

**TUESDAY, 5 MAY 1992**

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

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Private Sector Involvement in Infrastructure Development**

**Hon. K. E. De LACY** (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.02 a.m.), by leave: In Leading State, released last week by the Premier, the Government announced that it was opening the financing, construction and operation of infrastructure in Queensland to competitive private sector bidding. At that time, the Premier foreshadowed that the Government would release policy guidelines on the implementation of this major policy reform. I am pleased to inform honourable members that those detailed policy guidelines are available today and will be distributed widely within Government and the private sector. Three fundamental tenets will underpin any private sector involvement in infrastructure in Queensland. The first is that there will be no recourse whatsoever to the Government in respect of risks assumed by the private sector. In other words, where the private sector seeks to retain the returns from infrastructure provision, it will also be required to take the associated risks of such projects. The second is that any involvement of the private sector must prove to be more cost effective in either financing, construction or operational aspects of a project relative to traditional public sector provision.

At this point, I need to emphasise that, because of its very sound financial position, Queensland is free from the financial imperatives driving other States to involve the private sector in provision of infrastructure. The goal of the Goss Government is to harness the creativity of the private sector and explore the potential for efficiencies. Where private sector participation does not provide the best solution for Queensland, the Goss Government will continue to fund economic infrastructure on its own. The third important tenet outlined in the Government's guidelines is that the project must be able to function as a stand-alone commercial undertaking or through normal fee-for-service income from the Government.

The guidelines outline the processes and procedures for private sector involvement in infrastructure provision in this State. These include the creation of a one-stop shop for the private sector in relation to a proposal from conception to completion and ongoing review. Given its major project facilitation role, the initial point of contact for proponents of private sector infrastructure projects will be the new Office of the Coordinator General. However, due to the predominance and importance of financial issues associated with such projects, I will establish a specialist infrastructure development unit in Treasury. This small unit will provide a strong coordinating role from a financial and commercial perspective and will be equipped with the necessary expertise, responsibility and authority to deal with potential private sector participants.

These policy guidelines will take immediate effect and will be used to assess a number of private sector proposals currently before the Government. The guidelines could also be applied to projects such as the gas pipeline from south-west Queensland if the Government decides that a private sector option for any combination of construction, funding and operation of the pipeline best meets the State's needs. In conclusion, I need to reiterate that the decision to encourage private sector provision of new infrastructure in no way diminishes the Goss Government's commitment to the public ownership of Government-owned enterprises and the corporatisation process. Both policies are directed towards the same goal of increased efficiency in the Queensland economy.

**GENERAL BUSINESS—NOTICES OF MOTION**

**Hon. P. J. BRADY** (Rockhampton—Leader of the House) (10.06 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That, notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders for the remainder of this session, all general business—notices of motion (called ‘not formal’) appearing on the business paper, including those already appearing, shall be deleted from the business paper after the expiration of one month from the day on which they are called ‘not formal’.”

Motion agreed to.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE****Newsletter, Sir David Longland Correctional Centre**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In directing a question to the Minister for Justice and Corrective Services, I refer to the newsletter distributed at the Sir David Longland Correctional Centre, which I now table, which includes the following lines—

“What It Is Like To Kill”—

and I quote—

“It is like walking through a door, into a place you have Never Been Before. I hope someday you all can go there

...

There is no better feeling than the feeling, You get knowing, It is your choice who Lives and Who Dies. Then at the blink of an eye, You remove The Life from that Living Soul, That is ‘What It Is Like To Kill!’”

I ask the Minister: what sort of prison system is he running that permits such obscene literature to be produced and circulated by convicted murderers?

**Mr MILLINER:** I am not aware of the document and I will be very interested to have a look at it. I can give the Leader of the Opposition an assurance that, if that statement is correct—and I have no doubt that it is—I reject totally that sort of literature being distributed in the system, and I will do everything I can to have a look at it and see where we go from there.

**Criticism by Deputy Premier of Academic Wankers**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I refer the Deputy Premier to his Labour Day oration at Weipa and his criticism of academic wankers who are undermining old-style Labor policies, and I ask: are these same people inhibiting him in his role as Deputy Premier? Who are they? What Government policies are being undermined?

**Mr BURNS:** I welcome the question. Could I have 52 minutes?

**Mr SPEAKER:** No.

**Mr BURNS:** Bad luck. One night last week, on one of the national TV channels, I watched the performance of a couple of senators or members of Federal Parliament who said something along the lines that if people had to lose their jobs as part of the level playing field in trade, so be it. They did not use those exact words. However, I was never so sick in my guts in all my life than I was at the attitude displayed by those people. When it is all said and done, sooner or later these academic wankers—and I will keep using that expression forever—who spend their time in Canberra with IAC reports and other commission reports, and who make decisions that put people out of work, hurt families and kids and destroy their chances of getting a job, ought to be prepared to lose their jobs, too. If ever their jobs were on the line as a result of their decisions, they would not be saying, “So be it.”

I do not suggest for one moment a return to a complete tariff wall. I know that that cannot be done. I am not an economic rationalist, and I never have been. I come from the side of the Labor movement that believes that a worker is entitled to a job, to the dignity of labour and to a chance in life for his kids. I have a criticism of the honourable member's side of politics. Hewson's policy will destroy completely the people whom I represent. It will destroy the farmers whom the honourable member is trying to represent. It will destroy people in rural areas. That destruction will be wrought by Hewson, his GST and his level playing field. At least the Federal Labor Government is talking about reducing tariffs but not to a zero level. If a zero tariff level is introduced, we have had it. One of these days, the Leader of the Opposition should pick up a report called NTMs—non-tariff measures—and see what others are doing to protect their own. Because of what Japan, all the Asian countries and America are doing to us, I say it is time we defended ourselves. I make no bones about what I said yesterday, and I will continue to say it. I will keep getting up those academic wankers in Canberra, because it is time someone did.

### Land Tax

**Mr PREST:** I refer the Treasurer to the Opposition's proposal to abolish land tax, and I ask: has the Treasury Department's analysis of the land tax abolition proposal indicated who will be the beneficiaries?

**Mr De LACY:** I thank the honourable member for the question. As I foreshadowed last week, my department has been doing an analysis of the proposal to abolish land tax, and it is indeed coming up with some interesting information. It is interesting in the sense that there will be winners and there will be losers. It also proves that the Opposition did not do its homework when it made these glib policy promises to abolish land tax. I think honourable members would know that the financial assistance grants which the Commonwealth gives to the States are calculated on a fairly complex formula. That formula involves the revenue-raising capacity of the States and the extent to which they make an effort to raise that revenue. A complex formula is used to distribute the Commonwealth tax revenue. Last week, I said that the Queensland Government would lose something like——

**Mr Borbidge:** You sound like someone Tom Burns was talking about. Now we know whom Tom was talking about.

**Mr De LACY:** I will take that interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. The fact is that Commonwealth grants are distributed to the States on the basis of Commonwealth Grants Commission recommendations. The Leader of the Opposition can sit opposite with that maniacal smile on his face and say that we can disregard the Commonwealth Grants Commission, but the Queensland Government will not be disregarding the Commonwealth Grants Commission because it is absolutely vital to our financial welfare. Last week, I said that after the abolition of land tax and after a new distribution, we would lose about \$19m in financial assistance grants. But let me tell honourable members who the winners would be. My department has carried out a redistribution on the basis of the abolition of land tax. There will be an impact on financial assistance grants. There are losers and winners. All of the small States will lose.

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

**Mr De LACY:** Queensland would lose \$19m; Victoria would gain an extra \$5.8m; and New South Wales would gain an additional \$44m. If land tax is abolished in this State, not only will we lose the \$215m and \$19m in financial assistance grants from the Commonwealth, but Nick Greiner will get an additional \$44m. Perhaps this is a secret way in which the Opposition can help its beleaguered mate in New South Wales to balance his books or pay for the \$1.8 billion deficit that is occurring this year. I need to raise the point once again: who are the winners? Who are the losers? What about those electorates in the heartland of the National Party? Last week, I mentioned the Western Downs area. The total amount of land tax paid by people in the electorate of Barambah

is \$153,000. In the electorate of Surfers Paradise, it is approximately \$35m. Who has conned whom on this?

**Mr Burns:** He is not going to look after the people in the bush; he is looking after his seat.

**Mr De LACY:** The Leader of the Opposition talks about the party of the bush. The total amount of land tax paid in the electorate of Burnett was \$230,000. In the electorate of Callide, it was \$209,000. All of those electorates have to take their share of the pain when \$215m is cut from the provision of services. But what do those electorates pay? A minuscule amount. It is a policy for Surfers Paradise and it is opposed to the country of Queensland.

#### Racing Industry Reform

**Mr PREST:** My second question is to the Honourable Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing. I ask: is the Minister aware of comments by Western Australian trainer George Daly—

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to stop interjecting.

**Mr PREST:** I repeat: is the Minister aware of comments by Western Australian trainer George Daly regarding the state of racing in Queensland? Can the Minister inform the House of his progress regarding the reform of the racing industry?

**Mr GIBBS:** I thank the honourable member for his question. The fact is that the reform process in Queensland is now basically completed. The Queensland Principal Club has been formed, as have the five district racing associations in Queensland. The response to those changes has been excellent, apart from the response of a small handful of people who will never accept change of any nature. Race club officials who were opposed to the initial change have been saying that the process is now democratic and that they have an input into the decision-making processes of the racing industry in Queensland. I think that attitude is reflected in an article which appeared in the weekend newspaper. The article, which refers to the colt Surtee's explosive win in the Doomben Classic at the weekend, states—

"Perth colt Surtee's explosive Coca-Cola Classic victory at Doomben yesterday enhanced the chances of trainer George Daly and jockey Dennis Gundry transferring to Queensland.

The pair sounded more like Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation representatives than winning connections after Surtee spreadeagled his Brisbane opposition by five lengths in the \$200,000 classic."

That was followed by this interesting comment—

"'This is the land of opportunity,' the garrulous Daly declared . . . 'This is the coming place. Perth racing is really in decline. There are so many avenues here, with the Gold Coast and Brisbane racing so strong.' "

The fact is that Queensland racing has probably never been in a stronger position than it is now. At present, following an approach to me from the Queensland Principal Club, negotiations are under way in relation to the purchase of suitable premises in which to house the Queensland Principal Club. These negotiations include the proper updating of computer equipment so that there will be adequate security, which has been lacking in some parts of the industry in the past. Those problems are now being addressed, and it is expected that the industry will be in a position to ensure that the Queensland Harness Racing Board will be moving to those premises as well. At present, as a result of the initiatives taken by this Government, the racing industry is going from strength to strength.

### Rainbow Harbour Development

**Mrs SHELDON:** My first question is directed to the Premier. I refer to a report in Saturday's *Courier-Mail* in which the member for Barron River distanced herself from the proposed Rainbow Harbour development, claiming that she was not happy about approval of the project, which she had vowed to oppose before entering Parliament and which was also opposed recently at the regional conference of the ALP in Cairns. I ask: is this example of the Premier's failure to consult even the back bench of his parliamentary wing the reason why reports are now emerging of a split between the Left and Right within the State ALP?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** In relation to party organisational matters—I refer the member for Landsborough to Wayne Swan. In relation to the Rainbow Harbour development—the member for Barron River has not only nagged me and a number of other Cabinet Ministers in her opposition to this particular project; she has also—as the member for Landsborough points out—been very vocal in her local community and in her dealings with local community organisations. Notwithstanding the opposition and the persistent arguments and submissions put forward by the member for Barron River, it was the clear view of the Cabinet that, on balance, the proposal was one that should proceed. However, that decision was reached only after extended negotiations and discussions between the proponent of the project and the Government which resulted in a substantial number of modifications and safeguards being imposed to ensure the protection of the quality of the environment in that area. In particular, one of the major concerns expressed related to rock walls—which have been very substantially reduced—being extended out into the sea. A number of other safeguards or conditions were imposed by the Minister for the Environment, Mr Comben, and his department. As a consequence of those actions, resulting in what is a much revised proposal, Cabinet was prepared to make the decision to approve the project.

In relation to the position of the member for Barron River—her opposition has been made plain, and her opposition and submissions have resulted in the project being substantially modified in the way that I have outlined. In terms of the current position of the member for Barron River—I understand that she is still expressing her views and concerns and the views and concerns of a number of other people in her community. I have urged upon her—and I understand that she broadly accepts this position—that she should continue to be involved with other concerned members of that community to ensure that the conditions and safeguards that have been imposed are met. I understand that the member for Barron River has been prepared to accept and point to some of the positive aspects of the development, particularly the very substantial employment prospects that will be generated by the project. This has been a process of somewhat vigorous debate. Although valid concerns were raised by the member for Barron River, on balance the Cabinet believes that the right decision has been reached.

### Unemployment

**Mrs SHELDON:** In directing my second question to the Employment Minister, Mr Vaughan, I refer to the closure of the beef section of KR Darling Downs resulting in the loss of 300 jobs; the closure of the *Sunday Sun* resulting in the loss of 150 jobs; and the 15 per cent reduction in the number of jobs at Power Brewing. I ask: as major Queensland businesses are either closing down or shedding staff, can the Minister tell the House why more Queenslanders keep losing their jobs at the same time as the Government is claiming that the State is already out of recession?

**Mr VAUGHAN:** I point out that the most recent figures available indicate that the unemployment rate in Queensland has fallen from 10.4 per cent to 10 per cent.

**Mrs Sheldon** interjected.

**Mr VAUGHAN:** According to the figures that I have, in March 1992, the unemployment rate was 10 per cent. In February, the unemployment rate in Queensland was 10.4 per cent compared with the national unemployment rate of 10.5 per cent.

As to K. R. Darling Downs—the closure of the beef section of that company occurred because it had recorded a profit for only two of the last 10 years. So for that section the writing was on the wall. The Liberal Party promotes a policy of competition. I understand that the response of the unions that cover the workers employed in that particular establishment was that they believed that for quite some period the operation had not been running in an efficient manner and that therefore the eventual closure of that section was inevitable.

As to Power Brewing—it has been involved in a very, very vicious price-cutting war. It entered the beer industry as the underdog. For a number of years, it went very, very well. We all know that the company believed that it was going to make a huge dent in the profits of the big league companies in the industry such as Carlton United and Castlemaine Perkins. However, the story of Power Brewing is similar to that of Compass. Power Brewing thought that it could mix it with the best in the ring. Of course, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. It has run into difficulties, which is only natural if a company enters into the industry, even though it obviously has a good product. Although I am no expert, I believe that Power Brewing should give serious consideration to changing its marketing methods. I recall that when Power Brewing entered the industry, it made great play of the fact that it would enter into voluntary employment agreements which would make the company more competitive than its opponents. I have always believed in the concept of the level playing field. Obviously, when a company enters the industry with such a philosophy, it must be prepared to accept the outcome. A free enterprise market operates, and that is the name of the game.

### Techquad

**Mr PITT:** I ask the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development: is he aware of the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition advocating a separate corporation for the development of Techquad? Can the Minister inform the House of Government moves to advance Techquad?

**Mr SMITH:** The concept of Techquad is designed to advance the prospects of industry, particularly industries based on higher technologies in the south-east corner of Queensland and, more particularly, in the Gold Coast/Brisbane corridor. The concept of Techquad was certainly identified during the term of the previous Government. I make the point that during the term of the previous Government, no financial contribution was made towards that concept. Since this Government has been in power, it has made a number of grants, particularly towards QUESTnet, which is the high-speed fibre-optic network linking the universities of south-east Queensland that enables them to have a very, very high computer capacity—

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is clearly misleading the House. He has said that the previous Government made no financial contribution. It did on several occasions.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order. I am not sure how long I will have to point out to honourable members that ordinary points of order are about procedures and are not debating points.

**Mr SMITH:** The remarks by the Leader of the Opposition indicate that he proposes to set up yet another bureaucracy, which is contrary to what is required to efficiently advance the needs of industry and advance research and development in the south-east corner of Queensland. Today, the present proposal will be advanced by industry leaders, together with officers of my department and representatives of the universities, who will set up a task force to further develop the concept of Techquad and give it some meaningful directions in order to create better economic opportunities, particularly for venture capital in the south-east corner of Queensland.

### CRA Century Deposit

**Mr PITT:** I ask the Minister for Resource Industries: will he explain the significance of the granting last week of a mineral development licence to CRA for its Century deposit north west of Mount Isa?

**Mr McGRADY:** The granting of a mineral development licence is an important step towards what will be one of the world's biggest and greatest zinc mines. It means that CRA can go ahead with geological evaluation and mining feasibility studies, and conduct further metallurgical testing. It does not mean that the company can start mining. The granting of the mineral development licence also means that CRA can continue with environmental, Aboriginal and marketing studies. CRA intends to spend approximately \$750m developing Century, which by late 1995 will eventually employ approximately 700 people. It is a good example of the vast potential of the north west, which is recognised by this Government in its Queensland-Leading State economic statement.

#### **Fitzgerald Report Recommendations**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I remind the Premier of his pre-election promise to restore honesty and integrity to public life in Queensland. I remind him also of his public commitment to implement the Fitzgerald report recommendations, and I ask: does his promise to restore honesty and integrity to public life include the trade union movement? When will his Government implement the recommendations of the Cooke inquiry?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** A number of the recommendations from the Cooke inquiry are currently under active consideration by the Minister and me. There was a delay in terms of industrial relations reforms which this Government already had in the pipeline and was determined to proceed with. The Government was not in a hurry, and it did not see the same priority attaching to the Cooke inquiry recommendations as did the Opposition. The Cooke inquiry was initiated purely for political reasons. It is true that it uncovered several cases of wrongdoing by people associated with unions. Virtually all of those matters had already been identified in other proceedings and investigations. That highlights the ignorance of the National Party—in this case its deliberate ignorance—when it comes to the proper role of a commission of inquiry, namely, to deal with breaches of the law or to deal with wrongdoing when there has been a failure on the part of the traditional institutions of Government to deal with those problems. In the case of the investigating authorities and, in particular, the police—the traditional institutions of Government were dealing with those problems in the Federal Court or the Supreme Court.

The Cooke inquiry was a desperate little trick in the lead-up to the 1989 election, but the people saw through it. Some value was achieved by the Cooke inquiry, although it ranks nowhere near that of the Fitzgerald report or other similar undertakings. However, there is some value in considering a number of reforms to make trade unions more accountable. Although a number of safeguards are already in existence in that regard, the Government is happy to consider reforms to ensure that there is greater accountability and, indeed, to ensure to the greatest extent possible—although one cannot give a guarantee—that we never see a repetition of the sort of offences that occurred in the trade union sector, particularly in relation to the abuse and misappropriation of members' funds by union officials. That is a completely unacceptable and criminal action that this Government joins in roundly condemning.

#### **Member for Chatsworth**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I direct a second question to the Premier. As surveys show that public opinion throughout Queensland has swung completely against the member for Chatsworth, Mr Mackenroth, and his actions as Police Minister in his dealings with Police Commissioner Newnham, I ask: does the Premier now concede that the Government has erred in electing the disgraced member as chairman of caucus? Does he still intend to return Mr Mackenroth to Cabinet at the first available opportunity?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** In relation to the position of chairman of caucus—that is a matter for the caucus. I believe that the decision to appoint Mr Mackenroth was taken in general recognition of his considerable experience in parliamentary and caucus matters, as well as from the considerable degree of personal and professional respect and support that exists for him in his parliamentary party.

**Mr Littleproud:** No respect for Mr McElligott?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** There is, but there is only one position of chairman of caucus. As I understand it, Mr McElligott was one of those people who supported Mr Mackenroth. As to the issue of a further Cabinet appointment for Mr Mackenroth—that is entirely a matter for the parliamentary party when the occasion arises. Before I sit down, it is important that I remove the factual basis from the member's allegation, that is, that in relation to the member for Chatsworth and the clash or conflict between him and the Police Commissioner—

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition!

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Over a year or so, there were a number of significant differences of opinion on policy and other administrative matters between the Minister and the commissioner. Unfortunately, that can happen from time to time in any administration. I believe that, in each and every case, a difference of opinion occurred in good faith on both sides, but there was an inability to reconcile those differences. The conclusion was a private letter from Mr Mackenroth to Mr Newnham.

**Mr Littleproud:** We know all this. Answer the question.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** There is an implicit—if not explicit—suggestion in the member's question that Mr Newnham's troubles are something to do with the member for Chatsworth. They are not. The problems of the Police Commissioner are due to the fact that the Criminal Justice Commission agreed to the Loewenthal inquiry, which it established, widening its terms of reference not at the request of Mr Mackenroth but at the request of former Judge Loewenthal so that he was able to deal with other matters. Those other matters were the subject of the hearings of the Misconduct Tribunal that was established by the Criminal Justice Commission. The terms of reference of the Loewenthal inquiry were widened not at the request of the member for Chatsworth but at the request of former Judge Loewenthal, who was appointed by the Criminal Justice Commission. It was that commission which agreed to widen the terms of reference and scooped up the Canada matter and four other matters. It was nothing to do with Mr Mackenroth.

### Canned Pineapple Industry

**Dr FLYNN:** I direct a question to the Minister for Primary Industries. In view of the major publicity given last year to the supposed damage to the Queensland canned pineapple industry from imported pineapples from South East Asia, I ask: does the Minister have available the true picture concerning the sale of pineapple products for 1991?

**Mr CASEY:** On a number of occasions last year in this House and in the Queensland media, members were bombarded by reports about damage being done to Queensland's pineapple industry supposedly by imported pineapples. At that time, I made the point that there were problems with the marketing of pineapples in Queensland because the biggest problem faced by our major company, Golden Circle, was that in many cases it could not meet its share of the market.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Previous imports had cut demand. Previous imports had done the damage.

**Mr CASEY:** The member for Lockyer talks about damage to the industry from imported pineapples. Let me tell him the truth. Last year, the Golden Circle cannery was restructured and is now known as Golden Circle Limited. Its operations were



corporatised. Through my department, the company was given assistance to change its marketing techniques, amongst other things. Consequently, as all members would be aware, Golden Circle is still maintaining its place as the leader in pineapple canning and sales in Australia.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

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

**Mr CASEY:** This is not propaganda coming from me or from the department, as is sometimes alleged by members of the Opposition, particularly members of the National Party; these are facts taken from the Golden Circle annual report which was tabled by me in this Parliament last week. The 1990-91 annual report shows quite clearly that there were record sales amounting to \$220m in that year. I notice that Opposition members have quietened down a little now. Sales were up 15 per cent on the previous high for that industry. There was a record net profit of \$9.1m, which was 84 per cent more than the previous high in 1985, before the industry started to deteriorate under the administration of the opposition parties. Golden Circle has great prospects for the future, partly due to the growth in its soft drink and fruit juice sales, so it seems that it will have another great year in 1992 because of the support and assistance given to it by this Government. The punch line is the prices paid by Golden Circle for pineapples. The price for No. 1 pool pineapples was up by 10 per cent. There was a 10 per cent increase in that price at a time when there was cost inflation throughout the State which was almost zero.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

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

**Mr CASEY:** No. 2 pool price was up by 26 per cent. It is most important for the House to note that the cannery has experienced success in a year when it was being alleged that the Government was trying to do harm to this industry. It is now a better and stronger industry and, what is more important, it is a profitable industry which is contributing to this State's economy in a great way.

### Community Justice Program

**Dr FLYNN:** I ask the Attorney-General: what rate of success has the community justice program achieved in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs area?

**Mr WELLS:** I acknowledge the very positive role that the honourable member for Toowoomba North has played in bringing the community justice program and mediation services to Toowoomba and the Darling Downs area. A few days ago, I met the honourable member for Toowoomba North at the first anniversary celebrations of the community justice program in Toowoomba. We certainly were able to celebrate because, over the last few months, the number of mediations performed in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs area quadrupled.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They were very slow to start. It started on a very low base.

