ultimate cost of that efficiency should not be borne solely by the assignment-holders of the amalgamated area.

The legislation dealing with the local board of a closing mill certainly places a black cloud over that board for some time into the future and will scare the living daylights out of any member of a local board that may become involved in a closure and amalgamation of a new mill area. There is very little involvement of assignment-holders in the transfer arrangements with regard to the terms and conditions that might be expected in the commercial arrangements between the closing mill and the new mill. In the event of a closure where there is no agreement in place, the corporation has the power to apportion assignments solely as it sees fit, with no grounds of appeal for the growers or millers except through the tribunal. Under the Act, the corporation has been given a considerable degree of latitude. That is necessary. However, the legislation does not allow for a hearing

except in the case of the extinguishment of an easement. That principle, which should have been adopted in a number of places, is allowed with written submissions and hearings in relation to applications. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“During the extensive negotiations which led to the Sugar Industry Act, it was clear that industry did not want the corporation to have the broad rezoning powers which had vested in the Central Board. They wanted local control over assignment transactions, and this Government respected their wishes.”

The powers conferred upon the corporation in this Sugar Milling Rationalisation Act are considerable, but there is no provision for a hearing in which growers can put forward their concerns. The aggrieved—either growers or millers—may apply to the tribunal for a review of a determination by the corporation.

Under clause 19, the corporation also has the right to adjust any mill peak. The legislation mentions that all land that was used by the mill for easement immediately before closure will be granted to the new mill, which is reasonable to expect for tramway or vehicle use. However, the Bill also refers to easements required by the closing mill, which is a wide-ranging and open-ended provision for a mill that is closing and passing its assets over to a new mill. The words “or required” do not relate to an asset or an agreement; they indicate only a possible intent. Why was that provision included in the legislation? Perhaps the closure of the Hambledon mill at Edmonton could cause a dilemma with the suburban growth in Cairns and the need to give the growers north of the city access to the Mulgrave mill. Is this a roundabout way of the Government passing the buck onto the former owners of the Hambledon mill to avoid some unsavoury negotiation with the owner of the large block of land that is jammed in the only clear corridor to the growers farming north of Cairns?

Bulk terminals are also very important. In the past, bulk sugar terminals throughout Queensland that were owned by the various port authorities were leased to the sugar board, and they will now come under the jurisdiction of a corporation. Those terminals are located in places right along the coast of Queensland, including Cairns, Mourilyan, Lucinda, Townsville, Mackay, Bundaberg and Brisbane. The withdrawal of New South Wales to manage its own affairs in relation to refining and to determine its own destiny means that the terminal in Brisbane has a question mark over its future. Fortunately, when the terminal was commissioned, the National Party Government and the industry had sufficient foresight to design the complex to allow for its future use as a multipurpose facility. Now, with reduced tonnages coming through, that advanced thinking may benefit the industry by obtaining a considerable remuneration for the terminal, if required.

The rationalisation of mills will have a bearing on the future of the State's bulk sugar terminals. As the industry grows, proportionate changes will occur in the tonnages of sugar passing through those facilities. This is quite an important point. One of the considerations for the future will be who will pay for the further increases in terminal capacity. That is a major concern with the rationalisation of mills. The Minister will have to agree with that. We must have terminals to handle the increased capacity that will pass through those mills. If we do not have sufficient terminal capacity, that will require some rethinking of the whole aspect of terminals and, of course, where mills are placed. The growers who were involved in the industry until the recent expansion contributed, along with the millers. However, as the industry expands, it would be unreasonable for those regions that have no available land to contribute further to an increase in terminal capacity. The rationalisation legislation is very important to the sugar industry. Over a period, in order to stay viable, the milling sector has had to increase its crushing capacity.

Members of the Opposition see no major problems with the legislation, except in relation to the two-year notice that we require. The Opposition will propose amendments to

the clauses. I would like the Minister to take that matter into consideration. Recently, I spoke to him about it. A problem is created with Hambledon, but the Opposition will propose a complementary clause to overcome that problem. I would like the Minister to consider that.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (11.42 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill, I acknowledge the comments made by the shadow Minister, my colleague the member for Mirani. I would like to make a few additional points. It should be acknowledged that the Bill affects communities, farmers and millers along a 1 500-kilometre to 1 600-kilometre stretch of the Queensland coast. In a commercial sense, members could debate no other Bill that has the capacity to impact more on a whole range of communities than does this Bill. The legislation will affect people from Mossman in the far north to the Rocky Point mill near the New South Wales border. The circumstances applying to each community and each mill need to be recognised. I acknowledge that the gravity of the Bill and the necessity for it need to be included in a consideration of the framework of the Bill.

Obviously, the first mill restructuring that will be undertaken as a result of the Bill will be the closure of the Hambledon mill, which is operated by the CSR company. CSR operates four mills in my electorate—the Invicta mill at Giru, the Inkerman mill at Home Hill, the Pioneer mill at Brandon and the Kalamia mill just outside Ayr. CSR is a very good company. It operates the Plane Creek mill at Sarina near Mackay. In common with all companies, CSR has had to rationalise its own operations. People who work with and operate from the company must recognise that, from time to time, harsh and difficult commercial decisions must be made. We need to understand that, within the framework of those decisions, the rationalisation process will continue. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“In 1915, the Government of T. J. Ryan introduced the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act . . . there were 45 sugar-mills in Queensland. After this season, there will be 25.”

The acceleration in the demise of mills is of great concern to every member in this House. When I came into this Parliament there were 30 mills operating along the coast of Queensland. That number was reduced to 28 and after this season—as the Minister correctly stated—there will be 25 mills. This diminution in the number of mills must give rise to grave concerns about the capacity of other companies to continue operating. In particular, the communities and farmers who are dependent upon those mills must be looking at this rationalisation process with some concern. For instance, if rationalisation took place at the Invicta mill at Giru, it would have severe ramifications for the area. That mill has the capacity to rearrange its transport system and hook up to one of two other mills in the region. It cannot hook up to a third mill because the Burdekin River cannot be crossed by cane transportation. I do not suggest that there is the slightest chance that CSR might close down the Invicta mill. That concern did exist in the community a few years ago, but it has now dissipated. The fact is that other mills do not have the capacity to further rationalise their operations by diverting cane to other mills. I draw the attention of members to mills such as Rocky Point to the south, Moreton up here near Maryborough, and the Pioneer mill, which is a large and successful mill.

Mr Warburton: Where is Moreton?

Mr STONEMAN: Moreton is in the Maryborough area.

Mr Mackenroth: In the Bundaberg area.

Mr STONEMAN: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Chatsworth. It is all very well for the Minister to interject and make snide remarks. I acknowledge the input to this debate made by the honourable member for Mulgrave. He

was the only Government member, apart from the Minister, who saw fit to recognise the problems encompassed by this necessary Bill. I pay tribute to the member for Mulgrave because tonight he made a meaningful contribution to this debate. He did not make snide remarks about the Bundaberg mill being in Bundaberg. There is no such thing as the Bundaberg mill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Campbell): Order! I know that the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations also interjected about the Moreton mill. The Moreton mill is actually in Nambour.

Mr STONEMAN: It services that general coast area.

Mr Mackenroth: You don't know much.

Mr STONEMAN: If Government members wished to make a meaningful input they could have put their names on the list of speakers. The point I make is that isolated mills along the coast are facing a major problem, because they do not have the capacity to extend their services and ensure that their growers can transfer to other mills. This happened in the case of the Hambledon mill and the cane went to Mulgrave. Isolated mills do not have the necessary flexibility and the farmers in their regions are facing considerable further financial risk. They are put in the position where they are dependent upon the continuing existence of a single mill. Sometimes it is no longer possible to retain the mills because of the costs of expansion and the purchase of land. This occurred with the Hambledon mill and it could well happen in the Proserpine area, which is a developing tourist area and is most attractive. It has other capacities. If pressure was put onto that mill, there is no way that it could continue to process cane without a huge extension of its transportation network. It would have to go down to the Mackay area, as the Minister knows, which would impose an impossible burden on the region.

