THURSDAY, 30 APRIL 1992

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

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Abortion Law

From **Mr Randell** (39 signatories) praying that action be taken to ensure that the law prohibiting abortion on request be enforced.

Similar petitions were received from **Mrs Sheldon** (185 signatories), **Mr Gilmore** (334 signatories), **Mr Welford** (46 signatories) and **Mr Coomber** (207 signatories).

Petitions received.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

PSMC Review of Department of Resource Industries

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—Minister for Resource Industries) (10.02 a.m.): As honourable members are aware, the Public Sector Management Commission completed its review of the Department of Resource Industries and the Queensland Coal Board in December 1991.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the Minister making a ministerial statement?

Mr McGRADY: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: I have not called for that yet.

Mr McGRADY: I am sorry.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Information Technology Industry

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville East—Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development) (10.03 a.m.): The Leading State document released by the Premier on Monday——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Does the Minister seek leave?

Mr SMITH: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to make a ministerial statement.

Leave granted.

Mr SMITH: As I was saying, the Leading State document released by the Premier on Monday provided a detailed strategy for the future economic development of this State. Included in that strategy are comprehensive plans for the development of Queensland's information technology industry. Those plans have been drawn up by the industry and the Government over the past year. I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard* the details of those proposals.

Leave granted.

I wish to talk briefly this morning about the information technology industry in Queensland and the future development of the industry.

I can inform the House that the 1992-93 Budget will provide funding to commence the

implementation of the strategic plan for the development of the information technology industry in Queensland. My Department will begin immediately the preparation of an implementation plan.

I anticipate that interim appointments will be made to ensure that the fulfilment of the recommendations contained in the strategic plan occur as soon as possible.

Mr Speaker, the application of information technology is a major factor in the economic growth of industrialised nations. Information production and processing accounts for about one third of gross domestic product in most industrialised countries, although we are not yet at that level in Australia.

The development of an information technology industry is beneficial in its own right, but such an industry can also significantly benefit the economy as a whole. The proper application of information technology has the potential to significantly improve the competitiveness of Queensland's rural, mining, manufacturing and service industries.

Currently, Queensland has a small but growing software and information technology services industry, a growing telecommunications industry and a small hardware industry. The focus so far has been on servicing the needs of the local market, but the industry is sharpening its focus on exports, particularly software and services such as training and facilities management, for which there is a growing Asian market.

Last year, the Government, through the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development, initiated several industry strategic plans. The information technology industry was selected as the first such plan because of its generic application to other industries.

One feature of the development of this plan was the close involvement with the existing information technology industry. The plan aims to build on the base already established in Queensland and capture an increased share of trade in information technology and services.

As a result we now have a comprehensive ten-year strategic plan for the Queensland information technology industry. The central part of the plan is the establishment of an Information Industry board, Which will be responsible for the implementation of the major parts of the plan.

In brief, there are four components to the plan.

Firstly, there will be a strategic marketing campaign to attract information technology firms to Queensland through highlighting the State's advantages and the success of existing firms.

There have been several examples of companies re-locating to Queensland, the most notable one being the Royal Hong Kong Jockey Club Software Development Centre, which is based near Bond University on the Gold Coast. This campaign will stress Queensland's existing skills base, the strong level of academic support for the industry, and the easy provision of appropriate infrastructure.

Secondly, a Queensland Information Services Network will be developed to provide business, Government and the community with advanced services such as distance education, videoconferencing, and electronic trading. It is envisaged that this network will involve several Queensland universities as well as the private sector.

The network will build on initiatives such as the proposed Distributed Systems Technology Centre, which is based at the University of Queensland and is supported by both State and Federal Governments as well as the private sector. The global market for distributed systems is expected to exceed $100 billion by the turn of the century.

Thirdly, an Information Technology Export Centre will be established to promote the marketing overseas of local products and services, particularly for servicing and networking smaller enterprises.

Fourthly, the development of strong management in information technology enterprises will be encouraged through targeted industry extension services and industry funded programs.

This plan will encourage the development of an information technology industry which is competitive on the world stage.

Such an industry will create wealth for the State by increasing the export of products and services and raising the productivity and export potential of strategically important industries. It will also create more jobs through the expansion of the industry and accompanying strategic industries.

A healthy information technology industry would also improve the delivery of Government services such as education, health and other quality of life services. A particular benificiary of this would be the rural community.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

PSMC Review of Department of Resource Industries

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—Minister for Resource Industries) (10.04 a.m.), by leave: As honourable members are aware, the Public Sector Management Commission completed its review of the Department of Resource Industries and the Queensland Coal Board in December 1991. The commission consulted widely with the mining industry, mining unions, and within Government. The PSMC review recognised the vital importance of mining to the Queensland economy, the role of the department in supporting State economic development and the need for the Department of Resource Industries to focus on industry as its primary client.

The review made a number of recommendations designed to enhance the department's ability to fulfil its role as the key facilitator and regulator of resource industries. For example, the PSMC review found that—

the department should upgrade its services to industry, particularly in terms of its provision of geological information;

the functions and resourcing of district offices should be reviewed with the aim of improving delivery of services in regional areas;

the Government's recently announced environmental management policy—the result of extensive consultation and negotiation between my department and the Queensland Mining Council—should be reinforced by the development of clear policies and standards for mine site environmental management; and

the upgraded Queensland Coal Board was effectively servicing the Government and the industry. However, the 1948 Coal Industry Control Act should be reviewed to ensure its relevance to Government, union and industry needs.

My department and I welcome the findings of the PSMC review. We welcome the recognition of the importance of the mining and energy industries. We welcome the constructive recommendations aimed at encouragement of a stronger minerals and energy sector.

The implementation of those recommendations, and the initiatives announced by the Government earlier this week in Leading State, will enhance Queensland's reputation as an attractive investment target for exploration and mining companies. To that end, we have set up a number of implementation groups—some with industry and union representation—to ensure the PSMC's recommendations are implemented as quickly and effectively as possible. It is intended that the vast majority of the review recommendations will be in place by this time next year. I take this opportunity to thank the commissioners and staff of the PSMC and my own departmental officers for their contribution to this report. For the information of honourable members, I table a copy of the recommendations.

PRIVILEGE

Treasurer's Comments on Mining Industry Reforms

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.05 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. Yesterday in this House, the Treasurer referred to a report on the ABC's 12.30 p.m. bulletin that claimed that the executive director of the Queensland Mining Council had dismissed a statement I had issued, stating that the Government's coal industry reforms were virtually worthless to miners. I have since been informed by Mr Pinnock that at no stage did he make that claim.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Moggill will resume his seat. Members cannot rise on a matter of privilege to make a debating point.

Dr WATSON: Mr Speaker——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! A member may rise if he or she has been personally misrepresented.

Dr WATSON: Yes. I have been.

Mr SPEAKER: Or a member may rise on a matter of privilege that has something to do with the running of this Chamber. However, a member cannot rise to make a debating point about what was said and whether or not it was right, otherwise privilege would be used to debate matters all day, every day. The member is out of order. There is no matter of privilege.

Dr WATSON: Mr Speaker, this is an important issue with respect to the timing of what the ABC said. That is what I am getting at, and this is not an attack on the Treasurer or anything of that nature. It is purely an explanation of a misrepresentation that occurred in this Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I point out to the member for Moggill that the House does not allow members to clarify those matters by using that process. A member may do so at another time—for example, in a debate. However, this is not a matter of privilege. I so rule, and that is final.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. Is it not a matter of privilege, Mr Speaker, if a Minister either intentionally or accidentally misleads the House?

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Dr WATSON: Yesterday, the Treasurer made a statement that was based on a false premise on his part, which directly attacked me. I am about to correct that.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If I were to allow honourable members to debate those matters, we would never get on to the business of the House at all. I stick to my ruling. It is not a matter of privilege.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.08 a.m.): I seek leave to make a personal explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr SPEAKER: I point out to the honourable member that he must show where he has been personally affected or personally misrepresented. It must be on a personal basis.

Dr WATSON: As I said, yesterday, the Treasurer referred to a report on the 12.30 ABC bulletin, in which it was claimed that the Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Mining Council had dismissed a statement that I had issued stating that the Government's coal industry reforms were virtually worthless. I have since been informed by Mr Pinnock that at no stage did he make that claim. Indeed, the ABC had used a voice grab from Mr Pinnock that was given before I had spoken to the ABC on that issue. I quote from a report that is being released today by Mr Pinnock—

> "At no time have we commented on Liberal Party statements on the package, nor have we been asked to."

I table that report. All members of the House would agree that we expect better standards of journalism from the ABC.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr VEIVERS (Southport) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: On Wednesday, 11 March, I made an apology to the House about a document that I tabled, which referred to a horseracing track system known as Equitrack at the Lindsay Park Stud in South Australia. That particular document was a statutory declaration by Gold Coast publicist, Henri Lach, who had obtained information from the Lindsay Park Stud to the effect that the Equitrack was laid at the stud in August 1990. Although Mr Lach accepted that information in the best of good faith and produced his statutory declaration on the strength of it, the information as regards the date of the laying of the track turned out to be wrong. Since then, Mr Lach has continued on my behalf to make inquiries into the matter. It has emerged from those inquiries that, although the original information as to the date of the laying of the track was wrong, my contention that the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, Mr Gibbs, has grossly misled the House is certainly not wrong. As I said on 11 March, Mr Gibbs had sought to justify his visit to South Australia in December 1988 because, among other things, it gave him a chance—and here I quote from Mr Gibbs' own explanation—

> ". . . to glean a wealth of knowledge about various aspects of the racing industry, particularly the operations of the Equitrack."

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Where has the honourable member for Southport been personally misrepresented in that?

Mr VEIVERS: I am just getting to it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member had better get to it quickly.

Mr VEIVERS: The information that I had before me then led me to make the statement that the Minister could not possibly have gleaned knowledge of the operations of a facility which was not yet in existence. I say this again here today——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is debating the issue.

Mr VEIVERS: I now table the document.

Mr BORBIDGE: I move—

> "That the member for Southport be further heard."

Motion agreed to.

Mr VEIVERS: I say this again here today because I now have documentation from England—which I have just tabled—from the company that manufactured and laid the track. That documentation shows conclusively that the laying of the track did not begin until March 1989—and that is more than two months after Mr Gibbs says he visited the stud. I say again, as I said on 11 March: the ball is now in the Premier's court as to what action he will take against the Minister for so obviously misleading the Parliament and his Premier. For instance, just over one hour after I made my original statement in the House on 11 March, Mr Gibbs rose to say that his Division of Racing and his own officers had been in touch with Lindsay Park. That is on page 4046 of *Hansard*, to make it easy to find. Now, why would they want to do that? Did they not believe Mr Gibbs? Did Mr Gibbs not believe himself—or had he ordered them to do it?

Mr Gibbs interjected.

Mr VEIVERS: No, the Minister should listen. If the Minister had ordered them to do it, why had he ordered them to do it? Could Mr Gibbs not remember what he had done and what he had seen? There is a further puzzling point. Mr Gibbs says that his officers had been told by an executive at the stud that the Equitrack was in use months before November 1988. I say that it must have been a phantom Equitrack because, as the documentation that I have tabled shows, the actual manufacturing and laying of the track was delayed until March 1989—and that is more than two months after the Minister says that he visited the stud and saw the operations of the Equitrack. I rest my case.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (10.13 a.m.): I seek leave to make a personal

explanation.

Leave granted.

Mr Gibbs interjected.

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing and the member for Southport wish to have a conversation, they should go outside.

Mr SANTORO: Yesterday during question-time, the Premier told honourable members that I had said that the dismissal of the Police Commissioner was something to be decided by the Premier. I have never made such a remark and I seek to set the record straight. Yesterday on Rod Henshaw's program on ABC radio, I said that the Police Service Administration Act provided two options for the way in which a Police Commissioner can be dismissed if he is found guilty of official misconduct.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Again, I will not allow personal explanations to be used as a debating point. The honourable member has made his point that he did not say that. I ask him not to debate the issue, but only to say where he was personally misrepresented.

Mr SANTORO: With respect, the Premier did say what I am claiming that he said. I am trying to inform the House of precisely what I did say.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! A personal explanation is not to be used as an avenue for a debate on an issue. The honourable member is entitled to make it clear that he did not say that. He has made his point, and that is adequate.

Mr SANTORO: But, Mr Speaker, surely if I am misrepresented——

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

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

Mr SPEAKER: I advise Ministers that, if they wish, they may table their answers for incorporation in *Hansard*.

1. National Park Land Acquisitions

Mr ELLIOTT asked the Minister for Environment and Heritage—

"With reference to huge tracts of country acquired for National Park purposes throughout Queensland and particularly in the far north of the State—

(1) Will he detail all of those 80 acquisitions, outlining the area, price and its environmental credentials?

(2) Precisely when is all of that money going to be in place and what is the source?

(3) In light of his well demonstrated failure to manage the parks system, what steps are being put in place to rectify this situation, particularly in relation to control of feral pests, noxious weeds and straying stock?

(4) What arrangements has he put in place with his colleague, the Minister for Primary Industries, in respect of managing any potential outbreak of exotic diseases, such as foot and mouth, in the Cape York area?"

Mr COMBEN: (1) I thank the honourable member for his question. The environmental credentials for land which is acquired for national park purposes are that the land has been identified as a valuable addition to Queensland's system of national parks because of its value for biodiversity, habitat preservation, amenity or aesthetics or as a valuable addition to an existing park. I am able to provide the honourable member with a listing of 150 gazettals of national parks, which includes gazettals for such things as road openings. I will now give the honourable member the details he requests.

Tamborine Base, size: 0.765 hectares; Rainbow Beach Information Centre, size: 7.27 hectares; Cape Upstart National Park, size: 5 640 hectares, in the parish of Curlewis in the electoral district of Bowen. The Warrie National Park, extended by 615 hectares.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr COMBEN: That is No. 135. Native Dog Creek National Park——

Mr ELLIOTT: I rise to a point of order. The Minister may find this very amusing and think that he is very smart, but the people in this State who have not been paid do not think it is very clever at all.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cunningham has just taken a frivolous point of order, and I warn him under Standing Order 123A. Honourable members may be annoyed that the Minister is reading out those details, but while we have this archaic system, which has not been changed under Standing Orders, he is entitled to do so.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to paragraph (iii) of Standing Order 70, General Rules for Answers, under our archaic Standing Orders to which you referred, and point out that it states——

> "If, in the opinion of the Speaker, the Answer is too long, he may direct the Minister or the Member to cease speaking."

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his advice. I understand the Standing Orders. I ask the Minister for Environment and Heritage to continue his answer.

Mr COMBEN: Mr Speaker, I would certainly agree with the Standing Orders, but I have no choice because the simplest answer that I can give in answer to a question about "outlining the area, price and its environmental credentials" is to give the name and the size. That is the shortest thing that I can do in terms of the answer to the questions that I have been asked.

Hull River National Park, size: 220 hectares. Fort Lytton National Park, 6.693 hectares. Stones Country, 259 hectares. I could continue, but in view of the state of my voice and the 150 extensions that are listed, I seek leave to table the list of parks and have the names and the areas of the parks incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Park Name	Area (Ha)	Thrushton	25652.233
		Idalia	144000
		Mt Isa residence	0.0607
		Bloomfield	6.897
		Bribie Island	1330
Gazettals since 2/12/89		Cape Hillsborough & Wedge Is	813
Printed April 30, 1992 10:39		Cooloola	0
		Gilbrook	138000
Tamborine Base	0.765	Jardine River	21200
Rainbow Beach Info Centre	7.27	Moreton Island Rec'n Area	19760
Cape Upstart	5640	Lamington	20500
Warrie	615	Carnarvon	251000
Native Dog Creek (C No 20)	23.56	Futter Creek	36.9
Djilgarin	88.74	Cooloola	117
Hull River	1470	Palmgrove	0
Fort Lytton	6.693	Iron Range	8670
Stones Country	259.7	Coolmunda	89.2606
Hampton	2.0778	Noosa / Lake Weyba	1580
Innisfail	15.484	Vernon	59.7
Burleigh Head	27.6	Mt Kinchant	64.7497
The Knoll	86.8	Poona	4320
Kauri Creek	219	Pt Newry Road	4.842
Topaz Road	37.8	Nuga Nuga	2550
Baldwin Swamp	18.6	Hann Creek Fauna Sanctuary	194.0695
Venman	166.14	Porcupine Gorge	4100
Hinchinbrook Channel	5573	Tooloomah Ck	260.6
Carnarvon (Caernarfon)	223000	Currawinya	148000
Cape Hillsborough & Wedge Is	312.2*	Venman	300
Moresby Range	244	Yacamunda Fauna Sanctuary	70800
Eubenangee Swamp	1550	White Mtns	33900
Peak Range	761	Palmgrove	25600
White Mountains	52100	Wallaman Falls	598
Rundle Range	2170	Rosenthal (Warwick Base)	21.15
Carnarvon (Caernarfon)	251000	Blackwood	1648

Mt Etna	/15.27	Expedition	104000
Fitzroy Caves	131	Woogoompah Island	632.0177
Yamanie Falls	11600	Coomera Island	267.9015
Dalrymple	511	Kangaroo Island	415.2074
Skull Knob	28.4	Princhester	721.7568
Joseph Banks(Round Hill Hd)	114	Moreton Island Base	5.02
Burleigh Head	27.6	Cape Hillsborough & Wedge Island	818
Joalah	37.7	Cape Palmerston	7200
Fitzroy Caves	15.27	Linthorpe	N/A
Bloomfield	6.897	Baroon Pocket	1350
Mt Cook	502	Green Island	6.9
Kondalilla	327	Simpson Desert	1012000
Burrum River	2010	Precipice	9830
Forbes Islands	109	Burleigh Head	27.6
Raine Island	32	Bartle Frere	79500
Capricorn Coast	113	White Mtns	108000
Mt Walsh	2990	Lumholtz	88000
Curly Flat	22	Narrien Range	4020
Erringibba	877.2937	Dalrymple	1140
Conical Rocks Island	1.45	Broadwater Ck	339
Boyne Island	43.9	Thistlebank	5890
Toohey Forest	26.2219	Mt French	225.4627
Lakefield	537000	Mt Etna Caves	391
Mt Barney	11900	Mt Archer	2270
Jardine River	237000	Lake Bindegolly	11930
Springbrook	2620	Poona	4250
Great Sandy	74900	Kinkuna	13300
Crystal Creek / Mt Spec	7224	Hull River	1980
Springwood	29.4	Cooloola	
Mt Marlow	62.6	Cooloola	54700
Walligan	684	Wild Cattle Island	0
Rodds Peninsula	4150	Mariala	0
Mon Repos	44.4	Moreton Island	1.8211
Ella Bay	0	Isla Gorge	7830
Ella Bay	0	Mouth of Maroochy River	23.3
Isla Gorge	7800	Carnarvon (Caernarfon)	251000
Mt Coolum	60.3149	Capricorn Coast	114
Pine Ridge	107.8	Nypa Palms	333
Ella Bay	3430		
Byfield	8450		
Curtis Island	1550		
Wild Cattle Island	580		
Expedition	2930		
Lawn Hill	174000		
Currawinya	151300		
Mt Chinghee	1110		
St Helens Gap	8.428		
Cooloothin	11.3		
Mt Walsh	5170		
Six Mile Creek	14.2		
Tamborine Mountain	663		
Chesterton Range	16100		

Mr COMBEN: In relation to the other three parts of the question—the honourable member will find in the listing that I have tabled the details of location, area, previous tenure and cost. There are other areas of land where acquisition is complete but gazettal has not been finalised, and other areas of land which are the subject of current negotiations with land-holders.

(2) The funds for the acquisition program were allocated to the Department of Environment and Heritage in the 1991-92 Budget from Consolidated Revenue. As each acquisition is concluded, they are expended, in accordance with approved financial procedures, and at this moment there is more than adequate money in the acquisition budget to cover all negotiated areas.

(3) I have not failed to manage the parks system, and I challenge the honourable member to prove his claim. There are active programs for the control of feral animals and weeds on parks and an ongoing program of cooperation with producer groups and graziers on issues such as straying stock and other good neighbour issues. The honourable member should also be advised and may be interested to know that the rubbish shown on the *7.30 Report* two nights ago was not even on the Forty Mile Scrub National Park as claimed. On the one park where the ranger situation was called out, we have rangers adjoining that on a D and O reserve which we manage jointly there. That again was a distortion.