**Mr WELLS:** It started on a very low base. I acknowledge the interjection because the honourable member has also been a long time supporter of mediation. The number of mediations in the Toowoomba and Darling Downs area is now running at 15 per cent of the total number of mediations done throughout Queensland. This is very significant. We now have a healthy and well-established system of community mediation in the Toowoomba/Darling Downs area. One of the most important aspects of this is that it demonstrates the limits of the possible. We have, in Toowoomba, not a base centre, not bricks and mortar, from which the community justice program is being run, but a network. People in Toowoomba who wish to have a mediation done ring the 008 telephone number in Brisbane, and the local, Toowoomba-based, mediators conduct that mediation. This is very much less expensive for the Government and demonstrates the capacity that we have, even in this new, young, vigorous program, to expand across the whole State within a relatively short period.

As a comparison, New South Wales has had systems of mediation for 10 years, but those services have been confined to centres. It has only been in those centres that mediations occur. Basically, New South Wales has four spots where a person can get a mediation done. New South Wales has four sets of bricks and mortar, and around those sets of bricks and mortar there is a radiating circle of peace and harmony which is set in an amorphous sea of conflict and discord, and very little is achieved for those in between as a result. What we have with the community justice program network is the possibility of extending mediation services across the whole of this most decentralised of Australian States. The Toowoomba experiment demonstrates the aptitude of the people of Toowoomba who are taking on this new form of dispute resolution. It also demonstrates the possibility of extending the mediation process to the whole of this State.

#### **Acquisition of Land for National Park Purposes**

**Mr HOBBS:** I refer the Minister for Land Management to his answer to my question on notice last week with respect to the acquisition of land for national park purposes. I remind him that he told the House that a total of 36 properties had been acquired since 3 December 1989 at a total cost of approximately \$11m, with all funds provided by the Department of Environment and Heritage. On checking with owners, I have found that at least some have not been paid, in spite of the Minister's assurance to the House. I ask the Minister: how many former owners have not been paid, and why not? Why did the Minister provide a list of only 36 properties when the Minister for Environment and Heritage boasts as many as 80?

**Mr EATON:** The honourable member, in his question, asked how many properties had been resumed. There were 36. Others are in the process of being resumed or acquired.

**Mr Hobbs:** Paid for.

**Mr EATON:** Complex negotiations are still taking place with some of the properties mentioned by the honourable member last week. A certain amount has been paid for carry-on purposes until agreement can be reached. This is the normal procedure on many occasions when property is being resumed. There is an indicative valuation and the correct valuation, and negotiations are entered into as to the figure that the lessee or the owner will accept.

**Mr Elliott:** National Parks said \$2.2m. Your people came along and screwed them to death.

**Mr EATON:** That is the answer.

#### **Acquisition of Land for National Park Purposes**

**Mr HOBBS:** I refer the Minister for Environment and Heritage to answers given last week to questions directed to him and to the Minister for Land Management. I point out that the Ministers could not agree on the number of acquisitions of land for national park purposes. The Minister for Land Management referred to 36 acquisitions, while the Minister for Environment and Heritage simply tabled a list of gazettals, drawing a red herring across the trail with respect to the taking of land from private owners. I now ask: firstly, will the Minister truthfully supply the House with a list of those acquisitions from private owners, regardless of whether the land has already been gazetted as national park? Secondly, will he tell the House with respect to each acquisition whether payment in full has been made in the amount agreed with the original owners at the time they agreed to acquisition?

**Mr COMBEN:** The premise on which the question is based is incorrect. The member for Warrego refers to and compares the list of 36 properties which the Minister for Land Management tabled with the list of 150 properties which I tabled. At the time of tabling the list, when I heard the Minister for Land Management refer to 36 properties I actually hand wrote a note to my opposite number, Mr Elliott, which I did not send over,

but which I now wish I had, explaining that there had actually been a difference between the two questions that were asked. I was asked a question about acquisitions and, being completely honest, my department listed every piece of land which in one way or another had come to the Department of Environment and Heritage. That list even included properties such as a 26-perch block in Mount Isa for a house for a local ranger. I thought I was doing the right thing by not just taking a very narrow view of the question.

**Mr Hobbs:** One hundred and fifty?

**Mr COMBEN:** One hundred and fifty.

**Mr Hobbs:** You said there had been 80 acquisitions for national parks and the Minister for Land Management tabled 36.

**Mr COMBEN:** Yes. I ask the honourable member for Warrego to just listen to what I am saying. He referred to 80 acquisitions. He is referring to a television program in which I said that there had been 80 major acquisitions. In answering the question that the honourable member asked me about the other day, I referred to 150 properties, because that was the fullest possible list. The honourable member now has every piece of land which the Department of Environment and Heritage has acquired in two and a half years. In order to provide a full answer, my department considered that it was appropriate to give that list to the honourable member. If now he wants that split into further subdivisions, I think that is a technical matter. I would certainly respond to any letter that the honourable member chooses to address to me in that regard.

In terms of the other matters which have been raised, I point out that there is a difference between compulsory resumption—there has been only one compulsory resumption in this State—and resumptions by consent, in which people say, “Look, we have got agreement, so go through the quick process which is resumption under the Land Act”, and they are non-contested. There is also pure gazettal, pure surrender, pure purchase on the open market. There is a variety of ways in which we acquire land. If the honourable member wants to ask a question about any of those acquisitions, if he gets the terms correct, my department will respond according to those terms. Finally, to answer the last section of the five-part question to which I have to respond—payment in full would have been made for approximately—and I acknowledge that I am guessing here—147 or 148 of the 150 acquisitions which I tabled the other day.

#### **Government Office Building, Rockhampton**

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I direct a question to the Minister for Administrative Services. As the Minister is aware, this Government has made a commitment to construct a building to accommodate State Government offices in Rockhampton, and I ask: could he advise the House as to the progress on this building?

**Mr McLEAN:** The present position with the Government building in Rockhampton is that agreement with terms has been reached with the council. A proclamation was issued on 20 March 1992. The Administrative Services Department now has physical possession of the site. Tenders were invited from the following six companies on 25 March 1992: Thiess Contractors Pty Ltd, J. M. Kelly (Project Builders) Pty Ltd, Statham Qld Pty Ltd, Graham Evans and Co., Adco Constructions and Barclay Constructions Ltd. The original closing date for tenders was 11 May 1992. An official addenda providing extra documentation was issued to the above six tenderers on 10 April 1992, advising that tenders would close on 18 May 1992. The contract will be awarded on 22 June 1992, and construction should be completed by 20 December 1993.

The office building will provide six office levels, one basement car park for 81 vehicles and a rooftop plant room. The total useable office area will be 7 000 square metres with a gross floor area of 12 767 square metres. The budget figure at this stage is \$18m, and that includes land acquisition costs of \$330,000. A number of departments have indicated a willingness to occupy accommodation within this office building. It will provide a great convenience for the people of Rockhampton and an asset to the city itself.

### Archer Park Railway Station

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I point out that from his recent visit to Rockhampton he would be aware of the state of disrepair into which the historical Archer Park Railway Station has fallen. I ask: could the Minister advise as to whether he has funds or access to funds which would assist in the renovation of this railway station?

**Mr COMBEN:** My department does not have the funds, because I think that they would run into some hundreds of thousands of dollars, but I might have access to funds via the One Nation program. Under its heritage grants program, the Federal Government, as part of its One Nation program, gave the States some \$20m. An amount of \$3.4m is coming to Queensland. Last Sunday, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane made an announcement about certain buildings in Brisbane that will be included in the program. My department is conferring with the Commonwealth in regard to a series of other buildings for which it would be appropriate to provide funding under that program. The Archer Park Railway Station is clearly one of those buildings. It is a magnificent old railway station, and it certainly is high on the list. I think it is almost certain to receive funds. I am willing to accept the invitation offered this morning by the member for Rockhampton North to inspect the railway station as soon as I can. It will then be necessary to speak to the Minister for Transport to ensure that he has an extra several hundred thousand dollars to finish off the building and the work which my department is starting. I look forward to those discussions with the Minister for Transport.

### Rosewood-Ipswich Rail Service

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I ask the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development: is he aware of continued concern among the Rosewood community regarding the future of rail services from Rosewood to Ipswich? Can he give the people of Rosewood a commitment that rail services will continue?

**Mr HAMILL:** Because the honourable member for Ipswich West and I recently had the pleasure of addressing a public meeting in Rosewood when local residents outlined a number of concerns in relation to the rail motor service to that locality, I am very much aware of the concerns. When I departed from the meeting, I made some inquiries because a certain local National Party office holder had claimed that the only time rail motors began to break down was after December 1989, which was an extraordinary revelation. When I looked at Queensland Rail's records on the overhaul of rail motors, it was interesting to discover that what I had indicated at the meeting was in fact the case; that is, in 1988 the former National Party Government made a decision about rail motor services in Queensland and at that time certain rail motor services—for example, the Brisbane Valley line and the rail motor service between Tully and Cairns—were removed.

In 1988, the National Party Government made a decision not to provide major overhaul services for rail motors with the result that the rail motor fleet that is running currently is diminishing. The reason why it is diminishing is that there are no parts and that existing rail motors are being cannibalised. It is little wonder that the people who live in Rosewood, in the area that was previously represented by the former National Party Government's Deputy Premier, have very grave concerns about the future viability of that rail motor service. The other interesting aspect that was only too apparent and indicative of the whole state of country rail services is that over the last 30 years no replacement program had been put in place in respect of rolling stock used to provide country rail services.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

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

**Mr Johnson:** Remember what they said at the meeting.

**Mr HAMILL:** That position applied to rail motors as well as to the Midlander, which services the electorate represented by the member for Gregory. Over a period of 30 years, no new rolling stock had been acquired.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** It is little wonder that country people in this State became quite used to seeing country rail passenger services being withdrawn.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

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

**Mr HAMILL:** At the meeting, I gave an undertaking to the people of Rosewood that this Government would not oversee the end of rail passenger services to the area. In conclusion, let me add that following year after year of decline in country passenger services in this State under a program of neglect by the previous Government, last year marked an increase in passenger numbers on country rail services by 14 per cent. To date, there has been a further 10 per cent increase. Those figures reflect this Government's commitment to upgrading and improving country passenger services, not only to Rosewood but also elsewhere in this State.

### **Public Housing Rental Payment Scheme**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** In directing a question to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Housing and Local Government, I point out that recently he advised me that he and other State Housing Ministers were trying to reduce the need for pensioners to post payments or physically go to banks or departmental offices to make rental payments for Government housing. I ask: has any progress been made?

**Mr BURNS:** I thank the honourable member for his question. The question of pensioners making payments and the need for a system whereby deductions could be made directly from pensions for housing payments is an issue that has been addressed by State Housing Ministers in negotiations with Federal authorities over a period. I want to emphasise that when the service commences, it will be voluntary and it will not be compulsory for people to make deductions.

I recognise that pensioners have major problems with respect to payments. For example, older people have difficulty in remembering to pay rent. Presently, they post the payments, make the payments through the banks or visit the local departmental office. The honourable member for Ipswich West has been very helpful in assisting to negotiate the new arrangements whereby pensioners can voluntarily advise the Department of Social Security that they are Housing Commission tenants and that the rental payments should be deducted from their pensions. That arrangement will prevent a lot of problems from occurring. Obviously, those people would have to be notified when the rents are increased, which happens when pensions change, and a number of checks and balances would have to be put in place to make certain that everything happened properly. It is expected that by July this year, the Commonwealth Government will have started a pilot scheme. That service will be tested and this Government will see how it operates. My department is very pleased to cooperate with the Commonwealth Government. I hope that the scheme works. I hope also that those pensioners who feel that the new arrangements will provide an easier method of paying their bills will participate in the scheme voluntarily.

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

### **MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

#### **Post-Fitzgerald Reform Process**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Condamine—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11 a.m.): Much has been heard from the Goss Government about how much it has contributed to the reform process in Queensland, how it has been responsible for implementing Fitzgerald recommendations, and how it has gone about bringing in so-called sweeping changes throughout Queensland. Before the 1989 election, Mr Goss said in his own policy speech that his first commitment would be to work towards restoring honesty and integrity to public life in Queensland. If he was really serious about reform, why have the recommendations of the Cooke inquiry into union corruption been ignored? Just to refresh the Government's memory, I point out that Marshall Cooke, QC, looked into the issue of union corruption for 22 months in what proved to be a most extensive investigation into the workings of the union movement. Nine unions were probed, 250 interviews were conducted, and out of the inquiry came 13 000 pages of transcript and, most importantly, details of the suspect dealings of unions, including the Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association, the Federated Liquor and Allied Industries Employees Union and the Australian Workers Union.

The inquiry made a number of interesting discoveries. It found that ballot rigging was rife in union elections and had gone undetected for years and that security measures to prevent such ballot rigging were almost non-existent. It found that many union officials submitted false or exaggerated claims for the reimbursement of expenses. Unions' financial and accounting systems tended to be inadequate, enabling a small number of union officials to misappropriate relatively large sums of money. Substantial legal fees were incurred by some union officials for factional fighting and politicking. It was found to be difficult for rank-and-file union members to win elections, and the membership list of members eligible to vote was often inaccurate and out of date. Forgive me if I go over old ground, Mr Speaker, but with the lack of action taken by the Government I feel it is important to jog the Government's memory.

It is also important to remind the Government that Mr Cooke made a number of important recommendations. In his six reports, he made recommendations for legal, legislative and administrative reforms. He recommended that national accountability standards that are applied at present to corporate and public administrations be applied equally to unions. Has the Government done that? No! Mr Cooke suggested safeguards that could be adopted through amendments to the industrial relations Act. Instead, the Government rushed in a new Industrial Relations Bill, gagged the debate and introduced laws that relaxed the accountability of union officials. Mr Cooke suggested that affiliation fees and donations to political parties be identified properly in the annual financial statement so that rank-and-file members know where their money is going. Has that been addressed as an issue? No! Mr Warburton thumbed his nose at such a suggestion and, in the new Act, abolished the need for a political objects fund in union records.

One could also ask what happened to the recommendations aimed at improving ballot security and improving detection and prosecution of culprits. What happened to the recommendation that a secret postal ballot be held for all union elections and that it should be made an offence to rig or interfere with an amalgamation ballot? What happened to the recommendation that administrative instructions be given to ensure that ballot papers printed for union elections be printed with an appropriate security pattern? One could also ask what has followed, given Mr Cooke's concerns about the question as to where a member of the public or a rank-and-file member of a union can go to make a complaint. What happened to the recommendation that there should be protection for whistleblowers in a union environment? One could also ask about the question of financial accountability of unions. What happened to the recommendation that the necessary administrative arrangements be put in place to allow for the appointment of persons with auditing and investigative accounting qualifications to the office of the State Industrial Registrar, the registrar's duties being to examine annual union statements?

All those recommendations were designed to give the trade union movement a good clean-out to make it honest. What has Mr Goss done? Virtually nothing! Why did Labor choose to ignore the Cooke inquiry in direct contrast to the way in which it

treated the Fitzgerald inquiry? Why has Mr Goss treated Tony Fitzgerald, QC, as a demigod and Marshall Cooke, QC, as a despot? Was the inquiry a total waste of time? It has now been eight months since Mr Cooke completed that inquiry. One would think that, in that time, at least one of the recommendations would have been addressed if the Government was at all serious about the issue of reform. However, with not one of the legislative and administrative recommendations even considered, one can only assume that the Government is serious only about reform to suit itself and intends to ignore recommended reforms to the union movement.

Out of that inquiry, criminal charges have been laid against five people. One of those men, Ken Goodhew, a former vice-president of the ALP, no less—I repeat, a former vice-president of the ALP—was gaoled and is about to be released from prison into home detention. The ramifications of Marshall Cooke's findings were so serious that the court system was forced to take action, but what lessons were learnt? No provisions have been put in place to prevent the same things happening again. It could easily be that now, at this very moment, corruption is brewing once again within the trade union movement. Something must be done so that that situation will not be permitted to get out of hand once more.

Why is it that the Government has failed to address those issues? Why is it that, since Mr Cooke handed in his report, the only noticeable response from the Government has been Mr Warburton choosing to criticise the amount of money paid to the commissioner rather than praising his work? At the time when the report was released, Mr Warburton said, "It took too long and cost too much." Hardly encouraging. Yet, when the Labor Party was in Opposition, we heard ALP members screaming for more time and more resources to persecute National Party figures named in the National Party inquiry. They wanted a full and frank investigation and wanted to expand the terms of reference. Twenty-six million dollars was spent on the Fitzgerald inquiry, but, in comparison, \$6m—\$20m less—was spent on the Cooke inquiry. When Labor came to power, it advised Commissioner Cooke to wind up the inquiry as soon as possible. Last May, the Government refused Commissioner Cooke's request for an extension of time so that he could complete his investigation into the Queensland Professional Officers Association.

In short, the Government did not care for that inquiry because it did not suit it. Mr Goss wanted the Cooke inquiry shut down. What was the reason behind that? Was Mr Goss fostering some secret association with his union mates? Serious questions beg to be answered. Firstly, has Mr Goss made promises that the trade unions will continue unfettered—free to let corruption flourish within the union movement? Secondly, do those secret affiliations still exist within the system? Thirdly, which members of the Goss Government have avoided exposure—and, possibly, avoided court action? I am concerned that, as yet, the people of Queensland still do not know the full details of what is contained in the Cooke inquiry.

This Government seems desperate to prevent the release of the unabridged versions of the Cooke reports. The reports were delivered to the former Industrial Relations Minister, Nev Warburton, in six instalments between May 1990 and August last year, and he referred them to the Solicitor-General. A statement was made that the full reports could not be published because they may prejudice some trials. Mr Speaker, you will recall that only an edited version was presented to Parliament. How are we to know then if any senior Labor Party figures were adversely named? Now that the court trials of various union figures are almost over, there is no excuse to prevent the release of all the details. Why is the Attorney-General, Dean Wells, delaying the release of these details? Earlier this month, Mr Wells claimed on an ABC radio program that he could not release these documents because of a High Court decision. He claimed that a New South Wales case, *Balog v. The Independent Commission Against Corruption*, created a precedent and said that—

“. . . the court's decision in that case prevent recommendations made by the commission of inquiry to prosecutorial authority being made public."

That was a long-winded way of saying something which is essentially misleading—a cover-up. Perhaps it was a desperate excuse to protect his mates. The Opposition has sought legal opinion on this matter, which indicated that this case was entirely unrelated to any issue raised by Mr Wells. It insists that nothing in the case that Mr Wells cites establishes that the report of a commission of inquiry should not be published. The Government is being less than honest. This is a cover-up. There is only one other thing that I would like to add. Marshall Cooke said in summary that the success of the inquiry would depend on whether legislative and administrative change followed from it. He said that it is a matter entirely in the hands of the Government and members of Parliament. He said that if the inquiry report stimulates informed debate, it will have served its purpose. In that respect, I am afraid that the Government has failed dismally and may be guilty of failing to prevent corruption.

#### **Remote Area Incentive Scheme**

**Ms POWER** (Mansfield) (11.10 a.m.): I rise today to address the critics of this Government in relation to the Remote Area Incentive Scheme. In 1978, I was transferred to the one-teacher school of Mahrigong, some 80 kilometres east of Winton—we used to say “closer to the water”—where I spent two enjoyable years teaching before being transferred into Winton, for another year. While I was there and on my return to Brisbane, the Queensland Teachers Union set up a committee to investigate once again a Remote Area Incentive Scheme. Any ideas from this committee or from the Isolated Children’s Parents Association were ignored by the Government of the day. Yes, the National/Liberal coalition, the great supporter of the bush, did not want to enter into any discussions on attracting experienced teachers to the bush, nor did it wish to find acceptable ways of retaining teachers in rural and remote areas.

In the last two years in this House, I have listened to the shallow bleatings from Opposition members about cuts to rural services. They may be able to pull the wool over some people’s eyes, but not mine. I have lived out west, something which the member for Gregory seemed not to be aware of when he addressed the Evesham community at Easter time. The reality is that, during the National/Liberal stewardship of this State over 32 years, those parties did not put into place long-term programs to benefit all people living in rural and remote Queensland. They pork-barrelled, looked after their mates, and ensured their re-election. As I mentioned earlier, I spent three years in the Winton district. I would like to describe my living conditions in the late 1970s. May I say at the outset that these descriptions in no way are meant to denigrate my hosts but to show the National/Liberal coalition up as the hypocrite that it is.

Mahrigong State School was established as a provincial school for the surrounding communities. Credit must be given to communities such as Mahrigong, Evesham and Corfield, to name but a few, for being prepared to establish a school environment in the 1960s. When the Department of Education took over the school, the agreement was that it, the department, would provide a teacher and some educational facilities if the community provided the accommodation and generally looked after the school. Imagine the outcry in Surfers Paradise if they were the conditions for providing a teacher at a school in that area! I publicly thank the families at Mahrigong who shared their homes with me—the Barbers and their four daughters; the Woodwards and their two sons; the Oakes, Helen and Troy; and, most especially, John and Cathy Hayes; Anthony, Phillip and Jenny, for without them and their support life would not have been as pleasant.

Life on the stations was busy, but things I had taken for granted on the Gold Coast were not always available. There was certainly no TV. We used a party-line phone. Because there was no electricity, we used a generator. Sometimes there was not even running water until we went and pumped it from the dam. These were just some of the features of life. I am pleased that I had that experience because it gives me an understanding of the difficulties faced by rural Queensland. But it is hardly equitable when my teaching counterparts were living “soft” lives in the Whitsundays, Hervey Bay or Brisbane and receiving the same pay. After two years at Mahrigong, I was



transferred, at my request, to the Winton State School. There I had the dubious pleasure of using teacher accommodation. The year had a good start. Three single women teachers were transferred out of a house in which they had made themselves comfortable to make way for a married couple. As a result, the married couple had a three-bedroom house and used only one bedroom, and we got the single units in the duplex blocks on what was known locally as the "common". I soon knew what "common" meant. Everyone thought it was common ground.

Life in the teacher accommodation was different. A dirt road outside meant that the flat was always covered with a thin film of red dust that returned as soon as it was wiped away. It was not unusual for people to just drive up and enter one's home. Furniture was more of a mix than a match. The Administrative Services of that day had definitely never heard of "this goes with that". When faults occurred, such as a washing machine breakdown or broken locks, one waited weeks or months for them to be fixed because one could either do without or use someone else's. Where the maximum daily temperature for nearly six months of the year is well over 30 degrees, there was no airconditioning or water-cooling systems. If one wanted a cool—never cold—bath, one needed to run the water before going to school in the morning. I could detail more, but I think that these examples show why teachers such as I did not stay and why few teachers from these areas ever went back after tasting the better life.

Despite the many reports on a Remote Area Incentive Scheme and despite the many calls from parents and citizens associations around the State, the National/Liberal coalition Government of the day failed to address this issue in a reasonable way with a long-term strategy for the delivery of education in an equitable and fair way. I am not here today to say that this Government has found all the answers, but it has put into place a foundation which gives it a strong base on which to develop. The challenge was to begin—something that the Opposition was not prepared to do. Don Anderson from the Gulf and Cape Principals Association stated—

"I would like to commend the Education Minister Paul Braddy for introducing the Remote Area Incentive Scheme for teachers in the Far North."