Those are the sorts of things that need to be considered during this debate on the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill. I have some sentimental connection to the Mulgrave mill, although I am not a cane-grower and have never lived in the Mulgrave or Hambledon areas. The Mulgrave mill was the first sugar-mill I ever visited. In August 1950—almost 41 years ago—when I was but a callow youth of 11 or 12 years, I travelled to Cairns on holiday with the Young Australia League and we visited the Mulgrave mill. We travelled through cane-growing areas from the time we left the City of Cairns until we reached the Mulgrave mill. Development has occurred, and nowadays if one travels through half that area one does not see a stick of cane. In fact, one of the few cane-growing areas before one reaches the Mulgrave mill is the research station. I make the point that the Mulgrave mill is a progressive mill and at the present time the growers in the Hambledon district are very fortunate that people such as Don Leighton—the chairman of the cooperative—who have progressive and forward-looking attitudes provide back-up for cane-growers. These farmers have committed their total life savings to cane-growing. They have committed their livelihoods in every sense of the word. They are fortunate that the Mulgrave mill is there and that they have the forward-thinking management of people such as Don Leighton, his board of directors and the management of the mill. They are lucky, but such facilities do not exist in other areas.

This Bill facilitates a process whereby mills can be closed down for a number of reasons. The Minister made the point that mill closures are very emotional issues. That is correct. The mere thought of a mill closure causes emotion. The Minister said that the previous Government ignored some of these factors, but there must be further rationalisation if the industry is to continue. A facilitation process must be undertaken that takes account of emotions and commercial processes involved. The commercial processes are the concern of cane-growers, millers and people who have an investment in any facet of the industry. It has a tremendous amount to do with the people involved in the

service towns. Perhaps the Mulgrave area will benefit from the fact that Gordonvale will have a larger and greatly enhanced milling operation, but other areas that do not have the benefit of service industries and other growth factors will not be in as good a position. I believe that every member of this Parliament who represents a cane-growing area should stop and think, and realise that rationalisation could affect his or her electorate and the farmers and millers who live in those areas. It is most important that those members realise and understand fully the implications of this legislation.

As my colleague the member for Mirani mentioned, the follow-on effects of this legislation will be catastrophic. The Government should be careful to acknowledge the problems inherent in this legislation. Members of the Government should ask themselves: what if this happened to a farm in which I invested a great deal of money? They should realise that many farmers have invested a great deal of their money in the sugar industry and that the time for closure of some of the mills has now come to pass. A number of factors are imposing a great deal of pressure on the sugar-milling industry which will flow to the cane-farmer and then on to the community. I draw to the attention of the House the fact that this year has been a particularly difficult period for virtually the entire industry. Sugar-growing districts are straitened because of seasonal conditions, particularly in those areas surrounding Mackay, which is represented by the Minister for Primary Industries, and in areas near the electorate of Mirani. My assessment of the situation is that the area represented by the member for Mirani would probably be the hardest-hit area of the whole State.

The term of the crushing season has been shortened considerably, and that imposes even greater pressure on the mills because it is an additional problem. The operation of a mill should span a reasonable period, but, of course, a great deal of conflict has occurred between millers and growers about the length of the season. Obviously, the growers want the crushing season to be as constrained as possible and to be reduced to a period which will ensure that the cane is crushed when it has reached its optimum sucrose content. In my electorate of Burdekin, this period has been acknowledged and documented as being at the twenty-second or twenty-third week. However, this year, the crushing season finished a month earlier, which meant that the structure of the mill and the investment of CSR in four huge mills has been weakened and the expected return reduced. The end result has been that those mills have had to be closed down not for six months but for seven months of the year. The workers who have commitments and the contractors who are attached to the farming operation or milling operation have suddenly found that for at least a month—in other words, probably the best part of 15 per cent of their normal season—their livelihood has been pulled out from under them. They are faced with problems associated with ways to meet their financial commitments, and they have been forced to dip into expected revenue for the next season. These factors highlight the problems brought about by rationalisation that are confronting mill-operators. Short seasons exacerbate all the other problems because when one short season occurs, the next season will also be a short season, and this has a snowballing effect. I point out to the Minister that members of this Parliament on both sides of the House will have to grapple with this problem.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister pointed out that originally there were 45 mills and that only 25 remain. If that trend continues, it could well be the case that there will be only 20 within a few years. This is a matter of major concern. Mr Deputy Speaker, in your electorate of Bundaberg, there has been an increasing trend towards diversification, as you would well know. Cane-farmers are beginning to turn their attention to small crops and tree crops, which results in greater pressure being applied to the mills of that area because of the reduction in the amount of cane to be crushed. Right throughout the State, the same type of problem is emerging. The difference in circumstances has been quite

correctly identified by the Minister, who referred to the fact that the Ryan Government introduced the original sugar industry legislation in 1915.

Again, I acknowledge the need for rationalisation and the fact that greater efficiency is needed so that the entire industry can operate on an improved basis. I do not think that anyone could argue with what the Minister has described as reasonable rationalisation of mills, because I do not believe anyone could point the bone at a mill-operator ceasing to crush cane if it meant that the mill would be losing money ad infinitum. However, I am concerned that in areas that do not have a mill in close proximity, closure of the mill will result in a transportation system having to be developed, which will cost millions and millions of dollars. That type of expenditure cannot even be contemplated under the present economic circumstances, and isolated areas are being placed at risk by this legislation. Those areas will need all the support and assistance that the State and Federal Governments can give them. I remind the Minister that in his second-reading speech he stated—

“The objective will be to retain as much industry expertise as possible, and to allow those cane-farmers who wish to remain in the industry the opportunity to move their assignments to other mills.”

That statement leads me to the next point I wish to make.

The transfer of assignments to other mills is a reasonably simple operation because it merely requires a piece of paper or an Act of Parliament to facilitate the process, but the fact of the matter is that in each growing area and milling area, different growing protocols apply, and there are different developments in knowledge and expertise that farmers over several generations have become accustomed to. The problem is that a grower could be growing cane in the Mackay area and then have to shift his assignment and farming operations to, for example, the Burdekin area, which has the capacity to expand and develop. However, the machinery, the climate and the growing protocols are all different, and there are also social problems experienced by farmers who have to relocate to totally different areas. When they move to the new area, they have to construct sheds and homes, and they have to move their families. All those processes have to be entered into, and a transfer of assignments is not simply a matter of passing a Bill, which will make everything okay. The problem is that there are a whole range of problems that then flow from that facilitating process.

Although, as the Minister has said, the Bill will be put into immediate use, I believe that many farmers are going to have to think very carefully about continuing in the industry, particularly in the present economic circumstances. It is my observation that probably between 15 per cent and 25 per cent of cane-growers in the industry throughout Australia, largely centred in Queensland, are in fact on the borderline of viability, if not below the borderline. The problem is that in the foreseeable future there is no light at the end of the tunnel. I will not go into the fact that recent announcements in Canberra may give cane-growers an opportunity to see some light at the end of the tunnel. The industry is probably in its most critical stage in the history of its development.

On the one hand, this Bill allows a further facilitation and the flexibility that is required but, on the other hand, the financial constraints, the seasonal constraints and, more particularly, the constraints on the young people who are unable to rationalise being able to stay in the industry are going to make it more difficult to facilitate a smooth, transitional rationalisation as a result of this Bill.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (12.02 a.m.): Although I recognise the importance of this legislation, I also consider today to be a very sad day for Queensland. I suppose it is nothing more than a sign of the times that from time to time there has to be a rationalisation of industries. The Opposition recognises that, broadly speaking, there are

sunrise and sunset industries. Unlike some members who have spoken recently in this Parliament—particularly tonight—I have great faith in the future of the sugar industry. I see that this legislation for the rationalisation of sugar mills is probably nothing more than a hiccup in the long-term welfare of the sugar industry and, therefore, the long-term welfare of Queensland which, after all, since early last century has been the State which has been the most dependent on the sugar industry in this country.