(4) The Department of Environment and Heritage cooperates fully with the

Department of Primary Industries and its Commonwealth counterpart with respect to the maintenance of a stock-free buffer zone and other exotic stock disease prevention and preparedness measures on Cape York.

2 and 3 National Park Land Acquisitions

Mr HOBBS asked the Minister for Land Management—

"With reference to the edition of the *7.30 Report* screened on 28 April, where the Minister for Environment and Heritage claimed the Lands Department had fallen down in respect of payments for resumptions for National Parks purposes such as Undarra, Princess Hills and Bullaringa and, given that the money owing and unpaid represents a commitment by the Government to people dispossessed of their livelihood and heritage—

What measures have been put in place to pay all moneys promptly, along with compensation to people who have suffered crippling financial losses as a result of the incompetence and obstinacy of the people who make these arrangements on behalf of Ministers?"

———

Mr HOBBS asked the Minister for Land Management—

"With reference to the demonstrated failure of the Lands Department to approve the payments agreed with owners dispossessed of land by National Parks acquisition—

(1) What assurances will he give that obligations entered into to date can be met in full and on time?

(2) Will he provide a list of all acquisitions made since 3 December 1989 describing the blocks taken, their location and size, their current status and the source and value of funds used to compensate former owners?"

Mr EATON: Because of the complexity of the two questions in dealing with the one subject, I have combined the two answers into one. As requested by the honourable member, my department has prepared a list of all acquisitions made since 3 December 1989 on behalf of the Department of Environment and Heritage. This shows that a total of 36 properties has been acquired for a total sum of approximately $11m. All funds have been provided by the Department of Environment and Heritage. The individual amounts are not shown as these amounts have always been confidential between the department and its clients. As the list demonstrates, the great bulk of these acquisitions have proceeded satisfactorily. However, acquisitions can involve complex issues which require careful negotiation to ensure that the present and, where appropriate, future needs of the lessee are respected and to ensure that accountability requirements are met on the part of the Crown.

The honourable member has referred to three particular properties. As to Undarra—negotiations with the lessee have been on the basis of granting back a lease for tourism purposes and access rights by the lessee for tourism purposes to the national park. Finalisation of acquisition awaits resolution of this between the Department of Environment and Heritage and the lessees. The lessees have not been dispossessed.

As to Princess Hills—the common practice in the acquisition processes is for without prejudice negotiations to occur with the lessee at which indicative values are discussed, subject to more detailed verification. This course was followed and, indeed, a representative of the lessees acknowledged in writing that the figures discussed were subject to ratification. In the event, a slightly lower figure resulted. However, negotiations are continuing, and in the meantime an advance has been paid to the lessee. The lessees have not been dispossessed.

As to Bulleringa—involved in these negotiations were some improvements,

including the homestead which was found to be located on an adjoining property. Settlement was subject to resolution of this problem. In the meantime, a substantial advance of compensation was paid last year. Since then, my department has satisfactorily resolved the problem, and the balance of compensation was paid last month. The lessees were not immediately dispossessed and are being allowed a reasonable period, rent free, to vacate. I refute any suggestion that my department has failed to approve payments properly agreed with owners or lessees of affected properties. The bottom line is that accountability should be paramount in all transactions of this nature. As I have indicated, complex negotiations are often required, and these can take some time to finalise. While the Government has a program for increasing the size of the national park estate, it is also committed to ensuring that this process proceeds in an accountable fashion. For the information of honourable members as to the individual blocks, I seek leave to table the list and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Agricultural Farm No 06/9390 Portion 195, Parish of Palen	47.543 ha
LAB 6491, Lot 2 on RP 204825 Mt Barney	97.1125 ha
and Lot 195 on WD 674	59.5695 ha
Lot 2 on RP 605005(LAB 6628) Limestone Rldge N.P.	122.5030 ha
SL 41225 -Por 64, Parish ot Rockhampton Barmoya	136.278 ha
LAB 6687, Lot 52, Innisfail Parish of Meunga	288.1321 ha
LAB 6686 Lot 76 Beaudesert Parish of Talemon	259 ha
LAB 6683 Thooloora Island Lot 120, parish of Beerwah	56.86 ha
Lot 6537 Part of Lot 1 on Plan 114366 Patish of Greenup (Environmental Park)	93 ha
SL 49231 Lot 37 on Plan CG 6073 Parish of Woorim	About 200 ha
Collabara PH 1931	About 115,000 ha
SL 48795 Lot 1 on Plan GN 17, Parish of Monk (Blackall)	29,000 ha
GHFL 36 7936 Roma Lot 3 on Plan TM 59 Parish of Homebovne	8566 ha
GHFL 39/3137 St George Lots 3 & 4 on Plan MAR 19 Parish of Wierbella	17,086.233 ha
Highland Plains PH 2988	124,500 ha
Currawinya PH 1677	148,000 ha
LAB 7167, Part of Lot 176 Parish of Crows Nest Crown Nest National Park	8.971 ha
LAB 7161 Lot 8 on RP 835428 Parish of Dirran	50.0682 ha
LAB 7211, Lot 2 on Plan 840175 Parish of Abingdon	33.5982 ha
Dynevor Downs 1285 (Part only)	11,930 ha
Jedburgh 1242	89,613.6 ha
Adaford 3879	20789.9 ha
Gwandalan 3302	13,468 ha
LAB 6839 (Mount Blacckwood National Park)	64.75 ha
Lot 2 on RP 108445 parish of Fassifem	106.376 ha
Bray Hills 19/5192 (LAB 6593) Rodds Peninsula National Park	3,400 ha
GHPL 3316 Springsure Lot 11 on Plan DSN 993	About 1650 ha
Bulleringa 4620	54,400 ha
Thistlebank 5177	5,890 ha
Mount Mobil 1794	16,100 ha
LAB 7088 Lot 4 on Plan 838436, Parish of Ward Mount French National Park	36.04 ha
LAB 7188 Lot 196 on Plan NR 1114 Parish of Japoon	44.819 ha
Upper Kroombit 3961	5,180 ha
SL 31388 Portion 8 Parish of Clfflord (Part ot SF 31 6)	2,760 ha
GHPL 1248 Herberton	31 ,300 ha
SL 48923 Lease D in Lot 750 Parish of Herkes	3,440 ha
LAB 6630 Lot 1 on RP 16054 Limestone Ridge National Park	65.76 ha
LAB 7034 Riversleigh PH (Part only)	38,000 ha
Holt Pastoral Holding	44,800 ha
Bohle River 4864	2,149.7 ha
	Rounded Off
TOTAL AREA	788,000 ha
TOTAL COMPENSATION PAID	Rounded Off Approx. $11 mill

4. Rockhampton Correctional Centre

Mr LESTER asked the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services—

"With reference to the Rockhampton Correctional Centre—

(1) In light of the urgent need to upgrade the double perimeter fence at the centre, on whose decision and under whose direction was the inner vestibule fence removed, bearing in mind that this vestibule fence is considered vital for the monitoring and restriction of prisoner movement to the areas of industry?

(2) For what constructive reason was the vestibule fence removed, in the absence of any complaints about its existence and certainly without any consultation with the staff in relation to possible ramifications?

(3) Will he detail, step by step, plans to immediately remedy the internal and external security problems at the centre?

(4) When are these plans for upgrading due to commence and when will each step be completed?"

Mr MILLINER: (1) The fence referred to was removed following consultation between senior commission personnel and centre management.

(2) The fence referred to was part of the original perimeter fence, which has since been replaced. Its original purpose no longer exists, and its use as a movement control point was seen as a duplication of the purpose of the recently constructed central control room. However, the total operation of the Rockhampton Correctional Centre is currently being reviewed, and prisoner movement control will be covered in that review.

(3) The major security upgrade program now being undertaken at the Rockhampton Correctional Centre is necessary because of this Labor Government's inheritance of more than 30 years of wilful neglect of the prison system by the previous Liberal and National Party coalition Government. As a former Minister in that Government, the honourable member should be asking himself why he did nothing about it for so long. Stage 1 of the security upgrade program includes the installation of a microphonic cable on the internal perimeter fence. This will act as an early warning mechanism against attack from the inside. Razor tape will be installed between the two perimeter fences. Surveillance cameras will also be installed in the area of the detention unit. Stage 2 includes the installation of a microphonic cable on the exterior perimeter fence as an early warning mechanism against outside attack. Additional perimeter lighting and surveillance cameras will be installed, and the perimeter road will be sealed for vehicular response. This stage will also include reconfiguration of the gatehouse and armoury, the establishment of a central monitoring station and necessary ancillary services and equipment.

(4) Work on Stage 1 started on April 16 and is expected to be completed in August. Stage 2 will be running concurrently and is expected to be completed by the end of this calendar year. The total estimated cost of the work is $1.8m. Funding for this project will be provided from the Corrective Services Commission's capital works budget for the financial years 1991-92 and 1992-93.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Police Service Computer Contract C100

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to communication between the Police Commissioner and the Government in August 1991 concerning Police Service computer contract No. C100. In particular, I refer to Mr Newnham's comment—

"I find it frustrating that I am not trusted and my advice is not sought until it is too late to have any effect."

I refer also to his further comment—

"It may not be going too far"—

I am happy to wait until the Premier gets his instructions——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member should ask his question.

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer to a further comment of Mr Newnham that—

> "It may not be going too far to suggest that it bears the hallmarks of a secret character assassination."

I ask: does the Premier consider that the commissioner was being sabotaged during most of the time he has been Premier, and why has he failed to act?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The answer to the first part of that question is, "No", and that therefore renders largely irrelevant the second part of the question. I have explained before that after some time there was an unfortunate breakdown in the relationship between the Police Commissioner and the Minister for Police, but that for some time there was a good working relationship between Mr Newnham and Mr Mackenroth. It was a matter of some considerable concern to me that the relationship broke down so seriously. There were a number of significant policy and administration differences between the two men. One of those was a significant difference of opinion in relation to the way in which the Police Service handled that computer contract. The manner in which that tender was awarded was a matter that raised some concern on the part of the Minister for Police, and because of his concern he brought the matter to the attention of Cabinet. Subsequent to that, an independent review was carried out and, with some variations, the original tender was confirmed. So there has been no interference. There was, if you like, perhaps an excess of caution on the part of the then Minister for Police to ensure there was no impropriety. The then Minister also took the step of asking Sir Max Bingham to attend his office for a meeting with the Police Commissioner and Mr Mackenroth to discuss how that matter might be resolved in an amicable way.

As I understand the situation—and that is what I was confirming with Mr Warburton—that issue has now been investigated by the Criminal Justice Commission, and there was no impropriety of the kind described by the honourable member found by the Criminal Justice Commission. Right from the beginning, there was a concern registered with and by the then Minister for Police that there may have been some problem with the tender. We are very keen to try to avoid the sort of practices with tenders that occurred under previous Governments, as people are sensitive about that sort of thing. The matter was brought to Cabinet so it could be discussed. The outcome of the Cabinet discussion was that there would be an independent review. That review was properly carried out and properly reported on to Cabinet, and the tender then proceeded. I reiterate that the Minister for Police acted quite properly in bringing the matter and his concern to the attention of Cabinet. The Minister acted quite properly in asking Sir Max Bingham to come into this situation and discuss it with himself and the Police Commissioner. It has now been investigated by the Criminal Justice Commission. What the honourable member is engaging in is a cheap smear, and nothing more.

Commissioner of Police

Mr BORBIDGE: I ask the Premier: why did his Government restrict Commissioner Newnham's financial authority to approximately the same spending level as that of the former Minister's private secretary, which then subjected the commissioner to the humiliation of having to seek ministerial approval for the purchase of minor items such as belts, shoes and blouses? Why were the restrictions on financial authority that were imposed on the Police Commissioner substantially lower than those of all other heads of departments?

Mr W. K. GOSS: As I understand the situation, the authorisation given to the Police Commissioner by the Minister and this Government was substantially above that given by the National Party when it was in Government.

Mr Mackenroth: Fifty per cent.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am informed by that interjection that when Mr Mackenroth was Police Minister, he gave the Police Commissioner, who is the Police Commissioner that the National Party engaged when it was in Government, a 50 per cent higher authority than the National Party did. Let us make a judgment——

Mr Borbidge interjected.

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

Mr W. K. GOSS: Let the Leader of the Opposition explain to the public why the authority that the National Party gave Mr Newnham was, as I understand it, only approximately 66 per cent of that given by the former Police Minister. As to authorisations—generally they vary from chief executive to chief executive. This Government has taken the view, despite recommendations from the Public Sector Management Commission and other chief executives, that it will restrain the authority of chief executives to approve expenditure to a modest level, and over time that authority will increase. Once again, the reason for that is a cautious approach on the part of the Minister and this Government so that a detailed knowledge——

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: It is nothing whatsoever to do with an attempt to humiliate the chief executives. It is a responsible and cautious approach to financial administration by the Ministers of this Government. It is an approach that was also designed and adopted by this Government for the positive purpose and the positive reason that if this authority was set at a lower level——

Mr Borbidge: Tell us Kevin Rudd's limit.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not know. If this authority was set at a lower level, then it would provide the opportunity for Ministers to see——

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A for interjecting.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Apart from the first reason that I gave, which was a cautious approach to financial administration by Ministers of this Government, it was done also so that it would result in chief executives putting more detail before Ministers so that they could be more aware of the nature of expenditure that was occurring within departments and, thereby, have a better understanding of the activities of their departments. A regular flow of information about routine expenditure by the department would come to the Ministers. It was decided by Cabinet to take that approach, but, over time, to relax the guidelines and increase the authority. It will be reviewed on a regular basis. It has nothing whatsoever to do with the allegations contained in the question asked by the Leader of the Opposition. Once again, it is part of the cheap smear peddled by some people on the Opposition side of the House and a certain faction of the Police Service that is designed to try to create the impression of a Government vendetta against the Police Commissioner.

Let me say again that there has been a relationship of mutual support and trust from the commissioner to myself and from the commissioner to the Minister, Mr Warburton, and that has been reciprocated. There is no vendetta. The outrageous and dishonest suggestion that there is a mole in the commissioner's office is quite fallacious. To suggest that the Government is responsible for the commissioner's predicament is quite false. As everybody knows, the two inquiries were established by the Criminal Justice Commission. The personnel attached to the inquiries were selected by the Criminal Justice Commission. The inquiry operated entirely independently under the Criminal Justice Act, and it is independent of the Government.

Land Tax

Mr PREST: I refer the Treasurer to claims made by the National and Liberal Parties that the abolition of land tax will generate thousands of jobs in Queensland, and I ask: has the Treasurer received any advice from the Queensland Treasury on the economic impact of the abolition of land tax and does that advice support the opposition parties' claim?

Mr De LACY: I note the claims made by the Leader of the Opposition that 6 000

to 10 000 jobs could be created by the abolition of land tax. Although I do not dismiss those types of claims lightly, I think that if the Leader of the Opposition makes them, he ought to produce an analysis to support them. Nevertheless, I asked my department to conduct an analysis of the employment consequences of the abolition of land tax. I am sure that all honourable members would know that, based on the 1991-92 Budget Estimates, Queensland would lose $250m.

Mr FitzGerald: What is it going to be next year?

Mr De LACY: Substantially less. That is 10 per cent of the total tax revenue. The Leader of the Opposition made the simplistic assumption that there would be $215m worth of benefits to the business community, but let me say that my department advises me that the economic benefit to Queensland would be whittled away in a number of ways. Firstly, there would be a $19m loss in financial assistance grants to Queensland based on the fiscal equalisation formula that the Commonwealth Grants Commission uses. That is because of Queensland's decreased contribution. Therefore, Queensland would receive a decreased distribution under FAGS. Secondly, $33m under that formula——

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr De LACY: The $33m out of the $215m would go to interstate and overseas landowners. Therefore, it would not go to Queensland landowners, and would be of no benefit at all to Queenslanders.

Mr Dunworth interjected.

Mr De LACY: I ask the member to wait until I tell the whole story.

Thirdly, the Commonwealth Government would receive up to $80m in increased company tax, because land tax payable to the State is tax deductible. Therefore, up to $80m of the benefit that this Government gives back to landowners would go to the Commonwealth Government. As a result, something like $130m of the $215m that this State had forgone would not be available to Queensland business to increase jobs. How are we going to fund that $215m hole in the State Budget? By cuts in spending? What would that do employment? It would have negative employment consequences. For instance, that $215m represents about half the Police budget. Are we going to sack 3 000 policemen so that we can find that $215m?

Another way to raise that sum is by increasing taxes. But what would that do to employment in this State? It would have a negative effect on employment. We could also fund it by debt, but then the international rating agencies would be on our back, as they are on the back of the Liberal Party Government in New South Wales. Another option is to sell off some of our assets, as suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, but as anybody who understands something about economics would know, asset sales are one-off in nature. If we are to abolish land tax, the shortfalls will occur year after year.

I wonder why the National Party has been conned. It has been conned on the goods and services tax, the zero tariff, and land tax. Let me consider the impact of land tax on National Party heartland. I have asked my department to compile figures for Western Downs——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Treasurer is debating the question. He will answer it.

Mr De LACY: I am answering the question. This important economic issue needs to be clarified. Some of the figures in the Western Downs——

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. I rise under Standing Order 70, again in respect of the length of Ministers' answers to questions. If the Treasurer wants to debate this issue, he should bring on that debate today and we will debate the issue, but he should not abuse question time.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest that Mr Borbidge is doing exactly the same thing with question time. That is quite a frivolous point of order. I am in the chair, and I do not

need his advice on how to conduct question time. I suggest that the Minister be briefer with his answer. He has heard what I have said. I do not need the advice of the Leader of the Opposition on how to conduct the business of the House.

Mr De LACY: The question related to the employment impacts of land tax, and that is exactly what I am addressing. Let me consider the employment impacts in the Western Downs. The total tax paid last year was $259,000. The Bungil local authority area paid $1,500. The total tax paid in the entire local authority area of Bendemere was $2,200. I suggest that Mr Veivers would spend that much on a good dinner.

A Government member: He would eat that much.

Mr De LACY: He would eat that much.

Mr Stoneman interjected.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Burdekin and the member for Warrego will cease interjecting. I warn them both under Standing Order 123A.

Mr De LACY: Mr Littleproud comes from Chinchilla. The total land tax paid last year in Chinchilla was $23,000. If Mr Littleproud spent the whole of his electorate allowance in Chinchilla, that would have a bigger impact on employment consequences than would the abolition of land tax. The National Party has been conned. There is no benefit to National Party electorates by the abolition of land tax. National Party members ought to realise that they have been conned.

Compass Airlines

Mr PREST: In directing a further question to the Treasurer, I refer to recent claims by the Leader of the Liberal Party, Mrs Sheldon, that the State Government's initiative to get Compass Airlines back in the air will lead to a loss of maintenance jobs in Queensland, and I ask: can the Treasurer inform the House of the true situation?

Mr De LACY: I did note what the Leader of the Liberal Party said. In her passionate zeal or absolute determination to criticise everything and to be negative about any initiative of this Government, she became involved in the convoluted logic that, by refloating Compass, jobs will be lost. Mrs Sheldon must understand that no jobs are available with Compass at present. All those jobs disappeared last December when Compass folded. For the member to say on the airwaves that the deal that this Government has done is bad for Queensland because it will lose jobs demonstrates the lengths to which she is prepared to go to be negative about Queensland and what is happening here.

Let me make clear the position of maintenance jobs in Queensland. Mrs Sheldon stated that, under Compass, 50 maintenance jobs were available in Queensland. That is not true. When Compass was in existence, in Brisbane there were 100 employees in the corporate head office, 140 reservations agents, 76 ground handling staff and 15 airport maintenance staff. I confess that, under the new deal, those 15 maintenance jobs will not exist in Brisbane. However, a total of 331 maintenance people will be employed in Queensland. There will be approximately 300 employees with Southern Cross in Brisbane. As well, 45 extra staff will handle the new services to Townsville and Coolangatta. Under the old Compass there were 331 jobs, and under the new arrangement there will be approximately 345. How the Leader of the Liberal Party can paint that into a bad deal for Queensland, I do not know, but I think that everyone is starting to understand what she is on about, that is, knocking Queensland and being negative about everything that goes on here.