Mr Anderson stated that the concept of such a scheme has met with a strained silence by many recipients, and he would have liked to address this. Mr Anderson went on to state—

"We trust those who are now recipients of this scheme reflect upon the changes from the good old days, the effort and commitment of those who put it into place and restrictions which exist in an economy struggling with 10 per cent unemployment. We acknowledge teachers in some locations feel they should have been included and are naturally disappointed, however, this is matched by the delight from those who realise they were narrowly included. To the Minister and all those who are responsible for the Remote Area Incentive Scheme and dramatic changes for the personal and professional life in the Gulf Cape and Torres Strait . . . a big thank you."

I believe Mr Anderson expresses the feelings of the majority of people, and that the critics, such as the Liberal candidate for Maroochydore, would do well to consider the merits of the scheme for the future and for the overall wellbeing of education in Queensland.

Over the Easter weekend, I travelled to western Queensland to open a new building at Evesham State School, one of 92 schools included in the Remote Area Incentive Scheme. Evesham State School has just had new teacher accommodation facilities completed. Previously, the teacher had lived in a caravan, and before that—as it was in my time—he used to live in the shearers' accommodation. There has been some criticism of the slowness of implementation of the scheme. However, as of 27 April, nine of the 16 centres were completed, three others are almost completed, and the others are in the planning or later stages. This is the beginning of a major building program to eradicate substandard housing in remote locations. Poor quality accommodation will be replaced with three-bedroom transportable homes to provide

comfortable living for teachers in these areas. I suggest that the critics of the housing policy look at the record of the previous Government, and I ask them to be patient. This Government is not rushing in. This Government is putting in place a housing package which will have long-lasting results.

Another successful component of the Remote Area Incentive Scheme has been teacher scholarships. This scheme has been put in place to ensure that employment in remote areas does not disadvantage the professional development of teachers. Scholarships are available to encourage teachers in remote areas to continue to enhance their professional knowledge and skills. Eighty-eight applications for RAIS study scholarships for external study in first semester 1992 were received. Applicants must have served in remote areas for at least two years to qualify. Scholarships have been approved in the various regions. Cheques of \$2,000 for first semester scholarships are being forwarded in the next few weeks. The Department of Education is also paying HECS fees for teachers who have been successful in obtaining a study scholarship. Funds have also been allocated to regional offices to enable the running of induction programs for teachers appointed to remote schools. This allocation has been based on the number of teachers serving in these schools. The various regions have put in place programs to meet their needs. This Government does not believe it has all the answers; nor has the introduction of the scheme been easy. At least this Government has made a start—something previous Governments failed to do. Approximately \$3.4m has been allocated to the introduction of the scheme. In these difficult economic times the Minister is to be congratulated, not criticised, on obtaining the funding to begin implementing the scheme. Difficulties have been experienced with the implementation of certain aspects of the scheme, such as the cashing in of air tickets and the extension of emergent leave provisions for teachers from three to eight days. Naturally, when working conditions are under discussion many factors have to be considered. However, DEVETIR has assured the Government that those negotiations have now been completed, and the amended guidelines are to be presented to Executive Council for approval.

The introduction of a Remote Area Incentive Scheme is a commitment of this Government. It is part of this Government's long-term strategy to reform education in Queensland and to make it more equitable for teachers and communities located in remote areas. Significant reform requires time and, given budgetary restraints, any expenditure must be targeted with precision. This Government has begun to implement and will continue to implement the Remote Area Incentive Scheme. The Government will not have its agenda highjacked by its critics. The result will benefit education in the long term. In common with Mr Don Anderson, I believe that all teachers and communities in remote areas should give this Government, and in particular the Minister, a big thank you.

Time expired.

#### **Tertiary Places for Year 12 Students**

**Mr QUINN** (South Coast) (11.20 a.m.): I rise today to talk about education, and in doing so I highlight Labor's failure to provide an adequate number of tertiary places for Queensland students, in particular those leaving Year 12 who are hoping to enter university. No clearer evidence of this fact can be provided than the latest figures provided by the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre, which show that the number of Year 12 students who gained a university place this year is the lowest since 1988. This year, only 9 300 Year 12 students out of more than 27 000 who applied were offered a place. That figure represents just one in three students. Is it any wonder that when they are being denied better opportunities in life by Labor Governments at both State and Federal levels, young people are increasingly distrustful and resentful of Government at all levels?

If this House examines the evidence, it will see a litany of deceit and neglect by the Labor Party at both levels. If this House starts at the Federal level, the figures show that Queensland, with 17.1 per cent of the overall population of Australia, received just 15.1 per cent of Commonwealth funding for tertiary education. More importantly, only 16.2 per cent of Commonwealth-funded places were allocated to Queensland. It is only when one takes into account the fact that this State has 18.3 per cent of the nation's 17-year-olds that one realises how shabbily this State has been treated by the Federal Labor Government. This situation will not change in the future, because for the remainder of the triennium, Labor plans on a Federal level to increase the percentage of places in Queensland next year to 16.3 per cent and the following year, 1994, to 16.5 per cent. By that time, if no more interstate migration occurs, Queensland will still have 18.2 per cent of the nation's 17-year-old population. At this rate, it will take until the turn of the century before this State gets anywhere near its fair share of tertiary places. As the figures indicate, Labor has no plans to alleviate the present shortage of tertiary places in Queensland, despite the fact that this State has the highest level of unmet demand of any Australian State. That unmet demand is an estimate of the number of qualified students who have applied for a tertiary place but who have not been offered one. In 1991, the Australian vice-chancellors annual report on unmet demand for higher education in Australia estimated that approximately 7 300 additional places, or almost a third of the national total, were needed in Queensland. If the percentage of Queensland tertiary places matched our total population, it is interesting to note that we would be eligible for roughly 3 200 extra places. If the places matched the percentage of 17-year-olds in Queensland's population, Queensland would gain an extra 7 600 places, which would be sufficient to wipe out its unmet demand. In other words, almost all the qualified students in Queensland would be offered a place if the level of funding for tertiary places matched its population.

Against the background of the Federal Government urging that Australia must become a clever country, this seems ludicrous. Queensland's young people have responded to that plea by staying at school for a longer period. Queensland now has the highest student retention rate of all Australian States. Up to 80 per cent of students now progress from Year 10 to Year 12. Most of those students expect to continue on and undergo further studies at an institution of higher education. That is why at the beginning of this year, of approximately 35 000 students who finished Year 12 the previous year, 30 000 students obtained a TE score and approximately 27 000 students applied for a place at a university through the Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre. Under this Government and a Federal Labor Government, the encouragement is there, the expectation is there, but the places are not. I am sure that the young people of Queensland who have been locked out of universities in those circumstances regard this as hypocrisy of the highest order, and justifiably so.

I turn now to the role of the State Labor Government in this sad affair. It is a sad affair when students study in earnest for two years, only to be informed that although their tertiary entrance score may have been sufficient to gain a place two years ago, they now have to look to TAFE for further education or, more likely, the CES for a start in life. For example, under this Government, in two years the entrance score requirements for a Bachelor of Education at the University of Queensland have risen by 160 points. In addition, fewer students are gaining their first choice of places in their preferred courses.

To understand what is happening to Year 12 students, one has to consider some of the fallacies perpetrated by this Government and its members in this House. Firstly, the Labor Government's 1989 election promise was that, owing to its special relationship with the Federal Labor Government, Queensland would receive a bigger share of Australia's tertiary places. That promise was never able to be kept because any increase in the number of places would not have been possible without a review by the Commonwealth's triennium budget for higher education. Given the vested interests of other States, that is a most unlikely scenario. Despite all the pressure that has been applied by this Government since that time, there have been no additional Commonwealth-funded places above what has been planned.

Secondly, the Labor Government gave the impression that revising the tertiary entrance score would somehow lead to a fairer system of tertiary entrance. During the last two years, millions of dollars have been spent on the Viviani inquiry and the recommendations that resulted from it. One must ask: what is fair about a system that has seen the number of Year 12 students who are offered a tertiary place drop from 11 000 in 1990 to 10 000 in 1991, and to 9 000 as at the beginning of this school year? Since Labor came to power, the percentage of students entering university straight from school has dropped from 48 per cent to 38 per cent—a staggering 10 per cent. That is a damning indictment on the way in which this Government has managed tertiary entrance procedures in this State. It is interesting to note that, in comparison, New South Wales has managed to maintain for a long period an entrance rate to universities for its school leavers of over 50 per cent. Over the past two years, the number of tertiary places in Queensland has increased by approximately 1 900, yet this year almost 1 700 fewer Year 12 students were awarded a place. During the past two years, if the percentage of Year 12 students gaining a place had remained at 48 per cent, that is, had it remained level, an additional 4 000 Year 12 students would be now studying at universities. Considering the enormity of the obstacles that this Government has put in front of Queensland's young people, it is no wonder that they become cynical and untrusting of Governments.

That brings me to the cruel hoax that is being played on Year 12 students. It arises from the Viviani report. Members of this House will recall that Viviani realised that a situation similar to the one that has arisen could occur and that she proposed a method of addressing the foreseen problem. Late in 1990, this Government pushed through this House a Bill to establish the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority. That body was designed to do exactly as its name suggests, that is, to monitor and recommend changes to tertiary entrance procedures. The Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre provided clear evidence that the percentage of Year 12 students as first-year enrolments dropped from 48 per cent in 1990 to 42 per cent in 1991. Nothing was done to prevent a similar occurrence this year. That is exactly what has happened. There has been a further drop of 4 per cent to 38 per cent, which is probably the lowest percentage ever—certainly since 1976 according to the QTAC records that I have—and in raw numbers, only 9 300 students, which is the lowest rate since 1988 when 6 000 fewer places were offered. Under this Government, more students are applying to study at university, fewer places are offered, and the percentage of first-year places granted to Year 12 students is falling dramatically. If TEPA failed to recognise what was happening and make the appropriate recommendations to the Minister, then its very existence should be questioned. On the other hand, if it carried out its statutory obligations and made recommendations to the Minister, why was action not taken to avert the tragic circumstances in which Year 12 students find themselves? Either way, the Minister is responsible for this neglect. It seems quite obvious that something is desperately wrong with the system of tertiary entrance in Queensland, and this Government is doing nothing about it.

Year 12 students are the only students who receive a genuine TE score, whether it is under the old system or the new system. All other students—interstate, mature age, or those from other institutions—receive a notional or estimated score. It is because of those different methods of calculating scores that inequity and bias has crept into the entrance procedures to the disadvantage of Year 12 students. It is time that Year 12 students were given a fair go. It is time that the Government stopped talking about how the old TE score reduced two years of a student's work to a three-digit number and how the new system is so much better. Only those who are ignorant of the process make such claims. They conveniently forget that the new system will rely on a two-digit number for the allocation of the vast majority of tertiary places. It is time that the lack of tertiary places was recognised as the real problem facing Year 12 students.

Time expired.

## Health Services

**Mrs EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha) (11.30 a.m.): Recently, this House debated as a Matter of Public Importance, and at the request of the Opposition, health services in Queensland. During that debate, I waited in vain to hear of alternative policies, but heard only an attack on Queensland Health regionalisation, now being viewed by other States as the model to follow, and a bitter personal attack on a health service employee who has resisted political interference.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Mount Coot-tha that Standing Orders preclude her from referring to comments made by other members during previous debates in this session.

**Mrs EDMOND:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I must say that I was not too surprised that an excellent opportunity to put alternative proposals was so wasted. The Liberal Party does not want the people of Queensland to know what it is planning for the health services of this State. Buried in bits and pieces throughout its Fightback package—or "Dieback" as it is becoming known, relating to the plethora of dead wood at the top—the Liberal Party's health policy is as big a mess as its last effort.

At this stage I do not have time to go through the specific problems involved with the GST or the cosy deals that will lead to a blow-out of health costs. Today, I wish to highlight what I believe is a major fraud being perpetrated on the people of Queensland. The Opposition's obsession to privatise health in Queensland has led to its proposal to offer so-called tax credits. Under this policy, Australians would be forced to take out private health insurance. However, low income earners would lose access to bulk billing and would be exposed to patient billing at the much higher AMA rate, which is currently about 30 per cent higher. If it were possible to design a safety net under the Liberals' privatised scheme, such a net would be scant comfort to low-income Australians. This is because it would only provide protection against the lower Government schedule.

Outlandish claims are being made that the Liberal changes will allow access to private hospitals for all. What rot! What a fraud! The Opposition's proposals would only increase pressure on public hospitals and would do nothing to encourage more use of private hospitals. Contrary to Opposition claims, under its privatised health policy hospital access for people without private insurance would deteriorate badly, because the Opposition proposes major cuts of over \$1.2 billion to hospital State grants in addition to the proposed 5 per cent cut to State general revenue grants. Subsidising basic insurance for pensioners and low income earners would only allow them to change their status in public hospitals from public to private. Basic cover itself is not sufficient to pay for private hospital services. There would be a much greater incentive to treat insured patients in public hospitals to gain some extra revenue. However, with bed-day revenue set at below full cost recovery, the extra private patients would sap some of the funds presently provided for public patients. There would be flow-on pressures because of the use of the AMA schedule for private patients. Salaried doctors would seek a matching increase which other staff would also press for justifiably. All this adds up to a picture of greatly increased pressure on public hospitals. So much for the Opposition's claim that waiting lists would be alleviated! This would clearly not be the case. Even worse, there would be more private patients competing with public patients for these services. The Opposition's claim that there would be a significant shift of patients from public to private hospitals is false. This is because pensioners would only receive tax credits equal to or less than basic table cover, which is well below the charges in private hospitals. Other people taking out private health insurance to avoid the compulsory surcharge, or with Government credits, are unlikely to take out the supplementary insurance necessary to cover much of the private hospital costs.

Let us look at the figures. The Opposition health policy provides tax credits to those over 65 years of age and to those earning less than \$30,000 per annum to a maximum of \$800 per annum for families and \$400 for a single person. Currently, basic health insurance for private treatment in public hospitals costs approximately \$800 per family. In private hospitals this leaves a minimum \$100 per day out-of-pocket expenses, plus all those add-ons such as theatre fees and dispensing fees, which are really

substantial. Supplementary insurance that does cover most private hospital costs is at least \$1,500 per annum per family at present, though this would increase substantially under the Opposition schemes. For example, under the Opposition health policy, the basic table insurance costs would increase by about \$400 per family per year to \$1,200. Australians who are not pensioners or card holders would have no choice but to buy this insurance or be subject to a compulsory taxation surcharge.

The apparent intention of the Opposition scheme is to encourage people into basic health insurance. This means that public patients in public hospitals will become private patients in public hospitals. Those over 65 years of age will not have access to private hospitals, and public hospitals will not receive any net extra funding for treating them. To add insult to injury, in return for getting the so-called benefit of doctor of choice—as a private patient in a public hospital—pensioners who are currently guaranteed free public hospital treatment would be exposed to doctors charging them above the schedule. They would then have to meet these additional costs from their own pocket. Under the Opposition policy, some people without insurance would have to pay an income tax surcharge of \$800 per family. Again, this does not provide access to private hospitals. The only groups to gain from the surcharge are the private insurers. Their membership would be an effective subsidy to private insurers, but of no benefit to public hospitals or private hospitals.

I have raised these concerns because I believe that people need to know and understand what is planned for their health care. Some of my medical friends suggested that these tax credits are meant to be inducements rather than the whole cost of insurance. To clarify this, I quote from page 52 of the Opposition's executive summary of its economic package where it discusses the tax credits and makes the fraudulent claim that these credits "will effectively provide the full cost of private health cover entitling them to access to private beds and to the doctor of their choice." I would challenge the Liberal Party—if there were any of them there in the corner—to tell me where I can get for \$400 family insurance that will access private hospitals without being out of pocket by hundreds of dollars per day. That is its claim. At present, I am paying about \$1,500 per year. Pity help the poor pensioner or family person who is conned by that lot into believing that he or she can book into a private hospital. Those people will need a heart transplant when they receive the bill for the extras that are not covered by their Liberal private cover. I suggest that they send the bill to Joan Sheldon, who is urging this fraud upon them. I had believed that, as a health professional, she would have shown some concern. But on reading her CV, I note that the emphasis is on her as a small business woman, which explains her lack of interest. She is interested only in making money out of sick people, not caring for them.

I have not discovered any indication so far of where the cuts to public health spending will be made to accommodate Dr Hewson's GST. Over the last couple of years, this Government has striven to increase the desperately needed funding for Queensland Health. We are trying to overcome years of cut backs and years of neglect, but we cannot afford any cut backs. Indeed, members opposite urge increased funding as constantly as they urge cuts in revenue raising in all forms. Our health system cannot afford the 5 per cent cuts proposed by Dr Hewson and his Liberal cohorts. Our Queensland people cannot afford the increases in health costs that the Federal coalition wants to force upon them. It will be devastating to the people who rely on our health system, that is, the people of Queensland. The propositions to date from the Federal Opposition on health show that it has learnt nothing, absolutely nothing, about health care since the Schack/Peacock affair. The Liberal Party in Queensland may not care enough to fight these proposals but I, for one, do care, and this Government does care, and we will fight these outrageous proposals.

### Land Tax

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett) (11.39 a.m.): The Treasurer, last week and again this morning, in answer to questions in this House, made some simplistic statements concerning the commitments of the Opposition and the Liberal Party to abolish land tax

when elected to Government. To gain credence, he implied the backing of Treasury and produced some figures, supposedly supplied by Treasury, to support his arguments. Following the Treasurer's answers to a question last week, the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party and member for Moggill, Dr Watson, made a very pertinent remark on television that night. Dr Watson, speaking as a former economics professor, publicly stated that he would take back a university degree from any Treasury official who tendered any such advice that would entitle the Treasurer to draw the conclusions that he did.

This raises the question of the validity of the Treasurer's statements. We do not doubt that Treasury would have supplied some figures, but I am sure that Treasury has not supported the conclusions drawn by the Treasurer. Consequently, it would be entirely wrong and misleading for the Treasurer to imply that it did if, in essence, it only supplied the figures. To clarify this point, I ask the Treasurer to table any advice that he may have received from Treasury on this issue. As to the interpretation that may be placed on those figures—I am sure that the members of this House and the Queensland public recognise Dr Watson's qualifications in comparison to those of Mr De Lacy. They entitle Dr Watson's assessment of the possible effects of the abolition of land tax to be accepted rather than Mr De Lacy's.

There is no doubt that members of all political parties will make sweeping and unsubstantiated claims concerning the benefit or otherwise of the abolition of land tax. The fact remains, however, that common sense says that the abolition of land taxes will have some benefit for the economy, and it is puerile to argue otherwise. The questions are: how much, and whether that benefit will offset the loss of revenue from the tax. The Opposition argues that it will. To support our case, we had our model counterchecked by a leading independent academic at the University of Queensland, and we were advised that it is correct. The Opposition does not accept that it will mean a cut back in police, nurses or teachers, for that matter; quite the contrary. The Opposition has given an assurance that there will not be cut backs in these areas. Anyone who says that there will be is deliberately being dishonest in an attempt to scare people.

The real reason why Mr De Lacy and his Labor colleagues are opposed to the abolition of land tax is that, philosophically, they see it as something that rich people pay. They introduced it for the very reason of taxing wealthy freehold landowners and discouraging the build-up of large freehold land holdings. Has someone forgotten to tell the Labor Party that the situation has completely changed? The only justification for it now is the revenue it provides, and it is significant that that is the only ground on which Mr De Lacy has been prepared to defend it; not whether it is a just tax.

**Mr Livingstone:** Why didn't you do something about it? For 32 years you did nothing.

**Mr SLACK:** If the honourable member will listen, I will tell him what we have done about it. The evidence now clearly demonstrates that it is not a just tax. It has no relation to the income earned by those paying it, nor is there a service provided for the tax. Using the case, often quoted, of a hamburger shop proprietor on the Gold Coast having to sell 86 000 Big Macs per year just to pay the tax, it is clearly unjust. Mr De Lacy's argument that there is very little collected in rural areas or electorates only demonstrates further the unjustness of the tax. This morning, he gave figures that actually highlighted this. He instanced those in rural electorates paying hundreds of thousands of dollars while people in Gold Coast electorates pay \$35m. Taking Mr De Lacy's figures, it is quite clear that rural land-holders pay very little land tax. Quite clearly, the emphasis now is on encouraging rural people to increase their property sizes to make them more viable. That is opposite to a major reason for the introduction of the tax.

The National Party recognised this and, over the years, gave increasing exemptions to rural people, which has meant that the tax is now sectional, falling more heavily on the shoulders of small business, particularly in those areas where we have seen major escalations in land values. Recognising the disproportionate cost of land tax to certain sections of the community and the unfair nature of the tax, the National Party,

which had been progressively giving concessions over many years, now believes that it is time that it was abolished altogether. We were condemned and castigated when we abolished probate and succession duties, which involved much more money in comparative terms than land tax. Our Labor opponents screamed, "You are looking after the rich. How are you going to fund it? There will be less police, etc.," and the arguments went on. There were even doubters within our own ranks. But what happened? It was not long after that every other State and the Commonwealth followed suit; and did we have fewer police, nurses, teachers, etc.? No, but we did have less crime, less unemployment and a more prosperous economy than we have now. This State prospered and we became the envy of every other State and the Commonwealth.

What Labor people fail to sufficiently appreciate, or to come to terms with, is that employers have to be doing well, making money, or at least have confidence that they will, if they are to employ people. The Treasurer's argument that somehow, if land tax is removed, some rich person will only get richer, or the money will go to the Commonwealth or into some overseas landlord's pocket and not recirculate within the economy, is not worthy of a Treasurer of what has been recognised as the most progressive State in the Commonwealth. The simple fact is that the abolition of land tax would not only put more money at the disposal of the business sector to invest and employ, but also give that sector added confidence to invest and employ further. It would act as a signal that the Government understands their plight and is prepared to do something about it. The abolition of land tax would send out a signal that would engender confidence, which is so desperately needed.

Mr Speaker, as you would know, the positive effect of confidence is something that cannot be measured, but suffice to say that it would be immense. Even the Treasurer's statements about Commonwealth grants failed to recognise the possibility of other States following Queensland's lead, as was the case with probate and succession duty, when they saw business going to Queensland. In the case of overseas land-holders, there may be some arguments advanced for its retention because many people would support a tax on overseas absentee landlords. The fact that many people put overseas landlords in a different category from the majority of Queenslanders who are paying the bulk of this tax is further argument against the tax as it applies to Queensland freehold land owners. However, there are major considerations in relation to the tax in regard to foreign ownership. One is that, with the removal of the tax from other sectors, the amount of tax collected from overseas landlords may not warrant its collection, particularly if one considers that much of the money not collected would be invested in Queensland by the absentee landlord. Another is that, if a tax were to be placed on foreign investors who purchase freehold property, then it should be a separate tax applied Australia-wide, because, apart from possible international repercussions, if it were the only State to have such a tax, Queensland could see a withdrawal of investment in favour of other States. Suffice to say that an argument that supports an unjust tax based on the premise that some foreigners might benefit if it were removed is a very narrow argument indeed.

Finally, there is the aspect of the requirement by Government of an increasing amount of red tape, bookwork and forms to be filled in. I can assure the Treasurer that what is being required by Government in this regard is a major hassle and cost to business. The abolition of land tax would mean at least one fewer of those complicated annual forms to be returned by a certain date, otherwise one is liable to a penalty of X dollars. For the Treasurer to have given to the member for Port Curtis the answer about land tax that he did this morning can only indicate that his answer was based purely on politics and deliberately lacking in objectivity. I remember someone in this House once saying something like, "If it quacks like a duck, it is a duck." Needless to say, I am sure that the Treasurer's attitude to the abolition of land tax will do nothing towards this Government's gaining the confidence of small business.