A couple of members have said that this legislation has been introduced because of the rationalisation of the sugar industry in far-north Queensland and the closure of the Hambledon mill. I see the passing of the Hambledon mill as a very sad thing for the people of far-north Queensland. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that it was an emotional issue for those people who depended on the Hambledon mill over the years. That mill has been the mother of that area. It has always been there—a very happy smokestack quietly belching away the fortunes of the community. It was recognised as the linchpin, the thing that made the fortunes of that area, the thing that made it work. Now one sees the passing parade. The Hambledon mill is no more.

It is reasonable to suggest that there are other mills in that district—particularly the Mossman mill—which would not be so easy to rationalise. This legislation is relevant to the rationalisation of any mill that is required to close and the closure of mills throughout Queensland for a long time to come. It is very sad indeed. The Minister pointed out, as has already been mentioned, that previously there were 45 sugar mills in Queensland. Now there are 25. I hope and trust that this legislation will not be used on a regular basis because if it is, it will be a further indication that Queensland's once healthy and wealthy sugar industry is very much on the skids. One must be very careful about that.

Because it is relevant to the far-north Queensland industry and the rationalisation of mills in that particular area, let us consider briefly the closure of the Goondi mill a few years ago. In fact, in his second-reading speech, the Minister mentioned the disruption that was caused in far-north Queensland between Babinda and Mourilyan when the people of South Johnstone felt that they wanted some part of that. There has been grave upset in that community. As the book says—

“The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,
Moves on.”

There is not a thing one can do to wipe out a word of it. That is history in motion and the rationalisation of the sugar industry in far-north Queensland is, of course, going to be part of that.

The Mossman mill is moving in an interesting and different way to avoid the circumstances that the people of the Hambledon mill have found themselves in and, therefore, is subject to this legislation. It is moving up the range. It is a land-locked mill and it is suffering from the kinds of depredations of its land area that were suffered by the Hambledon mill. The Honourable shadow Minister mentioned the purchase of a large block of land from the Cannon family a couple of years ago for \$23m, which was probably the final death knell of the Hambledon mill. That large and viable farming area was plucked out. As has been pointed out, honourable members cannot stand up in this place and condemn that particular family for accepting a sum of money that was larger than they normally would have expected to receive for their land. They took that money and, of course, they were entitled to so do. It was evidence of the growth in the Cairns economy, the growth in tourism in Cairns, and the need for the development of the southern suburbs of Cairns. That took the product from the Hambledon mill, and that is what caused it to close. There was always the potential for the Hambledon mill to remain open if it took the rationalising steps that may well have been taken through the Atherton Tableland region. However, at the time, using Queensland Railways was not considered to be a reasonable way of

hauling cane from the tableland region to the coast. The infrastructure from Atherton to the Hambledon mill was already in place. There was a 3 foot 6 inch gauge line. There was no reason why cane could not have been produced quite adequately on the upper Atherton Tableland. In the areas in which irrigation is available in that region, the cane produced is three c.c.s. units higher. It is something to do with extra sunshine and adequate water supply.

Mr Randell: And rain.

Mr GILMORE: And rain, of course. That is what the Mossman mill has managed to achieve. Given the circumstances of the Bill that we are debating tonight, if the Mossman mill continues to lose land and has no access to further land on the upper Atherton Tableland, it will have to rationalise. What chance will it have? Where will it shift its cane to? The land area that is available for production on the coastal plain currently servicing the Mossman mill has no viable alternative agricultural crop. It has no viable product. What can be grown in the superwet tropics—exotic fruit trees? Enough exotic fruits could be grown there in a hat to flood the whole of the Australian market.

This Bill allows for the rationalisation of mills. That is what it is all about. But we have to attempt to keep these mills operating. There is no point in having the best legislation simply to close mills down. The name of the game is to keep the sugar flowing and to ensure that towns, such as Mossman which is at the far end of the system, continue to have a viable alternative. There are a number of viable alternatives in new technology such as the possibility of new package mills which can be introduced into these areas with smaller production capacity. Some time ago, it was considered that Hambledon mill could be disassembled and rebuilt in the Atherton Tableland area. Unfortunately, the technology was too old. The mill itself was too old. Therefore, that opportunity had to be passed up. The new technology which covers crushing between 200 and 2 000 tonnes a day is small technology, but it is certainly appropriate and can be used as a stopgap measure in some of these areas which might be facing serious threats of rationalisation under this Bill.

One of the things that most concern me and, I think, all people in far-north Queensland, because the sugar industry is one of our major economic institutions, is the lack of equity that farmers will have under the circumstances of rationalisation, particularly where there is no alternative. The Bill allows for all the necessary arrangements to be made between mill areas. We are talking about the transfer of assignments, farm peaks and mill peaks and, as was recorded by the honourable member for Mulgrave earlier, there is a reference to the tribunal for appeal, and I welcome that. It is very important that this Bill be so structured. I congratulate the Minister and his staff on going about this in a businesslike manner to ensure that all the matters that require to be considered in a rationalisation of the sugar milling industry are considered. In the unfortunate circumstances that a mill may have to close and all of the arrangements have to be transferred to wherever there is a viable alternative, the Bill covers it. If we come to the even more regrettable circumstance that there is no viable alternative, God help us all, because neither this Bill nor any other legislation will replace the equity value that the farmers have built up in their property for two and sometimes three generations. They have given their faith and their lives to the industry and can now see it frittering away.

When I began my speech, I suggested that there are times when we have to confront a sunset industry. I do not believe for one moment that the sugar industry is a sunset industry. I have very great faith in its future. Because of the international marketing arrangements, there are some obvious difficulties. I believe that, because we are so well placed in the production of cane sugar, and the way that we are respected in the world sugar markets, the industry will bounce back once more and be clearly seen and be clearly demonstrated to be a viable force in Queensland's economy. That will go on for many years. It does not matter whether the EC continues to overproduce beet sugar.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! The subject of the Bill is rationalisation.

Mr GILMORE: Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker, I am coming back to that point. Sometimes it is important to make a point in respect of these matters. I was making the point that, with faith in the industry, the Bill may well be able to be circumvented without further closure of mills.

My colleague from Burdekin mentioned the Rocky Point mill. It is in exactly the same situation as Mossman and could well face rationalisation but with no viable alternative provided by this Bill. I consider that the Minister has handled this legislation reasonably well. Regrettably, there is a need for amendment because the Bill is faulty in one respect. In sufficient time is provided for impending closures. The amendment that is to be moved will allow it to happen more quickly and that is fine, but more time is needed for impending closures. When it becomes obvious that this is to happen in the fairly near future and when it becomes obvious that there is an end in sight, it seems to me that action should be taken fairly quickly and fairly early in the piece to give people time to reorganise their affairs so that they can make alternative arrangements, can shift to another developing area, can get to an irrigated block or can switch to another mill area. I think it is unworthy that the Minister has actually—apparently, anyway—drafted this legislation around existing circumstances. The Hambledon mill is, to all intents and purposes, dead in the water, and the legislation is apparently drafted around that set of circumstances—not for future circumstances, which this Bill in fact is designed to cover. Opposition members believe that the amendment which will be provided to the Parliament is an adequate and sensible one, and I would expect it to be taken up by the Minister.

Hon. R. C. KATTER (Flinders) (12.16 a.m.): I was rather intrigued by someone asking me earlier on why I was speaking on the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill. It is true to say that it is very hard to live in north Queensland without realising that the sugar industry is an integral part of everyone's life. The biggest industry in Charters Towers—

Mr McGrady interjected.

Mr KATTER: If the honourable member would be quiet for a moment, he might get some education—which he desperately needs, judging by some of the things he has said recently. He will be getting an education from me, anyway, on those matters later on. It is very difficult to live in north Queensland without having every aspect of one's life affected by the sugar industry. In fact, in Charters Towers, which is some 150 kilometres from the nearest sugarcane, the biggest industry is the boarding schools, and around about one third of their pupils come from families associated with the sugar industry. So, if in fact there is a downturn in that industry, that is reflected very much in the economy, not only of Charters Towers, but also of cities such as Townsville.