Commissioner of Police

Mrs SHELDON: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the statement last night on Channel 9 by Police Commissioner Noel Newnham that he was advised to "get out of Queensland" by former Police Commissioner Ray Whitrod after the

commissioner had received a letter containing allegations against him from the now disgraced former Police Minister. I ask: does the Premier agree that Mr Whitrod's advice to Mr Newnham to resign and get out of Queensland immediately is a strong indication that Mr Whitrod believes that this Government has now dumped the Fitzgerald reform process and that it is business as usual in Queensland?

Mr W. K. GOSS: Certainly not. If I had an hour or so, I could find a transcript of what Mr Whitrod said when he was speaking on ABC radio some weeks ago. When asked by the morning talk show host about the comparison between the situation that he faced and the situation that Mr Newnham faced, he said, "No, it is completely different because now, in Warburton and Goss, you have people who are honest and who are trying to do the right thing", or words to that effect. It was quite a long and glowing tribute. It reminded me of how perceptive Ray Whitrod was.

The point that the Leader of the Liberal Party seeks to make is simply not there to be made. Mr Whitrod was speaking as a long-time friend and colleague of Mr Newnham. He was speaking with understandable sympathy about the situation in which his friend Mr Newnham found himself, and indicating in a very general way the difficulty of the job of Police Commissioner in Queensland while we are going through the troubled times that we have been experiencing over the last several years and which will continue for some years to come. But Mr Whitrod has made it plain on the public record a number of times that this Government is qualitatively different from the one which dealt with him in such a corrupt fashion. This Government is abiding by and respecting the process. As I have said time and time again, that process is laid down in the Criminal Justice Act. It came straight out of the Fitzgerald report recommendations in terms of the legislation. It involved extensive collaboration by Sir Max Bingham. It is legislation and a process passed by the previous Government and supported by the Labor Party and the Liberal Party.

The implicit suggestion in comments that the member for Landsborough made in her question yesterday that it is somehow the Premier's decision as to whether or not the tribunal decision or the Supreme Court decision is abided by is an absolute disgrace. The Leader of the Liberal Party should hang her head in shame. This Government abides by the process. It has stood back from the whole process involving Mr Newnham, initiated by the Criminal Justice Commission, and allowed that independent process under the Criminal Justice Act to proceed. It has not interfered, and it will not interfere, with the Misconduct Tribunal or the Supreme Court. That would be a gross transgression in terms of the separation of powers and the proper roles of the Executive on the one hand and the courts on the other. It might be the sort of conduct in which the member for Landsborough would engage, if ever she were to be in Government. The member for Landsborough might presume to herself the right to overrule and substitute her judgment for that of the tribunals and the courts of the land, but this Government would never engage in that sort of corrupt and improper conduct.

Commissioner of Police

Mrs SHELDON: In directing a second question to the Premier, I refer him to the Police Service Administration Act 1990 which states clearly that the Police Commissioner will only be removed from office by the Governor in Council—in effect, Cabinet—on the recommendation of the Police Minister and the Criminal Justice Commission Chairman, and that if there is a disagreement between the CJC Chairman and the Police Minister, this matter will have to be ultimately decided by Parliament. I ask: in either case, does the Premier now agree that, ultimately, he and his Cabinet colleagues will have to make the decision to dismiss Noel Newnham?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I will put it quite simply. I would have thought that the member would have got the message by now, but she is very slow—and I suspect deliberately slow—when it comes to understanding the reform process and the legislation. The decision that arises ultimately from this reform process in respect of Mr Newnham will be one that occurs according to the law of this State. The Government will abide by the law of this State. The honourable member has referred to one Act of Parliament. She

should also take the time to read an Act that was passed when she was not in this place and which clearly she still has not read—the Criminal Justice Act, in particular section 2.37 of that Act.

Securing Our Future; Liberal Party Economic Statement

Mr PITT: In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I refer him to the Liberal Party's Securing Our Future document, which professes to be an economic statement, and its proposal to establish an independent pollution control authority. I ask: will he advise the House of the feasibility of that proposal?

Mr COMBEN: I thank the honourable member for his question and refer again to the document to which I referred yesterday when I raised the matter of the billion dollar price tag on this "economically feasible" document. My attention has been drawn to a section which refers to the establishment of an independent pollution control authority. It is again nice, warm, inner-glow stuff. If the Liberal Party thinks that an independent pollution control authority is wanted by business in Queensland, by the conservation movement or by the people of Queensland, I suggest that its members talk to some of the businesses in Queensland.

Mr De Lacy: They have got a good Liberal for the job in New South Wales to be the director-general.

Mr COMBEN: They probably have. Business has constantly opposed such an independent pollution control authority. In New South Wales, a problem has arisen at Bondi. The Sydney Water Board, in conjunction with the New South Wales Pollution Control Board, is trying to address the matter with a $6 billion project and cannot address it. Yet the Liberal Party wants to set up that process in Queensland. It would mean a huge impost upon the people of Queensland. We do not know what it would achieve. The things that such a body might achieve could be achieved by a decent Department of Environment and Heritage going its independent way, giving advice to Government, and properly looking after the environment of this State.

This document has a warm inner glow and it puts further restrictions on business. I have fears about the Liberal Party and its genuine commitment to waste control. On 2 April 1992, the honourable member for Currumbin, Mr Coomber, stated that he had been told of instances of sump oil being poured into storm drains, used cooking oil being tipped into the Nerang River, and road tankers pumping out septic waste over isolated bushland. He is so committed! He gets a good headline, and his name is up there two inches high. What has the honourable member told my department? What has he done to try to get those people prosecuted and to give us the details? We cannot find one record of the honourable member putting in a complaint. Those midnight dumpers are still out there, the honourable member is still getting 2-inch headlines and nothing has been changed or achieved. The honourable member has been too lazy to give us the details, or it was just a cheap headline. That is what the financial statement of the Liberal Party is about as well—a cheap headline, a huge cost and nothing to be achieved.

Sugar Industry Working Party

Mr PITT: In directing a question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I draw his attention to the report in this morning's *Courier-Mail* that states that the Industry Commission report on the sugar industry argues that State Government regulations are denying the Queensland economy production and exports amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars each year, and I ask: can he comment on this statement, given the reforms recently negotiated between the Queensland Government and the sugar industry?

Mr CASEY: Unfortunately, it appears that the Industry Commission has developed its report in isolation from the changes that have already been made in the sugar industry in Queensland. I commented on this yesterday in a ministerial statement and in an answer to a question. This Government has received the Sugar Industry

Working Party report. One of the first aims and objectives of this Government was to seek such a report. This Government has always recognised that the sugar industry is the most important agricultural industry in this State. An example of what I am saying is the fact that the Industry Commission recommended that there be a 5 per cent expansion in the industry. I am afraid that the commission is a little bit behind in that recommendation, because our legislative program, which was adopted by this House and put into action on 1 July last year, allowed for a two and a half per cent expansion each year for the next five years—a total expansion for the industry of twelve and a half per cent. That was done for the simple reason that there is a need for a planned expansion to take place in the industry. This is the first time in the history of the sugar industry that a properly planned expansion has taken place.

The industry has not responded to the ups and downs of world prices. I am very proud of the way in which this Government has gone ahead of the Industry Commission, or anybody else for that matter, to streamline the industry and make it more flexible. This Government has put the sugar industry in a position that is far away from the position it was in during the years when it was neglected by the National Party Government in this State. The industry has greater flexibility now than it has had at any time in its history. That greater flexibility is indicated in the Industry Commission report. There is the opportunity to transfer decision-making back to the growers and out of the hands of the Government. There is greater flexibility to enable individual farmers to make their own on-farm decisions. Assignments are able to be transferred between various areas, which is different from the restricted position that applied under the previous Government for such a long period, whereby any expansion had to be distributed equally across-the-board, irrespective of whether there was suitable land available or whether it was the most economical place in which to grow the cane. The economic theorists in Canberra seem to poke their heads up from time to time and talk about things that they know absolutely nothing about. I am speaking about the boffins who sit in some of the departments or bodies that have been set up in Canberra. I am afraid that they do not know what they are talking about.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I seek your ruling. In the question the Minister was asked to make a comment on a newspaper report. I did not rise earlier, but I know that such a question is out of order. Surely, the Minister should not be allowed to open up a whole debate to make a statement about anything to do with the sugar industry. I believe that the answer is out of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am sure that the Minister has almost finished his answer, anyway, and I think it is relevant.

Mr CASEY: The main thing that this Government has done is get millers and growers together. What it has done is not like the puny efforts that were made by the honourable member for Mirani in this House last night. He wants to go back to the good old days of dividing the industry. This Government has set up a policy council in Queensland to enable all sectors of the industry to have constant discourse with Government. For the first time ever, this Government has recognised the Mechanical Cane Harvesters Association and other bodies involved in the sugar industry. It has also recognised the involvement of the trade union movement in the sugar industry. I am afraid that the Industry Commission is behind the times. This Government is way out in front and it will stay there. We will have a more flexible and better sugar industry.

Police Service Computer Contract C100

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the Queensland Police Service computer contract No. C100 and claims by Commissioner Newnham that—

> "Undue secrecy and lack of normal consultation have led to a Cabinet decision which, in hindsight, can be seen as inappropriate, perhaps improper."

In the Premier's response to the earlier question by the Leader of the Opposition, he said that the CJC investigated this matter. I ask: were all relevant Cabinet documents

made available to the CJC for this inquiry and, if not, will he undertake to do just that?

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not know what the CJC had access to, but I understand that it investigated the matter and had no concerns. I have no doubt whatsoever that the CJC would have sought all relevant information.

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I have no problem with them having a copy of the Cabinet submission. It was a straightforward matter. There was nothing whatsoever improper about it, but it has been investigated by the CJC. I do not tell the CJC how to run its investigations. The matter has been dealt with. I think Commissioner Newnham was unduly sensitive in relation to that matter but, as I say—and as I again emphasise—there was no attempt on the part of the Government to improperly interfere in that contract. Concerns were raised with the Minister by the computer industry in respect of impropriety in the Police Service. What does the honourable member expect the Minister to do? Does he expect the Minister to ignore the issue and turn his back on allegations of impropriety, whether they are founded or unfounded? As a Minister, he has the responsibility to look into those matters. In relation to this important matter—particularly given the history of the Police Department—he did the proper and cautious thing in drawing the matter to the attention of Cabinet.

All that Cabinet did was commission an independent review by an external consultant who, as I recall—and I may stand to be corrected on this—was recommended by the Information Policy Board. As a result of consultation with the Information Policy Board, an independent review was undertaken, and I cannot see any reason why Mr Newnham or the Police Service would have any concern whatsoever about an independent information technology consultant reviewing the tender process in respect of that particular computer contract. That was done, and the contract ultimately went ahead with the originally recommended supplier. I think there were some conditions attached and there was a trial period introduced into the tender of the arrangements to make sure that the computers would in fact be suitable for the Police Service, and that was the bottom line of the Government's consideration of the matter—to get the best possible product to the Police Service and thereby the best possible service, through the Police Service, to the public. It was handled entirely properly at all times. The Criminal Justice Commission was consulted at an early stage. I understand it subsequently carried out an investigation and was satisfied that there was nothing untoward in the matter whatsoever.

Commissioner of Police

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to comments he made in the House yesterday when he went to rather painstaking lengths to put any decision on the fate of the stood-down Police Commissioner, Noel Newnham, firmly back in the lap of the CJC and the Police Minister. Notwithstanding the views expressed by the CJC chairman, Sir Max Bingham, who said that he was "appalled at the ignorance of the Criminal Justice Act" on the part of some people who painted the Misconduct Tribunal as "belonging" to the CJC, I ask: if there is no change in the current situation following Mr Newnham's appeal and he receives recommendations from the CJC and the Police Minister for Mr Newnham's removal, does he accept the fact that his Cabinet will have to consider his removal? Why is he trying to hide or disguise his ultimate responsibility in this matter?

Mr W. K. GOSS: We will abide by the process. It is grossly improper of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to ask me to pre-empt the Supreme Court's decision.

Mr Littleproud: I am not doing that. I qualified it.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is doing exactly what that disgraceful person who sits in the back corner of this Chamber did, that is, he is putting forward the proposition—in the best National Party 1980s style—that the Cabinet of this State should substitute its judgment for that of the Misconduct Tribunal and the Supreme Court. I refer the honourable member not only to the Police Service

Administration Act but also to the Criminal Justice Act where the procedure is laid down. This Government must take cognisance of the provision in section 2.37 which clearly states that the decision of the Misconduct Tribunal is binding on all parties.

Magnetic Island National Park Proposal

Mr DAVIES: I ask the Minister for Environment and Heritage: does he recall the referendum sponsored by the Townsville City Council, which was held in conjunction with a mayoral election a few years ago, at which 60 per cent of the people of Townsville supported Florence Bay being declared as a national park? Is he aware of the article published in yesterday's *Townsville Bulletin* concerning the declaration of Florence Bay and Magnetic Island as a national park which contains criticism by Liberal Alderman Jim Cathcart of the private road to Radical Bay resort? Could he respond to that article and the ridiculous comments made by Mr Cathcart?

Mr COMBEN: My attention has indeed been drawn to Alderman Cathcart's comments in yesterday's *Townsville Bulletin*. They are very unfortunate comments because we are stuck with the situation that, through an unfortunate accident of history, a private road goes through the soon-to-be-declared Florence Bay national park. In saying that there would not be access to the park, Alderman Cathcart is certainly out of touch and out of step with both reality and the residents of Townsville. The realities of the situation are that a private road goes through a piece of Radical Bay land which is the subject of a resort proposal. The land is subject to a State Government lease to the Kern Corporation, which is now in receivership, and that private road has to remain open. If it does not remain open, there cannot be a resort at the other end of it. The possibility of a gate across a private road into a national park to a resort site is just not on. No-one who is dealing with a State Government, knowing that approval still has to be given, would suddenly put a gate across the road to stop access to the park and to stop access by his own people for his own purposes. There will not be a gate across the road, but there is a need for the road to the resort.

The Government is continuing to have discussions with the Townsville City Council. There is a need to negotiate the upgrading of that road. The Government has made an offer of funds to be contributed to the improvement of the road, and presently those offers are being negotiated as to the best terms. They are not being well viewed by the Townsville City Council, but I do not think that this matter is one from which either the city council or the State Government can walk away. For that reason, I certainly support the ongoing negotiations. In conclusion, let me say that the national park proposal is a fine tribute to the individuals who have been involved in the Save Florence Bay Committee over the years—people such as Val Valentine—and who have battled for so long for the creation of that national park. I hope that in the near future the Premier will visit the area to declare the park open. I congratulate the people of Townsville on the great job they have done against all the forces of darkness who now sit on the Opposition side of this Chamber.

Demolition of South Townsville Power Station

Mr DAVIES: I ask the Minister for Resource Industries: as he would be aware of my ongoing concern about and involvement with the removal of asbestos from and the eventual demolition of the old South Townsville Power Station, and in view of some of the comments that have been made by members on the Opposition side of the House over the last couple of days, can he inform the House of the current progress of the project?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for Townsville for the question because this is an issue in which I take a great interest. For some 15 years, together with my parliamentary colleague Ken McElligott, I was a member of the Townsville Port Authority. For most of that time, we were trying to get the relevant authorities to make a decision about the demolition of the Townsville power station. I am happy to inform the House that the contract is progressing well. The desired levels of safety for both the community of Townsville and also the workers who are involved in the demolition

process have been achieved. The contractor has reached the final stage of demolition of the last two boilers. The asbestos lagging has been removed and has been disposed of. Some rubble, which contains some asbestos, is about to be removed or has already been removed. Demolition of the building should be completed by the end of May and the site should be available for re-establishment by about the end of June.

Detective P. Hocken; Commissioner of Police

Mr CONNOR: This was to be a question without notice to the Premier, but I notice that he could not stand the heat and has left the kitchen, so I will direct it instead to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services. I refer to statements published in today's *Courier-Mail* and yesterday's *Gold Coast Bulletin* by Detective Phil Hocken of the Broadbeach CIB, who has called for a criminal investigation into the affairs of Police Commissioner Noel Newnham, and I ask: is the Minister aware that Detective Hocken himself was investigated by the controversial Police Complaints Tribunal for his involvement in a celebrated murder/verballing case known as the Barry Mannix affair? Does the Minister now agree that it is police officers with backgrounds like that of Detective Hocken and other old guard police officers who are barracking for the Minister, the disgraced former Police Minister and the Premier in his Government's vendetta against Noel Newnham?

Mr WARBURTON: If the Premier had had the opportunity to respond to yet another atrocious and despicable question, I am sure that he would have given a similar answer to the one that I am about to give. The fact of the matter is that I do not know the gentleman in question.

Mrs Sheldon: Well, you should.

Mr WARBURTON: Did honourable members hear that amazing interjection?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr WARBURTON: For the information of honourable members who did not hear Mrs Sheldon, I point out that she said that I should know him.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. I notice that the Premier is back in the Chamber. Can I refer my question to him, or am I too late?

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member is able to ask another question.

Mr WARBURTON: I have been the Minister for Police and Emergency Services for about three or four months, and in that time I have met many police officers. I suppose that within a few weeks I will know all of the 6 000-plus police officers by their first names. I will follow Mrs Sheldon's wonderful advice on the issue. I do not know the police officer to whom the honourable member referred. This morning, when I read the article in the newspaper, I dismissed it completely. I have no truck with that sort of comment by any of those sorts of people. I am not interested in it, and I am not going to do anything about it.

Detective P. Hocken; Commissioner of Police

Mr CONNOR: As the Premier is now back in the Chamber, I refer a question to him. I ask the Premier: is it not an undeniable fact that statements such as those made by Detective Hocken and other anonymous police seeking further action against Noel Newnham are proof that old guard and corrupt forces in the Police Service regard Mr Newnham's downfall as Police Commissioner as a victory?

Mr W. K. GOSS: There were a couple of double negatives in that question, but I am sure that the answer is "No".

Public Housing Upgrading Program

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I ask the Minister for Housing and Local Government: can he report on the public housing upgrading program and the Goss Government's effort to provide public housing tenants in this State with accommodation that is comfortable, clean, secure and adequately maintained? What type of tenant is a beneficiary under the program? To date, how much money has been spent on the public housing upgrading program?

Mr BURNS: The asset management program that the department is implementing is very important. The State of Queensland owns 37 000 houses, many of which were built immediately after the war. It is true to say that many houses have not been painted for 20 years and that many have had drainage problems for many years. Some houses still have kitchens with plastic sinks which have not been manufactured for 25 years. Many homes are getting to the stage at which, if the Government does not spend substantial amounts of money on them, they will be beyond repair. The major achievements of the upgrading program this year include 1 060 pensioner bed-sitting units that have been converted to provide a separate bedroom——

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

Mr BURNS: The bedrooms were far too small. The situation in which pensioner couples lived in units with the bed and the kitchen in one room was untenable. That is no longer the case. The department ensures that the bedroom is separate. In 1 060 cases, the kitchen and bedroom have been separated by a partition wall. In 4 487 pensioner units, security screens have been fitted to at least two openings in each unit. Some old people were living in ground-floor units close to a main road and could not open either the front door or back door of the units in the hot summer climate. It was unfair to ask those people to put themselves in a position in which thieves or thugs could break into their units, so the department provided a screen for the front door and the back door. We have tried to help people who provided their own screens by saying that we will provide a second screen. The department cannot afford to hand back the sort of money that those people have already paid, but we are trying to help them in another way. In 4 586 houses, new kitchens have been installed. All of those 4 586 houses have kitchen cupboards and vinyl floors. Out of those 4 586 houses, 1 403 houses have new vinyl floor coverings in the kitchen and dining areas. Built-in cupboards are being provided in the bedrooms. In the far west, in 65 units, the first airconditioning, or air-cooling, units have been provided for Housing Commission tenants. My department is providing people who live in those small places in the far north and the far west with decent living conditions.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I want to listen to the answer by the Deputy Premier. I have told honourable members that there is too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I ask honourable members to accede to my request. I will take action against people talking to each other. I cannot hear what is being said.