### **Yeppoon Police Station**



**Mr PEARCE** (Broadsound) (11.49 a.m.): I wish to draw to the attention of the House, and indeed the people of the Capricorn Coast, a press statement that appeared in the *Capricorn Coast Mirror* on 21 February this year, which contains comments made by the member for Peak Downs about policing in Yeppoon. Let me first give members some background to this issue. The people of Broadsound know that I tell it as it is, and that is the way it is going to be in this House today. Mr Lester is known for his stunts. He pulls more stunts than Houdini. I am known for the way I tell the people of the Capricorn Coast how it is.

The Goss Government has spent more than \$270,000 to relocate the single men's quarters and renovate the existing police station, in addition to providing more than \$30,000 worth of furniture and spending more than \$36,000 on airconditioning. Recently, the Minister was in Yeppoon, spoke to the local police, inspected the station and made some very favourable comments about it. Despite this upgrading, the Police Service has not been able to provide the extra uniformed police required to man the station 24 hours a day or 48 hours a weekend, let alone service the station on a 24 hours a day, seven days a week basis. As a result of my efforts and my representations to the Minister, one additional officer has recently been appointed to Yeppoon. I would like to thank the member for Rockhampton North, Mr Robert Schwarten, because his support assisted the Minister to understand the need for extra police. With the introduction in Yeppoon of the Government's one-stop shop, there will be another police officer released from the desk to perform duties in the community. I am annoyed, after spending time there and making commitments myself about policing, that now Mr Lester is in there trying to—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Would the honourable member refer to the member for Peak Downs by that title.

**Mr PEARCE:** Certainly—that the member for Peak Downs is now in there claiming credit for my efforts. That annoys me. In the press statement to which I referred, the Clayton's member for Peak Downs, Mr Lester, made certain comments. This was done after the Police Minister had visited the town and was honest enough to indicate to the community that at that time no police were available. However, the honourable member for Peak Downs made that press statement in which he said that the Labor Party, prior to the last State election, promised that the Yeppoon Police Station would be a 24-hour station. I have already explained the situation as far as police numbers in Queensland are concerned. The facts are that, despite increasing police numbers by about 900 already and a further 300 in the near future, so that the Goss Government's commitment of 1 200 police will be kept, there are other towns in the State that have greater needs than those of Yeppoon. I am not running away from that fact. I have to live with it. As a candidate, I made commitments to Yeppoon, but I have not been able to come up with the numbers. As I said, I understand that towns elsewhere in the State have needs greater than those of Yeppoon. However, the honourable member for Peak Downs went on to say—

“When the Labor Party made that promise, I, in my then capacity as Police Minister, had to go to Yeppoon and answer challenges made by the ALP in this matter.”

These are Mr Lester's comments—

“My answer was honest—frank and honest. I promised a 24-hour service at the weekends to start early in the term of the new Parliament and would then proceed to build to a 24-hour service.”

The former Police Minister misled the people of the Capricorn Coast, and he is continuing to do so. It is important that the voters of Keppel know exactly how Mr Lester, as a member of the previous Government, and as a former Police Minister, felt about policing at Yeppoon.

**Mr Mackenroth:** You know the most important thing he did while he was the Police Minister was to order a ride-on mower for every station in his electorate.

**Mr PEARCE:** I take that interjection, because that is in common with a lot of things I have heard around the electorate. Honourable members should bear in mind that he was formerly a Police Minister and is also the elected representative for Peak Downs, but at that stage he really did not care very much about the Capricorn Coast. The same can now be said for the people of Peak Downs whom he still claims to represent because he has walked out on them. He has treated loyal supporters—the people of Emerald, Capella, Clermont, graziers and grain growers who have supported him—in much the same way as he has treated Tony Fitzgerald when he said, “Fitzgerald can go to buggery.” That is what he said—“Fitzgerald can go to buggery.” That comment was reported in the media and attributed to “Mr Vince Lester, MLA Minister for Police Minister responsible for implementing the Fitzgerald Report.” He has backed away from the people of Peak Downs while pretending to be the angel of the National Party, floating around the new electorate of Keppel. He is dividing p. and c. associations, upsetting the elderly and interfering in the personal problems of many constituents. One woman came into my office crying and begged me to help. She said, “You’re my representative, Mr Pearce. Can you get that fool off my back?” I was so ashamed that another member of Parliament was interfering in such a way that people who were very upset had to come to see me. He is writing letters to Ministers causing them to prepare ministerial statements and keeping police officers from patrolling the streets. What is more, he skites about it. A report in the *Morning Bulletin* of 27 April contains the following words of the honourable member for Peak Downs and reads as follows—

“My representations, in fact, have been so persistent that the Superintendent of Police told me recently that it was taking a lot of time to deal with my queries.”

What a disgrace! He is down at Yeppoon arguing that the present Labor Government will not supply sufficient police officers, yet he is responsible for ministerial statements having to be written and for taking police away from their duties. He is a hypocrite. Mr Speaker, I note the look of disappointment on your face. This man is a former Police Minister, and I can understand how you feel. I understand that you, Mr Speaker, would not be aware that the honourable member for Peak Downs is capable of misleading the good people of central Queensland, but I can assure you that he is.

I turn now to the issue of police numbers. On 7 November 1989, the former Police Minister was reported in Rockhampton’s *Morning Bulletin* as follows—

“Yeppoon currently had nine officers, including one trainee officer, and he would increase staff to 11 by making it a training station and allocating two more trainees.”

The member for Peak Downs was certainly not honest with the public on that occasion because he did not state that included in those 11 officers would be two water police officers and one detective. There would be six uniformed officers and two trainees; in other words, three of the 11 officers stationed at Yeppoon were not available for normal police duties. The honourable member for Peak Downs was misleading the community by attempting to have people believe that Yeppoon had 11 policemen available for normal police duties whereas, in fact, only six permanent uniformed police officers were available for duty in the Yeppoon area. Trainee positions are temporary only, and these trainees can be recalled by the regional office at any time. The article went on to state—

“The matter would be taken up with the management service division of the Police Department. He would support an upgrading of one position from constable to sergeant second class.”

That article was published on 7 November 1989, which was less than one month before the State election on 2 December 1989. In spite of that, 14 days later, the same person—the member for Peak Downs—signed a letter as Police Minister. The last paragraph of that letter states—

“I have examined the matter and ascertained that, with the additional Detective Sergeant and associated resources, the present staff is adequate to meet the current needs at the Yeppoon Police Station.”

That letter was signed "Vince Lester, Minister for Police . . .", and he is the very same man who is trying to stir up arguments to put pressure on the Goss Government to increase police numbers in the Yeppoon area. All along, I have been leading the battle. The area will be getting extra police and I will win the battle. The member for Peak Downs has no right, after making the statement contained in that letter 11 days before the last State election, to claim that the area needs more police. I believe that every person in central Queensland knows that the member for Peak Downs has a selective memory. I have heard him talking on the radio about reform and accountability, yet this is the very same member who told Fitzgerald to go to buggery.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I was going to suggest at the conclusion of the honourable member's speech that that word is unparliamentary. I will now ask the member to withdraw it and for it to be withdrawn in relation to the previous occasions. Honourable members cannot use words that are unparliamentary, irrespective of whether or not the member said them or someone else said them.

**Mr PEARCE:** I withdraw the term, Mr Speaker. However, this is the very same honourable member who arranged a special deal for his mates.

Time expired.

### **Sugar Industry Tariffs**

**Mrs BIRD** (Whitsunday) (11.59 a.m.): I rise to briefly draw the attention of the House to the fact that last week I accompanied a sugar industry delegation from my electorate to Canberra. Included in that delegation were the manager of the Mackay Canegrowers association, Ron Mullins, the chairman of the Canegrowers association, Jim Pederson, the chairman of the Farleigh growers, Paul Schembri, and the mill representatives from Proserpine. Honourable members may be interested to know that at the time of the visit, the Senate was debating the sugar tariff and that during the debate, not at any time was any National Party senator from Queensland present in the Chamber. Neither Senator Boswell, Senator O'Chee nor Senator Florence Bjelke-Petersen was in the Chamber. The question remaining to be answered is: why were they not there? Was the matter simply not important enough? Had they forgotten, or were they simply not game to appear? Later, I saw Flo Bjelke-Petersen scuttling down the corridors of the members' offices in her pompom slippers, so she was not ready for any divisions.

It should be pointed out that the National Party is saying throughout Queensland, in several electorates in particular, that it is in fact opposed to tariff cuts. Every day, members of the National Party, including Mr Borbidge, have their comments published in the newspaper stating that they are opposed to tariff cuts, but when they have the opportunity in the Senate to present a case, not one enters into the debate and not one is present, even for a division. This situation was pointed out by Senator Margaret Reynolds.

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

## **NATURE CONSERVATION BILL**

### **Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 28 April (see p. 4591).

**Mr ELLIOTT** (Cunningham) (12 noon): I thank the Minister very much for the wonderfully long period that has been given to the Opposition to examine the legislation! The good old accountable Government that we were going to see said that it would give the Opposition lots of time to prepare for debates. The Minister has given members of the Opposition one week to have a good look at a Bill which will have great ramifications. I will come to that in a minute. Basically, the Bill is a framework on which

the Minister has hung the old Acts, such as the National Parks and Wildlife Act and the Native Plants Protection Act, that have protected the environment—the fauna and flora of this State—over a long period.

The Government should have been prepared to sit down and discuss the legislation with members of the Opposition, members of the Liberal Party and the community. Instead, we saw all the posing that went on around the State. I went to one of those so-called community meetings at which local authorities, in particular, were supposed to have a chance to have input into what the Bill would be all about. Unfortunately, it transpired that one of the Minister's minders turned up, and he did a very good snow job on most of the people who attended that meeting. Unfortunately for him, some people knew a fair bit about the subject matter and they asked some very embarrassing questions. Very quickly, we realised that that gentleman had been sent along to do a particular job. He was not there to listen to people's ideas or to take feedback.

A question was asked about soil erosion, the effect of the various Acts administered by the Department of Primary Industries and the requirements of local authorities in relation to banks, waterways and so on. A suggestion was made that, under the Bill, people could be required to ensure that no tail-water came from, for example, cotton fields but that the water was maintained and held on that property. Although that is a very laudable aim, the practicalities would make it very difficult to achieve when another Act states that thou shalt not put up any banks, and when people cannot construct any artificial structures across a flood plain because of the measures that have been put in place by the Department of Primary Industries. I would be interested to have explained to me how that will take place, and if it will take place under the Bill.

**Mr COMBEN:** I rise to a point of order. My point of order is whether the member is actually debating the Nature Conservation Bill. The meeting to which he referred concerned the Environmental Protection Bill. I say seriously: is the honourable member debating the right Bill?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! There is no point of order. I ask the honourable member to continue with his speech.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I am asking the Minister to outline how far reaching some of the provisions of the Bill will be. I know what he is saying and I understand where he is coming from, but I am asking: when will we see the relativity between all of the different Acts? Obviously—unless I am wrong—the Minister is going through a process. First of all, he introduced the Heritage Bill. The whole exercise is about changing all of the legislation. The Minister is not prepared to work under any of the Acts or to amend them. He is bringing in brand-new legislation and attempting to lead the public to believe that he will be the saviour of the environment and our natural heritage, such as the rainforest areas, and that he must have brand-new legislation to do it. The Minister cannot work under the existing legislation. As I understand it, that is where the Minister is coming from.

I would like the Minister to tell honourable members and the people of Queensland how far he intends to go with his agenda. For my money, the real problem with the Bill is the inclusion of Part 7—Conservation Plans. As I said, if the Minister had been prepared to sit down with the Opposition, I am sure that we could have put together a Bill which would have covered those matters. I accept the fact that, to a large extent, the Bill utilises the Acts and what they set out to do. In the main, they are fairly adequate. However, I would be the first to accept that the Native Plants Protection Act, for argument's sake, had some problems. For example, people were taking staghorns from national parks. At Jindalee and other places, we see people selling staghorns at the side of the road. Over a long period, the National Party Government tried to overcome the problem but, under the Act, we found that very difficult to do. The National Party Government tried to amend the Act, but we kept encountering problems such as the onus of proof and the fact that the Government must balance the democratic rights of the people with the rights of the community and our desire to protect those types of

plants in particular circumstances. I suggest that, as usual, the Minister is going about this in a grandiose way. The legislation has gone way over the top in terms of common sense and practicalities. I will draw an analogy for the Minister. The tropical rainforests of north Queensland have been listed under the World Heritage Act for—how long—three years?

**Mr Comben:** Yes.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** At the end of the three years, there is still no management plan. As I understand it, those people have been working on the management plan for only the last five months and they are hopeful that they might have it on the Minister's desk within the next few months.

**Mr Comben:** I said it has been in for three years. It has been under World Heritage for three years.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I suggest that there will never be in Queensland, under Queensland law, a national park that will have the resources, the reserves, the clout and all that has gone on in respect of the World Heritage exercise in north Queensland that by comparison has unlimited resources compared with what the Minister and I have tried to manage in this State. With all of their resources, these people have found it almost impossible to meet deadlines and to put together a management plan which, when it is all written down on paper, people can look at, accept and say, "This is a good plan. It is well thought out. It has thought of all the contingencies that we are likely to run across." If it does not do that, quite frankly it is not worth a tinker's curse.

Right throughout this legislation there is a requirement that management plans be put in place. All sorts of individuals will be required to undertake environmental impact assessments, statements and so on. That will mean that the whole legislation will become unworkable. It will become top heavy. The cost of administering the legislation will be a nightmare for the Treasurer. I suggest that the Treasurer will find it very difficult to find sufficient funds to ensure that the overall program is able to go ahead. Quite frankly, this whole exercise is fraught with difficulties and problems that the Minister has not really thought right through.

Part 7 deals with the requirement for the Minister to prepare a conservation plan for a dedicated area. Page 64 of the Bill states that such a plan must be prepared after the dedication of a national park (scientific), a national park, a conservation park or a resources reserve, or after the declaration of a nature refuge, a coordinated conservation area or a wilderness area. Although the intent of that part of the legislation may be very laudable, it will be unworkable because of the cost involved in carrying it out. We really cannot afford to go down that track. If in the future the Minister finds what I am saying to him today to be accurate, at a later date this legislation may have to be amended and the Minister will really have to come down to reality and accept that he has to work with the community. I understand that he desires to work with the community. Unfortunately, he has this funny body language which sometimes tells people that that is not really what he wants to do at all. People get the feeling that he wants to hit them over the head with a big stick. That came through very obviously in respect of the heritage legislation. It should be placed on record that my comments about the cost of administering, running and organising the Queensland Heritage Act are the same as my comments in relation to this legislation. The cost will be prohibitive, not because there is anything wrong with a lot of what the Minister is trying to do; it is purely and simply a matter of being impractical.

Part 4 of the Bill deals with protected areas. As I said before, many of the areas set out in clause 14 exist already. Clause 14 (c) refers to "National Parks (Aboriginal land)". That is a new designation entirely, as is "National Parks (Torres Strait Islander land)" set out in clause 14 (d). I would like to know what the access provisions in relation to those designations will be. Will there be any preclusion of other people venturing onto that land?

**Mr Comben:** No. There will be no restrictions—no further restrictions—of access under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Act.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** When the Minister said "further restrictions", did he mean in the DOGIT lands?

**Mr Comben:** No, I am talking about national parks. Some national parks, as you well know, do not have access to all parts.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Those restrictions will stay, but there will be no new restrictions. Clause 14 (e) refers to conservation parks. Of course, they are environmental parks and have been for years. I will refer to them specifically later because I believe the definition of "Conservation Parks" has been changed to a fair degree. Clause 14 (f) refers to resources reserves. As I understand it, they were D and O reserves. I ask the Minister: is that correct?

**Mr Comben:** Yes.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Clause 14 (g) refers to nature refuges, which, under the existing Act, are fauna refuges. Clause 14 (h) refers to coordinated conservation areas. To my way of thinking, this would relate to Moreton Island or Fraser Island.

**Mr Comben:** Yes.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Then there is a slight change in that clause 14 (j) refers to World Heritage management areas, for which the Federal Government is responsible. Has the Minister been asked to insert that designation into this legislation, or is it something that he himself decided to do?

**Mr Comben:** We decided to do it largely because there will be, one day, a number of areas where there might not be a huge amount of funding, etc., but if they are designated as that we might as well at least acknowledge them.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Fair enough. There then appears "international agreement areas". That is obviously a new Federal designation. Is that just to include World Heritage?

**Mr Comben:** No, it is Ramsar and those other sorts of international agreements. Very shortly we will have a Ramsar area over the Moreton Bay wetlands.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Right. We then move to the statement of principles. In Part 4, concerning the National Parks and Wildlife Act, the Minister has effectively opened up and broadened the definition in respect of what I call the cardinal principle as far as that Act is concerned. If one looks at the old National Parks and Wildlife Act, one will see that section 25 states the present position very simply. The Minister has broadened the definition by including "ecologically sustainable". Unless I have missed my guess, that has really opened up the whole show no end, and I would like the Minister to comment on that.

**Mr Comben:** It is difficult because we believe that we have restricted it in many ways, but I appreciate that perhaps some of the people who have been briefing you have been putting it on you, but it is a question for the courts to eventually work out. We think it is a restriction.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Right. If the Minister also looks under Part 4 in clauses 18 and 19—

**Mr Comben:** We are not debating the clauses.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes, I know. The Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders may perhaps use high-powered rifles in respect of taking wildlife. I would draw an analogy with the Indonesians entering Australia's fishing zones and using modern technology. Everyone gets very uptight about that. The way the Minister is approaching this, I would suggest, creates almost an opening for people to be able to go in and do just what we are complaining the Indonesians and Taiwanese are doing by coming in and fishing in our territorial waters. There really is not much included in those provisions to stop people from doing that. I do not really care whether the people who are doing that are black or white. As far as I am concerned, we have to say to ourselves, "Are we here to protect the environment? Is this a conservation Act?" If it is, surely we cannot look at people in regard to whether they are black or white. I would suggest to the Minister that a lot of conservationists, very well-meaning people right around this State, would

believe that this provision is definitely broadening and changing the whole thrust of this Bill.

**Mr Comben:** Any Torres Strait Islander's or Aborigine's use of parks is subject to the conservation plan throughout the park. There will be no ability to take general wildlife.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Perhaps the Minister needs to spell that out a little better.

**Mr Comben:** It is spelt out in the Torres Strait Islander Land Act and the Aboriginal Land Act. Those Acts say it must be subject to a conservation plan.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I just feel that this House has to be very careful in respect of the sort of messages it sends out to people, and I see some very real problems in that respect. I said earlier that I would expand in relation to environmental parks. Under the Minister's definition, as opposed to the old National Parks and Wildlife Act, grazing is now to be allowed. Is that in fact what the Minister intends, and are there currently situations in which existing environmental parks have grazing rights over them?

**Mr Comben:** No.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I did not think there were. Is a conservation park just an environmental park by another name, or is it really a change?

**Mr Comben:** It is an environment park by another name. It is a bit of tightening up.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** If a bit of tightening up is involved, what is basically the situation as far as the ability to allow grazing over it is concerned?

**Mr Comben:** I will take that on board.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Fair enough. The Opposition appreciates the fact that the Minister is prepared to respond, because people out in the community are asking these questions. They are questions I am being asked. If members cannot ask those questions here on the floor of the House and discuss them, members will not really know what they are talking about when they respond to those questions. The Minister and his department will be running the Act, and officers in the Minister's department are the ones giving him advice. I suppose I should not be discussing the clauses, but I do so to give the Minister a better idea of where I am coming from. As to clause 21—there is an attitude coming through where, to my way of thinking, the mining industry probably had a bit of a win, whereas forestry appeared to get a thumping all the way through the exercise. I do not know how they feel about that, but that is certainly the impression that I get.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Fair enough. This really comes back to clauses 36 and 37. We are concerned with the conservation of the environment or we are not. We are running across a problem with those clauses. There appears to be one attitude in respect to Aborigines or Torres Strait Islanders and another attitude in respect to other Queenslanders—other Australians—and to overseas visitors. I would ask the Minister to refer to that. Once again, he will probably refer to it at the Committee stage. However, by the time one gets to that stage, people are so sick of it all, it is late in the day, and it is fairly difficult to receive the type of specific answers that members of the Opposition really require.

As to clause 38 and management plans—I have written in my notes, "Costs, costs, costs." The Minister will receive a horrible fright when he discovers what has gone on. I draw an analogy with what has occurred in New South Wales, and it is one that the Minister should take on board. Over a long period in New South Wales, fetters have been attached to the titles of land in respect of conservation issues. Often that land has very high development potential. For many reasons, people who have owned that land have thrown up their hands in horror, walked away from the land, or sold it for half of its true worth. They either do not understand the process sufficiently, or are just not prepared to employ the consultants who have emerged in New South Wales. Those

consultants appear to have a great success rate. There is a bit of a commission going on in respect of that type of thing in New South Wales. I suggest to the Minister that he is in great danger of creating a stream of property consultants in Queensland, as has occurred in New South Wales. I urge the Minister not to go down that road. If he is not careful, outsiders, third parties—whatever one likes to call them—will come in and adopt the practice of being in the know. It is amazing. It does not necessarily have to be straight graft or corruption. It can be the old mates' rates or a counter lunch at the pub with the right people. Gradually, the situation will arise in which the only way a person can develop any property is by employing a consultant who knows everyone and knows how to attack the problem. The consultant may say, "Look, I suggest that you make those offers", or whatever. In the end, if the Minister is not careful, he will end up with a corrupt process. I would like it to go on record that I consider it reprehensible for the Minister to approach the matter in this way. He will be sorry if he does because, in the end, Queensland will finish up with the same result as New South Wales. Obviously, New South Wales is wondering how it can extricate itself out of the problem. It is not necessarily a problem created by the present Government; it is a problem that has developed because of fetters that have been placed on the titles to various parcels of land which have development potential. This problem has arisen over a period and people are looking for ways around it.

I think that the Government must consider its main objective and take a hard look at where it is going in regard to it. As I said before, the Opposition will be opposing this Bill not only because I, the shadow Environment Minister, and the spokesman for the Liberal Party, probably could have sat down and drafted a Bill which would have achieved all of the things that we are all aiming for but also because, unfortunately, the Minister has the attitude—as does the Minister for Lands—that people do not have any right to own land. He believes that it is almost immoral for people to own land. He does not like the word "freehold" or people owning land—

**Mr Campbell:** That's going a bit far.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** No. The honourable member should read the speech that the Minister for Land Management made. Unfortunately, that is the nub of the problem. Members of the Opposition—particularly me—believe very strongly in the principle of freehold land. I will tell the Government why I believe so strongly in freehold land. My experience—

**Mr Comben:** Then why did you leave 75 per cent of the State as leasehold land?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Over the years, we have seen instances—the Kimberleys in particular—in which leaseholders or absentee landlords have come in, set up companies, run and operated cattle properties, and they have absolutely raped the environment. One cannot take a broad-brush approach as there are some very responsible companies. I instance the Stanbroke Pastoral Company. My experience with that company is that it operates very responsibly. It goes to great pains to train people from jackeroos through to—

**Mr Littleproud:** Doesn't Hugh Lavery work for them?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Indeed, I think he has.