We have a situation where a mill is closing. Unfortunately, we have a situation in which other mills could close as well. It must be understood that if a mill closes and there is no other mill handy, then, of course, because the sugarcane producer cannot afford to transport his cane any great distance, he must cease production. At Clare, which is near Ayr, farmers simply could not afford to transport their cane to the nearest mill. Mr Deputy Speaker, you are looking worried. Let me state very definitively that if a mill closes, a grower is either within catching distance of a neighbouring mill or he has to cease operations as a sugarcane-farmer. In Clare, when the prices dropped below a certain point, people simply had to stop farming. Many of those people had paid \$2,000 an acre for their land. They had hundreds of thousands of dollars invested, with no return whatsoever. We have a situation here where exactly the same sort of thing could occur if in fact mills close and the cane has to be transported great distances.

It is rather interesting to analyse the reasons for the closures, because they demonstrate very, very clearly the incompetence of the Queensland Government. The Japanese giant Daikyo took up large areas of land. The Brisbane *Sun* newspaper of 13 June stated—

“The Japanese giant Daikyo has been knocked back on an application for more Queensland land because of claims that it has already bitten off more than it can chew.”

But that action was not taken by the State Government but by the Federal Government's Foreign Investment Review Board. It was that board that had at least made some sort of an effort to protect the amount of sugar grown in this area. If similar action had been taken by the Queensland Government, or at least it had attempted to stop Daikyo's unlimited expansion in this area, then the mill would still be operating. Let me state clearly for the record that Hambledon mill was then not under threat of closure. An entirely different situation has arisen over the last two years in the sugar industry when many mills have been placed under very great stress because of the downturn in the industry. Not only was the land in question not bought when the National Party was in Government, but also the very attenuating circumstances which exist in this industry now did not exist. I point out that Daikyo already owns about 800 hectares of residential land in Cairns, but has fully developed less than 300 hectares.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! This has nothing at all to do with the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill.

Mr KATTER: Mr Deputy Speaker, with all due respect, I crave your indulgence and say to you that if that land had not been bought by Daikyo, Hambledon mill would simply not be closing. Please understand that the area of land which was farmed with sugarcane that went into the Hambledon mill came from an area that is now owned by Daikyo. If it did not own it, or if this Government had forced it to farm the land which it owned—because it has just sat on it and done nothing with it—we would not be here tonight closing another mill in an area that has already been devastated by the World Heritage closures and throwing 100 or 200 men out of work.

Mr Bredhauer: You're wrong.

Mr KATTER: I am not wrong at all. I gladly and willingly accept any interjections. We have a situation in Cairns where Daikyo has bought a very large proportion of the entire surface area of the shire. In fact, Trinity Inlet is now substantially owned by Daikyo and various affiliate companies.

Mr Barber: They're your mates.

Mr KATTER: I take the interjection from over there. I would like to know who it was so I could acknowledge his statement. They are our mates? Mr Goss was the person who, two months before the last State election, twice went to dinner with Mr Schubert in the State's most expensive restaurant.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Flinders will return to the Sugar Industry Rationalisation Bill. If he does not wish to do that, he will cease his speech.

Mr KATTER: I am sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. The interjection has dragged me sideways. I fully acknowledge what you are saying, Mr Deputy Speaker. I will come back to the Bill. I was rudely interrupted by people sitting opposite. If Daikyo had been forced to grow sugar, we would not now be closing this mill. If in fact this Government had taken the strong stand that needed to be taken against subsidised EC beet sugar coming into this country, then we would not be closing Hambledon mill here tonight. There is no confidence in the industry. The reason for that is that the industry knows that the door is now open for subsidised EC beet sugar to be dumped on the Australian market,

which would utterly destroy Queensland's sugar market. The Government has failed totally to act upon a very serious matter that has arisen in the industry. In addition, the State Government has not acted on tariffs, which are being phased out. Even though the embargo was removed, we still had a protective mechanism in the form of tariffs.

Mr DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member has been talking for approximately seven minutes and he has not touched on the Bill. Mr Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to Standing Order 120 in terms of relevance.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have already asked the honourable member to return to the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill.

Mr KATTER: I am talking about the rationalisation of that mill. I am giving the reasons why that mill is being closed. If the honourable interjector does not realise that the importation of beet sugar from Europe is one of the most oppressive measures that is crushing these mills, he knows little about the sugar industry and he would be wise to sit down and shut up.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member for Flinders should also realise that I am in the chair.

Mr DAVIES: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am speaking to the member for Flinders. I am in the chair and the Bill that we are discussing is the Sugar Milling Rationalisation Bill. If the honourable member does not address the Bill, he will be ordered to cease speaking.

Mr DAVIES: I rise to a point of order. I take exception to being told to shut up. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that statement.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will withdraw that comment.

Mr KATTER: I withdraw the comment. Of course, those who find the kitchen too hot should not be in it, should they? I move on to say that, when we were in Government, a number of people argued strenuously—I believe they were ill-advised—to close the Babinda mill. When that situation arose, the Queensland Government stood behind the Babinda mill and made large loans available to it so that the 100 or 200 workers in that mill would be able to stand upright and the businesses in the town of Babinda would be able to continue to exist. At present, Hambledon mill is closing and the people in the neighbouring town will be left with no income except the dole. In sharp contrast to the action taken by us when we were in Government, this Government has made no effort to try to rescue the mill. The Government has presided over the burying of a corpse. The only attempt that it has made to look after the patient is to offer assistance in lowering the coffin into the hole at the end of the day. If they were able to obtain alternative employment in the area, some of the farmers may have been able to stay upright. However, because of the World Heritage area closures, alternative employment in the area has been removed completely. Other industries that existed in the area that would have enabled those people to earn an income and to battle on have been removed. The Government has again created the environment which has forced those people to leave those areas. The ALP Government has ensured that, in future, the people of the Cairns region will rely on jobs with Daikyo waiting on tables—or standing in dole queues. The Government should have stopped Daikyo from taking more and more land and forced that company to grow sugar. The people should have been provided with cheap loans so that they could stand upright, as we did in Babinda when we were in Government. Instead of fighting the Federal Government on the importation and dumping of subsidised EC sugar, no action was taken. Therefore, the Government is presiding over the death of jobs and employment in the State of Queensland.

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (12.28 a.m.), in reply: Mr Deputy Speaker—

A Government member: Is this the milk industry Bill?

Mr CASEY: It may as well have been the milk industry Bill, because all members, including the Opposition spokesman, have spoken about everything else. However, they were allowed that leniency by the Deputy Speaker at the time, and I respect that. Clearly, most Opposition members know absolutely nothing about the sugar industry, particularly about sugar-milling rationalisation. In common with the debate earlier this year on the Sugar Industry Act, Opposition members obviously have not read the Bill. If they had, they would have known what it was about. If they had listened to my second-reading speech, they would have known what was occurring and how it was being put into effect. Despite all the diatribe and nonsense that the honourable member for Flinders went on with, I point out that the Bill has been brought forward by agreement between the growers and the millers concerned. They were the ones who reached agreement—not the Government. They were the ones who said that they wanted to close down their mill because of its old technology and because it was no longer a profitable mill in terms of productivity. The only member who made a valuable contribution to the debate was the honourable member for Mulgrave, whom I thank sincerely. On behalf of the Government, I also thank him sincerely for liaising on my behalf with the people from Mulgrave mill, the cane-growers in the Mulgrave area and those in the Barron River electorate whilst they carried out negotiations on this Bill. I point out clearly that what is contained in the Bill and the way it was set up is the Goss Government style. The legislation was developed through consultation and cooperation with every sector of the industry. The legislation has been brought into this House with the agreement of the sugar industry. A deal was done between the millers and the growers concerned. As a result of the new industry Act that we have put in place, they were able to make their own decisions.