Mr BURNS: The numbers on 11 233 units were changed. It should be remembered that there are 37 000 houses. The big problem with an upgrading program is that as soon as improvements are carried out on one house, the people next door ask, "Why can't we have improvements carried out on ours?" So, problems are created by starting that process and it will be some time before they are worked through.

Houses that are 20 years of age or older and houses in which people have been tenants for 15 years are being upgraded before houses in which people have been tenants for only a few months. All of the new places that are being built have the additional facilities. The department is asked continually to provide carports. The most important possession of a majority of tenants is their car. They have to leave their cars outside where they are vulnerable to the actions of vandals and the effects of heat and rain. Down the track, the department will have to look at upgrading houses by providing carports.

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

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT (LAND HOLDING) AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 March (see p. 4349).

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (11.16 a.m.): It is my pleasure today to speak to this Queensland Government (Land Holding) Amendment Bill. The Opposition will not oppose its passage. If it actually makes Government operations more efficient, as the Minister claims it will, then it will be a good thing. It will also be one of the few things that this Government has done to improve the way Government operates in Queensland. That is the case particularly in the area of land administration, where we have seen disaster after disaster, all as a result of deliberate Government policy. So if this legislation works out, it will really be an exception. One of the real disasters foisted on Queenslanders by Wayne Goss and his team of incompetents was the new land legislation forced through the House late last year. One of the central features of that legislation was the nightmare it caused for people looking to gain the best form of title to their land—freehold. The Government used a report by people who understood very little about land or land law to justify restrictive new conditions on freeholding. The legislation paid lip-service to freeholding, but then laid down conditions that would rule out just about every parcel of worthwhile land in this State. The Opposition opposed those conditions, but the Government was totally unmoved. That is what makes this legislation so surprising. The Government, through the Minister, is actually supporting freehold.

Honourable members will recall that in his second-reading speech in March the Minister actually praised freehold title. I would like to remind honourable members of just what the Minister said at that time. Among other things, he said—

> ". . . individuals and corporations dealing with the Crown will find a freehold transaction more attractive than the more involved and unnecessarily restrictive dealings that they now face. In short, a more easily understood and efficient process will apply."

What an admission! The Minister has seen the light. He now understands that freehold is the preferable form of title. He now acknowledges that other forms of tenure are "more involved"—they are his words—and "unnecessarily restrictive"—again, his words. Now that the Minister has seen the light and now that he is prepared to give the Government the advantage of dealing in freehold land, I wonder if he may take it a bit further. Now that he understands freehold, will he move to ease the restrictions that he imposed on freeholding last year? If the Minister and the Government are not prepared to do that, they are guilty of gross hypocrisy. They cannot maintain their ideological opposition to freehold and then turn around and use freehold transactions to their own advantage.

Mr NUNN (Isis) (11.19 a.m.): At the outset, I congratulate the Minister on the introduction of this Bill. It goes without saying that those congratulations must also be extended to all those people who assisted in its drafting. Other members will speak of the purpose of the Bill, but I would like to dwell on the reasons which made the amendment Bill necessary. They are as many as they are varied. Over many years, the system of land management in Queensland grew like Topsy—a bit here, a bit there, and shove a bit in here as it suited. Amendments and alterations to the system were done on an ad hoc basis and quite often were a matter of convenience rather than necessity. This Government, through the Minister and his department, has undertaken a thorough review of our land management system with a view to making the department more accessible and the system more efficient and fairer and, as a consequence, faster and more economical.

Mr Hobbs: You said it was immoral to have freehold.

Mr NUNN: I thank the honourable member. I go to bed at night and pray for an opportunity like this. I get up in the morning and I hope against hope that he will again lead with his chin. The honourable member will remember that, in a speech I made in this place on a previous occasion, I did bring to light the bad methods of freeholding which

existed under the previous Government. Selective quoting does the honourable member little credit. I said that there was in place a system which could allow the Minister to value the land to be freeholded. I said that the land to be freeholded could be valued by the Minister and that it could then be made available at a 50 per cent discount and if the person requiring the freeholding tenure did not like that, he could be given a 40-year interest-free loan.

More than one person who has had dealings with the department has observed that there have been no cohesive policies or guidelines to coordinate the application of appropriate tenures to parcels of Government land. The ad hoc arrangements of which I have already spoken and which have accumulated over decades have resulted in the existence of numerous inconsistencies within current Government land-holdings. Some agencies and departments hold parcels of land under different tenures that are all used for the same or similar purposes. Examples of this are port authorities and the Transport Department. I believe that, at times, up to 10 different tenures in the one agency were in existence. The overall result of the present tenure arrangements has been one of decreased efficiency and effectiveness. I am pleased that the Opposition spokesman on Land Management recognises that this Government is about to remedy that situation. There have been legitimate concerns expressed about inappropriate tenure allocation—for example, reserves over land for Government buildings. These reserves, which are genuinely held for departmental or official purposes, cannot generally be used by other departments because of the specifics inherent in that original tenure. To allow this would require the cancellation of the reserve and issue of another tenure, which would allow for alteration of the use originally specified. Indeed, the old system places unnecessary restriction on the use of Government land. There is no valid reason why the Government should not be able to deal in a commercial manner with any of its property if it is appropriate, and I will illustrate some examples of situations in which that may be appropriate. The present tenure arrangements also severely complicate land dealings. The dealings involved in releasing land to a member of the public have been so complex that costly delays have occurred, which have resulted in the failure to proceed with developments that could have been beneficial to Queenslanders and the Queensland economy.

Underutilisation of land and inconsistent land dealings are also of concern under the present system. For instance, the departments of Main Roads, Railways and Housing all may hold freehold land; however, the departments of Education and Health cannot. The Department of Administrative Services became so tired of the whole old system that that department found a way around it by having the Public Trustee hold the land for it. While adopting that approach made things a little more convenient, the whole process is still unwieldy and time consuming. The deficiencies in the old system have been recognised and substantial steps have been taken to rectify them. Under the new system, the Government land register has been established, along with the Government land management system, which documents Government policy on land management. These two measures are complemented by the introduction of this Bill, in a coordinated effort to modernise and simplify the management of Government land.

The need for this legislation arose for two distinctly separate reasons. It is possible that honourable members will remember my speaking at length on other occasions regarding my concerns about the weaknesses inherent in the process of freeholding Crown land under the system presided over by the previous Government. That state of affairs was carried out with the aiding and abetting of the white-shoe mates of the previous Government. Those people have now disappeared to far sunnier climes. They now reside in Spain, in Pacific islands and at present are being pursued through the lands of Europe by various bankruptcy courts. The two distinct reasons for this legislation have something to do with freeholding. One of the objects of this Government's land management system is the disposal of land surplus to any departmental requirements. The ways in which freehold title can presently issue to a prospective purchaser is limited. These methods are time consuming, very involved and costly to implement. With the passing of this Bill, the Crown will be able to follow a more desirable course of action on the sale of Government land. It will be possible for the

Crown to undertake the transfer of title in a manner similar to normal commercial transactions. That will mean that the Minister in charge of the department will not value it but there will be an independent value put on it. There will be no 50 per cent discount and there will be no 40-year no-interest terms for the mates of responsible parties, as occurred under the previous Government. That type of situation has been dispensed with, and the honourable member opposite has supported that move in his speech.

I wish to reinforce that, with the passing of this Bill, the Crown will be able to follow a more desirable course of action on the sale of Government land, and it will now be possible to undertake the transfer of title in a manner similar to normal commercial transactions. Secondly, the Administrative Services Department and other Government agencies also require the option of the availability of freehold title to enable them to exercise more efficiently their management role over Government property. The principal need arises in leasing excess space to the private sector. This could happen where premium space is available for commercial activities in such places as the ground floor of a high-rise building. It could be that the Government may wish to lease residential accommodation to public servants. The purchase of freehold land, including building units and group title lots for Government purposes, will also be much quicker and easier with the passing of this Bill. The benefits of the proposed Bill relate to private persons and corporations dealing with the Crown in the areas to which I have referred. They will relate more readily to a freehold transaction, which will suit them better than the more involved, restrictive dealing with Crown land. In short, a more efficient process will apply. This Bill demonstrates clearly the difference between Government land and Crown land. This Bill reduces legislation requirements by minimising the need for Government agencies to seek separate enabling legislation to deal with land. As honourable members would know, to do otherwise would eventually result in a proliferation of Government bodies corporate. Lastly, this Bill simplifies and streamlines current Government tenure arrangements and facilitates consistent Government land dealings. All in all, this Bill is a very good effort. I congratulate the Minister and support the Bill.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (11.28 a.m.): It is a pleasure to rise in this debate and to indicate the Liberal Party's support for this legislation. I was pleased that the member for Isis did a 180-degree turn. He is now a real estate salesman, and he did a very good job of supporting the virtues of freehold title. I trust that the honourable member has become a member of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland. I congratulate him member on his big change. It is pleasing to see the Government freeholding land in the manner proposed. This Bill will certainly diffuse the differing tenures currently in place, and the Minister indicated in his second-reading speech that the system was proving unwieldy for Government departments and the Government as a whole to operate under. The record of Labor Governments is not satisfactory in this area, and I would ask just what is proposed to be done with the proceeds of the sale of this land, because we are talking here about large and small areas of very valuable land indeed that will generate many millions of dollars.

For a long time, I have called for Government departments to establish an assets and liabilities register. Of course, an assets register would encompass a register of lands. The Minister might be able to tell me whether Government departments have such a register. Of course, such claims are often made. I believe that is because the departments do not know where all their land holdings are. Although there is a lot of huffing and puffing about this matter, in the past land holding registers have not come to light. I am pleased to see that Queensland will have a land holding register. I presume that it will also lead to an assets register for all Government departments so that there will be a clear record of where the Government's land holdings are. That way, the departments will be better able to utilise the land that they own and, of course, ascertain whether or not that land is required for Government purposes.

As the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, rigorous assessment is required before a determination can be made under the Government's land management system that properties are surplus to total Government and community requirements and should be disposed of. Naturally, one would believe that that would occur. During that

process, Government departments will identify where those land holdings are. I assume that departments will place land holdings on a register to ensure that, over a period, they can ascertain whether or not those land holdings are necessary for Government purposes or to meet community requirements and that, if they are not needed, the departments will dispose of them. As I have indicated, this certainly has not happened in the past, even though there has been a lot of huffing and puffing to the effect that it does happen on a regular basis.

I will return to the point that I raised about the proceeds from the sale of land. If that amounts to some tens of millions of dollars during one year—and no doubt it will vary from department to department—I hope that those proceeds will not be whittled away and used as part of general revenue funds. I hope that those funds will be used to pay off Government debts. We hear a great deal from the Treasurer about how well the Government is managing taxpayers' funds and how the proceeds from any sales—for example, the proceeds from the sale of assets—will be used to offset Government debt. I presume that the same thing will occur in these circumstances. I would like this matter clarified, because I think that it goes to the very heart of what the Government is doing today. I emphasise that it is important that the funds from the sale of Government assets not be used as a milking cow, in the same way as the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund was used by another Minister in another department. That Minister suddenly wanted $95m. He had a hollow log of funds amounting to $100m that had built up over some time. Over a period of 12 months, he used those funds to prop up Government services—at least, the Treasurer did. I do not want to see that type of thing occur in relation to Government lands. The sale of land provides an ideal opportunity for the Government to reduce its debt over a period of time. As I have indicated, periodically, Ministers of Government departments ascertain the purposes of the land holdings of various departments and decide whether they are required for Government purposes or for community services.

That brings me to Government buildings. One cannot help noticing in the city that the Government does not always make the best use of its buildings. Government buildings seem to remain vacant for a long time. In some cases, there may be justification for that occurring. However, I cite as a prime example the Old Treasury building. It is a fine, wonderful building. Hopefully, the Government will restore it to its former glory.

Mr Hollis: A casino.

Mr BEANLAND: Hopefully, it will not be used as a casino. That building is most unsuitable for that purpose. It ought to be leased out to generate funds for Government coffers. The Old Treasury building is not the only vacant Government building. There are many others. Government departments should keep a keen eye on their buildings and ensure that they are being utilised. If they are not being occupied, they should be listed on a register and the Government should dispose of them.

In conclusion, I refer to the provision of services. The Minister's department has been criticised for closing some Lands Department offices around the State. Although a number of statements have been made, I am not sure exactly how many offices have been closed over the last two and a half years. I am sure that the Minister would have a list of the offices that have been closed. I would like an indication from him today of exactly what offices have been closed by his department in the country areas of Queensland. I would like to know the circumstances of the closure of those offices. As I have indicated previously, the provision of services in the rural areas of Queensland is most important, particularly during these hard economic times. The Department of Lands is responsible for a number of important matters. It is very much a people-oriented department, and it relates to the everyday activities of the community. Therefore, it is very important that that department makes available to the community a number of officers and a wide range of services. My comments relate not only to the closure of offices but also the opening of offices. I would like some indication of what the Minister is planning.

Mr BARBER (Cooroora) (11.37 a.m.): Firstly, I deal with a point raised by the

member for Warrego, who has mixed up this debate. This simple piece of legislation seeks to freehold Government land in terms that are easily understandable by the market so that it can be readily dealt with in the marketplace, if necessary, and will return a profit to the public purse. Under this quite simple concept, the member for Warrego calls upon the Government to freehold the leasehold rural areas of Queensland so that freehold land owners can flog it off at a premium to the Japanese and make a profit for themselves. A clearer distinction could not be found.

This is a simple piece of legislation. I believe that the member for Warrego has done a disservice to the debate in prosecuting the case of those greedies. This debate is about land that belongs to all of us. The short and simple Bill contains few provisions. It provides simply that the Governor in Council may grant Crown land in fee simple to the Crown in right of the State of Queensland under the name of the Queensland Government. It provides also that only the Minister or an authorised person may deal with such land under the name of the Queensland Government. Concomitant with that are some strict administrative guidelines that will operate in conjunction with those few short provisions to ensure that this piece of legislation does not have unforeseen or undesirable effects.

Any legislation freeing up the dealing with Crown land should put members on guard. Why? Because Crown land belongs to all of us, and we should ensure that it is used only for the common good of all Australians. It is also the land which, historically, white Australia stole from the indigenes. Modern Australia is only now coming to terms with trying to undo that historical mistake and recognise the claims of Aborigines on parts of Australia. We must ensure that Crown land is used for the benefit of all of us. To that end, the strict controls in the Bill and attendant policy documents are a must.

What will be the operation of the Bill? Firstly, should the Government operation or service conducted on land required for ordinary Government business and which has limited intrinsic community value be discontinued, or should that Government operation move to another site, that land can potentially be held in freehold in the name of the Queensland Government. No such land automatically becomes freehold. The Government has laid down firm guidelines that must be followed to determine which lands are suitable for holding in the name of the Queensland Government.

I wish to assure the House of what the Bill does not do. Firstly, it does not lead to asset stripping or selling off the farm. The disposal of excess Government land can already occur with or without the Bill. However, present arrangements are clumsy and cause unnecessary delays. In turn, that gives rise to marketplace hesitancy in buying excess land from the Government. Land required for community purposes such as parks and recreation reserves will remain as reserves and will not be transferred into freehold tenure of any form. Excess Government land will be disposed of after rigorous assessment to determine other Government and community requirements first.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr BARBER: Yes, but the Government is going to return a profit to the people of Queensland. Assessments are undertaken in accordance with published policies and guidelines approved by Cabinet in the Government Land Management System Procedural Manual. The revenue earned from disposals will be managed in accordance with revenue-sharing guidelines contained in the GLMS Procedural Manual that ensure that the State's asset base is maintained through net disposal revenues being reinvested in the State's Capital Works Program—or asset renewal—used for debt redemption, or provided for some alternative investment that is clearly beneficial to the State.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr BARBER: The member has missed the point. He wants rural properties to be freeholded. In my view, that is so that they can be flogged off at a premium to foreign investors and the freehold land owners will reap the profits. Government land must return a profit to the people of Queensland because it is Crown land. In short, the Government's land management system promotes more efficient management of real estate assets controlled by Government agencies. The proposed Bill will support that

goal. The Bill does not remove necessary checks and balances. Authorities will be issued subject to compliance with the Government Land Management System Procedural Manual, which documents Government policy for the management of all State Government controlled land. Compliance with the Government's land management system will become a requirement of the Public Finance Standards through the inclusion in those standards of an appropriate clause. This will give the GLMS statutory status, making compliance subject to independent audit. Before surplus land can be disposed of, a market valuation must be carried out and notified on the Government land register. I am confident that this Bill will achieve its averred aim. I am also confident that the guidelines attendant to this legislation will ensure that there is no selling off of the farm; that Government land will be best stewarded on behalf of the people of Queensland. I commend the Minister for introducing this Bill, and I support it.

Mr GILMORE (Tablelands) (11.44 a.m.): Contrary to the belief of some people, I did go to school. During those halcyon days, a lecturer taught me about the intricacies of mechanics. On one occasion he spoke about the function of a differential in a motorcar.

Mr Littleproud: Rear end of a car.

Mr GILMORE: Yes, the rear end of a motorcar. By way of explanation of how the differential functions, he said that because it is a very intricate piece of machinery it tumbles as well as turns. That statement came to mind this morning when the member for Isis was speaking. He is a champion gymnast—he tumbles as well as turns. Because of the loops that he took this morning, for eternity there will be toenail marks in the carpet where he stands. When he sought to mislead the Parliament during that speech, he made a pathetic effort at justifying his current position. I refer to his maiden speech, which is a classic and one that we have had filed away because we knew that sooner or later he would stand up—and he did.

Mr Hobbs: He led with his chin.

Mr GILMORE: He led with his head—the whole damned thing. Because it needs to be brought to the attention of the Parliament, I will quote his statements at that time. He said—

> "Earth, water and sky are the main components of our environment, and they are free. By 'free', I mean that not only were they initially provided to us free of cost but also that these things—which are so important to life itself—must be free from freehold ownership in most circumstances. I contend—as did the old-time socialists—that, by and large, freeholding of land is just as immoral a proposition as the proposition that the very air that we breath should be owned—possessed by the favoured few. The freeholding of Crown land by the Crown is an immoral act and, as a land tenure"——

Mr Littleproud: What was that part? I missed that.

Mr GILMORE: I will repeat it. He said that the freeholding of Crown land by the Crown is an immoral act; and he denied that today. But I remind the honourable member that I am reading from the record of the Parliament. He continued—

> ". . . is not to be compared with the system of long-term leases, which existed in the past. It is the people who are the custodians of the land"—

violins must have been playing when he said this—

> "and it is to the people that the land must return after expiration of the tenure, or special use for which the land was designated."

There it is. When it is all done, the honourable member has either to explain himself to the Parliament or shout for the whole crew. There is no question that this morning the honourable member misled the Parliament.

I will get away from the gymnastic ability of the honourable member and address the serious business of legislation. I consider the legislation to be fairly innocuous. However, I will raise some questions in this second-reading debate. Of recent times—I suppose it goes back as long as government has been indulging in suburban

subdivisions—after development, land has been put up to public auction and innocent members of the community have gone along and bid on them and have then been unable to gain title.

Mr Elder: You were giving it away.

Mr Nunn: You would still give it away.

Mr GILMORE: It is not a new concept; it has been going on for a hundred years. I raise the question: will this legislation ease the method by which the department can proceed with Crown subdivision of land and sell land to the people at auction as freehold but provide a title at settlement? Recently in my home town, a subdivision was sold at auction by the Lands Department and the people could not get titles. That has been going on for many weeks. I rang the department and was informed that it may take another three weeks to obtain the title. There are a couple of administrative reasons for that, and I will raise them shortly. However, it seems to be an immoral act for the department to subdivide land, have people buy it at auction and settle the bill with a cheque that is cashed by the department, yet the department, in response to that settlement, does not give free title to the land. A problem arises when young people who want to get on with their lives purchase land from the department in good faith, go to mortgage the property so that they can obtain a loan from Tom Burns' department, and the department says, "Sorry, you have not got a title." Simply because the Lands Department cannot provide titles, the progress of this State is being held up. The reason for that is that, with the regionalisation of the department, thousands of documents which are incomplete have been transferred from the central office in Brisbane to the regions; the department has not provided those regions with sufficient staff to process the documents; and there is such a backlog that people are unable to obtain title from the department when they have already paid for them. That is entirely unfair. If the department is to proceed with regionalisation—I do not wish to discuss that now—the Minister should at least have the decency to provide the wherewithal in an administrative sense to have the business carried out. Until the Minister takes that on board, more problems will occur in the administration of the Lands Department in this State than have occurred in history.