**Mr Comben:** He did a project on the bilbies.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** That is right. That is a very good point and a very pointed example. What I am saying is that other types of landlords, such as absentee landlords, have just wrecked the land. In comparison, I find that far fewer individuals on freehold land do that type of thing. They do not do that because they believe passionately in the land. They believe that it is theirs. In most instances, it has been handed down to them and they believe that it is their birthright. In other cases they have purchased a piece of land through hard work such as shearing sheep, working out in the bush or whatever, to make enough money to be able to afford to buy it. They then hold very strongly to that land and have a tremendous affinity with it. They want to keep the land in the same condition it was in when they took it on, or better, and they want to pass it on to their children. They want their children to have the opportunity to work on the land, to gain



some financial benefit from it, and to have the same feeling for it. That is why today many people who have investments besides their properties feel so strongly about their children staying on the land. They know that it is important to teach their children the correct values and that by experiencing hardship they will learn that life is not always easy. Because I was raised with that ethos, I find it amazing that the Minister for Land Management does not believe that any of that teaching is relevant. He is missing an important point in this debate.

The Minister for Land Management got this Minister into trouble over the acquisition of the Princess Hills property. This Minister's department had already negotiated a property settlement of \$2.2m. However, the attitude of the Minister for Land Management permeated throughout his department and its officers. With their heavy, size 10 boots, they walked all over the private land-holders and their rights to compensation in a deal that the Minister's department had already negotiated. When I was the relevant Minister, I took part in many negotiations, but I was always very loath to enter negotiations that involved land being taken from people who had no desire to leave it, particularly if they were doing a good job on it.

**Mr Comben:** Do you remember a bit of land up at Girraween?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes, a very small parcel of land.

**Mr Comben:** That was freehold land.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes, that is true. As I said before, I was very loath to get involved in negotiations such as that.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I inspected a rather unique dwelling on that land. The department should have respect for people's property. When the Green Paper on this subject was issued, it made no mention of compensation. At least that situation has been modified, and from that point of view it has improved. To understand the Opposition's objections to this Bill, one must understand what the Land Court can and will be able to do. It can make one-off decisions relating to compensation purely on legal matters. It cannot make decisions in relation to equity. I predict that a property containing a lake will become the subject of a decision by the Minister's department, and the Minister will say, "That is a lovely lake for a wild bird habitat." Being an acquisitive type, he will also say, "I want that lake included in a national park." I imagine the Minister saying that while wearing his very best zealot hat.

**Mr Littleproud:** He hasn't got any others, has he?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** No. Unfortunately, the Minister does not wear many other hats. This was mentioned during discussions about the Orchid Beach Resort on Fraser Island. Getting back to what I was saying—lakes such as that are not always full of water. They fill up during floods and dry out at other times. Not many weeds grow in the bed because it has been under water. When the beds of those lakes—some of which are very big—dry out, it is quite common for farmers to plant huge areas of sunflowers in them. One might ask, "Why sunflowers? Don't they get flooded and wrecked?" Sunflowers have a tap root, and once they strike they seek out moisture far below the surface. On an intermittent basis, farmers can make huge sums of money from those sunflower crops.

**Mr Littleproud:** Opportunity farming.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes, exactly. As the member for Condamine, soon to be the member for Western Downs, says—opportunity farming. He knows only too well what I am talking about. Income from sunflower crops is unreliable. Although the Darling Downs district supposedly provides a reliable farm income, it has not done so lately—as my bank manager keeps reminding me. Approximately once every three or four years, those sunflower crops provide significant income for farmers. I am not talking about Mickey Mouse money, I am talking about a quarter of a million dollars from one crop of sunflowers, even though the gross yearly income from that property would normally be less than that amount. Income from those sunflower crops is often a significant factor

taken into account in the valuation of a property. The Minister might say that the Land Court can take that income into account when assessing the value of a property. However, the very viability of that property that includes a lake will be lost if the Government includes that property in a national park. Members should mark my words, because, sadly, my prediction will one day come true. If a lake bed planted with sunflowers floods, the farmer loses his crop, but that is the risk he takes. The lake then attracts waterbirds, which have a ton of fun eating the sunflowers.

**Mr Comben:** They do that, anyway.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** They do that, anyway, and they are very good at it. Galahs and sulphur-crested cockatoos love eating sunflowers. No-one knows more about that than I do, because I see it regularly.

**Mr Comben:** Why don't you get rid of them?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I just grin and bear it. Some of my neighbours get permits to do something about that. It would not be so bad if the birds attacked only sorghum, because they do not seem to be able to carry away quite so much of it. Anyway, I digress. I should get back to what I was saying. I am trying to outline our philosophical problem with the principle that the Minister has put into this legislation. This is really where we part ways, not because we do not have a desire to do many of the things that the Minister wants to do. I set the whole nature conservation program in train, as the Minister well knows. I put out glossy literature in an attempt to encourage land-holders and landowners to provide corridors. The Minister has been to my area and has been on my property where I showed him what I am talking about, that is, corridors for native fauna, particularly koalas.

**Mr W. K. Goss** interjected.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I notice that the Minister is wearing his good tie today. His appearance is improving very slightly. Unfortunately, he has a tendency to wear his extremist hat occasionally.

In many aspects, we are heading in the same direction, but it is our belief that all of the things that the Minister wants to do can be done by working with the voluntary groups. There are many tremendously good voluntary organisations that are trying to do the very things that I am talking about. I worked with them when I first put the nature conservation program in place. Many producer bodies offered incentives to their members and presented awards, for instance, for the best water-conservation scheme and for the best soil-conservation scheme. The same applies to the conservation of timber resources or the preservation of the fauna that lives in some of our timber resources. We must encourage those people. We must also encourage the local authorities which, in many instances, are just as important but which, unfortunately in some instances, have had an adverse influence on the environment. Many people have changed their attitude to land care. The land-care movement does have tremendous support. A large number of rural land-holders and people in the wider community feel strongly about the protection of their land and their area to ensure, for instance, that there is not saltification, as there has been in some areas. Luckily, Queensland has seen very little of that mainly because the areas have not been farmed for very long. The Minister should work on a voluntary basis with land-care people and the Wild Life Preservation Society of Queensland, which is a very sound organisation that does a top job.

**Mr Littleproud:** Did you hear the comments made at the weekend by Jock Douglas, the Chairman of Land Care?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** No, I did not. I was at the Goondiwindi show.

**Mr Littleproud:** He was extolling exactly what you are saying—that if land care is to be successful, it has to be done on a voluntary basis, and he suggested that the Government should step back from being the overall hand and that it should put more emphasis on the voluntary aspect.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I could not agree more. The two people who are most influential in these areas are in the Chamber and it is a pity that the Treasurer is not here as well. They are the people who will make the decisions on the funds that are made available. The Government should realise that voluntary organisations make the best use of resources and money, and I refer to bodies such as Blue Nurses and Meals on Wheels. The same applies to the conservation of an environmental area. If the Government can get these people to work for nothing, it has to be in front. For starters, the Government would have an immense amount of expertise from people who would be dedicated to the task. Why would the Government create a huge bureaucracy at immense cost when it can use people who cost nothing? It should have a budget that is realistic. The right amount of money should be used in the right direction to ensure that those people do the work for the Government. Why set up more bureaucrats? The Government is good at that. There are 7 500 more bureaucrats now than when we left office.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The honourable member will return to the contents of the Bill.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I was drawing an analogy to indicate that money could be saved in the conservation area. That is why I digressed slightly.

**Mr Comben:** If you can save money in the conservation area, I will listen. I am always open to suggestions.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I will remind the Minister of that. I foreshadow some amendments that I will move in Committee. I do not believe that the words used on pages 12 and 14 are appropriate. I shall circulate the proposed amendments at a later stage. Members of the Opposition do not oppose the Bill, but we are opposed to some of its aims. We oppose it also because of the way the Government has gone about it. For a number of reasons, we do not believe that it will be successful. We believe it will be a very costly exercise. We consider it is overplanning. We believe that the Government is doing this because it is trendy and because people love to see plans. However, the Government can overdo calling for conservation plans and environmental impact statements. Good conservation is inspiring people to want to do things, not using a big stick, as the Government is keen on doing in the heritage area. The Minister might remember my suggestion that he put a carrot on the end of the stick rather than hit people with it. It is amazing how much can be achieved by dangling a carrot in front of people.

Three times as much would be achieved if a few million dollars were spent on providing incentives instead of spending \$20m or \$30m in the public arena. That has been proven time and time again. I urge the Government to consider that. The Opposition opposes the legislation because at this stage we are not convinced that there is a need for a different approach to be taken in regard to Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders when it comes to national parks. We are all one people. We have to be if we are going to get on well. We do not want what has been happening in Los Angeles to happen here. There has been a lot of talk about affirmative action. I suggest that many of the programs have broken down because one sector of a particular racial group—whether it be Aboriginals or Torres Strait Islanders, as in this Bill, or, in the case of Los Angeles, one of various ethnic groups—always comes to the fore and prospers. That is a fact of life. Some people will always do things better, make more money and be more successful, so in the end there will be more division than unity. That is my concern in respect of what the Government is proposing in this Bill.

There will be a lot of bitterness, particularly in regard to Fraser Island, because the reason for doing it will not be understood. People will see it as the Government giving back an area which has been publicly identified. I keep saying that it is a family area. It is a fisherman's paradise. It is an area that people have held very near and dear. I regard it as exceptionally important. The members of my committee and I spent a lot of time on Fraser Island. I spoke to people on the mainland, the area at Inskip Point where the barges go across and up and down the island's beaches. Unlike Tony Fitzgerald, who said, "I will be available"—the king sits and the king will listen—I walked up and down the beaches and said, "Hi."

**Mr Comben:** Were you enjoying yourself on parliamentary business?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I was on parliamentary business, and I claimed it as such. Let there be no mistake about it: I was on parliamentary business. I talked to those people. I said, "Why do you come here?", and they said, "We come here because we cannot afford to go to the expensive resorts and traditionally we have been doing it for years. We see it as a very important experience for our children to come here to camp, to fish, to wander up and down Fraser Island at their leisure and enjoy themselves". That is what these people are doing. This Government must keep that in mind when it is legislating in respect of Fraser Island, or it will destroy something that is precious to the people of Queensland.

**Dr CLARK (Barron River) (12.45 p.m.):** I am proud to enter this debate because the Nature Conservation Bill represents a turning point in the long struggle to protect and conserve nature in Queensland. The Bill reflects a new consciousness, as expressed in the words of Sir David Attenborough—

"We live in networks of relationships between animals and plants, big and small, of which we are a central part. The whole system is so interlocked that if you start messing about with one part of it, you inevitably affect other parts of it, and in fact you affect yourself and the rest of the human beings."

This notion of interconnectedness of natural systems has become the cornerstone of ecological understanding and underpins the Nature Conservation Bill. The legislation that we are debating today indeed challenges us to think about natural values versus economic values. It challenges our concepts of private property, particularly as it relates to endangered species and critical habitats, and it challenges us to be concerned for whole species rather than just for individuals. But most significantly it challenges us to learn to live in a way that is compatible with our fellow species and respectful of the culture of the indigenous people of Australia. I think that this accounts for some of the comments made by the member for Cunningham. At this point, I must say that I am disappointed by the member's contribution to the debate so far. Perhaps he will have more to say at the Committee stage, but I expected the shadow Minister for the Environment to provide a more insightful analysis of this legislation. I am afraid I must say I am disappointed that yet again that has not been delivered.

This is a timely, reformist piece of legislation with which I am proud to be associated. Wherever plants and animals are interposed between humans and their desire to build, change, or make a profit, we can expect people to dismiss the protection of perhaps a fish, a snail or a plant as examples of foolish environmental excess. No doubt we will hear some of that as this debate continues, but who will belittle the lowly mould from which the wonder drug penicillin was discovered or the rosy periwinkle, a species of African violet, which has saved children from leukemia? Preventing the extinction of our fellow creatures is neither frivolous nor foolish. It is the means by which we keep intact the great storehouse of natural treasures that make possible the progress of medicine, agriculture, science, and, indeed, human life itself.

It is said that living wild species are like a library of books still unread. In Australia we have not even begun to catalogue all of those books. Our heedless destruction of wild species is like burning that library without ever reading the books, and the Nature Conservation Bill is a means by which we are seeking to avoid complicity in that senseless destruction. But while the legislation does challenge traditional concepts and requires a new way of looking at nature and our role in it, it does seek to do this as far as possible by cooperation rather than compulsion, because it is only when all Queenslanders, whether they live in the bush or the city, whether they own a business or earn a wage, accept responsibility for nature and our impact on it, then and only then, will this legislation achieve its goal of conserving nature. There are already very good examples of the sort of cooperation to which the member for Cunningham referred. For example, I can refer to the Cassowary Conservation Committee at Mission Beach which is achieving wonderful results at very little cost. Those sorts of voluntary groups are currently being used because of their commitment. This Government will continue to encourage more groups like that. That is the very thrust of this legislation. To say that the Government is ignoring such a great resource is to quite blatantly state an untruth.

The Minister for Environment and Heritage's 16-page second-reading speech provided a very comprehensive description of the Bill. However, anyone who was in the public gallery and heard the speech made by the shadow Minister for the Environment would have no conception of the Bill, so I will highlight the key features.

**Ms Robson** interjected.

**Dr CLARK:** I take the interjection. The shadow Minister made no comments about its contents or structure, and one wonders how thoroughly he even read it. In addition to national parks, the legislation provides for seven new kinds of protected areas—five of which provide opportunities for landowners and other Crown agencies, such as the Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Lands—to manage their land with the goal of conserving nature by entering into voluntary conservation agreements with the Department of Environment and Heritage. These new protected areas, to which I will refer later, are conservation parks, resource reserves, nature refuges, coordinated conservation areas, wilderness areas, World Heritage management areas and areas that are the subject of international agreements. National parks are classified into four kinds to recognise their particular significance to Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders or their exceptional scientific value. All 11 classes of protected areas are based on international criteria that have been recommended by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Clauses 16 to 26 of the Bill set out the management principles for each of these protected areas.

The Bill provides also for the protection of two other types of areas. The first is designated as "critical habitat" and applies to an area that is essential for the conservation of a viable population of protected wildlife or a community of native wildlife. These would generally be small areas that are required for a particular species outside an existing protected area. The second is referred to as an area of major interest, which means an area containing natural resources of significant natural conservation value. This would be used, for example, to identify and protect areas proposed for national park purposes. Nothing was said by the Opposition spokesman about those particular areas, but perhaps honourable members will hear his thoughts at a later stage.

The Bill also provides for prescribing protected wildlife. It is important as this debate continues to realise that this means both plants and animals and that, therefore, it provides a much greater protection for Queensland's flora and fauna than has existed previously. The wildlife that is protected under this legislation includes wildlife that is presumed to be extinct, is endangered, vulnerable, rare or common. Clause 68 describes the management principles that will apply to protected wildlife. Two other categories of wildlife—namely, international and prohibited—are also identified in this legislation because their proper management is essential if native wildlife are to be protected. The Bill breaks new ground in the level of protection afforded to rare and endangered plants. This aspect was seriously neglected in previous legislation.

While broad management principles for wildlife and protected areas are set out in the Bill, the real key to nature conservation in Queensland under this legislation consists of the conservation plans and conservation agreements which provide the vehicle for developing detailed mechanisms for the protection, use and management of protected areas, areas of major interest, critical habitats, protected wildlife, and international and prohibited wildlife. One wonders, having heard the comments made by the member for Cunningham in relation to costs, what the alternative is to the proposal in this legislation. Is he really saying that we do not want conservation plans for these areas and that we will just bumble along doing the best we can, or is he going to get professional about this and actually put together a plan which provides for maximum involvement of the community and all the stakeholders? Does he intend to actually have a document that can then be provided, setting out how to do the job?

**Mr Elliott:** You've got to plan in the broad. If you are going to get as specific as this Bill does, there is no Treasury in this country that has enough money to be able to do all that the Minister would like to do with this Bill, believe me.

**Dr CLARK:** I think the honourable member will be proved wrong. The submissions that can be made in relation to conservation plans provide two opportunities for the public to make comment and become involved. One is when there is a proposal for a conservation plan, and the other is when a draft plan becomes available. The conservation agreements between land-holders and the Department of Environment and Heritage may be binding on future owners. I believe this is important because many people want to ensure that what they have will be preserved for future generations. They do not want to see it sold and then destroyed by somebody else. However, it is important to emphasise that they have a choice. Provision can be made in those agreements for financial and technical assistance to be given, if necessary, including rates relief when a local authority is in agreement. Clause 41 sets out in detail exactly what can be included in those types of agreements.

While conservation plans and conservation agreements will normally provide for the wise management of our significant natural resources, including wildlife, there will be occasions when circumstances require an immediate response to some threatening process. It is in such circumstances that interim conservation orders will be issued as a last resort to provide immediate protection when a rare or threatened species, critical habitat, area of major interest or protected area is under imminent threat. Again, I was most surprised to hear no mention of this by honourable members opposite. I would have thought that this would be an issue on which they would have had something to say. Perhaps this is another case of waiting to hear whether they have something to say at a later stage. In fact, I was expecting to hear their outrage at the prospect of this Government actually stopping some type of threatening process from being carried on. Does their silence mean that they, too, recognise the need to take action in such circumstances? If indeed that is what their silence means, I welcome it. However, I think it is important to realise that interim conservation orders last a maximum of 90 days only, and are designed to provide time for further investigation and implementation of long-term protective arrangements. The Bill also breaks new ground in that it is the first time in Queensland that the concept of ecologically sustainable use has been introduced into legislation.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.30 p.m.

**Dr CLARK:** As I was saying before the luncheon adjournment, clause 5 specifically indicates that, in the achievement of the object of the Act—the conservation of nature—the use of protected wildlife and areas must be ecologically sustainable. In the preparation of the legislation, consultation occurred with all major stakeholders—in this case, the conservation movement, Aboriginal organisations, land-holder groups and mining and development industry representatives. As drafting progressed, agreement was reached on many issues; however, areas of difference do remain and no stakeholders are entirely satisfied with the outcome. Indeed, I would be concerned if any one particular group were totally satisfied with the final outcome—unlike members of the National Party, who I believe were only ever concerned to satisfy landowners and business interests.

I will address some of those outstanding issues and concerns, because I imagine that they will not be resolved readily and some of them will continue to be contentious. In doing so, I will respond to some of the issues raised and criticisms expressed by the Opposition. Although the conservation movement recognises the many positive features of the Bill, not surprisingly, some issues are still of concern to it. In the time that I have remaining in the debate, I wish to focus on one of those, which I regard as the most significant of their concerns, namely, the question of third-party appeals. The Government gave an election commitment to amend legislation to give legal standing to community groups and individuals in relation to environmental matters so that they could appeal against decisions made under environmental legislation and enforce the provisions of the legislation. That right is provided in the new Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act, but agreement could not be reached between stakeholders with respect to the Bill that we are currently debating. Very strong arguments were mounted by industry groups, who fear that multimillion-dollar projects could be stopped if a rare or threatened species is found on a development site and

environment groups utilised third party appeal rights to ensure that the Government enforced the law and protected those species at the expense of their development.

The question of public interest is paramount in environmental matters and the need for third-party appeals is, in my mind, essential. Experience from the US, where an endangered species Act has been in existence for nearly 20 years, is instructive. The conclusion in the US is that, without an informed and committed citizenry willing to litigate as well as castigate, endangered species protection can easily slip back into the balancing mode by which developmental land uses always seem to come out ahead. Although not all development projects have been stopped in the US because of impacts on endangered species when contested in the courts, the American legislation has had the effect of ensuring that projects are shaped to suit the requirements of the listed wildlife. Surely, that is the appropriate outcome.

Third-party appeals are still under active consideration by the Government, and the matter is under review by the Litigation Reform Commission, headed by Tony Fitzgerald, QC. I support the Government's position that the resolution of the matter should await the findings of the commission so that the question of third-party appeals can be addressed in a systematic, comprehensive manner for all legislation, not just nature conservation legislation. Personally, I hope that we can avoid the courts being used to solve problems and resolve conflicts with respect to environmental issues, because its adversarial format is ill suited to such a task—to say nothing of the costs. Alternative forms of mediation are, I believe, much better suited to achieving an acceptable outcome for both development interests and community organisations.

I turn now to the question of Aboriginal and Islander involvement in the management of natural resources and traditional hunting and gathering both in national parks and on Aboriginal land, which is provided for in the legislation and is well overdue in Queensland. The member for Cunningham suggested that, with the legislation, the Government could be laying the groundwork for another Los Angeles situation. I believe quite the opposite, because the legislation provides for social justice, which is long overdue with respect to the traditional rights of Aboriginal people in relation to resource use. I take this opportunity to condemn the member for Sherwood for fuelling racial conflict over the question of access to national parks, which could be leased to the Government by Aboriginal owners and managed by a board of management, including Aboriginal members. The depths to which that person is willing to sink to score political points reveals yet again his cynical opportunism. The member for Cunningham was not much better—although he is more genuine, I will admit that. I say: shame to both of them.

The response to the question of public access to national parks lies in the Aboriginal Land Act, which states specifically in section 5.20 (10) that there can be no aggregate decrease in public rights of access to a national park after it is claimed. It is disappointing that people do not do their homework and find out the true situation. Further, a detailed examination of the legislation reveals that, although Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders may use or keep protected wildlife under Aboriginal tradition or Islander custom, that right is always subject to the provisions of conservation plans as detailed in clause 85. Thus, traditional hunting and gathering in national parks would be subject to the approved management plan for the park, and conservation would be the first priority in line with the Law Reform Commission recommendations on the question of traditional hunting, fishing and gathering practices.

Aborigines and Islanders will be conserving nature, as will all Queenslanders. Aborigines and Islanders can exercise traditional resource-use rights on private land only with the consent of the landowner, in just the same way as white Australians. Although the legislation recognises Aboriginal tradition and Islander custom, it recognises also that Aboriginal and Islander people have the same responsibilities as landowners in other parts of Queensland, that is, the responsibility to conserve endangered and threatened species and critical habitats on their own land. To that end, the Bill amends the Community Services (Aborigines) Act and the Local Government (Aboriginal Lands) Act to make traditional use subject to clause 85 of the Bill. So, rather

than having one rule for white and one rule for black, we are returning to a situation whereby, whether it is black land or white land, the same rules will apply. In those situations, when I said that Aborigines and Islanders will be able to exercise their traditional rights, it will be after a cooperatively developed conservation plan for any endangered and vulnerable species and critical habitats is developed. I regard the compulsory declaration of nature refuges on Aboriginal and Islander land, which are feared by some Aboriginal organisations, to be extremely unlikely, because Aboriginal and Islander people bring to land management a conservation ethic often absent in other sections of the community. As Alison Wooler, the Chairperson of the Aurukun Shire Council, said recently—

“We had national parks before white people ever thought of the idea.”

Just as the member for Cunningham's concern about legislation dividing black and white was based on an incorrect or incomplete understanding of the Bill, so too is his concern about the threats to private property. However, the member's conception of private property is something that must be challenged if nature is to be conserved in Queensland, that is, the notion that ownership of property entails ownership of species of wildlife. This legislation contends that a species is not private property. The appropriate relationship between land and landowner is that of caretaker to a trust rather than property owner to his property. What we have here, and what we need, is a concept of stewardship. Unfortunately, that is a philosophy that neither the National Party nor the Liberal Party can ever really bring themselves to embrace because they are so strongly captured, I believe, by the owners of properties in this State. But even so, this legislation does require consultation and it does require compensation to landowners, if necessary. So property rights are still being recognised, even in those cases in which compulsory declaration of nature refuges occurs.

I would like to take up a point that the member for Cunningham made in relation to the Land Court. He said that the Land Court can take into account legal aspects only. Actually, that is not the case at all. Clause 115 of the Bill sets out that the court “must have regard to the following matters”. Those matters are “the public harm that is likely to be caused if the regulation were not made”—this relates to conservation plans—“the sustainable land capability of the area; and the increase or decrease in the value of the land because of the regulation”. So there certainly is the opportunity for the Land Court—

Time expired.