Despite the fact that the millers, the growers and everybody else in the industry reached agreement in relation to this matter and came to the Government, which legislated in the way in which they asked and required, the Opposition is now trying to encourage the cane-growers of Queensland to welsch on the agreement that they made. That is typical of the way in which the National Party acts. That was not done for the benefit of the industry, because the benefits to the industry have been discussed between its own groups. The Opposition is trying to do it for political reasons in order to take away from the sugar industry the feelings that it has at this stage. At the moment, the industry has very real problems. The Opposition is trying to say, "This is because of the approach by the Government to this particular measure." The wrong approach that has been made in this regard has been that of the National Party. It has been a clandestine type of approach, not by the leadership to the leadership of the industry but through a back-room staffer who still wants to be a big fish in the small pool where he was and who wants to bask in the glory of the old times that he wanted to continue. The honourable member for Hinchinbrook knows full well about whom I am talking because he was the bloke who was involved in these clandestine approaches at the time when the Opposition spokesman was overseas on a parliamentary mission. He went about it in this devious way. Also, he went about it in a further devious way with other people who are arch enemies of the CSR.

Over the years in this place, I have had my own fights with the CSR. I have had a lot of fights with the CSR; there is no question about that. The CSR has agreed with its growers on the way in which milling assets are to be disposed of. It has agreed with its growers on the way in which it decided to bring about a rationalisation of the milling situation between Mulgrave and Hambledon mill growers. But what happens here? The National Party comes in here and wants to stir things up in relation to this agreement. Let

me refer to a few quotes that were sent to me first and foremost from the Australian Sugar Milling Council. It told the Opposition that cane-growers had written to it and to me and that it accepted the one-year notice provision contained in this Bill. Only yesterday, the Australian Sugar Milling Council indicated to me that it was willing to write to every member of this Parliament expressing its support for the Bill.

Mr Randell: Why didn't they?

Mr CASEY: For the simple reason that I said, "No, if Opposition members want to make absolute fools and backsides of themselves, let them get up here tonight and do it." That is exactly what they have done, to try to force the industry to welsh on an agreement that it made within itself. The cane-growers themselves have also expressed their concerns about the fact that a few problems have occurred in negotiations concerning this Bill. But what did they say finally? They said—

"Because of these concerns, a number of changes were made to the draft Bill to ensure that the Sugar Corporation and the Sugar Industry Tribunal take whatever action is necessary to minimise losses, to ensure that growers are able to make alternative arrangements to supply another mill with cane, where possible, and are protected against loss of income arising from cane supply prior to closure, to the extent of the provisions contained in the 'Sugar Industry Bill 1991'."

Members opposite still have not read that Bill, which went through this House back in April. The cane-growers went on to say—

"Canegrowers would not want our submissions for a Minimum 2-year Notice of Intention to Close to prevent the passage of this Bill and thus put at risk the agreements and arrangements now in place which facilitate the transfer of Hambledon assignment to the Mulgrave Mill area."

That is the important aspect of this legislation. That is the whole principle that we are talking about here tonight—whether we as a Government are prepared to stand by those negotiated arrangements and agreements that the industry entered into. And we are most strongly prepared to stand by those arrangements and agreements. But not these people opposite, including even the Liberal Party. Tonight, the former Leader of the Liberal Party, the member for Toowong, made an absolute fool of himself with his statements on milling. I would remind him of a simple mathematical calculation—a big mill has a big crushing rate; a small mill has a small crushing rate. That is the reason why Hambledon has had only a small crushing rate over the years—it has been only a relatively small mill in the whole system. None of the foreshadowed amendments that have been put forward by the Opposition are acceptable. I am going to wait to see the race between the member for Mirani and the member for Toowong when they try to move the same amendment tomorrow morning.

Motion agreed to.

QUEENSLAND BUILDING SERVICES AUTHORITY BILL

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (12.37 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to regulate the building industry."

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) (12.38 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Tonight, I introduce the Queensland Building Services Authority Bill. This Bill represents an Australian landmark in the regulation of the building industry. This legislation will put the Queensland building industry into a stronger position by providing greater protection for all sides involved in the industry—builders, subcontractors, and consumers. The Bill provides new mechanisms to speed up settlement of disputes over home-building, as well as new structures and services to tighten licensing provisions, improve training for builders and subcontractors and improve the level of advice offered to consumers. The industry will develop and grow through the Bill's promotion of higher standards through the improved dispute resolution process and through its in-service training initiatives. This in turn will result in greater confidence in the industry from consumers. This Bill incorporates the benefits of the experience of all other States and makes allowances for the lessons that they have learnt. I am proud to introduce this Bill, because it has flowed from the home-building review I initiated nearly two years ago. The review team—headed by Brisbane barrister Raelene Kelly—undertook wide-ranging consultations and generated general support throughout the building industry for the major provisions of the Bill.

The passage of this Bill will facilitate equity in an industry which has in the past featured inequitable practices. The Bill will provide means for self-improvement through training, and the Act will enable enforcement of minimum standards to benefit both consumers and contractors. In summary, the Bill will provide the legislative backing to limit unfair practices, defective quality and unjust contracts and provide the means to quickly remedy complaints. The Bill establishes the new Queensland Building Services Authority to administer the Bill, comprising a new Queensland Building Services Board, the Home Building Advisory Service and a registrar/general manager. The Queensland Building Services Board will replace the Builders Registration Board. The new board will provide for the first time representatives of consumers, subcontractors and designers as well as builders. In the past, only builders sat on the Builders Registration Board, so this is a major reform, especially for subcontractors. The Home Building Advisory Service will communicate board policy and provide advice on authority services, as well as arrange education programs.

A major change under the new Bill is tighter licensing provisions for all contractors engaged in the building industry to regulate performance, to facilitate dispute resolution and to discipline inadequate performance. The Bill requires owner/builders to meet minimum standards of knowledge and to be responsible for their actions through notices to future purchasers. Provision has also been made for minimum equitable standards to be enforced in home-building contracts. The Bill also provides for the home builders insurance warranty from the existing Act to continue. Under the new legislation, the authority will be able to order and execute rectification of building work similarly to the existing Act. However, it also establishes the Queensland Building Tribunal to administer or review the application of the Bill's provisions. The new tribunal will be able to resolve disputes, order rectification work, issue stop orders on building works and discipline licensees. Avenues of appeal are also detailed. The Bill clearly outlines the jurisdiction

and powers of the Building Tribunal, which will be headed by a chairperson with suitable qualifications and experience. It is the aim of this legislation to ensure the maximum level of integrity in the process of resolving disputes. The Queensland Building Services Authority Bill is a milestone in creating conditions for equity within the building industry. I believe it will bring security and confidence to all sides involved in the industry. The legislation has the support of all key users. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

TOWNSVILLE BREAKWATER ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE BILL

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government) (12.41 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to provide for the Townsville Breakwater Entertainment Centre, and 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) (12.42 a.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

For some years, it has been argued that there is a need for a substantial entertainment and convention facility in the Townsville region. Honourable members should note that, in recent years, conventions have been growing into a multimillion-dollar business throughout Australia. The potential for conventions to generate foreign exchange earnings for Australia are enormous. Indeed, a study by the Australian Tourist Commission last year showed overseas visitors attending conventions in Australia contributed \$227m to the national economy in 1990. So the spin-off effects of conventions on the Queensland tourist industry cannot be underestimated. In addition, it was argued that a large-scale entertainment centre in Townsville will also help attract to the city events which now by-pass it because of the lack of a suitable venue. The likelihood of a Townsville side competing in the 1993 national basketball league, and the need for a suitable venue being available to stage matches, has further highlighted the lack of appropriate facilities.