The member for Cooroora raised another matter which is of concern. Unfortunately, he is no longer in the Chamber. He mentioned our indigenous citizens. He made me wonder why we are going through this process in terms of vacant Crown land. I invite the Minister to answer me at a later time. It is my understanding that the vast majority of the vacant Crown land in Queensland at present is under a moratorium for claim by Aborigines of this State. If we are going through the process of allowing the Lands Department to create freehold land for further dealing within the department, I wonder which land it will turn into freehold. Will it divest the Aboriginal citizens of this State of their access to that land by saying, "No, you cannot have that bit. We are going to make that freehold and then we are going to sell it off to the Japanese."? The member for Cooroora was quick to suggest that the Minister would not do that. I wonder how he will get away with it if those people turn up with a chequebook at a public auction. I would like the Minister to address that matter. I am concerned that the Minister is either going to use the legislation to take away the right of Aboriginal Queenslanders to have access to the vacant Crown land that has been set aside by his Government for Aboriginal claim or that he is going to use the legislation in some other way in respect of the Torres Strait Islander Land Act and the Aboriginal Land Act. Is there something in the back of his mind in respect of changing the title from vacant Crown land to freehold and then dealing with the Aboriginal community of Queensland under its claims under the two pieces of legislation mentioned earlier? Is the Government going to, in some way, inflict this legislation on the national parks areas which have been set aside for Aboriginal claim? There are implications in this legislation that I wish the Minister would answer when he rises to speak in reply. The honourable member for Cooroora also raised an interesting point. He mentioned those dreadful land barons out west of the Great Dividing Range who happen to have been land-holders in that area for 120 years——

Mr Dollin: Leaseholders.

Mr GILMORE: Yes, leaseholders. They have stayed there for 120 years. Some have stayed longer—four, five and six generations. The National Party had an unbroken period of 32 years in Government in this State. The land was not freeholded under the existing legislation. Suddenly the owners dispossessed themselves of their land. They sold it to a mysterious person with a very large cheque book, thereby denying this State a profit from its land even if they had purchased it from the Crown in the first instance. The implication of what the honourable member for Cooroora said was that the process that was in place previously was wrong. Quite frankly, the Government did not need this piece of legislation to address the process that it finds so abhorrent. The Government had the ability to alter it simply by changing the process or the terms and conditions under which it freeholds land. I believe that the honourable member for Cooroora has no understanding whatsoever of this piece of legislation.

Mr Hobbs: I think he spoke against it.

Mr GILMORE: For a while, honourable members were wondering whether he was speaking against the Bill. I suspect that both he and his colleague the honourable member for Isis were somewhat off the track in respect of the thrust of this legislation. As my colleague the honourable member for Warrego has said——

Mr BARBER: I rise to a point of order. The honourable member has said that I raised a spurious point, but it was raised by the honourable member for Warrego at the start of the debate.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr GILMORE: As the honourable member for Warrego has already pointed out, the Opposition is not going to stand against this legislation, however——

Mr Eaton interjected.

Mr GILMORE: There are some questions that have risen in our curious little minds about what it is that the Government has installed under the table.

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (11.55 a.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak to the Queensland Government (Land Holding) Amendment Bill. This Bill will enable Crown land used by the Government for operational purposes only to be converted to freehold status that can be held by the Queensland Government. This transfer of operational land to freehold status may only happen with the approval of the Governor in Council. It allows for the acquisition by the Crown of privately owned freehold land with such land remaining as freehold tenure in the name of the Queensland Government. The guidelines under which the Governor in Council may grant land in fee simple to the State will require rigorous assessment to determine that properties are surplus to Government and community requirements before any disposal can be considered.

I challenge some of the statements made by the previous speaker, Mr Gilmore. I want to restate what my good neighbour the honourable member for Isis, soon to be the member for Hervey Bay, had to say about immorality in dealings. As a sawmiller and a timber buyer up until a few years ago, I bought timber from Gympie to Rockhampton, Townsville and out west and I saw more immorality, more crookedness, more thievery and roguery than most other people would ever witness in their lives.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr DOLLIN: I bet that the honourable member got a pretty good deal from his bit of freeholding, too. I heard that he did.

Mr Hobbs: How many years?

Mr DOLLIN: It was three years ago that I gave up the business I had conducted for the previous 20 years. I went all through the area of the brigalow scheme and up to Moura. That land was freeholded for a song—for a fraction of the value of the timber. I have paid $120,000 for paddocks that had been freeholded to the owner for the timber on them for $4,000. That was happening right up until about three years ago. That is what the honourable member for Isis was talking about when he mentioned immorality in

some dealings—it was about 75 per cent of the dealings. They were as crooked as a dog's hind leg.

Mr Hobbs: You name those places later on.

Mr DOLLIN: I could name them, but it would not be fair to the fellows who had the windfalls.

Mr Hobbs: You name those blokes.

Mr DOLLIN: It is good to get the record straight. I could supply those names. I have in my notebooks the prices that I paid for them. Revenue earned from sales will be managed in accordance with the strong guidelines contained in the procedural manual which will ensure that the State's assets base is maintained, not given away, by revenue earned being reinvested in the State capital works program or used for the reduction of debt. In other words, the Government will not be selling the farm. Freeholding will occur only when land is surplus to Government requirements and capital gained through sales will be either held in reserve, used for debt redemption or provided for alternative investments that are clearly beneficial to the State. Another safeguard is that a deed of grant can only be issued in the name of the Queensland Government and only with the approval of the Governor in Council. Parks and recreation reserves will not be transferable into any form of freehold tenure. Reserves will remain reserves for the community to use and enjoy. There are a number of benefits from this legislation. It will mean that individuals and corporations dealing with the Crown will find a freehold transaction more attractive, because it will be less involved and less restrictive than the transactions they now face. In short, a more easily understood and more efficient process will apply. It should be understood that capital gains derived from sales of assets will not go to Consolidated Revenue or be used for any purpose other than the replacement of property, such as schools, police stations, etc. I know of an example in my electorate concerning a land-holder who wishes to freehold a leased property. For 30 years, part of her freehold property was a school lease. About 12 years ago, a new school, with a large recreation complex adjacent to it, was established approximately 5 kilometres away. The original schoolgrounds are no longer needed, but the process involved in freeholding that land is a long and complicated one. It would have been much simpler to carry out that type of transaction if the land had been subject to freehold title instead of a lease. I see this as an example of the great benefit that will result from the passing of this legislation.

A tremendous amount of money has been held up for months awaiting transfers. Sometimes the transactions look so difficult that business people are discouraged from taking on the projects at all. In addition, the long periods of delay cost them a fortune in interest charges. Any measure that can speed up those processes will assist the development of this State to a great extent and will also encourage business people to invest in these properties instead of being frightened away by the complexity of effecting the transfer.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr DOLLIN: Interest is paid on the money those people borrow to undertake the project, and they get hung up waiting for the titles to go through. In the future, this legislation will result in a much more efficient and commercial process applying to transactions relating to surplus Government real estate. I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Condamine—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.02 p.m.): In rising to speak to this Bill, let me say at the outset that I endorse the intent behind the Opposition's support for it, which has been well canvassed. However, during the course of the debate, a few issues have arisen on which I wish to comment. Yesterday, I took note of a question that was asked of the Honourable the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, Anne Warner, with regard to progress on the allocation of land to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under the Aboriginal Land Act. This morning, my interest was heightened by comments made by my colleague the member for Tablelands. From the answer given by Ms Warner, I

understand that an exhaustive consultative process involving all the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups across the State will be undertaken to permit them to be very much aware of the contents of the Act to which I have referred and their rights pursuant to it. Apparently, people will then be able to go out and identify pieces of land across the State and lodge a claim. When I was listening to the answer, it seemed to me that this would result in literally hundreds of claims, counterclaims and overlapping claims and that the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs would have to institute a process whereby allocations of land would be determined on merit. On top of that, there will have to be a process undertaken by the Lands Department that will involve the actual identification of properties, drawing of boundaries and the transfer of title. The processes will generate an enormous workload. At first, I thought that most of that workload would be handled by Ms Warner's department, but I now think that, eventually, a huge workload will come to the Minister's department. I can imagine that the Minister is probably shaking in his boots at the thought of having to approach Cabinet for more money and more staff to deal with the huge workload that he can see coming.

As the debate has proceeded today, I became aware of a couple of problems that have arisen of which the Minister may also be aware. I ask the Minister to provide me with clarification of the following matters. If Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have the right to lay claim to any vacant Crown land throughout this State and if the Crown has capacity to convert Crown leasehold land to freehold, what would the implications of the Anti-Discrimination Act be? I believe a conflict exists because under this Bill the Crown has the right to convert all Crown land to freehold land, but the Aboriginal Land Act states that people cannot get Crown land, only Crown leasehold land. Is it possible that under the Anti-Discrimination Act people will say, "You are creating freehold land for other people. Why won't you create it for us?" The Minister may wish to comment on those matters later when he has had the benefit of advice from his departmental officers. I have no doubt that his department has engaged in some consultation with the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Nevertheless, I am sure the Minister can appreciate that as I travel around my electorate and throughout rural areas of Queensland, people will ask me all sorts of questions on this legislation.

I understand that the intent of the Bill is to enhance the value of Crown land when it is sold. I believe that that is all to the common good, and I have no worries with it. Crown land has been disposed of over a period, particularly by the Railway Department. I took note of the comments made by the member for Maryborough in respect to the disposal of land that I previously thought was railway reserve land, and I am pleased that it is not the Minister's intention to dispose of reserve land. However, I suppose railway reserve land could be in a separate category.

I detect some inconsistency in the Government's policy with regard to land tenure. I can recall the debate on the South Bank redevelopment which centred on the designation of land for parks and open spaces, etc. The project will be opened soon, and I note that it is developing well at this stage. The relevant legislation also deals with the sale of some parts of the land to private enterprise for commercial and residential uses. A pretty heated debate took place when the legislation was being discussed, and I can remember that members of the National Party put to the Premier that people buying land for private use in that location should be given freehold title. The Premier would not agree to that. Of course, that is Labor Party policy. Members of the Labor Party do not believe in freehold land. I suggested something similar to a 99-year lease or a perpetual lease, and in an exchange across the Chamber, the Premier went so far as to say that a 120-year lease could be given. When members of the National Party challenged him to amend the legislation accordingly, he refused to do so, and occupancy of the South Bank site is still on the basis of leasehold title. In spite of that, the Government has now brought forward this legislation which will result in other Crown land being sold as freehold land. The inconsistencies are quite obvious.

People will draw an analogy between the provisions of this Bill and the Government's action in relation to Daydream Island where a development lease was

issued on the condition that the developer undertook $120m worth of improvements. The deal was that if the developer put together a worthwhile project, it would be granted freehold tenure. The agreement was struck between the previous Government and the developers, but recently there was a huge public outcry when the Premier made it known that that promise would not be honoured. The Government broke the contract and changed the title to perpetual lease. In addition to the Government's obvious inconsistency between the presentation of this Bill, which will result in some land being converted to freehold tenure and larger profits on the sale of the land, and its treatment of the developer who constructed a vitally important tourism facility, it has abandoned the tradition of incoming Governments honouring previous agreements.

I found it difficult to follow completely the argument advanced by the member for Cooroora, who seemed to be complaining about private land-holders flogging off land to the Japanese. I believe the Minister may well find himself in the position of selling some converted Crown freehold land to Japanese buyers. If he did not, he would probably come to the attention of the anti-discrimination people. The honourable member's argument seemed to lack some consistency.

A Government member: That's stupid.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No, it is not. Those people will be able to bid. Will the Government say that it will not sell some land with freehold title at auction because the buyer happens to be an Aborigine, a Japanese or a Scotsman with one leg?

Mr Barber: The profit goes to the Crown. It's not a private profit.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That is all right. What will happen to the land after that? Will the person who buys the land be free to sell it or will there be some sort of caveat on it? I turn to the way in which the Government deals with land tenure and the uncertainty that has been created in the bush. Honourable members may have heard my comments on the Premier's economic statement. I mentioned that, other than the drought, one of the greatest setbacks for rural Queensland in the past couple of years was the removal of Government services and the fact that people who have Crown leasehold land—be it pastoral leases or leases on industrial estates—have found that their charges have increased enormously. The Government has to realise that its argument that the Crown should get a reasonable return on its asset must be modified to the extent that the charges must be realistic; otherwise, people will not have the confidence to take up or to develop the leases, and we will not get the full productivity that we deserve. There is a danger that everyone will lose if the Government goes for a quick quid first up.

Mr Hobbs: If they want to charge a commercial rent, they should be able to give a true commercial contract. That is where the problem is.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That is correct. It is a matter of the formula that is used. I turn to an issue that I have taken up previously in this House, that is, the capacity of the Minister to have some discretion regarding leasing charges to churches and charitable organisations. Now that the Minister has the capacity to convert Crown land to freehold land and to sell it off, I want to take up the cause of the Jandowae Golf Club. The Minister may remember my raising it with him. That club has a lease over a piece of land where even the goannas take cut lunches. The club has developed a golf course. People thought that it was pretty good because they used to lease that land for $50 a year. Under the new administrative procedures, the rent increased to $500 a year. To the Government, $500 is not big bickies. However, to the members of that golf club, the difference between $50 and $500 is enormous. I have said to the Minister and his department, "Can't we do something about it?" The latest suggestion made to me is that some of the leased land which is unused could be cut off, given back to the Crown, and the golf club would take over only the part that it uses. That is some sort of a compromise.

Now that the Minister has an option to convert Crown land to freehold land, he might reconsider the case of the Jandowae Golf Club. Jandowae is a small community of only 800 people. They are battling to keep a nine-hole golf course going. The club is genuinely concerned about its capacity to maintain that sort of an overhead on the

course. It is a quality-of-life issue. Tommy Burns is running around the State listening to people's concerns, as are some junior members of the Northern and Rural Task Force. Quality of life is important, and the matter that I have raised affects the quality of life of those people. In the main, I understand what the Minister is on about, although there are some inconsistencies in the way in which he handles land tenure. I would like the Minister to address those matters with regard to land claims by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the way in which they will affect what the Minister will be able to do in converting Crown land to freehold land before it is sold.

Hon. A. G. EATON (Mourilyan—Minister for Land Management) (12.11 p.m.), in reply: At the outset, I thank and congratulate the speakers from both sides of the House. The debate has been very constructive. The Government is not frightened of criticism if it is just and constructive, and the fears expressed by members of the Opposition will be allayed easily. Although I do not want to take any credit away from Government members, some of them were on the legislative committee and perhaps had some insight into the Bill. Their contribution when the legislative committee had discussions and meetings about the Bill is probably one of the reasons why those members were well acquainted with its provisions.

I want to allay the fears expressed and the issues raised by some members. The first member to speak in the debate referred to the ad hoc administration of the legislation. The Government is trying to smooth out the operation of the legislation. It is not as though the Government will freehold every bit of Crown land that is surplus to its needs. Having been in Government for a long time, members of the Opposition would realise what is involved in developing projects and constructing Government buildings. I can cite my electorate as an example. A new school is needed at Mission Beach. Because of the advancement and progress that is being made in that area, more people are choosing to live there, and each year an increasing number of children attend that school. Demountable buildings have been placed on all the ground that is available at that school. Each year, a new demountable building is installed. The Government had to buy a piece of freehold land—and this will explain what the Government will do with the money. A query was raised whether the money would go into Consolidated Revenue. It is not an asset-stripping sale. The money will be returned. Although the site on which the present school is located is too small, it is very valuable and the money from its sale will be offset against the cost of building a new school.

Mr Hobbs: When you sell the land?

Mr EATON: That is right. When we sell the land, the money will go towards the cost of a new school. That does not mean to say that the Government will restrict its use and say that, when a school is sold, that money must go to a school. In some rural areas in which the Government has excess land, such as the horse paddocks at the old police stations——

Mr Hobbs: Are you saying that the money actually stays within the department for that purpose? It does not go to Consolidated Revenue? It stays in the Lands Department?

Mr EATON: No, not in the Lands Department. The money will be used in various departments. The Government has its checks and balances. The Government Land Management System and the Public Finance Standards will be the checks and balances. Before any of that land can be freeholded, the matter must come before the Property Review Committee, comprising the Directors-General of the Department of Lands, Transport, Housing and Local Government, Administrative Services and the Under Treasurer. The Government has included all those checks and balances to stop me from giving the land to my relations or to my good friends.

Mr Littleproud: Take the Broadbeach school. There are plenty of proposals to buy it. You can convert it to freehold, sell it off and the Education Department or the Administrative Services Department will hang on to——

Mr EATON: That is right. It would be used to maintain the Government's equity in assets.

Mr Littleproud: Within the departmental——

Mr EATON: Not necessarily; but, yes, we could sell the school to build a new police station by doing a land exchange or selling off land. In some towns, more so in the rural areas along the coast, where development has taken place over the years, new police stations might be required. It may be the case that the old police station does not have sufficient land for expansion. As a result, that station may be sold to the storekeeper to increase his store space and the police station relocated somewhere else. It may not necessarily involve the sale of the police station but some of the ground on which it stands, which may be a horse paddock. That land may be sold so that a Works Department office, an education facility or a Family Services office can be built there. It will be used for building on Government assets so that the value of the asset remains. Just because the Government is getting rid of the land, it does not want to be accused of stripping the assets of Queensland. If the assets are sold, the Government will end up with no assets and no revenue, and all of us will be broke. The Government wants to maintain that equity and standard in the assets for the people of Queensland.

I think I have answered the issues that were raised by Mr Beanland. The Government is not asset stripping, it is selling only those parcels of land that are surplus to its needs. The honourable member raised concerns about the Lands Department closing offices in Queensland. I am very proud to be able to say that my department is one of the departments that has not closed any offices in Queensland. In fact, the department now has one more office than it had when Labor came to Government. That office is in Monto. Previously, the department's transactions were handled at the courthouse. The department is quite proud of its achievements. Although no Lands offices have been closed, there may have been cases in which Valuer-General's offices have merged with Lands offices and are now all in the one building. There are still a couple of places where that has to be done. The department now has some quite good offices in which it is a pleasure not only for our staff to work but also for people to come in and talk and do business with them.

The member for Tablelands understands the problems of the transition to regionalisation. He spoke about the slowness in service. We are aware of a bit of slowness in the granting of titles. The department is in the transition period and at present officers are interviewing 1 000 people for about 480 jobs. Many of those people will be going out into the regions to make up the numbers. In rural areas, there will be an increase in the number of public servants, particularly those employed in the Lands Department. We are aware that there is a bit of a time drag, but we are working on it. It is hoped that, in the next month or so, all of those positions will be allocated. However, it may take a short time for those people to actually take up their positions because they may be family people with children going to school and they may not want to shift during busy periods such as the school holidays.

Another issue that was raised concerned Aboriginals. There are three bases on which Aboriginals can place a claim on vacant Crown land, including national parks. However, they have to give evidence of its heritage value or they have to have some assimilation with the ground. This Bill does not really contain anything that concerns Aboriginals. Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders are covered by an Act dealing with inalienable freehold land which will be administered by them.

Mr Littleproud: They also have a right to vacant Crown land.

Mr EATON: Yes, but not in the urban areas as such. They cannot claim land as tribal land, or whatever they like to call it, in urban areas.

Mr Littleproud: What about the rural areas?

Mr EATON: In the rural areas, yes, but that application has to go before a tribunal, and that land has to be available and suitable for their claim. I do not think we have any worries with regard to that. However, there is nothing to stop them from buying land as a commercial operation. If they do that, they will be treated in the same way as the honourable member or I would be treated, and they would have to conform to the same conditions as those that would be imposed on us should we buy it. I do not see that

anybody should have any fears about Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders not being treated fairly or right. With that, I think that I have answered all the claims.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 March (see p. 4316).

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (12.22 p.m.): At the outset, I express disappointment that once again the Premier, who has charge of business before the House, has decided not to attend the subsequent debate. Earlier this week, in the discussion that was permitted on the State economic development strategy, the Premier made his contribution to the debate and then headed north, at taxpayers' expense, on a public relations sell at Mackay. We have before the House legislation which is of extreme importance involving amendments to the Criminal Justice Act in this State.