**Mr DUNWORTH** (Sherwood) (2.39 p.m.): At the outset, I thank the Minister for making his staff available to brief me on the Nature Conservation Bill. However, I also condemn the Minister for allowing a Bill of this significance to lie on the table for only three working days. This Bill, which is an amalgamation of many Acts, was introduced into the House last Tuesday. Many people are interested in this legislation. Copies of this Bill were posted to people outside Brisbane and received by them on Thursday. Those people have had one and a half working days to actually comment on it. Right at this very moment, I am receiving faxes from various interested groups who wished to comment on this Bill before it was debated in the House.

We in the Liberal Party cannot support this Bill as it hands over vast areas of Queensland to minority groups. We do not support it even though we find in it much that is very worth while. We cannot condone the formation of segregated enclaves in Queensland. This State has a national parks system that was established in the early 1900s. With this legislation, this Minister will make available to a particular minority group in our community the opportunity to claim national park land and then, subject to a management plan, lease it back to the rest of the citizens of this State. There can be no doubt that the areas that I am about to mention—or major parts of them—will be claimed. First of all, there is the Jardine River. As we saw last Monday night, at the moment it does not have any management whatsoever. There is also Hinchinbrook Island and Lakefield, which has an area of 500 000 hectares and is managed by three staff. There is Lawn Hill which, after the Riversleigh debacle, will have 250 000 hectares. It has two staff. There is also the Bunya Mountains, Stradbroke Island, the border



ranges, Carnarvon, Fraser Island and Cooloola. All of those areas will be claimed as Aboriginal land. There should be no doubt that the freehold on those parks will be transferred to a minority group which will then lease them back to the people of Queensland. I will pose a number of questions to the Minister which he can answer either when he replies or at the Committee stage.

The first question that should be asked is: what percentage of existing national parks will be closed off to non-Aboriginals? How much rent will be charged by Aboriginal groups to lease national parks back to the community? I know that the Minister will say a peppercorn, but I would say that in time that will prove to be extremely wishful thinking. Will it be \$2 or \$2m? What additional entrance fees to those national parks will be charged by Aboriginal groups? Will the additional entrance fee that is charged by Aboriginal groups be spent on the upkeep of the parks or, as was stated in the *Sunday Mail* about a week ago, will that money be disseminated throughout Queensland to other Aboriginal groups? Can the Minister also tell me whether traditional methods of hunting will include hunting with high-powered rifles?

**Mr Comben:** Yes.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Will that occur in the Bunya Mountains, Carnarvon and Fraser Island?

**Mr Comben:** No.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Where will it be? I ask the Minister to tell me where he will allow hunting with high-powered rifles.

**Mr Comben:** Where there is a need for it.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** What if it is a dugong or a kangaroo? What if it is a common wombat? What if it is a bilby? Are they all part of Aboriginal tradition?

**Mr Comben:** You would be flat out finding a common wombat north of Orchid Beach.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** They would be found in the border ranges. Because of their special natural and cultural significance, national parks should continue to be held in trust for all the people of Queensland and should not be handed over to minority groups on racist grounds. It is particularly significant that Aboriginal groups cannot claim forestry reserves, grazing leases or stock routes, but they will be allowed to claim the absolute pinnacle of Crown land, namely, the national park.

The current status of Aboriginal land in Queensland should be taken into account. In DOGIT areas there are 1 750 236 hectares, and in Aboriginal reserves there are an additional 2 962 984 hectares, making a total area of 4 713 220 hectares. That should be compared with the existing national parks area of 4 889 471 hectares. At present, the amount of Aboriginal land is about the same as the amount of national park land. Therefore, Aboriginal groups are going to be able to claim an additional 2 per cent of Queensland. Honourable members will find that many environmental groups have serious reservations about this Bill, particularly the Australian Conservation Foundation, led by Philip Toyne, which was at the forefront of Aboriginal land claims in the Northern Territory. The April 1992 edition of *Habitat Australia* states—

“Some environmentalists feared that by allowing Aboriginal communities to claim National Parks and to hunt in them, the Act would threaten the survival of certain plant and animal species.”

The article went on to state—

“ ‘No longer will they be National Parks but Government-sanctioned killing fields of our once protected ecology.’ ”

That statement was made by a long-time member of the Daintree Wilderness Action Group. He went on to say—

“ ‘Almost 100 years of protection ripped up, shot up, burnt up, stuffed up.’ ”

That is how environmentalists feel about the Government's handing over all of the national parks in Queensland to Aborigines. Many environmentalists regard the issues of national parks and Aboriginal land claims as completely separate. If honourable members continue to look at the same magazine, they will discover what the future holds. The following is a quote from a lady named Ann Creek. She was speaking about Cape York and claims on the McIlwraith Ranges. I think this statement is indicative of what is going to happen in Queensland. She stated—

“Now we want total ownership of that land. We want any negotiating to be done in Coen with our legal adviser and anthropologist. We want to sit on the Board as directors of all National Parks . . . We want the power to issue permits and have the authority to say what we want done with our lands.”

Notice that the reference is to “our land”. It is no longer “national parks”. She continued—

“We want our own people to be recognised as authorised officers of the Park.”

There is no problem with that. She continued—

“We want control over hunting, gathering and camping sites on our lands. All this can only be achieved if National Parks people sit down with us and negotiate a good park management plan. But within the McIlwraith Ranges, we also want land for our own purposes. Land that we can call our own. Where we are accountable to ourselves, not to any Government departments.”

I suggest that that is the future of these national parks that the Government is in the process of handing over to a minority group in Queensland. The Government will hand over vast areas of national parks to Aboriginal groups, and then it is supposed to formulate a management plan. Let this House examine the record of management plans in Queensland. What is to be allowed? Are we to see the hunting of porpoise in marine national parks? Are we to see the hunting of turtles, dugongs, cassowaries, crocodiles, common wombats, bush turkeys, kangaroos, possums—

**Mr Comben:** They are not in Queensland.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** They are in Queensland. Are we going to see the hunting of native bears and snakes?

**Mr Comben:** Where?

**Mr DUNWORTH:** There are common wombats in the border ranges. If the Minister refers to some of the literature available, he will find that is correct. Let this House look at all other mammals, reptiles and birds. Are we going to see the hunting of emus, magpies and geese? Are they part of Aboriginal tradition? Do Aboriginal traditions include the trapping of the Minister's favourite subject, the ground parrot? What about the eclectus parrot, the red winged parrot, palm cockatoos, the wedge tail eagle and the white breasted sea eagles? Are all of these birds, animals and reptiles to be hunted under Aboriginal tradition? Are they?

**Mr COMBEN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I take objection to the style of the member's speech, and I emphatically say to him, “No.”

**Mr DUNWORTH:** I have a few other quotes from particular groups that will take care of that for the Minister. This Bill will allow Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders to hunt and gather in all national parks until a conservation plan or a management plan is put in place. Does this mean hunting in Currumbin Hill, the Kennedy National Park or Mount Tambourine? There are approximately 300 national parks in Queensland. There are about 20 to 30 management plans currently in place. We have been waiting 12 years for a management plan for Cooloola. This Act effectively allows all Aboriginal groups to hunt in national parks before there is a management or conservation plan.

**Mr Comben:** Rubbish!

**Mr DUNWORTH:** I have legal advice on that matter. I have an estimate from an authority, in whose credibility I would place great stead, that to put into place

management plans in all our national parks would take 600 to 700 man-years. There are currently only 20 to 30 national parks with management plans in place in Queensland. It was stated on the *7.30 Report* last week that many of this State's national parks do not even have any rangers on the ground and are infested by rubber vine, and that is why the Minister is now officially dubbed the "Minister for Rubber Vine". These national parks will be plundered at will. The last report published by the Minister's department stated that an additional 12 staff were allocated to look after one million hectares of national park. This legislation will allow all of this State's national parks to be plundered. I am sure the Minister opposes that. He opposes being overridden by the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I am sure he realises that the National Parks and Wildlife Service is certainly not happy, and was certainly not happy when the Minister reduced it to branch status, which was in direct conflict to his promises before the last election.

**Mr Elliott:** You notice he is wearing their tie today.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** He wears their tie, that is right. He is an Indian giver. It is probably also indicative of this situation that the well-respected Director of National Parks and Wildlife recently left his department. Again, I think we should consider this cynical, political exercise that the Government is involved in with its double counting. Forestry reserves will be revoked and proclaimed as national parks. Therefore, there will be an increase in national parks, even though there will not be an increase in the amount of Crown land. Those national parks will then be gazetted as claimable by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups. They will then be proclaimed and leased back to those groups. The Government will retain the same section of Crown land, the Queensland Forest Service will lose out, the number of national parks will increase and Aboriginal land areas will increase. It is a very, very cynical exercise in double counting just so the Government can win a cheap political point for the forthcoming election. Some national parks are overrun by lantana, rubber vine, and groundsel, yet there is no weed eradication program under way. The Government is now going to hand over only those parks that are probably the most sought after parks in Queensland. Those parks are the ones that are probably the most patronised, and they will produce the greatest amount of revenue. Even though many national parks are in an abysmal state because there is no management, the Government will still hand over many of the remaining parks to Aboriginal and Islander groups, which, to my knowledge, do not have any particular management skills.

I will now move on to the ownership of protected wildlife. I wonder if the Minister is really aware that, under this Bill, people who own budgerigars must apply for and receive a conservation plan. What sort of bureaucracy will this create? Every child who wants to breed budgerigars, because most budgerigars are mutants, must apply for and receive a conservation plan. It is absolutely ridiculous. There will be another blossoming of the bureaucracy. Queensland will have a department called the "Conservation Plans for Budgies Department". In regard to the protection of wildlife—the legislation refers to native birds. A recent article states—

"The irony is that native birds which are considered pests in Australia fetch huge prices in illegal markets in Europe and the United States. In 1990, sulphur-crested cockatoos fetched \$5,000 a breeding pair, whilst the common galah sold for \$8,000 a pair. Naturally, the more scarce the species, the higher the price. For example, less common but not endangered varieties such as the Major Mitchell cockatoo sold for \$20,000 per pair and the White-Tailed Black cockatoo for \$30,000.

Wildlife policy has failed . . ."

Recently, as the Minister knows, I was in north-west Queensland. He was kind enough to arrange an appointment for me with his director in the north west of Queensland. One of the things that I found rather tragic is that when we talk about protection of our wildlife, we talk about some of the most beautiful birds in the world, but what is the true situation? It is that this Minister has one wildlife officer to police an area that stretches from the Gulf down to Bedourie and right up to

Karumba—approximately one-quarter of the State of Queensland. We are talking about the protection of wildlife. It is all very well to have legislation to protect wildlife, but if the Government does not have the people on the ground, it will never achieve it.

The other section of this Bill that I think is very worth while is that relating to the protection of areas. In Queensland, 35 per cent of the original forest area has been cleared and significantly disturbed. If one compares that figure with the forest areas in Victoria that have been cleared, which is 69 per cent, and those forest areas in New South Wales that have been cleared, which is approximately 50 per cent, I believe that this section of the Bill is extremely worth while. Queensland has eucalyptus and melaleuca forests, and open red gum forests in the south east. It has woodland communities on the eastern sea belt and brigalow forests and associated communities. It also has lowland rainforests. All of those forests are very worthy of protection. Although people may think that some of the legislation is a little bit strong, I think that the Minister has learned a very good lesson from the Heritage Buildings Protection Amendment Bill in that in this Bill the Minister is prepared to pay compensation. A compensation clause is included in the Bill. This is in direct contrast to the Heritage Buildings Protection Amendment Bill, under which no compensation was payable.

The only other problem with this legislation, as was pointed out by the shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage, is that there will be encumbrances on people's freehold titles. Over a period, those encumbrances will end up costing landowners an enormous amount of money. The compensation which is payable today will not represent the loss of the true value of that land. Even though there is a right to claim compensation, there is no right of appeal to the courts over interim conservation orders. I will deal with that part of the Bill at the Committee stage. I will also touch briefly on the World Heritage international agreements. I wonder why Queensland has the Fraser Island and the Wet Tropics legislation. If one looks at putting together management plans, we should again look at the debacle in the Wet Tropics, the proclamation of which was made nearly three years ago.

Time expired.

**Mr BREDHAUER** (Cook) (2.59 p.m.): I really think that the previous speaker should go and take a pill. Because he talked about things "touching" on this and "touching" on that, I think he is a bit touched himself. Obviously he should get out and talk to a few people and have a look around. If he did that, he would not harbour the divisive and dreadful sentiments that he expressed. I will say more about that a little bit later on in my speech. The Nature Conservation Bill marks yet another milestone in the process of legislative reform undertaken by this Government since its election two and a half years ago. In common with many Bills before it, this legislation currently before the House represents an opportunity for the Government to honour its pre-election commitments and to update existing legislation into a more appropriate contemporary form.

This Bill consolidates provisions of the National Parks and Wildlife Act, the Fauna Conservation Act, the Native Plants Protection Act and the Land Act. Inadequacies in the existing legislation have been demonstrated on many occasions, including certain well-publicised instances such as the wholesale clear-felling last year of land on Southedge holding by developer George Quaid. Whilst wholeheartedly supporting the provisions of this Bill, I urge the Minister to continue to give high priority to the rights of land-holders and the rights of individuals. The intention of this Bill is to establish a cooperative framework in which land-holders, particularly in the grazing industry, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, conservation groups and officers of the Government collectively work to establish agreed parameters for the protection and preservation of habitats and nature.

Whilst I acknowledge that there may be times when the need to protect the environment should supersede the right to farm, mine or hunt, in the main land-holders should be able to carry out their daily business without interference from the Government. The extensive consultations that occurred before bringing this Bill to the House should not end here, but should remain a feature of the implementation and

administration of this Act. The vast majority of land-holders care for their land and appreciate the environmental significance of special areas or species that may exist on their land. Most will be willing to cooperate with management planning, provided that they are approached in the right way. The people of this State, and the nature that we seek to protect, will be better served by having land-holders as willing contributors to the management process than by pressuring them through compulsory conservation orders. I believe that this is recognised in the legislation. Whilst I acknowledge that there will be circumstances in which the Government needs to reserve the right to issue compulsory conservation orders, I believe that such orders should be used sparingly and that, by and large, property owners in Queensland—if approached by the Government in the right way—would be prepared to cooperate with plans to preserve habitats or species. Obviously, that is the positive context in which this Bill has been framed.

I wish to focus for some time on the involvement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the process of protecting our environment. I recognise what was said earlier by the member for Barron River, namely, that Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders were practising habitat management and species preservation long before national parks were even thought of or established in this State. That is not to say that there is not a need to maintain vigilance in areas where Aborigines and Torres Strait Islander people are operating. We should not neglect or fail to recognise the importance of technological advice that is available and the importance of the pressure of populations on species that may not have existed prior to our coming to Australia some 200-odd years ago when Aboriginal and Islander people were effectively managing the land according to tradition.

Among the classes of protected areas in the Bill are the designations of national park (Aboriginal land) and national park (Torres Strait Islander land). Whilst upholding the cardinal principles of national park management—and conservation is the main feature—these classifications are significant in providing the Government with the mechanism to implement the expressed intentions of reforming the relationship between indigenous Queenslanders and national parks in accordance with the provisions of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Acts. The Minister knows that, over the past two and a half years that I have been a member of this House, on numerous occasions we have had discussions about the relationship between national parks and indigenous Queenslanders, and I have been an advocate of the rights of indigenous people to what they still regard as their traditional lands, particularly in areas such as Cape York Peninsula, the Torres Strait and the Gulf of Carpentaria.

Criticisms of the provisions in this legislation have come from a cross-section of interest groups, including indigenous groups, some conservationists and, obviously, Opposition members such as the member for Sherwood. During the consultation process that led to the drafting of the legislation, meetings to which various Aboriginal people were invited were held in various regional centres. For example, at the Cairns meeting, representatives of the Cape York Land Council and the Tharpuntoo Legal Service were present. Discussions also took place with representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, including a meeting with zone commissioners, ATSIC staff and the Aboriginal law reform group. Copies of the discussion paper on the Bill were also circulated to all Aboriginal communities. I acknowledge that there has again been some criticism of the consultation process. It is possible that this process was not perfect, although it was extensive. Nevertheless, measures were taken to provide an opportunity for discussion on the legislation and feedback from indigenous groups. At various stages of the drafting, those views were taken into account.

One of the difficulties that I have faced during my time as a member of this House is that any legislation involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has almost invariably attracted the criticism of inappropriate or incomplete consultation processes. It is not easy to develop a model for consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. To the best of my knowledge, no-one has ever devised such a process that will reach all indigenous groups. Some people want to criticise processes such as

this, but when one approaches them for advice as to how the process could be improved, some of them claim that it is not their problem and that it is ours to sort out. It is not easy to get those processes together. As a Government, we must continue to be vigilant and to improve the processes of negotiation and consultation. That applies not just to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland but to the community generally in regard to legislation such as this. We should always try to improve our effort. In my personal experience, this is particularly so in the consultation process with Aboriginal and Islander people.

It should be stressed that the legislation embodies certain principles but that its practical implementation through either national park (Aboriginal land), national park (Torres Strait Islander land) or even nature refuges or conservation areas would each be the subject of separate detailed discussions and negotiations with the appropriate indigenous groups. If we are to put together a plan of management for, say, the Jardine River National Park, we would talk with the indigenous people of that area to put that plan together. The legislation itself does not put in place those management plans or nature refuges. The legislation embraces the principles by which that process can be achieved. The opportunity for further consultation and negotiation with Aboriginal people as we detail specific plans of management or nature refuge areas is available to us.

I am concerned that some people in the Aboriginal community and also in the non-Aboriginal community have failed to grasp the significance of the shift in philosophy and policy that this Government has embraced in evolving relationships between Aborigines and Islanders and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. I again refer to my discussions with the Minister over the last two and a half years. We have made enormous progress during that period in evolving our philosophy and putting it into practical implementation through Government policy in fostering better relationships between Aborigines and Islanders and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. No longer will national parks be used as a mechanism to lock out indigenous people from their land. No longer will Aboriginal people be threatened or cowed by a proposed national park. On the contrary, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be able to take and use cultural and natural resources in accordance with the management plan for national park (Aboriginal land), national park (Torres Strait Islander land) or a conservation plan. This management plan may include hunting and gathering rights, fishing, living areas and traditional and ceremonial purposes. I will come shortly to some of the rantings of the member for Sherwood in this regard.

Where conservation is an issue, restrictions can be negotiated through the management plan on the taking or use of wildlife. That is an important point to recognise. Whilst generally supporting the established principles of the Australian Law Reform Commission, the method of taking wildlife could also be negotiated through the management plan. It should be noted that the Aboriginal Land Act states specifically that access to national parks, unlike what the member for Sherwood would have us believe, should not otherwise be diminished. The beat-up being attempted by the honourable member for Sherwood is, at best, a blatant and deliberate attempt to misrepresent the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Act, the Torres Strait Islander Land Act and the nature conservation legislation. I suggest that, at worst, he is pandering to the racist sentiments of a minority of Queenslanders, which he himself obviously harbours.

I wish to dwell briefly on the taking of wildlife by indigenous people, because this seems to be causing a lot of consternation. The Law Reform Commission considers that any recognition of traditional use rights should take account of the wide variety of legitimate community interests—and that is the broader community, not just the Aboriginal community—such as conservation, effective management of natural resources, and pastoral and other residential or commercial interests. Traditional rights should not be interpreted as simply taking food for an individual's sustenance but should include the broader notion of subsistence, which includes ceremonial exchange and kinship obligations. A recognition of traditional rights does not amount to carte

blanche for indigenous people over native or introduced species, as the honourable member for Sherwood would have had us believe in his rantings and ravings earlier.

The focus of the debate should be on the purpose for the activity rather than the method of taking. As I have already mentioned, restrictions can be negotiated in circumstances where a species is threatened, and Aboriginal and Islander people can be involved directly in enforcing responsible restrictions, in monitoring and researching species populations and in comparing and implementing conservation plans. I urge the honourable members for Sherwood and Cunningham and others to obtain report No. 31 of the Australian Law Reform Commission, which was published in 1986. It states, in part—

“Traditional Hunting and Fishing Methods. In principle, in determining whether an activity is ‘traditional’, attention should focus on the purpose of the activity rather than the method. Thus the question which methods or technologies are to be regarded as ‘traditional’ is, for most purposes, a subordinate one. In normal circumstances it is inappropriate to insist on dugouts, fishing spears and harpoons . . . In the Northern Territory the use of firearms has been held to be consistent with traditional hunting.”

It goes on to quote Chief Justice Forster holding that the—

“right to take or kill food for ceremonial purposes . . . includes the right to kill by shooting.”

The commission then proceeded to quote his words. Those views have also been held in other jurisdictions, notably Western Australia. It is not the method by which the animals are taken that is significant in terms of recognising traditional rights. For the benefit of the honourable member for Sherwood, I also add that the Law Reform Commission also gives paramouncy to conservation as a primary concern. The report further states—

“Conservation—A Primary Concern. That necessary conservation measures should restrict traditional hunting and fishing activities is recognised at the international level.”

And further—

“Accordingly, in certain circumstances conservation measures must override traditional hunting and fishing interests. The following priorities appear to be justified:

- (a) conservation and certain other identifiable overriding interests;
- (b) traditional hunting and fishing;
- (c) commercial and recreational hunting and fishing.”

Even the Law Reform Commission principles, within which this legislation is drafted, recognises that conservation is an important issue. I now turn to some of the outrageous attacks by the honourable member for Sherwood. He is known for quoting selectively and, to be honest, his performance in the House today, as his performances seldom do, did not befit a person of his station, that is, a member of Parliament who should be a public leader in this community. Instead of putting back the cause of race relations in Queensland and Australia by years, as he does with his erratic and nonsensical attacks on Aboriginal people and their legitimate interests, he would be better served by getting out and conducting some research, meeting a few of the people and talking to them about issues that are important to them. Instead of coming in here and quoting the meaningless mouthings of Paul Everingham, the former Chief Minister of the Northern Territory who used to bash Aborigines at every available opportunity in that jurisdiction, the honourable member should be taking notice of the current situation. We are dealing with 1992, not a situation in the Northern Territory that is 10 years old.

We are dealing with real people. He should visit my electorate some time. I would introduce him to the real people, the Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, for whom

he has so little regard. He has attacked the Aboriginal and Islander people. He has attacked their integrity by even daring to suggest that, by having a clause that allows management plans to be negotiated in national parks, all national parks in Queensland will suddenly be opened up to the wholesale slaughter of wildlife and habitat. His arrant and erratic claims in this House fly in the face of the fact that he has not even read the Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act which give us the opportunity, as a Government, to gazette national parks for claims. National parks in Queensland are not available for claim until such time as the Government gazettes them. Until we gazette them, they cannot be claimed. It is the process of gazetting those national parks, of allowing them to be claimed, and of putting them under the management of the national parks plan in place that allows us to control those sorts of things. If the honourable member were not so irresponsible as to rise in this House and attack the legitimate interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland, he would know that. In addition to that, the honourable member misrepresents the interests of the conservationists in Queensland and Australia. Let me go on to quote from an article by Mark Horstman, a well-known member of the Australian Conservation Foundation in the journal *Habitat*. He said—

“Some environmentalists feared that by allowing Aboriginal communities to claim National Parks and to hunt in them, the Act would threaten the survival of certain plant and animal species. ‘No longer will they be National Parks but Government-sanctioned killing fields of our once protected ecology’ . . .”