Both the Townsville and Thuringowa City Councils have investigated many different ways and means of establishing such an entertainment and convention facility at a reasonable cost for the overall benefit of the area. Early this year, the councils submitted to the Government a proposal for developing such a centre on land adjacent to Townsville's Breakwater Casino. In essence, the proposal was that the councils would become joint venturers with ANZ Executors and Trustee Company Limited—the trustee of the Breakwater Island Trust. Together they would undertake all necessary works and activities to construct and operate the entertainment and convention centre. The proposal provided for the centre to be able to cater for—

approximately 1 800 delegates in a convention setting;

1 000 seats in a banquet setting;

the staging of indoor basketball, tennis or ice skating with provision for 3 000 to 4 000 seats for spectators; and

the staging of concerts with capacities in the range of 4 800 to 6 200 people depending upon the seating configuration.

Equity participation in the project was to be obtained by way of contributions of \$5m from Townsville City Council, \$2m from Thuringowa City Council and the provision of land by the trustee with an estimated value of \$6m. In addition, assistance from the Government was sought by way of a grant of \$7m. The proposal also provided for Breakwater Island Ltd, the manager of the casino, to have priority in managing the centre once it had been established, on the clear understanding that the company would carry any losses sustained as a result of this activity.

The proposal was examined in detail by the State Government, and it was decided that legislation should be enacted to enable the project to proceed. It was also decided that the State Government would contribute \$7m as a grant towards the estimated \$14m cost of building the centre. The Bill before the House does that by specifically allowing both the Townsville City Council and the Thuringowa City Council to participate as joint venture partners with the trustee to design, develop, construct, commission, operate and own a convention, exhibition, sports and entertainment centre. It was recognised at the outset that no legal power or authority existed which would allow the local authorities concerned to participate in a venture of this nature. As a consequence, this Bill provides those powers and authorities.

Members will note that three rather lengthy draft agreements form part of the Bill. The Bill in fact permits the local authorities to enter into such agreements as may be necessary to establish the facility, and declares that for this particular purpose the establishment, operation, and ownership, etc., of the facility are functions of local government. Because of the time constraints which apply, the Government has decided to include two specific provisions to help fast track the centre's development. The Bill provides authority for the joint venture partners to deal in priority with a constructor, namely, Multiplex Constructions Pty Ltd, without the need to invite public tenders. The processes used by the councils in determining the most suitable constructor have been examined and found to be adequate in ensuring that no party has been dealt with unfairly. Further, to enable the project to get under way almost immediately, provision is made for any of the joint venturers or their agents to have access to the site and for them to carry out works on the site notwithstanding that the transfers of land may not have been effected at that time.

As I have said previously, the joint venture undertaking establishes equity in two forms, that is, cash funding by the councils and by Government grant and by the contribution of land owned by the trustee, which will comprise the site of the development. The Bill confirms that these equities may be established in this manner and further provides for procedural matters to be undertaken in respect of certain lands so that a complete site for the project is available. The Bill also provides for the land comprising the site to be included in a zone under the Townsville City planning scheme so that the development may be lawfully established on the land from the time that the provisions contained in this Bill have force of law. I believe that the establishment of the Townsville Breakwater Entertainment Centre is a vital component in the ongoing development of the Townsville region as a major tourist drawcard and that, in the long term, the development will contribute significantly to the region's economic development. I commend the Bill to the House.

Bill, on motion of Mr Lingard, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (12.47 a.m.): I move—
“That the House do now adjourn.”

Use of Superannuation Funds as Venture Capital

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (12.47 a.m.): Now that the dust has settled following the launch of the Federal coalition's economic reform package, the people of Queensland can feel confident that they have a real and worthwhile alternative to consider when they go to the next Queensland and Federal elections. As the debate on the goods and services tax and all the other elements of that package continues in the coming weeks and months, I am sure that the people of Australia will grow to appreciate its value more and more. However, the important factor will be whether the Hawke and Goss Governments continue to perform—if one can use that word—in the battle against rising unemployment and economic hardship. The real worry is that both Hawke and Goss have been making decisions and announcements that accelerate the process of erosion of confidence in the business and rural sectors in particular.

The issue that I particularly want to raise affects millions of hardworking Australians who look to their superannuation funds as their insurance for the future. As people go about their jobs—those who still have them—they may not realise that moves are under way which could damage the value and even the safety of a portion of their superannuation funds. One of the key figures in that process is none other than the Queensland Premier. He has been alarming board rooms and business organisations with announcements about his support for the concept of using a portion of superannuation funds for venture capital. In terms of the use of superannuation funds—to many astute business-leaders, that could be more aptly described as misadventure capital.

I draw to the attention of the House an editorial in the *Australian Financial Review* of Tuesday, 26 November 1991, which stated—

“Headed by Mr Ray Block, of SBC Dominguez Barry, the task force has recommended to the Minister for Science, Mr Free, that super funds be encouraged to invest 1 per cent of their assets in venture and development capital.

Should those funds prove unwilling then those funds with more than 10 per cent of their assets overseas ‘should be required to invest 1 per cent of their assets in venture and development capital’.”

At a recent meeting of the Business Council of Australia in Brisbane, Mr Goss went so far out on a limb on that issue that he received what can be described only as a stern rebuke from BHP chief executive, Brian Loton.

Under the two-year Goss Labor regime, Queensland's public servants have suffered terribly, but their suffering will be made even harder in the knowledge that this Labor economic illiterate wants to get his hands on some of their superannuation to gamble it on the 5 per cent or 6 per cent chance that a particular venture might succeed. Those are the odds which face investors in such projects—a 5 per cent or 6 per cent chance, odds of 20 to 1. Mr Goss wants to dip into the superannuation funds, including those of Queensland's public servants, for just such purposes. In case members feel that I might be overstating the issue, let me further quote to the House from yesterday's editorial in the *Australian Financial Review*. It stated—

“For superannuation fund investment and venture capital investment are two completely different animals. Super funds are cautious and look for steady returns

while venture capital is much closer to systematic gambling in a game where one hit makes up for a lot of misses.”

The editorial then proceeded to castigate the Federal Minister for Science, Mr Free, for supporting such a concept. It stated—

“But it would have been far better for Mr Free to acknowledge reality and abandon any further talk of forcing super funds to invest in high-risk ventures.”

Again, I make the point that that is the idea that the Premier of this State is bandying around the board rooms of Brisbane—a situation that has the capacity to create and is creating shock, horror and dismay not only amongst public servants of this State but also amongst other people of this State.

Time expired.

Youth in Mansfield

Ms POWER (Mansfield) (12.53 a.m.): This evening, I wish to highlight the valuable contribution made by youth organisations in my electorate to society and the well-being of young people. Recently, I attended the Sleeman Sports Complex in my electorate to award medals to swimmers participating in the Chandler Swimming Club's Politician Stakes. Politicians throughout the State at local, State and Federal levels were invited to sponsor events in this B-grade swimming carnival. I was pleased to write my cheque and I thank my colleagues, especially the member for Manly, who responded generously to ensure an excellent meet. Clubs from Beaudesert, the Gold Coast, the north coast, Pittsworth and Brisbane participated in the all-day carnival. Competition was keen in each event to gain the fastest three times for medals. As well, aggregate trophies were presented to the top scorers in each age group for both sexes. The perpetual club trophy awarded to the participating club with the highest point score at the end of the carnival was taken home by the host club Chandler. There were approximately 1 000 competitors at the carnival and all would agree that it was very successful. This success was due to the work of a small, dedicated group of adults. These people spent a lot of time ensuring the success of the carnival. Firstly, there were the coaches and others who supervised the training. Secondly, there were the people who organise club nights and interclub meets. Then there were the people who provide food and drink, those who timed the events, and those who recorded the times. The list goes on. All these people play an important role in supporting the swimming club and youth in the electorate.