Mr Littleproud: It is of some sensitivity.

Mr BORBIDGE: It is of sensitivity. Again the Premier is not present, and that is contrary to the spirit of Fitzgerald reform. In fact, when these amendments were being introduced into the Parliament, the Premier did not even extend to the Opposition the courtesy of suitable advance notice of the introduction of the legislation. The point that needs to be made today is that the Premier was elected on a platform of accountability and of making this Parliament work better, and time and time again we see him treating this Parliament with contempt. On this, the eighth sitting day in five and a half months, and during the second debate the Premier has been in charge of, he has gone missing, and that is simply not good enough.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: While you moan, he works.

Mr BORBIDGE: Members opposite are prepared to put up with the vain and bad-tempered man who leads them. What I am saying to the people of Queensland is that this Parliament deserves better, and it deserves respect from the man who pretends to be accountable and committed to the reform process. I can understand the sensitivity of members of the Government, because they advocate one set of standards and, when it suits them, they abandon those principles and commitments. I will elaborate on that point later.

The Opposition supports the legislation before the Parliament. The legislation will enable the Criminal Justice Commission to better manage its considerable workload. As indicated by the Premier in one of his rare appearances in this Chamber when he introduced this legislation, the proposed amendments are supported by the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice and by the Criminal Justice Commission itself. I have corresponded with the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission, Sir Max Bingham, and he has indicated to me that he is more than satisfied with the amendments before the House. I make the point that the National Party in this State has consistently supported the Criminal Justice Commission, both in Government and in Opposition, and will continue to do so.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: In Opposition.

Mr BORBIDGE: The honourable member interjects. I have seen honourable members come and go. I have seen so many oncers, and the honourable member who has so much to say will be one of the biggest oncers who has ever fallen into this Parliament.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! The honourable member for Nundah will cease interjecting.

Mr BORBIDGE: To quote the commitment to reform of this Government, I refer to comments that were made at Parliament House on 28 January this year by Professor Ross Fitzgerald. Professor Fitzgerald has, over a long period of time, been the conscience of the Labor Party, of the reform process and of Queensland. Honourable members opposite supported Professor Fitzgerald when he was criticising the previous Government, and now that Professor Fitzgerald has turned against the members opposite they attack and denigrate him. Let this House examine what Ross Fitzgerald had to say about the performance of the Goss Labor Government in terms of the reform process. He stated—

> "It is disturbing to find that . . . the Goss Government, over the last two years, has embarked on a confrontationist approach to one of the major Fitzgerald reform bodies—the body given the responsibility to oversee the reform of the police force and that is, of course, the Criminal Justice Commission. Queenslanders expected politicians in the post-Fitzgerald"——

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I have allowed the member for Surfers Paradise some leeway since he began his speech. The legislation before the House deals with the management of complaints received by the CJC. I ask the honourable member to confine his remarks to that subject. I believe that prevents his making comments about the Government.

Mr BORBIDGE: With respect, those comments were made at a forum on the Criminal Justice Commission. Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe I am entitled to quote Professor Fitzgerald's criticism of your Government's attitude towards the Criminal Justice Commission.

Mr WELLS: I rise to a point of order. The honourable Leader of the Opposition has just cast an aspersion, and an unjustified aspersion, on the Chair. The Speaker is independent. The honourable member should withdraw the last remark he made.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! My ruling still stands. The Bill is about the commission's workload. However, I am aware of the forum at which the comments referred to were made, and I am aware of the context in which they were made. What I am saying to the honourable member is that this legislation relates to the management of complaints made to the Criminal Justice Commission and to its workload. I ask the honourable member to confine his remarks to that issue.

Mr BORBIDGE: With respect, Madam Deputy Speaker, I ask that you seek advice from Mr Speaker.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: I move, "That Madam Deputy Speaker consult Mr Speaker in respect of the ruling she has just made."

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am advised by the Clerk that such a motion cannot be moved. I ask the honourable member to continue and to observe my warning.

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer to the fact that this matter is currently before the Speaker. Yesterday in Parliament, the member for Fassifern asked Mr Speaker to rule on the scope of second-reading debates. Mr Speaker undertook to give such a ruling. It is my understanding that until such time as a different ruling is given by Mr Speaker, previous rulings by Mr Speaker stand. The comments that I am making specifically relate to the

CJC. Dr Fitzgerald stated—

> "In relation to the CJC, why the Goss Government has embarked on a program of confrontation with the major reform body arising out of the Fitzgerald report is almost beyond understanding and can only be explained by the Government's resentment . . ."

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition was seeking the view of the Speaker. Yesterday, the member for Fassifern asked me—I thought somewhat arrogantly—to respond by today on that matter. It was really an unfortunate tactic by the member for Fassifern to suggest that I rule on how broad second-reading debates ought to be. It is my view that if I said that second-reading debates could be as wide as the back of a truck, and we had a debate on a Bill containing a simple amendment that mentions the word "health", members could spend two days talking about the Health Department. Some tolerance is shown in second-reading debates when we are discussing an issue such as the CJC—which is a very, very broad issue—as we are today, or other matters relating to it, or when we are discussing an amendment to the Criminal Justice Act that relates to the handling of complaints. I rule that during this debate, that is what honourable members can discuss generally. I am not going to allow a debate on the CJC on this occasion. That is my ruling. I ask the member for Surfers Paradise, the Leader of the Opposition, to take my ruling into account because, under Standing Order 141, the Chair can deal with him on that matter.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, in view of your ruling, could we seek a ruling from you with regard to first-reading debates? It has been the practice——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Lockyer! I was a member of this House when debates were held on the first reading of a Bill. I thought that those debates were ludicrous. Members debated something that they had not seen. It has been argued that because a deal was done to get rid of first-reading debates, future Speakers, future presiding officers, would be inclined to take that understanding on board. I do not agree with that. I do not agree that there is any obligation on the present occupant of the chair, the present presiding officer, to take that ruling into account. I am extremely concerned that if I give a ruling that second-reading debates on a Bill can be very broad, members could spend a day debating a very simple amendment. That is not really how Parliament should function. I will not debate this issue any further. That is my ruling.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, I seek advice on your ruling. In his second-reading speech, the Premier referred broadly to the CJC. He referred to official misconduct by officials in units of public administration, including the police. He dealt with a range of other matters. I am seeking advice as to whether I, as Leader of the Opposition, can also canvass such issues in response to the Premier's second-reading speech.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The legislation deals with the handling of complaints. Members can talk about the types of complaints and the types of issues that arise. I think that is consistent with my ruling.

Mr BORBIDGE: With respect, that is what I was doing. I was referring to criticism of the Government's attitude towards the commission by a leading Queensland academic. Because of that, the previous occupant of the chair ruled me out of order. If I cannot quote a prominent Queenslander who has criticised the Government over matters that are currently the subject of debate in Parliament, I do not really see much point in the Opposition being here.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will listen to the member and then make my judgment.

Mr BORBIDGE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In relation to the CJC, Dr Fitzgerald stated—

> ". . . why the Goss Government has embarked on a program of confrontation with the major reform body arising out of the Fitzgerald report is almost beyond understanding and can only be explained by the Government's resentment of the CJC's power and of its independence. The CJC however, is central to the planning process on how to tackle law and order issues over the next ten years,

particularly the research and co-ordination division.

> Reforming the police force, ensuring that it is better educated and better trained and is actively involved in community policing, are vital to protecting the community and 'restoring' law and order. The CJC has direct responsibilities in these areas.
>
> It is my view that the work of Sir Max Bingham and the CJC has been impaired by the amount of time and energy it has had to expend defending itself against two years of unwarranted attacks by the Goss Government. This applies equally to the head of the Parliamentary CJC Committee, Peter Beattie."

Dr Fitzgerald stated further—

> "The Government clearly resents the independence and power of the commission. The former Police Minister demonstrated this by his unbelievable attack on the CJC and Sir Max Bingham as well as on the Police Commissioner . . . selective media background briefings, public attacks and half-smart remarks to the media have all been used to try and denigrate the CJC in the minds of the community. While this has substantially failed, it has brought into question in the public's mind, the Government's commitment to the reform process."

Mr Speaker, the remarks made by Dr Fitzgerald clearly demonstrate the extent of concern in the wider community in regard to the way the Government is dealing with the commission and its chairman, Sir Max Bingham.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has made his point with regard to that. I ask him to discuss the handling of complaints, which is what the Bill is about, otherwise I am going to use Standing Order 141 and ask him to resume his seat.

Mr HARPER: I rise to a point of order. I believe that the issue actually goes beyond the Bill presently before us. With respect, Mr Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that this amending Bill contains a provision which substantially changes the original Act in relation to the handling of complaints.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is what should be debated.

Mr HARPER: The points that the honourable Leader of the Opposition is endeavouring to draw to the attention of the House relate directly to a very substantial change in the Act whereby in future not all complaints will be required to be investigated.

Mr BORBIDGE: With respect, Mr Speaker, it is unparalleled in this place that the Leader of the Opposition or the Opposition spokesman not be permitted to engage in a wide-ranging debate on the legislation before the Parliament. I have been a member of this place since 1980, and this has never happened before. I find the rulings made by the Deputy Speaker an absolute disgrace to the integrity and independence of the institution of Parliament. If the Opposition is not permitted to engage in a wide-ranging debate, we may as well go home.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that I have made a ruling. I am not going to allow a wide-ranging debate on a simple amendment to the Criminal Justice Act. That is my ruling.

Mr BORBIDGE: I give notice that tomorrow I shall move—

> "That the House expresses its dissent of the ruling of Mr Speaker on 30 April in regard to restricting second-reading debates in the Legislative Assembly."

May I continue, Mr Speaker?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member may continue, but I ask him to take account of my ruling.

Mr BORBIDGE: I make the point that, in his second-reading speech, the Premier was not restricted in terms of his ability to comment on the behaviour of officials in units of public administration, including the police. Mr Speaker, I seek your advice as to

whether I may have the very same privilege.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Leader of the Opposition will continue his speech. I am listening to him.

Mr BORBIDGE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Earlier today in this Parliament, the Opposition raised concerns and directed specific questions to the Premier as a result of particular matters that were recently before the Criminal Justice Commission. I refer to the hearing into the alleged official misconduct of Police Commissioner Noel Newnham. The point that I made earlier——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I rule that out of order. I warn the member to come back to the Bill. Members are debating a very simple Bill. I give the member my final warning, and if he does not heed it he will resume his seat.

Mr BORBIDGE: I take it that I am not allowed to comment on matters upon which the Premier was permitted to comment in respect of this Bill.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am ruling on what the member is saying. I am not here to answer his questions.

Mr BORBIDGE: With respect, Mr Speaker, such matters were referred to in broad detail by the Premier during his second-reading speech.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have given my ruling. Is the member suggesting that the Premier spoke about the Newnham situation in his second-reading speech?

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, I will quote to you what the Premier said. In introducing the legislation, he said—

> "The . . . Bill addresses concerns expressed by the Criminal Justice Commission, and endorsed by the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. Those concerns relate to the fourth of the functions I referred to . . . investigating complaints of official misconduct."

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am aware of that.

Mr BORBIDGE: I want to comment in respect of a particular case of official misconduct.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The legislation is about which complaints are investigated. It is also about the investigation of complaints. It has nothing whatsoever to do with tribunals or other matters.

Mr BORBIDGE: Mr Speaker, I ask you to carefully consider the decades of tradition that you are placing at risk this afternoon by your ruling. I will address that issue in a motion at a later time. It is clear that the riding instructions have been given.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I find that statement offensive to the Chair and ask that it be withdrawn.

Mr BORBIDGE: I withdraw that remark. I find it extraordinary that the Opposition is restricted effectively to a debate on the clauses of this legislation. It is a sad day for this Parliament. As I indicated earlier, the Opposition supports the amendments to help reduce the workload of the Criminal Justice Commission and to give it the power to vet particular complaints. But in doing so, I believe that I would be negligent if I did not attempt—as every other Leader of the Opposition and every other shadow Minister has been permitted to do—to instance examples to which the proposed amendments refer. That is what has been lost today. I express the gravest concern. There is obviously little point in the Opposition's continuing to try to raise matters of genuine concern that have arisen as a result of answers given to the Parliament this morning by the Premier and which impact directly on this legislation. Mr Speaker, you have made a ruling, and I will accept that ruling. However, it is obvious that the Opposition's involvement in this debate will, in my view, have to be tragically restricted.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I rise to a point of order. Earlier today, members debated the Queensland Government (Land Holding) Amendment Bill. I am sure that if one searched the *Hansard* records of that debate one would find that it was a very wide-ranging

debate. I took part in that debate and mentioned matters such as the anti-discrimination legislation. The occupant of the chair at that time allowed a broad-ranging debate from members on both sides of the House. There seems to be some inconsistency. In fact, the Minister in charge of the legislation said that it was a very worthwhile debate and commended all members of the House who took part in it for the way in which they conducted themselves.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I stress to members that this is a very simple amendment to the Criminal Justice Act. I do not believe that in this debate I should allow a broad-ranging debate on all aspects of the CJC.

Mr BOOTH: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I am prepared to listen to your logic on this matter. However, I do not believe that it is within your right to say that a Bill is simple or otherwise. This Bill will affect the legislation of this State. It will also affect many people. I believe that your judgment should be that the Bill be overdebated rather than underdebated. It is quite wrong to stifle debate on a Bill such as this.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am not trying to stifle debate. I am happy for members to discuss the handling of complaints by the CJC and the issues that arise from that.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (12.45 p.m.): I rise to support the amendments to the Criminal Justice Act. These amendments come before the House following a long consultative process involving the Criminal Justice Commission and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and consideration by the Cabinet Office. Members will recall that, on 3 December 1991, my parliamentary committee tabled in the House a report No. 13 which contained 43 recommendations. Recommendation No. 11, which deals with the substance of the Bill which is before the House today, states—

> "The Committee endorses the recommendation of the Criminal Justice Commission that s2.20(2) and s2.29 of the Criminal Justice Act 1989-1991 be amended to remove the duplication of investigations and reports which is required of the Complaints Section of the Official Misconduct Division and the Director of the Official Misconduct Division by sections 2.20 and 2.29 of the Act. The Committee also endorses the recommendation of the Commission that s2.29 of the Act be amended to remove the requirement that the Commission investigate all complaints that it receives."

That recommendation of the parliamentary committee was considered by the Premier and Cabinet, and the appropriate amendments are before the House today.

For some time, the matter of complaints before the commission has been of concern. As members would be aware, the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee meets with the commission on the first Friday of each month. Over the last 18 months, the committee has regularly discussed the volume of complaints that have come before the commission. As members would be aware, on 22 April 1992 the CJC celebrated its second anniversary. The blunt reality is that this Bill is about the efficiency of the operations of the CJC. If these amendments were not put before the House, the CJC would have slowly drowned in the volume of work it was receiving. The volume at which complaints continue to be received by the CJC means that, if the commission remains obligated to investigate every matter, other areas of its activities will have to be severely curtailed. For example, in its first two years of operation, the CJC received nearly 5 000 complaints. In fact, 4 919 complaints were received. There is no reason to believe that the avalanche has slowed. The four busiest months have occurred in the last eight months. The figures are: August 1991, 278 complaints; October 1991, 300 complaints; January 1992, 263 complaints; and February 1992, 259 complaints. The number of complaints received during the second year of the CJC's operation has consistently exceeded the number received in the corresponding month in the first year by 60 per cent.

I will do a statistical comparison of registered complaints between 22 April 1990 and 29 February 1992. Those figures are slightly different from those which I just presented to the House, because the figures I just presented were the latest figures available as at 28 April 1992. In the period between 22 April 1990 and 29 February 1992,

the commission received a total of 4 438 complaints. As I mentioned earlier, in February 259 matters were registered. In that period, an average of 13 matters per day were registered by the CJC. People would appreciate the enormous volume of work that goes into the investigation of every complaint that comes before the CJC. Bearing in mind the considerable amount of public scrutiny both in this place and in other places such as the media and elsewhere that goes into the outcome of the investigations by the CJC, an enormous amount of care needs to be taken with the investigations. To be receiving 13 complaints a day gives members of this House an accurate appreciation of the volume of work that is being received by the CJC. As at 29 February 1992, 3 661 matters had been finalised. At 29 February 1992, the CJC had 777 matters current.

If a comparison is made of matters received each month, honourable members and members of the Queensland community will have some idea of the desperate need for these amendments. In January 1991, 161 complaints were received. In January 1992, 259 complaints were received—a 60.9 per cent increase in complaints over that period. If a comparison is made of matters received on a yearly basis, we find that, between July 1990 and January 1991, 1 229 complaints were made. Between July 1991 and January 1992, 1 991 complaints were made—a 62 per cent increase in that period. If a comparison is made of matters received on a working day basis, we find that, in January 1991, 8.05 complaints per day were received. In January 1992, just under 13 complaints per day were received—a 60.9 per cent increase. I believe that the statistics that I have presented for the information of all honourable members graphically illustrates the serious situation which developed at the CJC and the desperate need for this legislation.

Mr Pearce: Does that mean people were just complaining about almost anything—the first thing that came to their minds?

Mr BEATTIE: There were quite a number of complaints, some of which were frivolous and vexatious and some of which, perhaps, could have been dealt with in other places or in another way. That is one of the important issues that these amendments deal with and how matters will be dealt with in the future. This volume of complaints obviously placed increasing pressure on the staff. Two support staff resigned because of the workload. Three legal officers requested transfers to other Government departments, accepting salary reductions to do so, because of the volume of work. A number of the police group attached to the CJC applied to be transferred elsewhere. It is, therefore, essential that some respite be given, which is what this Bill does. I wish to discuss in general terms the proposals contained in the Bill. They do not mean that complaints will be rejected out of hand, or given scant consideration. I will deal with this point at some length, because it is fundamentally important that public confidence is maintained in the Complaints Section of the Official Misconduct Division of the CJC. Honourable members will recall that the former Police Complaints Tribunal did not enjoy public support.

Mrs Woodgate: Nor should they.

Mr BEATTIE: As the honourable member said, "Nor should they." This Bill deals with more than just complaints against police. It deals with all matters relating to official misconduct. There was a perception in the community that the former Police Complaints Tribunal simply whitewashed complaints that were made to it. Indeed, that was largely the case. There were some exceptions when Judge McGuire and former Justice Carter were with the tribunal. It is fair to say that they restored some dignity to the tribunal. However, that perception has been retained by the community. That is why we must make certain that when these new processes are put in place the complaints that should be investigated are investigated. This Bill is not an excuse for the CJC not to investigate legitimate complaints. My parliamentary committee has spent many hours discussing this very important point with the CJC. We agreed to recommendation 11 only after we were satisfied that appropriate safeguards would be put in place to ensure that those complaints that should be investigated would be investigated. This is the new process provided for in the Bill.

All complaints will continue to be assessed by a committee of senior personnel

comprising lawyers and police. A decision will then be made, having regard to a set of criteria that focus on the seriousness of the allegation and the chance of productively investigating it, on whether a matter should be investigated. I will explain that a little later. The public interest remains the fundamental guiding principle. I repeat: the public interest remains the fundamental guiding principle. On some occasions, an immediate decision that the matter should not be taken further can be made. I will give honourable members an example. A complaint was received by the CJC alleging that in 1985 an unidentified police officer made rude or threatening remarks to the complainant who was walking alone on a city street. That complaint involved allegations of relatively minor misconduct. It provided no means by which the officer could be identified. It appeared to indicate that there would be no corroboration of the allegations and that a decision would depend upon the resolution of the conflicting accounts given by the complainant and the officer, were he or she be able to be identified. Such a complaint could be finalised upon receipt. The complainant would receive a letter explaining the commission's decision and the file would be closed. If a complainant cannot provide the CJC with sufficient information on which to begin an investigation, then clearly the CJC would be wasting its time commencing an investigation that would go absolutely nowhere. That is a basic, fundamental principle. There must be some information which would provide the basis of an investigation.