Does that sound familiar? It is the quote the honourable member for Sherwood made earlier today. The article continues—

“. . . a long-time member of the Daintree Wilderness Action Group claimed ‘Almost 100 years of protection ripped up, shot up, burnt up, stuffed up.’ ”

Does that sound familiar? That is the quote which the honourable member took out of context before. It continues—

“Such initial mistrust is now being misplaced by understanding.”

That is an understanding and an empathy which the honourable member for Sherwood seems to lack totally. The article continues—

“Most conservationists agree that land management issues are best resolved through negotiations with traditional owners and that such negotiations must be based on a recognition of land rights and respect for traditional practices.”

We have seen what the honourable member for Sherwood thinks about negotiation. We have seen what Paul Everingham thinks about negotiation. He wanted to get out there and lambaste Bill O’Chee and Ron Boswell from the National Party. I will be interested to know if the member for Cunningham has any views about that. The Opposition is not interested in negotiation or consultation; it is interested only in one thing, and that is confrontation. That is why Opposition members come in here and try to whip up people’s feelings against the legitimate interests of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Let me quote Phillip Toyne from the Australian Conservation Foundation in a press release which was put out about the scaremongering campaign of the member for Sherwood. “The Australian Conservation Foundation condemns scare campaign against land rights” is the heading of the press release. It states—

“The Australian Conservation Foundation has rejected allegations that Aboriginal land claims would exclude white people from national parks, and called for a determined effort from the Queensland Government to support the aspirations of Aboriginal people.

Mr Phillip Toyne, Executive Director of the ACF, was responding to concerns from environmentalists and the Queensland Opposition that Aboriginal people will be able to claim land within national parks.

‘Allegations by Mr David Dunworth (Liberal spokesperson for environment and heritage), that national parks are “under threat” by “radical Aboriginal groups”



which are threatening to exclude white people, are politically motivated, completely unfounded and highly divisive', Mr Toyne said."

These are the conservationists the honourable member for Sherwood purports to represent in this place. The article says, "politically motivated, completely unfounded and highly divisive". It states—

" 'Mr Dunworth's comments have divided the community and set race relations back 50 years. The Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community deserve less destructive behaviour from public figures', he said."

The shadow Minister for Environment and Heritage talked about the situation if special rights were given to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and he referred to the attacks in Los Angeles. Unlike what Mr Elliott seems to think, the provisions in this legislation represent the legitimate aspirations of Aboriginal people. They do not represent some special class. The honourable member talked about generating a class of people which would suddenly become more wealthy. I would like to see the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Queensland become more wealthy. The attitude which the member for Sherwood portrays would lead to the divisiveness that was seen in Los Angeles. I would bet that, if Mr Dunworth were on the jury in Los Angeles, he would have found the four not guilty.

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (3.19 p.m.): One could be excused for thinking that the Minister is coming into this particular Bill as a great attention seeker.

**Mr Hamill:** Me?

**Mr STEPHAN:** No. The Minister for Transport is just sitting in the seat of the Minister for Environment and Heritage at present. I take it he has gone out for some rest and relaxation. Maybe he cannot stand the strain. I have never known a time when landowners have been more nervous than they are now. I have never heard them more nervous about the possibility of Big Brother coming in and saying, "You shall." If honourable members do not believe me, they should go out and listen to some landowners. What should be looked for is great cooperation. In the Explanatory Notes an image is created, and many Queenslanders from their urban backgrounds to inland farms and grazing properties support the principle of protecting habitats. The Explanatory Notes state—

"This legislation does not seek to override other legislation dealing with the commercial use of nature such as fishing, forestry and agriculture. Rather it seeks a cooperative, complementary approach where nature conservation issues arise."

The legislation also refers to compulsory declaration. If agreement cannot be reached, provision is made for compulsory resumption. This is the area about which so many landowners are very concerned, and possibly rightly so. If it is determined that there is rare wildlife of whatever description in a portion of a particular property and it is declared, the landowner will lose control over that particular area of land which could be a very important part of that landowner's livelihood, and one which he cannot afford to lose. These people need to be convinced that they have nothing to worry about. Has there been full consultation in regard to the Queensland Forest Service? The Conservator of Forests has been given that title because he is a conservator of forests. It is my opinion that the Queensland Forest Service has an outstanding record in its ability to conserve nature and the forests in which that service works.

The member for Cunningham mentioned in his speech the issue of grazing being permitted in national parks. I regard the implications of this practice as very important for both the national park officers and adjoining landowners. In those areas, crops will be eaten by some animal or other, such as rabbits and kangaroos, or by livestock breaking through the barriers. There is also the possibility that a build-up of wildlife in national park areas will result in the proliferation of vermin, which will have a detrimental effect on crops being grown in adjoining private properties, thereby reducing the ability of graziers to feed their stock or earn their livelihood. I urge the Minister to give serious consideration to this aspect. I believe that a proper analysis of the function of these

areas would do a great deal to overcome some of the present or potential problems associated with them.

I noticed that comment was made in passing during the debate about a simpler procedure for revocations. The present procedure is reasonably simple and involves presentation of a proposal which must be debated in the House within 14 clear days. In my view, that is a reasonable procedure, yet it was only last week when this Government took steps to bypass this Parliament. I could be wrong, but on my reading of the Bill, it contains provisions that confer authority on the Government to bypass this Parliament. This is a matter of concern to me and to other members of the Opposition who opposed legislation last week for that very reason. The adoption of the so-called simpler procedure will curtail the opportunity of members of this Parliament to express either their support for, or disapproval of, proposals presented by the Government.

Clause 41 of the Bill provides for conservation agreements. While it is not my intention to deal with this clause in depth, I believe it is important to highlight the underlying purpose of the clause. A conservation agreement may contain terms which are binding on the owner and on the owner's successors in title. The clause will allow a land-holder to carry on specified activities and will prohibit certain specified uses of the land. It will also require the land-holder to refrain from and not permit specified activities. However, if agreement is not reached, the Bill provides for enforcement of the arrangement upon the landowner. It is the force that will be imposed by the top level of Government that is of grave concern to landowners. Many have expressed concern in relation to it. I point out to the Minister that if he wants to implement a successful method of operation for these agreements, it is incumbent upon him to ensure that the arrangements are entered into on a voluntary basis. He should ensure that the landowner supports the proposal and is willing to cooperate.

Land-care matters are a very good case in point. It could be argued that, over a period, carelessness has resulted in erosion of land and that the continuation of bad practices has led to land degradation on a wide scale. Because of land-care procedures and forums that have been developed, this is no longer the case. In provincial and rural communities, people are exercising great care in their treatment of the land and recognise that greater care should be taken of the land in the future. In fact, in areas that were noted for land erosion—such as on hillsides, etc.—degradation is nowhere near as great now as it used to be. That is not to say that erosion has been totally eradicated, but I noticed after this year's floods that the careful choice of vegetation planted on riverbanks led to retention of the soil. The Government should give a great deal of encouragement to land-holders because I am sure they would not take kindly to a Minister who says, "You shall."

Compensation is an issue that also must be looked at very closely indeed, especially as the Bill refers to World Heritage listing. The Government does not have a particularly good record when it comes to the payment of compensation following the listing of World Heritage areas, especially in the Wet Tropics area of Queensland. Recently, a copy of the Lynch-Blosse consultancy paper on the structural adjustment package, containing over 100 pages, came to my attention. Basically, the report proved many of the things that members of the National Party have believed for a long time. These include the facts that the structural adjustment package was fundamentally flawed in only attempting to solve the short-term difficulties caused by World Heritage listing when most of the problems were long-term ones, that is, politically motivated. I will deal with this aspect in more detail at a later stage. The report also found that private-sector assistance under the plan was insufficient to meet the real needs of those who had been disadvantaged by World Heritage listing, and that public-sector assistance was the only successful part of the package. I would not disagree with that fact, but simply stress that the Government has \$35m in kitty that it still refuses to pass on to local authorities. As a direct result of World Heritage listing in north Queensland, 600 jobs have been lost. Of course, the loss of jobs as a result of World Heritage listing in north Queensland can be cited with equal validity in relation to Fraser Island. A couple of days ago, I was at a meeting on Fraser Island and can inform the House that those who attended the meeting are still not very comfortable with the end result,

particularly the compensation package. There has not been a great deal of consultation with local people.

**Mr Beattie:** Oh, that's nonsense!

**Mr STEPHAN:** There has not been a great deal of consultation with the locals. As a matter of fact, the Fraser Island association is very well attended and has more than 400 members, yet it was not invited to have a representative on the Government's committee.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I am an honourable man. I am telling the truth. One cannot blame those people for their concern. I begin to wonder what the Government has in mind about compensation for people in regions outside the Maryborough/Hervey Bay area. From my experience in my electorate of Gympie, it seems that preferential treatment is being given to the Maryborough/Hervey Bay region over other places, such as the Cooloola region, that have suffered also as a result of World Heritage listing. No compensation has been given to those in the Cooloola region who suffered as a result of the supply of logs being reduced by 6 000 cubic metres. If compensation was given to people on Fraser Island and in Maryborough, it should also be given to people in the Cooloola region.

**Mr Nunn:** We're going to do Gympie a favour.

**Mr STEPHAN:** How will the Government do Gympie a favour?

**Mr Nunn:** Remove you at election time.

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is about the only thing that the Government would like to do. That is about all we can expect from the member for Isis—or Hervey Bay, as it will be next year. However, the member for Hervey Bay might be different from the present member for Isis. Under those circumstances, the National Party will do the people of Hervey Bay a great favour, too. The Government has not given any compensation to those timber workers and millers who have lost a great deal of their supply from the Cooloola region.

**Mr Beattie:** You got caught out attacking Maryborough.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I did not get caught out attacking Maryborough. The Government has been propping up Maryborough. Every week, two or three Ministers visit Maryborough and try to prop up the local member. The Government says, "Trust us. We will look after you." The Government gives out some goodies, for example, rebuilding the railway station and preserving heritage buildings. However, the Government is not doing anything of lasting value. The report on the World Heritage listing of the Wet Tropics rainforest area stated that the Government was attempting to solve the problem on a short-term basis only. Government reports have stated inaccurately the number of jobs that have been lost or will be lost. It is false and misleading advertising. It is certainly advertising that is designed to be of a political nature. I can understand that the Government is trying to overcome the problems and to look after its own political kin, but it is certainly not helping the rest of Queensland.

Earlier, I mentioned forestry. Under the legislation, the Queensland Forest Service seems to have been forgotten by its Minister and is being taken over by the Department of Environment and Heritage. All forest products in areas dedicated as national parks under the proposed Act will cease to be the property of the Crown for the purposes of the Forestry Act. The restriction on the ability of the Conservator of Forests to sell timber products and quarry material in national parks and environmental parks will apply in respect of national parks and conservation parks. The Conservator of Forests will be unable to get and sell forest products in national parks and conservation parks except in accordance with the relevant conservation plan under the proposed Act. That will come under the proposed Nature Conservation Act; it will not come under the Forestry Act. The restrictions on the Conservator of Forests to grant licences in respect of land in an environmental park are no longer necessary because there will be no environmental parks. The chief executive of the Department of Environment and Heritage, instead of

the Conservator of Forests, will be deemed to be the owner and occupier of State forests and timber reserves for the purposes of those provisions of the Local Government Act 1936 that relate to impounding. That must be a concern in relation to the looking after of wildlife.

As I have said, the Conservator of Forests and the Forest Service have done a splendid job in looking after logging areas and regions that are affected by environmental legislation. Here, the Government has a very good example of a multiple-use region—the multiple use of picnic areas, environmental areas and forest areas. I wonder what the Government is trying to do in dismantling or disrupting that situation. It is certainly not for the benefit of what was once the great forestry industry. The legislation will apply to all native wildlife—animal or plant—including the wildlife in territorial waters. However, a species of wildlife is not necessarily native wildlife until it is prescribed. How long will it take for some species to be prescribed as native wildlife?

The Bill provides for areas to be dedicated as protected areas. Many activities that are carried out by primary producers in areas that are not protected areas—for example, burning-off on farms, forest operations and commercial fishing—may have to be carried out in accordance with a conservation plan developed by the Department of Environment and Heritage under the proposed Act to protect a species of native wildlife, even though the area is not protected. I ask for clarification, because the matter is of concern. There is a need for controlled burning. The Forest Service and landowners in close proximity need to be able to keep under control some of the vegetation that otherwise gets out of hand. If people cannot go to the Forest Service for approval to burn but instead have to go to the Department of Environment and Heritage, many of the burning procedures in forestry areas will become chaotic.

That provision could cause landowners a great deal of concern. The burn should be conducted at a time when the moisture is right and the heat is not excessive. Under such circumstances, one could reasonably expect that a fire would be controlled, and controlled reasonably easily. But if a landowner is not given approval to burn and in the next day or two the temperatures rise into the forties, a fire will certainly not be able to be controlled. At times, fires have occurred because of lightning strikes or because a tyre on a passing car has blown out, generating a great deal of heat and friction, thus causing a fire. Under those sorts of conditions, a fire really does get out of control. The Bill also refers to interim conservation orders.

Time expired.

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave) (3.39 p.m.): This Bill is very large, and I will certainly not attempt to cover all its provisions in the short time allocated to me. Before I address the Bill, I would like to take up the member for Gympie on one point he made about the World Heritage listing of the Wet Tropics. If I understood him correctly, he indicated that the World Heritage listing of that area, much of which lies within my electorate, had resulted in a massive loss of jobs which had not been replaced. I point out to him that the tourist industry has benefited most from the World Heritage listing. Current figures indicate that, with the number of tourists coming to the far north, any job losses and losses to the economy that might have been incurred through the listing of that area have been more than made up for. It is the only area in the world where the outback, the rainforest and the reef are all side by side attracting tourists from all over the world. If the honourable member has any doubts about that, I will get the data for him from the people involved in tourism and send it to him. Another point is that, for a long time, it was thought impossible that plantings of commercial rainforest timber could be undertaken. There is a move afoot now, I understand, to replant some 30 000 hectares of rainforest in that area which will not only provide additional rainforest with all its benefits but also produce something commercial for years to come.

By any standards, the Nature Conservation Bill is really a detailed piece of legislation. The current provisions governing the protection and conservation of our natural heritage sometimes fall short of their stated aims. It is generally accepted that the fragmentation which exists is a recipe for confusion and therefore in many cases non-compliance by citizens due to ignorance. As the Minister clearly pointed out in his

second-reading speech, the Nature Conservation Bill is not—I repeat “not”—at variance with legislation having jurisdiction over the use of natural resources for commercial purposes. Such commercial purposes would include, I suggest, agriculture, fishing and forestry. This Bill removes the onus of conservation from the province of the State alone and places that onus on a cooperative basis with all of the stakeholders concerned, that is, the population of Queensland as a whole.

The Goss Labor Government, and more particularly the Minister responsible, has a magnificent record on environmental issues of which conservation is but one, and it is a very important one at that. I note with great interest that in this Bill a good deal of emphasis is placed on the role of education. If this Bill is to meet its desired outcomes, education has a vital role to play. This Bill is proactive rather than, as we have seen in many Bills beforehand, reactive and relying to a large extent on penalties and policing. These things alone are very time consuming and add to a degree of resentment in the community. It is much better for us as a society to incorporate people's general feelings of interest and concern for the environment and have them go out and care for their environment because they want to, not because they have to. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said that education will be a key feature of the program which will implement this legislation. He said that this will be done through involving the community in the preparation of conservation plans. I applaud him for that. Unless the public and interest groups, including the Government agencies, have a real understanding of the rationale behind the conservation process, and unless they are provided with sufficient ongoing information, the cooperative approach will not succeed. I have every confidence that this will be forthcoming.

The role of the Department of Environment and Heritage is vital when promoting the area of responsibility assumed by some other departments, and these departments, I suggest, would be the Department of Primary Industries, the Fisheries Branch and the Queensland Forest Service. It would therefore, in my view, fall to the Department of Environment and Heritage to monitor this situation and assist those other agencies to manage the environmental aspects of their policies and their practices. This legislation is not overriding legislation; it is complementary legislation. It is legislation that draws things together. There is no duplication that I can perceive. It relies to a large extent on the cooperative approach. It is especially pleasing to see in the legislation a commitment to putting in place simple administrative arrangements to overcome the potential that exists for duplication of such things as fees, permits and the need for approvals and the like.

This piece of legislation is of vital importance to Aboriginal and Islander people. It was with great interest that I listened to the debate earlier this afternoon and most particularly to that magnificent speech by the member for Cook. I must congratulate Mr Bredhauer, a man who genuinely understands and believes in the wonderful role that Aboriginal people play in our society. In common with me, he has lived in the far north all his life. We do not view Aboriginal and Islander people in the same way as some other members of this House, particularly the member for Sherwood, apparently do. The Aboriginal Land Act and the Torres Strait Islander Land Act have passed through this House. They are significant pieces of legislation. Through the provisions of those Acts, some national parks will become Aboriginal land. In my electorate of Mulgrave, I am looking with great interest at the claim that I believe will be made on part of Fitzroy Island, a claim that I believe will be upheld by the tribunal. I understand that the people involved, the Kunghanghi people, have interesting plans for the management of that part of the island which is part of the national park. There is no doubt some community concern in respect of handing over national parks to Aboriginal people. There is concern about uncontrolled hunting and concern also about access. The concern ranges from that which is genuine—that which is put up by conservation groups, and by Aboriginal people, who, as the member for Cook pointed out earlier this afternoon, sometimes feel as though the consultation process has not been quite as good as it should have been. I point out that that situation by and large arises from the fact that no single group can speak for Aboriginal people in this State, and the consultation process

when handling Aboriginal matters is necessarily complex and in no way can ever be seen to be perfect.

Unfortunately, there have been wild statements made by those basically opposed to land rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those people seem to talk in terms of Land Rovers and high-powered automatic rifles and a desire of Aboriginal and Islander people to go into the State's national parks and perhaps emulate some of our cousins from the United States who seem to think that, if it moves, one has to shoot it. Some of these people are also concerned about some sort of racial segregation of access. Those people need have no fears. This piece of legislation and the complementary pieces of legislation do not allow for that situation; as a matter of fact, they will prevent those sorts of instances. I have here an article from the *Sunday Mail* of 19 April in which the member for Sherwood says that the legislation "sets a dangerous precedent that should be opposed by all sensible Queenslanders who do not want to see our State split up on racial grounds". There are no grounds for suggesting that this legislation will split the State on racial grounds. This Government is suggesting that some people have a legitimate right to that land, and the Government is asking those people to hold that land in trust, not only for their own people but also for all Queenslanders, all Australians, and all those people who want to come from overseas and enjoy access to some of that land.

The Nature Conservation Bill will allow certain national parks—initially those in the Cape York region and other far north areas—to be gazetted as Aboriginal national parks. Aborigines will then be eligible to put in a claim to the tribunal and, if accepted, freehold title will be granted on the proviso that the lands be leased back to the Government as national parks in perpetuity.

**Mr Comben:** And the management plan.

**Mr PITT:** Yes, the management plan is very important indeed. The legislation does not mean that the lands will be closed to people other than those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. As a matter of fact, the Aboriginal and Islander people to whom I have spoken see this legislation as a means of projecting their culture and their heritage to all Australians, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups are going to welcome people who are not Aboriginal or Islander people into these parks to share with them some of the mystique of their culture.

The provisions in the legislation in respect of the taking or using of wildlife by members of the Aboriginal and Islander communities are based on the report of the Law Reform Commission on traditional hunting and gathering. In his second-reading speech, the Minister referred to the appropriateness of this approach, and consequently gave an unequivocal commitment that such practices would be governed clearly by the relevant park management plan, which will be developed in cooperation with the Government agencies and the Aboriginal people who are finally designated as trustees. The park management plan requires the Aboriginal and Islander trustees to enter into negotiations with those State agencies and, at the end of that process, they must devise a means of management which retains conservation as its paramount intent. The conservation issue will override all other issues in the management plan for those particular parks. Additionally, hunting will be restricted to certain species, and limits will be placed on the number of animals to be taken. Of course, feral animals, such as pigs, are currently quite a problem in our national parks, and they will obviously be considered as suitable for hunting. I am sure the member for Sherwood and those on the other side of the House who spoke before him would welcome any sort of management plan which would involve people who have a desire to rid those national parks of those feral animals. However, where an issue of conservation is identified in respect of a species, restrictions should be and will be imposed as part of the management plan.

I turn now to Part 5 of the Bill, which deals basically with wildlife habitat and conservation. I now introduce into this debate that much maligned creature, the crocodile. The Minister for Environment last year approached me and asked me if I would chair a committee to review and present a draft east coast crocodile management plan. It was with some trepidation that I accepted the assignment. Crocodiles are not

generally held in high regard. When considering the conservation of a species, people do not think of crocodiles in the same terms as they think of cuddly creatures such as koalas and our wonderful national emblem, the kangaroo.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr PITT:** Well said, Minister; especially as I live in far-north Queensland, where in recent years there has been a history of overreaction to matters in relation to crocodiles, and that overreaction was in no small part due to the poor direction given by the previous Government in the matter of handling crocodiles as a valuable part of our native wildlife. The committee includes the member for Cook, a representative from the local authority, officials from the Department of Environment and Heritage, conservationists, Aboriginal and Islander groups, groups from the tourist industry, and a very significant group, the Crocodile Farmers Association. The two forms of crocodile that we are concerning ourselves with are the two we find here in Queensland—the crocodylus *Johnstoni* and its cousin, the salt-water crocodylus *Porosus*. These animals are in danger. There has been over the years in the far north the belief that crocodiles needed to be eradicated. One finds that their habitat is being destroyed slowly but surely, and any thought that perhaps crocodiles were on the increase is not true; their numbers are not increasing dramatically. I would also say that those who perhaps had the hope that crocodiles were being wiped out will not be satisfied either, because crocodiles have managed to retreat to areas which are more favourable for their survival, and in those particular areas their numbers actually have increased. The aim of the committee is not only the conservation and protection of the species, but most importantly, and overriding all other considerations, the protection of our species, the human species. The Bill that we have before us today emphasises the role of education in the protection of wildlife. It also emphasises the role of education in the protection of human beings.

It appears that people are largely ignorant of crocodiles. They tend to think of crocodiles as only vicious creatures that are capable of inflicting injury and death. People do not think of crocodiles in terms of their contribution to the wider ecology. Crocodiles in far-north Queensland are valuable creatures for tourism. Many tourist operators in far-north Queensland have operations which largely centre on people being able to go to crocodile country and actually see crocodiles in the wild. There are also other operations in which crocodiles are kept in captivity so that people, who may not be quite so adventurous to travel to the outback, can see them at first-hand. Also, some kind of misconception exists about the danger that crocodiles pose to people. Crocodiles and sharks, because of the savagery of their attacks, are sometimes grouped together as dangerous creatures. The truth is that sharks, stingrays, taipans and red-back spiders are responsible for far more deaths in Queensland than crocodiles are. Over the period of European record taking, any statistics that one could lay one's hands on would actually bear that out. Therefore, the crocodile has huge potential. I am pleased to see that this legislation is proof of the work that has been done by the committee with which I am involved. Under this legislation, more responsibility will be placed on the people who benefit from the use of wildlife and conservation plans to ensure that those people contribute to the protection of wildlife. The people who operate in the tourist industry and the farmers themselves realise that the crocodile is a commodity of dollar value and are prepared to assist in that respect.