Another group in my electorate providing a service to youth is the Sunnybank Tennis Association, which was formed in 1986. The aim of the association is to encourage and promote junior tennis in the surrounding suburbs. The committee which guides and assists the association's activities is composed solely of interested parents of club members. The association has some 400 members who play in a range of fixtures. It has achieved recognition in the Sunday evening fixtures, which accommodate some 10 southern suburbs clubs, and has won the best club trophy for the past two years. The majority of members participate in professional coaching classes ranging from beginners to McDonalds developmental squads for the club's best players. The club conducts a number of domestic tournaments throughout the year for its members. As well, members are encouraged to play in challenges against other clubs and tournaments in south-east Queensland. A team of interested players is also sent to Sydney and the USA every two years. Again, the success of this association is due to the work of a large band of volunteers. These people play a positive role in the development of the club members and in the local community. The Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing also recognises the valuable contribution of this association, which is the recipient of subsidies for junior coaching and capital works in the form of a practice wall.

Another successful club in my electorate is the Mansfield District Junior Cricket Club of which I am proud to say I am the patron. Again, this club relies on the generosity of many volunteers. Every Saturday a host of fathers and mothers supervise and train a range of boys from approximately 5 years to 16 years of age. In addition, a lot of work goes on behind the scenes so that everything runs smoothly on the day. There are many more organisations in my electorate that provide a service to young people. There are swimming clubs at Mount Gravatt East and Mount Gravatt South. There is Rugby League, Rugby Union, soccer, grid iron, marching girls, netball, baseball and softball. The list goes on. As one drives around the electorate during the week and on every weekend, one sees a group of adults busy keeping young people entertained. All these groups provide sports facilities for young people. The success of these clubs is due particularly to a group of volunteers who give their time freely and willingly in order to provide children with a range of activities in which they can participate. It is often very easy for us to comment about young people and the less than positive things that they do. It is with a great deal of pride that I take my hat off to the people in my electorate who provide such stimulating events for the youth of Mansfield. I congratulate those people who administer the clubs, keep the grounds, train the players, run the canteens, sell the raffle tickets and pick up the kids and take them here and there on their contribution to the development of youth in Mansfield.

Disclosure of Political Donations

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (12.57 a.m.): This morning, I rise to speak about an issue that is never far from the public agenda—the disclosure of political donations. Like most things, when it comes to political disclosure, actions speak louder than words. Lately, we have heard a lot about disclosure from the ALP. However, unfortunately, there is a large gap between what members of the ALP say and what they do. What they say is simple—“We support the public disclosure of all political donations.” What they do in real life is completely different, very complex and downright sneaky. I will cite a few examples.

At the last Federal election, despite the requirements of the Electoral Act, the ALP national secretary, Bob Hogg, disclosed only 40 per cent of the political donations received by the Labor Party. He would have got away with it if his mate in Western Australia—Brian Burke—had been a bit more careful. It was the WA Inc scandal that made the Electoral Commission look a little more closely at the ALP's books, and honourable members can guess what it found. That commission found an extra \$2.3m of undisclosed money, \$300,000 of which was received from “Brian Burke Trust Account, Parliament House, Perth”. That small transaction—I will not call it a donation because if it was a donation the ALP would have disclosed it—came just weeks after the infamous gold tax lunch starring Bob Hawke, Brian Burke and a cast of thousands of WA Inc personalities. Was this a coincidence? Not likely! Mr Hogg's excuse for inadvertently failing to disclose the \$2.3m was that he did not read the fine print.

If the ALP cannot abide by campaign finance laws passed by Labor Governments, how can we trust this Government to abide by its own rules? Is it simply proposing a set of rules that will make it easier to conceal where its money comes from? Earlier tonight I talked about allegations made by a witness to the Senate Select Committee on Political Broadcasts and Political Disclosures only a week or so ago. He alleged that \$40,000 collected by the Electrical Trades Union and the TLC in 1985 to assist the families of 1 000 striking SEQEB workers was secretly donated to Con Sciacca's campaign for the Redlands by-election. The Premier came into the Chamber and said that all had been declared. Words are cheap and actions speak louder than words. Will whingeing Wayne Swan have the courage to put his money where his mouth is and release the minutes and accounts of the 1985 Redlands by-election campaign? He who mouths disclosure will

simply not have the courage to practise what he preaches. Again, the Pinocchio of Queensland politics, Mr Swan, will be shown to be nothing but the political fraud that so many in his own party accuse him of being.

There are almost two million workers who belong to unions affiliated with the ALP, which represents a tax advantage to the Labor Party of at least \$1m a year. Apart from affiliation fees from unions, the ALP receives another \$2.5m in gifts for campaign purposes. I ask: are affiliation fees declared as political donations? Between elections the ALP receives fees and gifts from unions totalling \$4m. ALP national secretary, Bob Hogg, openly admits that the Labor Party is adept at using the current legislation to hide funds to the tune of \$8.5m. Let us not forget that it was a Labor Government that passed the current legislation that it is now rotting. Has any of this money been publicly disclosed? It was certainly news to me, and I think it is news to a great number of unionists and workers who have no idea how their union fees are being spent. When it comes to disclosure of political donations, what are people to believe—what the ALP says, or what it does? Obviously, an amount that most people consider to be a donation—for example, the \$40,000 hijacked from the SEQEB strikers' fund—is not regarded in that light by the Labor Party.

Mr ELDER: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Merthyr is misleading the House. The facts before that committee were quite clear. The TLC ran a separate campaign and the party funded itself through its own campaign funds. There was no funding of the campaign by the TLC.

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

Mr SANTORO: As far as the ALP is concerned, any money that is gleaned from its union buddies is not a donation and does not have to be declared. It does not have to state what the amount is, let alone ask the poor worker who is eagerly paying his fees or the unionist who is donating to a strike fund if his money can be used for political purposes. The Liberal Party's policy on political disclosure is quite clear. Members of the Liberal Party believe that it is the right of any individual to be able to keep his political beliefs entirely to himself, and that if he decides to donate money to a political party, he should be able to do so with complete privacy. Throughout the community, there is a genuine fear that if donations are received in anything less than the strictest confidence, the donor may face retribution from an opposing Government or political party. The Liberal Party conforms completely with the requirements of the electoral Act, and all donations received by the party are acknowledged by a receipt and are recorded. As Mr Fitzgerald can state, there are no brown paper bags because the Liberal Party has maintained a responsible fund-raising code and has never been tainted with the smell of corruption. There are no secret backhanders from union or business mates, no dodgy transfers from dubious strike funds, and no failures to declare campaign funds or read the fine print. If actions speak louder than words, then I think it is quite clear where the real political integrity in this State lies. In conclusion, let me say that if any reform is to occur in this State, the Liberal Party is of the view that the trade union movement at both State and Federal level must be required to be more open, honest and answerable to its membership with respect to political donations and expenditure made by or on behalf of the union.

Time expired.

Liberal Party on Gold Coast

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (1.02 a.m.): I wish to refer to a group of Liberal Party members on the Gold Coast who are known as the God squad.

Mr Elder: The dog squad.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: Or the dog squad. These Liberals are based on the Federal seat of McPherson and are headed by the Federal member for McPherson, John Bradford, the member for Currumbin, Trevor Coomber, and the member for Nerang, Mr Connor. At the moment, the God squad is plotting to secure the safe seat of Merrimac, for which the honourable member for South Coast is trying to win preselection. I believe that the hatchet job done by the member for Currumbin on the previous Liberal leader, Mr Beanland, has left blood on his hands which is overflowing into Merrimac—the electorate that Mr Quinn would like to represent. During the recent leadership struggle in the Liberal Party, Dr Watson, Mr John Goss and the Liberal Whip, Bob Quinn, were involved, and I believe that Mr Quinn is receiving a pay-back from the God squad on the Gold Coast and that the job is being done by the member for Currumbin.

I also wish to refer to the credentials of the member for Currumbin that were canvassed in a recent report published by the CJC on a public inquiry into payments made by land-developers to aldermen on the Gold Coast. Page 33 of the report states—

“The Commission did not find Coomber a credible witness in relation to the \$5,104.31 Newton’s had allegedly billed Lewis Land in respect of services provided to Coomber, and is satisfied from, inter alia, the documentary evidence that the donation was made for Coomber’s benefit.”