On other occasions, it may be necessary for a preliminary investigation to be undertaken before a decision is made as to whether a matter should be fully investigated. For example, a complainant may allege that he was assaulted while at the watch-house. Upon interview, the complainant may indicate that he received no injuries, that no-one was present at the time other than the officer, that he made no mention of the assault to any other person and that he could not identify the officer involved. Although the allegation is more serious than the one I cited before, it still could not be productively investigated and again the matter would be finalised at that stage. That does not mean that those complaints would be treated lightly, but there needs to be some corroboration before a matter goes further. Again, the complainant would receive a letter explaining the CJC's decision. It would point out that the CJC had not made a finding adverse to the credit of the complainant but, as disciplinary charges must be proven to the required standard, the complaint could not be substantiated in the absence of corroborative evidence. The illustrations I have given would be supported and understood by honourable members. The focus of the amendment is to enable the CJC to deploy its limited resources in a manner calculated to provide the best possible service to members of the public.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr BEATTIE: Before the luncheon recess, I was emphasising that the focus of this amending legislation is on enabling the CJC to deploy its limited resources in a manner calculated to provide the best service to members of the public. It cannot do so if it is required to investigate each and every complaint, irrespective of merit or likely outcome. There needs to be a discretion, and there also needs to be a system of checks and balances in operation which will ensure that the CJC investigates the type of complaints that it should be investigating, as I said earlier. My parliamentary committee—and, I hope, future Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committees—will continue to monitor very closely the complaints section of the Official Misconduct Division. I hope that the commission will continue to provide monthly reports to the parliamentary committee because, if the reform process in Queensland is to succeed, a very close eye will have to be kept on the complaints area. I hope that 12 months from now the future committee will conduct a review and provide a report to this Parliament on the success of the new system. As I have indicated, I believe it will be a success, but I believe it needs to be continually monitored. I hope that a report will be presented to this Parliament in April or May 1993 on the success of this process.

Because it is important to realise that the effect of this amendment will free up the Official Misconduct Division and enable it to carry out other necessary tasks, I should make a couple of other general comments. It can be seen from recommendation 12 on page 67 of the parliamentary committee's report that provision is made for enhancing the

role of the Official Misconduct Division in relation to organised crime. The amendments contained in this legislation will free up the resources of the Official Misconduct Division of the CJC so that more time can be spent on attacking organised crime. Worldwide cooperation now exists between South American drug organisations, the Mafia, the Yakuza and the Triads, so it is important that that division of the CJC has resources to deal with the worldwide drug-trading problem. Unless the resources are freed from the complaints section, the CJC will not be able to spend the time that it should on that area. I acknowledge that the commission is now spending energy and effort on attacking those problems. However, because the complaints have been so extensive, as I mentioned earlier, it has not been able to apply the resources that it needs. I can assure honourable members that, judging by the reports received by the committee, this is a matter of concern which needs to be given the priority sought by the CJC in terms of placing greater emphasis on organised crime as opposed to some of the complaints that can be dealt with in an easier way.

I know that later this year the CJC will be providing this Parliament with a report on organised crime. When amendments are made to this type of legislation, it is important to ensure that adequate safeguards are put in place. I say to the people of Queensland and to members of this Parliament that anyone who is concerned about these amendments needs to be aware that a safeguard exists in the form of the parliamentary committee's making sure that the new amendments work. It is the role of the parliamentary committee to do that job to its maximum ability. I point out that the legislation provides for the appointment of a chief officer of the complaints section who will be directly accountable to the director of the Official Misconduct Division. The chief officer will determine whether or not the complaints section will conduct or continue an investigation. Because of the secrecy provisions contained in section 6.72 of the Act, the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee can look at each file. The people of Queensland should know that if anyone is unhappy with the manner in which a matter has been investigated, the additional mechanism of coming to the parliamentary committee is available. The committee will approach the commission and check that the system is working properly. If the matter should have been investigated, the committee will take steps to ensure that that is done. A safety net is provided for people who believe that particular matters should be investigated. Too often, matters of a political or general nature have been directed to the commission which should never have gone there. The CJC is not a political football to be used by people who want to take advantage of the system or exact revenge. The amendments presently before the Parliament will solve that problem.

Mr SANTORO (Merthyr) (2.35 p.m.): It has been my privilege to serve as the Liberal Party's representative on the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice. Today, I am pleased to participate in this debate. I endorse the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition and other honourable members. It is extremely unfortunate that members have been restricted in making comments during the second-reading debate instead of being allowed the usual latitude and courtesy. However, I wish to speak to this Bill as a member of the parliamentary committee which, as a whole, has conducted its relations with the commission in a professional and methodical way. The commission has been put under a great deal of pressure by some people within Parliament and others outside it, but I am pleased that the majority of Queenslanders strongly support the CJC. I know that members of the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice will continue to fight for the independence of the CJC.

Honourable members know the brief history of the CJC. It was recommended by Tony Fitzgerald, QC, as he was then, and legislation to establish the commission was introduced by the previous Government. The present Government has continued the process, and the CJC has weathered quite a few storms to reach its current position. The Bill that honourable members are discussing today is one that will streamline the operations of the commission and allow it to devote its considerable resources to the fight against corruption and crime. I will return to these two issues later, but at this stage I want to make it clear that I and other members of the Liberal Party support this Bill completely.

I pay tribute to the efforts of the CJC Chairman, Sir Max Bingham, not only for preparing the amendments that are being considered by the House today but also for the other good work that he does. Sir Max is a former Liberal Deputy Premier of Tasmania, and it is fair to say that a few members on the Government side of the Chamber initially viewed Sir Max's appointment with some suspicion. However, I think—and I hope—that there is now universal approval for the way in which he has handled a very difficult position. At this point, it should perhaps be noted that Sir Max is the man who was appointed by a Federal Labor Government as Chairman of the National Crime Authority. While carrying out the responsibilities of that position, he conducted himself with great distinction. In the short time that he has been here, Sir Max Bingham has made a very real contribution to public life in Queensland. He has surmounted very difficult problems with very great dignity and has done much to re-establish public trust in the institutions of Government. People may not trust politicians, but, by and large, they do trust the CJC. It is interesting to note that the workload of the CJC is increasing in quite alarming proportions, hence the reasons for the Bill.

At this point, I had intended to go into a detailed statistical breakdown of the CJC's increased workload, but that has already been done very ably by the honourable member for Brisbane Central, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee for Criminal Justice. However, a couple of relevant figures bear repeating. In a little under two years, from April 1990 to February 1992, the CJC received 4 438 matters, which it has registered for investigation. Of those registered complaints, 3 361 had been finalised as at the end of February 1992, leaving 777 matters current. Of most concern is the rapid increase in the rate of new complaints. In February this year, 259 matters were registered—an average of 13 a day. That is an increase of 60.9 per cent on the figure for the same period last year. Other statistics show similar figures all around the 60 per cent mark, indicating that complaints to the commission have increased by about 60 per cent on the same figure a year ago. That position shows no sign of changing.

As other speakers before me have said, that demand has put an almost unbearable strain on the commission and its staff. That is one of the reasons for the Bill before the House, which will remove the requirement for the commission to investigate all matters that fall under its jurisdiction, no matter what they are, how vexatious or frivolous they are or whether they are anonymous. It is a pity that some people in our community seem to have regarded the CJC as a general complaints department for the Government, if not for society as a whole. Many people have not understood the jurisdiction laid down for the CJC by its Act. It is a step in the right direction to allow the CJC to exercise discretion in its investigations. Police and other investigatory bodies are allowed similar discretion, so the amending Bill really brings the CJC into line with its law enforcement cousins.

It is a pity, however, that the ambit of the CJC cannot be further expanded to probe official corruption in organisations other than units of public administration. Members of the Liberal Party are on record as saying that the Liberal Party would legislate to give the CJC power to investigate other complaints, including corruption within industrial organisations, which are virtually public bodies in this day and age. Government members will not be too happy about what I am saying, because such investigation would expose some unfortunate skeletons in the ALP closet. Out of respect for previous rulings of the Chair today, I do not want to go into that too much. Suffice to say that the day will come when the Liberal Party in Government will allow the CJC to investigate crooked elections, management practices and financial practices in industrial organisations. That day may come sooner than Government members believe.

It is important to stress that all parties in this place supported the Act when it was debated. At the time of enactment, no party opposed the sections that are being amended today. However, changes are necessary because conditions have changed, and that is recognised by all parties in this place. It is of value to look at the functions of the commission as set out in the Act. Section 2.14 tells us that the commission shall continually monitor, review, coordinate and initiate reform of the administration of criminal justice. It shall also discharge the functions of the administration of criminal justice which cannot be discharged by the Police Service or other law enforcement

agencies. Thus, the powers of the CJC are enormous. Its detailed responsibilities show that to be the case. Section 2.15 of the Act outlines those responsibilities, which include the acquisition of resources and personnel, monitoring and reporting on the sufficiency of law enforcement resources, the overseeing of criminal intelligence, the researching and reporting of law reform proposals, investigation of public corruption, witness protection and the investigation of major crime—to name only a portion of the responsibilities detailed in that section.

Mr Hollis: This is repetition.

Mr SANTORO: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Redcliffe, who says that it is repetition. The hypocrisy of his comment—the hypocrisy that he often shows in this place—is demonstrated by the fact that he refused to interject when the Premier went into some detail in placing his comments in context and when the honourable member for Brisbane Central went into some detail in placing his comments in context. I see the member for Redcliffe smiling and laughing, but he clearly does not have an answer. I will always take interjections from Government members, provided they are sensible. I took that interjection from the honourable member for Redcliffe to demonstrate clearly how stupid his interjections are.

Whenever people feel critical of the commission, they should read that section of the Act to put their complaints into perspective. If I were to ask the honourable member for Redcliffe to quote the relevant part of the Act that I am talking about now, I am sure that we would find him terribly, terribly lacking. There was good reason for the inclusion of such wide scope for the CJC and such widespread powers. In 1989, there was a public perception of corruption within the power structure of the State. Deep suspicion shrouded our institutions and our public and administrative processes. It was a time for a rethink of our systems, and the Fitzgerald report gave us some ideas and directions. At the time, no-one dared criticise anything that was laid down in that report. What the report directed virtually had to be implemented "Lock, stock and barrel"—to quote a former Premier. In light of more recent criticism from those same people, it should be remembered that, at the time when the CJC was being put together, no criticism was put forward by the media, by lawyers or by the politicians of that day.

It is important to underline that point, because the powers of inquiry by the commission and the obligations of inquiry by the commission have been used by Government members. The section of the Act that the Bill will amend has been used by Government members to denigrate the integrity of the commission. Indeed, I suggest that, if any political party had opposed that section of the Act that we are amending today, it would have been political suicide. I cannot help commenting on the way in which the attitudes of the Government have changed during the past two and a half years. When the Fitzgerald report revealed corruption, all of its recommendations, including the one that led to the section within the Act that we are amending today, had to be implemented immediately, if not sooner, according to the ALP and the honourable member who is now the Premier. However, it has to be said that it was seen at the time that problems could arise out of the section that is now being amended, and review mechanisms were instituted, quite properly so, to allow a review of the Act, as indeed is occurring today. That has now happened and has led to this Bill.

The CJC itself reviewed the Act and its operations and made recommendations to the parliamentary committee. The committee then reviewed the report and examined other matters as well and found a number of problems which needed to be remedied. The most obvious was the requirement that the CJC investigate every complaint that it received and was empowered to investigate. Given the explosion in complaints that I have already detailed, something had to be done, and this Bill does it, by giving the CJC discretion and by requiring it to dismiss obviously frivolous and vexatious complaints without the need for an investigation. As the member for Brisbane Central pointed out, the fact that discretion has been given to the CJC does not mean that that discretion will be used lightly or that the commission will pick and choose which matters it investigates. What it means is that the CJC will not be hamstrung by the requirement that it fully investigate matters where there is obviously going to be no proof available or

where the identities of alleged perpetrators are unknown and certain to remain so.

The member for Brisbane Central outlined this well, and I want to take time to note that one of the greatest supporters of the CJC is the chairman of the parliamentary committee, Mr Beattie. Indeed, that is probably why there has been such backstabbing within the Government over the CJC issue, with the Premier and his cronies keen to keep Mr Beattie down and working on the childish assumption that the best way to attack Mr Beattie is to attack the CJC. The sad result of all this is that the reform process has been compromised, in my opinion, and it has been compromised by the very people who rode to power on the white charger of accountability. Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, out of respect for previous rulings by the Chair, I will not pursue that particular line. Some people knock the commission by trying to tell us that its decisions are unpopular. People say that the CJC makes mistakes, that it has too much power or that it is a waste of money.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mr SANTORO: I will take the interjections from the honourable member for Nundah. He keeps on interjecting and making all sorts of suggestions, yet his name is not on the list of speakers debating what members opposite claim to be one of the most fundamental pieces of legislation and such an important component of the so-called reform process. I say with respect to members opposite—other than Mr Beattie and Mr Foley—that they do not have the courage to put their names on the list of speakers and to make their comments in the context of an intelligent contribution.

Government members interjected.

Mr SANTORO: Members opposite say that that is a cheap shot. I do not believe that they even have a knowledge of the Act that we are discussing, let alone the implications of the amendment now before the House. The facts are quite clear and it is quite plain that the vast majority of Queenslanders support the CJC. That is one of the clues, on which I will now elaborate, as to why the number of complaints is as high as it is. Let me draw an analogy. Just because a Broncos player misses a tackle now and then, or another drops the ball and knocks it on from time to time, it is not true to say that everyone turns against the Broncos. That analogy is very relevant to the CJC and to the number of complaints that it receives because of public confidence in it. The people of Queensland see the CJC as being on their side, as playing on the same team in the fight against corruption and crime. The most recent properly conducted public opinion poll is a little over two months old. It gives us some vital clues in relation to the point I am making. That poll, which was conducted in February this year, showed that 63 per cent of Queenslanders believe the CJC needs to continue its operations and needs proper funding to do its job. Of even more concern is the fact that almost as many people—57 per cent, in fact—believe that there is still as much corruption in Queensland as there was in the pre-Fitzgerald days. This is what the CJC must stamp out. Why Government members find this to be so distressing, I can only speculate.

It is gratifying for members of the parliamentary committee and the commission itself to see such a strong level of community support for the CJC. This is clearly signified in the number of complaints that are made to the CJC. Even admitting that a lot of the complaints are frivolous, even admitting that a lot of them do not have the evidence to back them up—admitting those particular flaws in the backup to the complaints—nevertheless people who feel aggrieved and who feel a genuine need to make a complaint and therefore submit it have enough confidence in the CJC to in fact lodge that complaint. There comes a time when people such as Sir Max Bingham and his senior officers clearly must make a decision, or should have the power to make a decision, that such complaints are indeed frivolous, that they do not have enough backup and that they do not warrant an investigation. I am sure that they will exercise with great responsibility that particular discretion, which this amendment will give to them. The way in which some opponents, including some within this House, have sought to undermine Sir Max has been disgraceful. However, the public has clearly rejected this undermining and keeps on referring matters to the CJC.

And so to the future, which is really what this Bill is about. I refer to the future of

the CJC and of law enforcement in Queensland. Whilst community support for the CJC is strong, I believe that there is one particular area of concern that needs to be addressed, and that is the perception that the CJC has not tackled organised crime in general and the drug trade in particular. Of course, this has hardly been the commission's fault, given the demands placed upon it in its first couple of years. But the perception is not quite the same as the reality. It has already been reported that the CJC has undertaken a large-scale investigation of organised crime, and most particularly imported organised crime. In particular, the Japanese Yakuza and the Chinese Triads have been targeted. It has been reported that Yakuza activity in Queensland is on the rise, and the CJC's report detailing the results of its investigations will be released later this year.

It is vital that sufficient funding be provided to allow the CJC to properly fight organised crime rings, which have tens of millions of dollars at their disposal. This amendment will help ensure that much-needed resources are directed into this vital area of CJC investigation. That is why it is particularly gratifying to see that what I have just mentioned received quite a considerable mention in the Premier's second-reading speech. He said—

> "The effect of the amendments will be that, if the Criminal Justice Commission continues to receive a very large volume of complaints, it will be able to give priority to complaints which are of most substance or which point to systematic problems."

That is what I have referred to. Several other matters were suggested for amendment by the CJC and the parliamentary committee. These were designed largely to make the commission more open and accountable. They included the debating of the commission's reports, requiring the Government to respond to reports, increasing the time available to parliamentary committee members to spend on their role of reviewing the commission's activities and strengthening the CJC's powers to investigate and combat organised crime. For unknown reasons, some of these particular amendments have not yet been touched by the Government, but I am happy to accept and acknowledge that in some cases the reasons are justified.

Bearing in mind that the Criminal Commission Act is administered in conjunction with the Police Service Act, it is vital that police be given power to do their jobs properly and to regulate the Police Service to enable corruption to be rooted out. It seems that there is a continuing problem with discipline within the Police Service, with the Police Commissioner not having the power to hire and fire. Perhaps now is also the time to amend the Police Service Act, which has always operated in conjunction with the Criminal Justice Act. The Government should look favourably, I would suggest, on the Police Commissioner's recent call for more power to enable him to facilitate the cleansing of the Police Service.

There is one other matter that needs to be raised in connection with the Criminal Justice Commission and its watchdog, the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. The Premier referred to this particular point when he talked about the accountability mechanisms that exist between the Criminal Justice Commission and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. I have already mentioned that at this stage the Government has chosen not to implement many of the reforms recommended by the Criminal Justice Commission and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee. One example of that fact is recommendation No. 6, which calls for the Criminal Justice Act to be amended to allow the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee to remain in office after the Parliament is dissolved in preparation for an election, and to remain until a new Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee is appointed after the new Parliament sits. Unless this is done, it will mean that from the time the Parliament is dissolved until the sitting of the new Parliament, there will be no watchdog over the CJC. This could be for quite a length time—up to six months. This is quite unacceptable, I suggest, and should be addressed before this year's election is called.

Other areas of the Criminal Justice Act should also be reviewed, including that section dealing with police misconduct tribunals. In dealing with this issue, I do not wish

to touch on the specifics of the Commissioner Newnham situation. The question of the jurisdiction of the tribunals and from where their power is derived has become a matter of public discussion over recent days and, I would suggest, one of confusion. This Bill does not include one of the most important recommendations of the Criminal Justice Commission and the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee, and that is recommendation No. 23, that separate legislation should be enacted to cover misconduct tribunals and remove them from the Criminal Justice Act, and further, that the tribunals should be accountable to the Department of Justice. Apart from those particular reservations in terms of the scope of amendment that this particular amending Bill provides, the Liberal Party is very pleased to be able to support this amendment. The amendment will certainly streamline the operations of the Criminal Justice Commission and will help direct its vital resources towards the pursuit of issues of greater concern to the community. This State looks forward to the Criminal Justice Commission continuing the valuable work it has been performing for the community of Queensland.

Mr FOLEY (Yeronga) (2.55 p.m.): In bringing this Bill to the House, the Government is asking the Parliament to give the Criminal Justice Commission a very significant discretionary power—one which allows the CJC to investigate or not investigate a complaint. It replaces the existing rigid rule which requires the Criminal Justice Commission to investigate all complaints. The Government is asking this House to give a vote of confidence to the Criminal Justice Commission. In proposing this legislation, the Government itself is expressing an important and indeed historic vote of confidence in the Criminal Justice Commission. The Government has, of course, been supported in that regard by the all-party parliamentary committee. That committee deserves congratulations for its role in assisting to restore public confidence in the institutions of democracy.

This legislation is the next stage of the Fitzgerald reform process. The first stage was to set down rigid rules to compel the Criminal Justice Commission to investigate all complaints. That requirement was a drastic measure designed for drastic times. It was the teeth of the greatest shaking of public confidence in the institutions of the law in Queensland this century. That requirement was designed to give the people of Queensland a reassurance that there would be an institution which would have no discretion about whether or not a matter should be investigated, but had a function to investigate all cases. That was a strict rule, implemented at a time when public confidence was at a crisis point. The stipulation of those rigid rules was supported by all parties in this House in 1989. However, time has moved on. A lot of public money has been spent and attempts have been made by people in all political parties to help build the basic trust which is fundamental to a democracy and to build confidence in public institutions. Without these basic elements, no civilised society can flourish.