Mr Coomber: You are a disgrace.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: If I am a disgrace, the Liberal member for Currumbin is, too, because he sought preselection from the National Party in the 1985 State election. When he dipped out on that, he then stood as an Independent against the National Party and again jumped the fence and stood for the Liberal Party in the 1988 election.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! The member for Merthyr will cease engaging in conversation.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: I wish to refer also to other parts of the report that reflect badly on the member for Currumbin—for example, page 68.

Mr Prest: What does it say?

Mr SZCZERBANIK: The report states—

“Mr Coomber, there’s just one matter I wanted to clarify with you if I may. I noted you were saying in your evidence this morning that you thought it was undesirable for Councillors to be seen to be receiving money from developers. Did I note you correctly? Was that something you said, something you thought?—Well, I think it’s undesirable on the scale of things when you are an elected official, that you have to be seen to be aloof from any influence whether it’s inferred or whether it’s true. I mean, in the times that I’ve been on Council for nine years, I don’t believe any Alderman has been put in that position, but the city has grown in such a way that the development industry had been part of the funding of a lot of not only Local Government elections, but State elections as well.”

That statement is quite true. The report states that Mr Coomber received approximately \$5,000 from the Raptis group. I note that his evidence contained high praise of the Raptis group because, when reflecting on the development application before council on Ephraim Island, Mr Coomber said that he believed that it was the best development application to go through council.

Mr COOMBER: I rise to a point of order. If the member for Albert is going to quote the report, I would like him to quote it correctly because the words I used—and he can find the reference in the report—were that the Raptis development was the “most sensitive” development to go through council during my time.

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

Mr COOMBER: If he wants to quote the report, he should quote it correctly.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have already said that there is no point of order.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: It must be the most sensitive development to go through the Gold Coast City Council that the member had put through. Page 24 of the report contains the most damning indictment of the member for Currumbin. It states—

“The Commission was satisfied to the requisite civil standard that many witnesses (including a significant number of Aldermen) who gave evidence on oath were, at times, untruthful.”

That is a most damning statement.

Mr COOMBER: I rise to a point of order. At no place in the report is there a statement indicating that I was untruthful. I find those remarks offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SZCZERBANIK: If the member finds those words untruthful, I will withdraw them.

Time expired.

Longreach Special Education Unit

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (1.08 a.m.): Tonight, I rise to join in this debate to speak about the future of the special education unit at the Longreach State School. Over the last few days, an airing of problems has taken place in that centre. I point out to you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and to other members of this Parliament that this unit covers a very wide area of central and western Queensland. Currently at that school there are 11 mentally impaired and physically handicapped children. Some of these children are doing exceptionally well under the guidance of the two teachers who are currently there. This Government proposes to close that facility in the near future and to turn it into office space for the support centre of the Education Department for the north-west region, which will be based in Longreach.

Currently, the support staff are based in Glasson House in Longreach, which was the headquarters of the north-west region before it was moved to Mount Isa by default. I make it clear that this special education unit at the Longreach State School must remain intact where it is and how it is. These children need the isolation from the rest of the school. They do not need to be put into the centre of the school, as is currently proposed, or could be proposed. I want to bring to the attention of this Parliament what could happen. To avoid embarrassment to the families of these children, to the teachers who do a great job in assisting these children, and to the other children of this school, it is of paramount importance—and I ask the Government to place special emphasis on this—that these kiddies remain where they are. They have a garden there that they are very proud of. They also have a playground facility which is a great asset to them. I trust that the Government will take note of what I am saying here tonight.

I understand also that it is the prerogative of Governments to implement change, but it is not a healthy situation to have change for the sake of change. As the member for Mount Isa well knows, moving the north-west office from Longreach to Mount Isa has been a total and utter failure. The people who work in that centre are not happy and the office is not functioning in the way it should be for the sake of education..

Mr McGrady: That's not true.

Mr JOHNSON: It is true. The honourable member for Mount Isa knows it as well as I. It is about time that the people of this State realised how much money it cost to move that centre to Mount Isa and how much money it will cost—

Mr Neal interjected.

Mr Stoneman interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hollis): Order! The member for Burdekin!

Mr JOHNSON: It is pork-barrelling, as the honourable member for Balonne has just said. How much money will it cost if this special education unit in Longreach is closed and relocated in another part of those school grounds? It is a sad situation in this State when children who are not as fortunate as some other kiddies, and are not as fortunate as some people in this House, are picked on.

I beg this Government to keep that special education unit in Longreach as it is, where it is, and operating in its current capacity. As I said a while ago, there are 11 kiddies in that unit and their two teachers are doing a grand job. Next year, there will be 14 children utilising that facility and they will have three teachers. There is no way in the world that that centre can be moved. I trust that the Government will show compassion on this issue, show compassion for the children—

Mr McGrady: Who said it was being moved?

Mr JOHNSON: I do not have time for interjections. The honourable member for Mount Isa knows who mooted the moving of the centre. The member for Mount Isa is trying to avoid the issue. He knows what the issue is. I do want to bring to the attention of this House the fact that it is absolutely paramount that that facility remains as it is. I beg the Government to show compassion to the families of these children, to the children themselves, and to the other children and the people of the region. It is a great facility. I urge the Government to retain it in its current capacity.

Electoral Boundaries

Mr ELDER (Manly) (1.13 a.m.): Today is, of course, the final chapter in this State's gerrymander. The final curtain is being drawn. Today, we created the final boundaries for the 89 seats in this Parliament. At long last, it can be said that the gerrymander is dead. The Electoral and Administrative Review Commission was given the task—the unenviable job—of transforming the electoral system in this State. Of course, it commenced that task with vigour and fervour on 20 April this year and now, some eight months later, has completed the task. All honourable members—in fact all Queenslanders—should be very appreciative of and thankful for the work that has been done by this commission and should recognise, of course, the responsibility and the diligence demonstrated by it in the performance of this duty. It is at a time such as this that we need to recall what Fitzgerald said about the electoral processes—the electoral laws—in this State. It is very relevant when we are talking about the final gazetted document that came to us today. Fitzgerald said—

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

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

The fairness of the electoral process in Queensland”—

I am referring to when Fitzgerald was reporting—

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

...

It has not always been obvious that the Electoral Commissioners were independent of the Government. Submissions and other material upon which the Commissioners have proceeded have been secret. The Commissioners did not report to Parliament,"—

as in this case—

"but to the Premier.

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

Today is the culmination of that process because, today, we have a document that has been presented to Parliament. There are no missing files. It is there. The reasons are given for the changes. The reasons substantiating those changes are documented. It is not like 1985, when the redistribution position of the National Party went missing.

I congratulate EARC on the work it has done with the new seat of Capalaba which I will be representing in this House after the next election. For the first time it is being defined by natural boundaries. For the first time, natural boundaries have been used to define the electorate. I recall what happened in the previous redistribution in 1985 when the Nationals, and particularly Don Lane, did the fine-tuning. Don Lane looked at the seats of Manly and Redlands. It was always assumed that the natural boundaries of Tingalpa Creek and Hilliard Creek would be used, and they are the boundaries that have been used for the new seat of Capalaba. The seat of Capalaba should have been there some six years ago, yet it never was. Don Lane surprised us all by throwing the Labor areas of Capalaba, Alexandra Hills, Birkdale and Thorneside straight into the seats of Manly and Lota, just to save the former Attorney-General, Paul Clauson. He achieved that aim, of course.

Mrs Woodgate: Never to be returned.

Mr ELDER: No, although I see that he has bobbed up again. I understand that the National Party has called for nominations for the new seat of Redlands which, I might say, will be won at the next election by the Labor Party. It will be won by John Budd, who has been selected to represent us in the campaign.

Mr Schwarten: They are taking their maps out.

Mr ELDER: They are the ones who have concerns, and many of them have been perusing the maps very closely over the last 24 hours. It looks as if Paul Clauson will throw his hat into the ring again, and at the forthcoming election he will be just as successful as he was at the last election.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.18 a.m. (Thursday).