This amendment, whilst modest, is nonetheless significant. In the theatre of Parliament, one often hears the subplot on the froth and bubble of debate, and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the plot and the subplot. The real plot in this Bill is a vote of enormous confidence in the Criminal Justice Commission. I think it would be reassuring for the people of Queensland to know that this Bill is a matter on which the Liberal and National Parties and the Labor Party are speaking as one voice. If one looks behind the heated histrionics that we have heard in this Chamber over the last couple of hours to the substance of what is being voted upon in this Bill, one sees a very welcome extraordinary vote of confidence in the CJC by all of the political parties, and a statement that the Criminal Justice Commission has developed to a point where this State may reasonably trust it to exercise a discretion reasonably and fairly. All too often in the modern debate about the progress of our institutions, members of this House divide the world into pre-Fitzgerald and post-Fitzgerald.

This debate marks the beginning of a new era. All the political parties have contributed to the rebuilding of some basic trust to create a world in which we may have institutions which work in order to reconcile the very difficult problem of the relationship between the citizen and the State. It has been said that the duty to investigate all matters, which is the subject matter of this Bill, is too onerous a duty. Indeed, one saw

in the scheme of the original Criminal Justice Act some recognition of that by way of the provision of Division 4A—Complaints Section. A specific function was given to the Complaints Section under section 2.29, which states—

> "(b) to summarily reject such complaints and information as appear to the chief officer of the Section to have been furnished frivolously or vexatiously;"

Whatever was the intent of the draftsperson, that provision sat very uncomfortably with the provision which is the nub of the problem that has brought this amendment before the House. I refer to the provision in section 2.20 (2) (d) of the Criminal Justice Act 1989, which imposes a function on the Official Misconduct Division to investigate all cases. It is seldom that the mere removal of one word can mean so much, but in this instance the mere removal of the word "all" means a great deal.

It has taken some time to reach this stage. One of the tragedies of modern debate is that the media is likely to be enamoured of the gladiatorial clash and combat and the sensational lance rather than analysing what is the basic message of this legislation and the basic message of the conduct of each of the political parties in this Chamber. That basic message is that great progress has been made to restore public confidence in the institutions of law. Indeed, members of the opposition parties have quite properly supported this legislation. In doing so, they have indicated a vote of confidence that the CJC is sufficiently independent and sufficiently well-resourced to do its job. It follows from that proposition that members of the opposition parties have given a resounding vote of confidence in the Government of Queensland for its role in helping to ensure that the CJC is adequately provided with the resources and the climate in which to go about its most important work.

Mr Santoro: That does not necessarily follow. It is a move in the right direction, we acknowledge that, but I would not call it a vote of confidence in the Government.

Mr FOLEY: I accept the honourable member's interjection. Perhaps the implications of his party's actions have just dawned upon the him during the course of my speech. If so, I rejoice in that fact. I welcome the political maturity shown by the opposition parties in their actions, although I remain in hope that the words of anger and of shallow criticism and confusion about the other provisions in the Bill may perhaps be remedied by the process of patient repetition.

Mr Santoro: We understand.

Mr FOLEY: It is very difficult to reconcile the rhetoric that has fallen in the course of this debate from members on the other side of the House, namely, the Government's alleged attempts to denigrate and attack the CJC, with their actions. Very properly and sensibly, the opposition parties have said in Parliament that our law and our institutions have developed to such an extent that this Parliament may with confidence say to the people of Queensland, "We can trust the CJC to exercise this discretionary power responsibly."

Mr Santoro: Would you agree with me that this particular discretion was built into the review mechanism by previous Governments? I mean, the setting up of the Act, including the potential of this particular mechanism, was set up under the tripartite agreement. All parties agreed that eventually this Act and the Police Service Administration Act had to be amended. Would you agree with that?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, I do.

Mr Santoro: That mechanism and that foresight was clearly the responsibility of the three parties before the honourable member's party came to Government.

Mr FOLEY: I will give the opposition parties credit for foresight. By the same token, the Government, as the responsible Government, has the stewardship of providing the deep structures of law and the finances which make possible the operations of the CJC. I welcome the resounding vote of confidence in the Government given today by implication in the course of action adopted by the opposition parties.

The development of ways in which citizens may obtain redress of grievance against the State is one of the challenges to law-making over the next few decades. We

in Queensland have had to be fast learners because things have changed very rapidly. It was only 15 years ago that the public outcry over the inadequacy of the system to deal with complaints against police led to the commission of inquiry headed by Mr Justice Lucas on which also sat Mr Des Sturgess and retired Chief Superintendent Becker. Only 15 years ago, there was dismay amongst the Queensland public about how one could render the police force—as it then was—accountable. A commission of inquiry set out certain recommendations about the enforcement of criminal law. We have come a long way since then and we have been through a few dry gullies.

Mr Littleproud: What about Los Angeles today?

Mr FOLEY: What, indeed. Not often in this Chamber do we have occasions to rejoice on our progress, but this is one of them. This is an occasion on which members from diverse backgrounds can acknowledge that progress has been made in dealing with one of the most difficult issues facing modern society, namely, issues of corruption and official misconduct. The Police Complaints Tribunal was tried and had varying successes until it was eventually discredited and disbanded. The Fitzgerald inquiry identified a raft of deep problems and set up recommendations for some pretty stern medicine to be taken. It moved the law in this area a very long way from the private law remedies available in tort or, indeed, through the criminal law. In 1992, it seems laughable to say to a person who had a complaint against police or a complaint against a public official, "Go and sue for trespass to the person" or "Go and seek relief through the criminal courts." We now realise that those remedies are grossly inadequate to deal with the complexities of modern administration. That is why we have bodies with vast powers, such as the Criminal Justice Commission.

If we are to develop as a civilisation in Queensland, we have to learn the lessons of the Fitzgerald reform process and chart a way forward so as to ensure a proper balance between the rights and liberties of individual citizens and the power of State agencies. This amendment is one important development. It is an amendment conferring a discretion on the CJC that will be important in the context of the ongoing debate as to whether the CJC should be the sole body to receive complaints and afford whistleblower protection to those complaints or whether there should be extended to a broader class of agencies the responsibility to receive whistleblowing complaints and to afford protection. That debate as to whether one should follow the recommendations of EARC and the EARC Parliamentary Committee will no doubt come before the Chamber in due course.

I congratulate the Government on its vote of confidence in the CJC. I commend the opposition parties for taking a responsible course in their actions. I urge them to realise that, when they resort to heated rhetoric in this area, they are tinkering with the institutions of law enforcement in this State and they should proceed with caution and care, because the rebuilding of basic trust in this democracy is not going to be an easy process. Along the way there will be many temptations for opposition parties in particular to take the cheap shot to the detriment of public understanding. In that respect, the ability of this Parliament to make such a vote of confidence in the CJC is surely a welcome event.

Hon. N. J. HARPER (Auburn) (3.13 p.m.): I would like to believe that most of the comments made by the honourable member for Yeronga accurately portray the feelings of the Goss Labor Government. I would like to think that the Goss Labor Government was indeed expressing a vote of confidence in the Criminal Justice Commission.

Mr Littleproud: And the committee, too.

Mr HARPER: As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition says, "And the committee, too." One must ponder the accuracy of the hopes and claims that the honourable member for Yeronga espoused just a few minutes ago. As the member for Merthyr rightly said, at times it certainly seems that members on the Government benches, from the Government itself down to its party members in this House, are really attacking their colleague the member for Brisbane Central as much as the Criminal Justice Commission. Be that as it may, I assure the honourable member for Yeronga that the public perception is not that the Criminal Justice Commission or the Parliamentary Committee

for Criminal Justice has from the Government the confidence that he obviously has in the process. I hope that he is able to convince his Government colleagues of that fact. I assure the House that there has been no resounding vote of confidence in the Government given by the fact that both opposition parties in this House are supporting the amendments which the Government has proposed.

I turn briefly to the reason for the inclusion of the provision in the original Criminal Justice Act which was introduced by the National Party Government in 1989. I was privileged to be part of that Government and to have a considerable degree of input into the preparation of the legislation. The reason for the substantial clauses that we are amending today was to avoid any accusation being levelled against the then Government by anyone—the Labor Opposition, the Liberal Party, or any other political party, organisation or individual—that matters were being swept under the carpet. It was to avoid any accusation of stifling the rights of any individual to voice concerns, to lodge complaints, and to have those concerns and complaints addressed by an official investigation carried out by an independent body. In short, we wanted to be sure that we as a Government could not be accused of applying a gag in this area of justice. It is rather unfortunate that a parallel for concern and for legitimate complaint exists in the ruling given by the Honourable Speaker in this specific debate whereby the Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition in this Parliament was denied an opportunity to detail, to make public and to have aired in the highest forum in the State, or what should be the highest forum in the State, genuine concerns of a very large section of the community, which I believe—and my belief has been supported by the words of members on the Government benches such as the member for Brisbane Central and the member for Yeronga—transcends all party political boundaries. Opportunity for debate on that issue will be at the whim of the Government and is undoubtedly a question for another day.

As a result of the more understanding atmosphere presently prevailing—that was referred to by the member for Merthyr, by the member for Yeronga and by the chairman of the parliamentary committee, the member for Brisbane Central—for a number of reasons, including some of those which have previously been enumerated, informed members of the community now accept that the existing provision requiring an investigation of every complaint is simply not workable in practice. However desirable it may be to avoid accusations of sweeping matters under the carpet, in practice the legislation simply is not working. It is on the public record that the parliamentary committee has conducted public hearings in which this question has been canvassed. At those public hearings, evidence was given and placed on record by a diversity of individuals in the community. The proposition was put forward that in bringing about an amendment such as the one we are debating whereby a discretion will be afforded to the commission as to those complaints and concerns which it does address and those which it does not address, to use an old rural theme, with the chaff as it goes through the header and over the sieves there must inevitably be some grain. If the farmer is a competent operator, very little grain will go over with the chaff, but inevitably there will be some.

I believe, and obviously the great majority of thinking people believe, that the Criminal Justice Commission is competent in making these decisions. I put the proposition to a number of people at those public meetings: what about the odd grain that goes over with the chaff? Without exception, the view was that that had to be accepted; that, in order to streamline the reform process and make workable in practice the ability of individuals to place complaints before the commission and have them dealt with in an appropriate manner, it had to be accepted that on occasions some grain would go over. But there is room—and there is intended to be room—for that grain to be retrieved if such a circumstance arises and it can be shown to have arisen. In exercising the discretion which this Parliament is obviously going to give to the Criminal Justice Commission, there must be appropriate accountability for the decision-making process so that the integrity of that decision-making process and the integrity of the complaints section—the review of complaints and the investigation of concerns and complaints—will be preserved.

The amendments before the Parliament have the unanimous support of the

parliamentary committee. As all honourable members know, that committee comprises representatives of all three political parties in this House. The honourable member for Brisbane Central, during his speech, referred to those further amendments which are well known to honourable members. The amendments have been recommended by the committee after extensive discussion with the Criminal Justice Commission and others such as private counsel. I sincerely trust that they will be brought before the Parliament without undue delay. Perhaps the Attorney-General, who is standing in for the Premier during this phase of the debate, may care to give some indication as to the time frame which the Government has in that regard.

A mass of less important legislation—I should say arguably less important legislation—has already been presented for consideration by honourable members in this Parliament. I say without equivocation that the Government must be sincere in the area of criminal justice, and in the area of making sure that this Criminal Justice Act works in the way in which it was intended to work in ensuring that the other difficulties that have been encountered, and the other improvements that have been identified, will be brought before this Parliament during the present session. If the Government is sincere in this area of criminal justice, it will surely acknowledge the importance of appropriately amending this Act. Through their delegates, all three political parties represented on the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee have endorsed the proposed amendments, so their acceptance by all three political parties represented in this House should not be difficult. I suggest that final drafting should be given priority and should not cause undue difficulties for the Parliamentary Counsel. As has been indicated, honourable members on this side of the House support this amendment. We believe that it will make the Act more workable and that it will be functional.

Honourable members on this side of the House are pleased to express confidence in the Criminal Justice Commission, in its chairman—a man who has had a distinguished career, which has included serving as a member of the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General and being selected, at the behest of the Australian Labor Party in Government in the Federal sphere and in a number of States, for appointment to the National Crime Authority—and, of course, in the commissioners. It is often overlooked that those commissioners play an extremely important role in the functions of the Criminal Justice Commission. I place on record my own confidence in and respect for the chairman, each of the commissioners and, in particular, the senior staff with whom the parliamentary committee deals very frequently and whom it has come to know, understand and respect.

Hon. D. M. WELLS (Murrumba—Attorney-General) (3.27 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members who took part in the debate today. In particular, I thank the honourable members for Brisbane Central and Yeronga for their useful contributions to the debate. The central point that I gleaned from the remarks of the honourable member for Brisbane Central was that the effect of the amendment will be to release a considerable amount of resources which will then be available to be recycled by the CJC into its crime-fighting activities. That is an extremely desirable outcome and it is a public benefit which will be brought about by this amendment. As the honourable member for Yeronga pointed out, we have to see the means by which this is achieved as a significant delegation of power. What is happening is that the commission, which previously had no choices as to whether or not it should investigate a matter, will now be delegated the power to make that determination. In doing that, the commission is gaining considerable extra discretion. Nevertheless, it is essential that the Parliament be prepared to trust it to exercise that discretion, because the use of resources which would be occasioned by failing to make that delegation is very significant and undermines the capacity of the Government to pursue the law enforcement functions which the Government, through all of its agencies, including independent agencies such as the CJC, must perform.

I would like also to thank the honourable members for Surfers Paradise, Merthyr and Auburn for their contributions and support for the legislation. Their remarks require no response from me, apart from the remarks of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. I note the honourable member's impassioned defence of his inalienable human

right to make irrelevant speeches, but that is something that he has the opportunity to do in a different context under the Standing Orders of this Parliament, as amended by this Government. I thank the other honourable members for confining their remarks to the Bill. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 6, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

REVOCATION OF FISH HABITAT RESERVE

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (3.32 p.m.): I move—

"(a) That this House agrees to the proposal to:

(i) revoke the setting apart and declaration of a fish habitat reserve in whole, under the Fisheries Act 1976, being the Myora Fish Habitat Reserve, described in the First Schedule to an Order in Council dated January 23, 1969;

(ii) revoke the setting apart and declaration of a fish habitat reserve in part, under the Fisheries Act 1976, being 1.8 hectares of the Myora Fish Habitat Reserve as shown as Amendment A on plan 015-001, to amend an Order in Council dated November 17, 1983 as amended from time to time; and

(b) That Mr Speaker convey a copy of this Resolution to the Minister for submission to His Excellency the Governor in Council."

I recommend that the Legislative Assembly approve the revocation of 1.8 hectares from the Myora Fish Habitat Reserve declaration. It is not my intention to easily accommodate revocation of fish habitat reserves, and my recommendation only follows careful consideration of the anticipated physical impacts to the local marine wetlands. ACI Industrial Minerals Division has requested this revocation to allow construction of a jetty across the foreshores of Stradbroke Island through the Myora Fish Habitat Reserve. For the jetty to proceed, the area of works within the reserve must be revoked from the declaration of the reserve as a requirement of the Fisheries Act.

ACI are undertaking a full environmental impact assessment study for an upgraded operation. An environmental report on the impacts of the jetty construction for the proposed revocation of part of the Myora Fish Habitat Reserve has been completed. I am proposing that revocation of 1.8 hectares of the existing Myora Fish Habitat Reserve is appropriate at this stage to allow the company to proceed with the full impact study. Should the overall proposal not proceed, the area revoked may be reinstated to the fish habitat reserve. Revocation itself will not provide any approvals to undertake works or have any physical impacts. Approvals will only follow determination of the full study and the proposed project.

The completed report suggests significant likely benefit to Queensland from the overall proposal. The facility could generate approximately $20m per annum of export income over the project's life. ACI argues that more than 90 jobs will be created. From an environmental viewpoint, ACI have agreed to surrender 485.6 hectares of existing mining lease back to the Crown for inclusion in national park as part of the overall development proposal. From a fisheries viewpoint, the tidal wetlands of North Stradbroke Island are of significant value for nature conservation and fisheries. The

physical impacts of this jetty, however, are considered to be minor and will be limited in the long term to only the placement of the piles. The jetty will be 1.1 kilometres in length and 3 metres in width.

The Myora Fish Habitat Reserve was originally declared in 1969 and has a total area of 480 hectares. ACI has requested an area 900 metres in length by 20 metres in width—that is,1.8 hectares—be revoked from the declaration of the reserve for the purpose of managing and constructing this jetty. Although the jetty is 1.1 kilometres in length, only 900 metres of this is within the Myora Fish Habitat Reserve. I consider that the total proposal that ACI has put to the Queensland Government could have significant benefits for Queensland, and at this stage I am prepared to support the revocation of a small part of the Myora Fish Habitat Reserve. I will also simultaneously be taking to the Governor in Council a recommendation to declare an extension of 6 470 hectares of tidal lands in this area as additional fish habitat reserve. This reserve, to be known as the Myora Extension Reserve, is adjacent to the existing Myora Fish Habitat Reserve and will encompass further shoal banks and associated habitats near Dunwich and Amity. The banks and numerous small channels of this area are of significant importance to the fisheries of Moreton Bay and fish and crustacean species such as bream, whiting, mullet, flathead and particularly juvenile prawn species. This extension represents an area 13 times the area of the existing Myora Reserve.

The proposal deals with two revocations. The Crown Law Division of the Attorney-General's Department has advised that a legal error occurred in 1983 during the reign of the National Party Government. The Myora Fish Habitat Reserve was originally declared in 1969 and, under the Fisheries Act 1976, a declaration cannot be revoked, in whole or in part, without a resolution of the Legislative Assembly. No such resolution was passed in November 1983 when the National Party Government purported to revoke the original Myora Fish Habitat Reserve and to substitute another reserve. This error had the effect of creating two reserves over substantially the same area, and that is why it is necessary to revoke the 1969 declaration in total. To allow the construction of a jetty, it is necessary to revoke part of the 1983 declaration, as I have described. This is a somewhat messy, though unavoidable, process because of the mistake that was made by the previous Government. As I have said, the net effect will be an increase in the area declared as fish habitat in the vicinity of Myora by a factor of 13—that is, 13 times the size of the original area. I commend the proposal to the House.

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (3.39 p.m.): The Opposition supports the motion. As the Minister has pointed out, the revocation of the Myora Fish Habitat Reserve provides for the building of a facility for silica sand loading purposes. The reserve to be revoked will be replaced by an even larger fish habitat reserve. Of course, the Minister pointed out the economic benefits to be derived through jobs created as a result of the project, so the Opposition supports the motion.

Mr BEANLAND (Toowong) (3.37 p.m.): This matter is some two years old. Over the past two years, it has been before the House in various shapes and forms. It was withdrawn previously for further consultation. The Minister has indicated that that has now occurred. That additional consultation having taken place it is clear that, although the proposal will create more jobs, there is a good deal of concern in the community—particularly the fishing community—about the effects that the changes could have on the fishing grounds in the Myora habitat. In addition, concern has been expressed about rare plants and even a rare animal in that location. Certainly, we must pay a great deal of attention to the diversity of life that one finds in the tidal wetlands. That area is regarded as very important for marine science and it is of great conservation value. When the Minister made his speech to the House, he made some reference to that.

Although some changes have been made to the original proposal and the proposal has, no doubt, been rearranged a few times to try to accommodate the additional loading facilities for the sandmining company, the proposal still does not meet the requirements, as I understand it, of many of the people who are currently involved with the conservation movement. Those people are concerned about the effects of the

revocation on the conservation importance of the area. Nevertheless, we can understand the reasoning for the Government's going ahead with this particular undertaking because of the opportunity that it gives to create more jobs.

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (3.40 p.m.), in reply: I would like to thank both the Opposition spokesman and the representative of the Liberal Party for their support for the proposal. It is another aspect in which we are showing our determination as a Government to get on with the job of creating more work opportunities in Queensland and more industry in this State. I thank them for their support.

Motion agreed to.

LAND (DAYDREAM ISLAND TENURE) CLARIFICATION BILL

Withdrawal

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Rockhampton—Leader of the House) (3.41 p.m.): I move—

"That the Order of the Day 'Land (Daydream Island Tenure) Clarification Bill: Resumption of Second reading Debate' be discharged from the Notice Paper and the Bill be withdrawn."

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.41 p.m.