I also note that the legislation introduces new classifications for the protection of wildlife, such as presumed extinct wildlife, endangered wildlife—which would be crocodiles—vulnerable wildlife, rare wildlife, and common wildlife. Australia is a co-signatory to CITES, which is the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species. It is a national convention and it is under that umbrella that my committee has been approaching the situation. Division 3 of Part 5 of the legislation quite clearly states that protected animals in the wild are owned and controlled by the State. That applies not only to the crocodile, about which I have been speaking, but also to all other species. For the benefit of those people who are interested in crocodile farming, I point out that the progeny of a native animal will generally be regarded as the property of the owner of the female parent. A considerable supply of young crocodiles are being

developed in far-north Queensland. Basically, they have been bred in captivity from, in many cases, females taken from the wild in the natural course of the Department of Environment and Heritage and other authorised catchers going out and taking those animals away from the wild when they pose some type of danger to humans. In this legislation, protected wildlife will not be taken, kept or used unless the activity is authorised under the conservation plan, a licence, permit or other authority issued under a regulation. Therefore, the taking of protective wildlife from the wild will and should be controlled.

I turn now to the ranching of crocodiles. From time to time, this matter has been suggested. I know that crocodile farmers in this State, for whom I have a great deal of respect, have been very cooperative in their deliberations with the committee. They have a desire to investigate the possibility of ranching crocodiles. Ranching basically means that people go out into the wild, catch crocodiles and replenish crocodile farms with those crocodiles taken from the wild. Those people also collect eggs and so forth from the wild. That is only possible if it can be proved that the population in the wild is sustainable in the long term. The Government does not have sufficient evidence to give a clear indication that a program of ranching could be undertaken in Queensland. I understand that such a program is operating in the Northern Territory, but it must be understood that the crocodile population in the Northern Territory is much greater than it is in Queensland, and it is much more concentrated. Therefore, it is easier for people to take measures to find out whether or not the crocodile population is sustainable.

In conclusion, I wish to pay particular tribute to some of the many people involved in the Crocodile Farmers Association. I had the opportunity to visit Mr John Lever's farm in Rockhampton, and I was most impressed with his expertise as a showman. I use that word advisedly because he was able to put across his educational message in a manner which I was not able to forget in a hurry. I also look at my own backyard. In the Trinity Inlet, there is an offshoot of the Edward River crocodile farm. Mr Vic Onions, who has an establishment there, employs several local people. That farm provides employment for a number of young Aboriginal people in my area who seem to have a special skill and affinity with this type of work. I applaud those operators, along with Harry Freeman, who has an operation on the Marlin Coast, for the interest that they are taking, not only in the species, but also in the promotion and education of the species, and most particularly, for offering employment to young people in my area.

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego) (3.59 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to speak to the Nature Conservation Bill. I do not want to reiterate what other honourable members have said, but I must refer to what one honourable member said. The member for Barron River stated that this is timely and reformist legislation. It certainly is timely. There has been no time lost at all in putting through the legislation. As to reformist—the honourable member really must ask herself a question about that. The legislation contains 124 pages. There are 170 clauses and 18 amendments to other Acts. The honourable member stated that this is reformist legislation. That must have been a joke. But that is not the point. The point is that the Opposition is prepared to debate the issue anywhere and whenever the occasion arises.

**Mr Comben:** You don't have a choice. This is the place. This is the time. Get on with it.

**Mr HOBBS:** I most certainly will get on with it; there is no doubt about that. I will very, very soon refer to matters that concern the Minister. The consultation process is one of the issues that should be addressed in this legislation. I understand that the Minister has had a lot of consultation on this issue. But it is unfortunate that Her Majesty's Opposition has not been involved at all in any of those——

**Mr Comben:** I sat over there for six years.

**Mr HOBBS:** The Minister introduced this new, reformist legislation. He said that he was going to consult with people; he was going to be pure lilywhite. But what has he done? He is a pure fraud. The Minister talks about what happened in the past, although he said that all that was behind him. It has also been said that this is timely and reformist



legislation. I refer to the Minister's second-reading speech, in which he spoke about the protection of the rights of people and private property. He said—

"It is a pleasure for me to introduce this Bill guaranteeing the future of all aspects of nature."

I wonder whether the Minister is really protecting the rights of people. It is obvious that in many cases he is not doing that. I will mention that aspect later. Also in his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

". . . we can boast that we have a truly world class system of national parks which is representative of the biodiversity . . ."

The Minister has gone about this process like a man possessed. He has used the forces of Government to take land from people, he used taxpayers' money on a personal crusade, and he abused his position for personal ego-tripping.

**Mr COMBEN:** I rise to a point of order. I find offensive the concept that I have abused ministerial office for personal ego, and ask that it be withdrawn.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! The member will withdraw the comment.

**Mr HOBBS:** Because of your ruling, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will withdraw the comment.

**Mr Comben:** You haven't got a choice.

**Mr HOBBS:** It is a matter of judgment as to whether people really believe what the Minister is saying or what I am saying. I guarantee that more people support me and my views.

**Mr Comben:** I will see you at the ballot box.

**Mr HOBBS:** All right, I will see the Minister at the ballot box. In his second-reading speech, the Minister also mentioned hunting. He stated—

"Any hunting which took place would be subject to the park management plan which will require the approval of Governor in Council and which has conservation as its paramount intent and would be restricted to appropriate numbers of appropriate species, including feral animals such as pigs."

I wonder why the Minister referred to pigs. They are feral animals that cause me a great deal of concern with regard to the Minister's acquisition of land program. As I said before, the Minister's mad-dog approach to land acquisition does not take into consideration the management of feral animals and the consequences of overstocking and disease. The possibility of an outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease concerns me greatly. All of the land in national parks will be unmanaged. How on earth is the Minister going to control the outbreak of a disease such as foot-and-mouth in a national park area?

**Mr Comben:** How is it going to get there?

**Mr HOBBS:** The Minister asks how it is going to get there. A whole boatload of people arrived in north Queensland—

**Mr Comben:** You are talking about Cape York.

**Mr HOBBS:** I am talking about north Queensland, and anywhere else in Queensland for that matter.

**Mr Comben:** We have not declared one new national park on the coast of north Queensland.

**Mr HOBBS:** Mr Eaton mentioned recently that he had paid for Riversleigh.

**Mr Comben:** That is not on the coast, it is 300 kilometres away from it.

**Mr HOBBS:** Does the Minister claim that a disease outbreak cannot reach that area? Disease does not happen only along the coastline.

**Mr Comben:** I am saying it hasn't changed since you left Government.

**Mr HOBBS:** It is changing dramatically, and will change even further under this legislation. The Minister talks about a world-class national park area.

**Mr Dunworth:** The "Minister for Rubber Vine".

**Mr HOBBS:** Yes, the "Minister for Rubber Vine". The Minister has been telling people that this world-class area will be bigger than Kakadu, but he will not be able to control any outbreak of disease in an area that size. He is placing in jeopardy the grazing industry and the whole economy of this State and nation.

**Mr Elder:** Rubbish! You do go on with some drive!

**Mr HOBBS:** What I am saying is correct. I have been involved with the Department of Primary Industries in the containment of the outbreak of an exotic disease. Departmental officers had to find stock that had been moved from a saleyard. They also had to clean up the wild pigs in the area, and that involved the use of helicopters. If that could not be done on the limited scale of that outbreak, what could be done with an outbreak in the huge area of land that will be locked up under this Minister?

**Mr Comben:** Mr Hobbs—

**Mr HOBBS:** I have a few more things to say, so the Minister might like to listen to them. The problem of plague locusts comes to mind. Because large areas of land are involved in this legislation, they are a real problem, and I am concerned that the Minister will not know whether or not plague locusts are on the land. Recent legislation has specified that the Plague Locust Commission cannot enter a national park without special permission. If it locates plague locusts, it must contact the Minister before it can enter that land and control those pests.

**Mr Comben:** Rubbish!

**Mr HOBBS:** That is the case. That provision exists in legislation at present. I invite the Minister to check that.

**Mr Comben:** Where? Will you please tell me? Just tell me where.

**Mr HOBBS:** I cannot think of the legislation at the moment. It was in one of the Bills that was passed last year.

**Mr Comben:** One of them. That shows how well and up-to-date you are with your shadow portfolio.

**Mr HOBBS:** It is in one of those many Bills that went through the House last year.

**Mr Comben:** It is a great advertisement for you.

**Mr HOBBS:** It is. In fact, during the debate on that legislation I asked the Minister a question about access to that land, and he said that it would be all right and that he would be able to control that problem. Of course, he cannot. This legislation also effectively puts a ban on grazing in national parks, although it recognises current agreements. The Minister will need help to maintain and manage existing national parks. He cannot control them in the present manner. There is no reason why neighbours cannot cooperate in these situations. The Minister should be able to provide grazing rights on particular areas that adjoin or are part of national parks. I believe that there would be better control of noxious weeds and feral animals if he did that. Recently, the *7.30 Report* presented a good story on the rubber vine. The Minister has been referred to as the "Minister for Rubber Vine", which is not bad. There is also parthenium, prickly acacia—

**Mr Dunworth:** Groundsel, lantana—you name it.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is right. There is a whole host of noxious plants out of control at present. We have already had the social movement down here carrying on about all the Labor Party philosophies. While that has been going on, all of the weeds have been growing out in the bush.

**Mr Comben:** They weren't there before?

**Mr HOBBS:** Some were there before, but it is worse now. We are facing a dim future. The Minister referred to compulsory declaration of nature refuges. He has proved that he cannot handle compulsory acquisitions. I refer to the Riversleigh case where he has taken 85 000 hectares when 5 000 hectares would have been enough. He knows that as well as I do.

**Mr Comben:** I do not.

**Mr HOBBS:** The Minister does know that as well as I do. He provoked all those people during the discussions. He has changed his mind on the boundary lines as he did with other national parks when negotiations were going on. He has taken the land, and the owners do not know the price. Would the Minister sell the land on which his house sits to someone who said, "I will tell you the price later on"? No; and nobody else would, either.

**Mr Comben:** If you said, "I will buy your house at fair market price as determined by the court and you can live in it for the rest of your life"—yes, I would.

**Mr HOBBS:** What the Minister is doing is, first, reducing people's incomes.

**Mr Comben:** The cows are on it.

**Mr HOBBS:** No, the Minister will not let them graze there.

**Mr Comben:** The cows are on it today. They have not moved.

**Mr HOBBS:** The cows will not be there, and the Minister knows that.

**Mr Comben:** We will discuss it.

**Mr HOBBS:** Will the Minister give them a grazing lease?

**Mr Comben:** The honourable member for Cunningham asked a question and, in answer, I said, "We will allow them to have long-term grazing rights. We will apply the fair market price. We will discuss fencing, roads, and everything else." What did they say? They said, "No."

**Mr HOBBS:** That is totally unfair, and the Minister knows that as well as I do.

**Mr Comben:** I stood here and said it.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is totally unfair. The Minister has a very short memory. He is suffering a bad memory loss, apparently. The Minister did not tell them where the boundaries were. He took more country every time he spoke to them, and they did not know how much he would pay them. The Minister does not realise that. How many Government members would sell some of their house property without knowing the price? What would they get for it? No-one knows! "Trust me" says Pat Comben. Would anybody trust him?

**Government members:** Yes!

**Mr HOBBS:** They have to be joking. He will have to take a food taster with him the next time he goes out west. The Minister referred to an appeal from a decision. What appeal do these people have against the Minister's decision? They can appeal to the Land Court against the price, and there are some things there to be sorted out, but there is no other appeal.

**Mr Comben:** There is an appeal under the Acquisition of Land Act and section 86 of the Land Act.

**Mr HOBBS:** This is not the Land Act. This is different. The Minister is going onto private land——

**Mr Comben:** That is the Acquisition of Land Act. The appeal is there. That is in your piece of legislation.

**Mr HOBBS:** The Minister has lost the complete trust that these people had for the Government. There is no appeal process to stop a politically motivated madman taking any private or leased land that takes his warped fancy.

**Mr Comben:** We do not have any politically motivated madmen around.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is a very debatable point. I would not like to point any fingers at anyone. The Minister has lost the people's trust for the Government. An Act could have been passed along those lines, but now the deal is off.

**Mr Smyth:** Out where?

**Mr HOBBS:** Anywhere in Queensland I am talking about.

**Mr Comben:** We will see at the ballot box.

**Mr HOBBS:** We will see at the ballot box all right. I would like to make a few points on the international agreements. I always wonder why Government members want to surrender their sovereignty. Why would they want to do that? Why do they want to hold up Third World countries as models for the future? For the life of me, I cannot understand that.

**Mrs Edmond:** What a load of nonsense!

**Mr HOBBS:** They are doing it.

**Government members:** Where?

**Mr HOBBS:** World Heritage is a good example. The Government does not even have a management program in place after two and a half years on World Heritage. Is the Government consulting Colonel Gaddafi or somebody? It is the Third World countries that are dominating the heritage areas, and Government members know that as well as I do.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! The honourable member for Warrego will continue with his speech.

**Mr HOBBS:** The Government refers to a declaration of international agreements. The legislation refers to specified depths below the surface and specified heights above the land. We know that the Minister is sometimes away with the pixies, but in Australia, with its vast areas and sparse population, a few aircraft flying along major routes would have no effect on wildlife. Why would the Government want to put that into legislation?

**Mr Comben:** To stop a helicopter going over Lawn Hill at 30 feet.

**Mr HOBBS:** The Minister said that Uluru is the model that he is working on, and I think it is 5 000 feet there. I could be wrong. This has caused a lot of concern among the people in this area. The Minister will end up with a low limit of a mile for aircraft.

**Mr Comben:** That is not what I am saying.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is what the Minister is saying. He should read the legislation.

**Mr Comben:** We are saying that we can. Then we can work out the management plan and whether the height is 100 feet for helicopters and 3 000 feet for fixed-wing craft. Those things will be worked out in the management plan.

**Mr HOBBS:** We will see what develops along those lines. The other point which needs to be raised in this debate is the restriction on taking protected animals. I wonder whether, in the interpretation, there would be any restriction on present or normal practices. I ask this because there is provision for a huge maximum fine—3 000 penalty units.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is right, but the penalty is still sufficient for somebody who may be going about his normal management-type practices and does not perhaps understand what has happened. There is a need for a commitment from the Minister in his reply that he will be lenient in that respect. Obviously there should be no encouragement for bird smugglers and those types of people. They must be hit hard. I accept that. However, I think that some consideration should be shown for those people who are going about their normal business, be it farming or whatever else.

People should be able to go about their business without the fear of having somebody jumping down their neck at a later time.

Another aspect is the incentive for private land-holders. I am surprised that local government has agreed to give rate relief. Perhaps the Minister should ask whether local government has in fact agreed to provide rate relief. Under the acquisition program, the Department of Environment and Heritage does not pay rates in respect of land that has been taken over by the department for national park purposes. Many properties in some of the far-western shires previously paid rates. The provision of rate relief means a substantial reduction in income to the councils concerned. I do not really believe that local government has been consulted on that issue. Perhaps the Minister could cover that particular point in his reply. Where acquisitions have been made, a lot of local authorities have been expecting some sort of assistance in regard to shire work, such as roadworks. That is an area that needs to be looked at a little more closely.

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central) (4.18 p.m.): I rise with some degree of enthusiasm to support the Nature Conservation Bill. I think that members of this House and the community would know that nature conservation is fundamentally important to the survival of mankind or humankind. It is disappointing to hear in debates such as this the nonsense and diatribe contained in the contributions of the honourable members for Sherwood, Warrego and Gympie.

**Mr Elder** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** What a "treesome"! The only thing that those members have in common is their support for trees. It concerns me that in important debates such as this members use the sort of scare tactics that were used by the honourable member for Sherwood. Anyone who has read this Bill would be very acutely aware that the honourable member for Sherwood has not read it. I find that distressing because this piece of legislation is fundamentally important to the future of this State.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** If I were the honourable member for Warrego, I would not interject. He is the member for "weeds". All we heard from him for 20 minutes was nonsense. The honourable member for Warrego has not read the Bill either. I was being a bit kind to him. He has not read the Bill. If I were him, I would stop while I was ahead.

**Mr Hobbs:** I have read the Bill.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member for "weeds" indeed. This Bill is about providing security for all aspects of nature in Queensland. It is about nature conservation. I congratulate the Minister. He has not just successfully produced this fundamentally important piece of legislation; he has vigorously pursued the doubling of Queensland's park estate, or national park area, as promised by the Labor Party at the 1989 State election. That is also something that is fundamentally important to all Queenslanders. However, the doubling of the national park estate, important as it is, does not in itself guarantee the security of nature. This Bill is designed to take that one step further and to provide, as far as possible, a guarantee of the security of nature.

I intend to speak about only two matters because honourable members have spent a great deal of time talking in general terms about the Bill. One matter is conservation planning and the other is Naturesearch, which are matters that are particularly related. The reason I want to deal with conservation planning is that it is an issue of fundamental importance to this State. It concerns Queenslanders wherever they live. In my electorate, I find a great deal of support not only for environmental issues generally but also for conservation planning. What needs to be acknowledged about this Bill is that it is doing something practical and it is providing some planning, and the word "planning" is fundamentally important. Bearing in mind that it is estimated that over the next eight or nine years there will be an influx to the south-east corner of Queensland of somewhere between 600 000 and 750 000 people—almost three-quarters of a million people—long-term planning is fundamentally important. Without that planning, the nature of this State will be very seriously impaired. As members would be aware, one of my strongest criticisms has been the lack of planning by past Governments which have rushed into

legislation or plans that have provided schemes for bridges crossing the Brisbane River and plans for destructive freeways. These sorts of things have come about because of short-term planning. With that rapid increase in population in the south-east corner over the next eight to nine years, it is fundamentally important that there be conservation planning, otherwise some of the most important areas and important species in this State will be lost forever.

I will deal with conservation plans, which are a key element in this legislation. They will provide opportunities and mechanisms for the protection, management and use of protected areas, critical habitats and protected wildlife. Conservation plans will involve land-holders and interested persons in the preparation and development of strategies to conserve nature. Such mechanisms will ensure that people who benefit from ecologically sustained use of protected areas and wildlife contribute to the cost of preparation of the plans. There should also be some benefit to nature or to the community. I refer to the Minister's second-reading speech where he sums up the importance of conservation plans as follows—

“Conservation plans will be approved by the Governor in Council and there is a requirement that they be implemented. All persons will be required to comply with the plan. Compensation provisions apply to landholders who may be detrimentally affected if a use is regulated in a conservation plan.

Other Departments and landholders will also have an interest in the preparation of conservation plans. Examples are the Department of Lands, QDPI and the Department of Resource Industries. Plans will recognise the skills and resources that landholders and these Departments have in regard to managing the protected areas where they have an interest or where protected species or their habitat are involved. The plan may authorise other Departments to issue permits and other authorities under their legislation providing that this is consistent with the conservation plan and the management principles for the wildlife or the protected area. Conservation plans for classes of wildlife will be prepared before the whole Act is proclaimed. This will enable provisions dealing with any taking or use of wildlife to be developed in consultation with the community.”

The crucial words are “developed in consultation with the community”, which really puts to rest some of the nonsense that has been uttered in this debate.

A prime example of a conservation plan exists in south-east Queensland and is known as Naturesearch. I wish to deal in detail with that program because of its great relevance to the issue of conservation planning. Naturesearch is a survey of native flora and fauna that has been undertaken in the area from Noosa to the border and west to the Great Dividing Range. A map has been drawn on a computer system on the basis of grid squares. The Minister has sought community support for the project, which is a matter to which I will refer later. Naturesearch is designed to gather information and to use as wide a cross-section of people as possible to gather it. It has led to an incredible response from the public, and most people have been surprised by the amount of support that has been forthcoming. In fact, approximately 1 400 people have joined the Naturesearch 2001 program, including conservation groups and their members in the Naturesearch area. Although the project has been in operation for only six months, so far 300 people have returned their survey forms. The information has been entered into a computer database, and today I spent a little time looking through the names and addresses of people who have volunteered to assist in the program. I notice that people who live in areas of my electorate such as Herston, Red Hill, New Farm and Newmarket are displaying a genuine interest in preserving the nature that abounds in the community in which we live.

**Mr Schwarten:** They should be applauded for it.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take the interjection and agree that they should be applauded for it. I am delighted that people who live in my electorate are involved in the program. Let me be more specific about Naturesearch because I believe it is important to understand what it entails. The program is designed to establish a flora and fauna register which will incorporate species location information at two levels. The distribution of all flora and

fauna species can be accommodated on a presence or absence basis at the one minute grid level. For rare or threatened species, the actual latitude and longitude will be recorded as far as is practicable at the property level. A major outcome will be assessment of the flora and fauna habitat values and the location of nature corridors in the 19 local authority areas covered by the program. Information for the register will come from a variety of sources including Government departments, universities, consultants, specialist organisations, conservation groups and sections of the wider community, to which I referred earlier. Collation and analysis of information from those sources will provide basic knowledge regarding the distribution of species and general habitat preferences. It will contribute to better management of rare or threatened species and their habitats. It will assist in improving management of the existing service estate, in identifying potential sites for acquisition for the service estate, and in producing recommendations for town-planning and development control plans. It will also contribute to integrated community-based nature conservation planning in off-park areas, including recommendations on the value and maintenance of nature corridors.

During my contribution to this debate, I wish to emphasise that one of the most important uses to which the information will be put is assisting with the implementation of recommendations for town planning and development control plans. As I said earlier, over the next eight or nine years almost three-quarters of a million extra people will be flocking to the south-east corner of this State. It is fundamentally important, therefore, that the information provided by the search be made available so that councils and State Government departments can plan effectively instead of simply destroying areas—which has happened in the past—and then saying, “What the heck happened?” By that stage, it is probably too late to save the situation, which is why planning is of fundamental importance.

The local authorities to which I have referred have already willingly joined in the project and have provided enthusiastic and essential support. In addition, each one has contributed \$2,000 towards the scheme. The State Government has also allocated \$80,000 in this year's Budget. As I mentioned earlier, 1 400 volunteers, including entire families, have participated in the scheme. The area to be surveyed will cover 18 000 square kilometres and will cover 19 shires and cities. The whole area has been divided into 7 200 map grid squares of 1.6 kilometres by 1.6 kilometres to facilitate precise surveying and recording. The project's volunteer effort is being headed by a team of five managers, and the planning and information derived from the area will be of fundamental importance in avoiding many of the mistakes that have been made overseas. I have in my possession Naturesearch 2001 data that is dated 30 April 1992, which I will table for the information of honourable members. This information is still at a preliminary stage, but I believe that honourable members will be able to see from the small, shaded areas that the work associated with the program is well under way.

If we look around the world to see what has happened in some cities, we see that one of the great disappointments is Los Angeles, which has been in the news in recent days because of the rioting and the other problems. Anyone who understands social issues and community difficulties would know that many community problems—whether they be crimes by juveniles or social unrest generally—come out of the environment in which people live. Therefore, many people would say that mistakes—planning errors—made in the past in Los Angeles have contributed significantly to many of its recent problems—not only the racial issues themselves but also the social issues that have gone with them. The contribution by the honourable member for Cunningham, who made some adverse comments about the social policies of the Democrats in the sixties and the seventies, with all due respect to my learned colleague, was, to say the least, stretching the bow a little far. If one were to look at what happened in Los Angeles, one would see that the city was not planned. It sprawls like an ugly—

**Mr Schwarten:** Snake.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take Mr Schwarten's interjection for want of a better word. The city sprawls like a snake. What was done? Instead of the authorities looking at the nature of the area—which is what this legislation provides—and instead of looking at a

systematic way of planning for the city, they did nothing and Los Angeles ended up with very little public transport—a sprawling, ugly city with freeways running through it.

**Mr Ardill:** And fumes.

**Mr BEATTIE:** And fumes. Los Angeles is a disaster—a planning nightmare—because no long-term planning was done. As I said, the problems that occurred recently are as much a result of that lack of planning in Los Angeles' past as they are a result of racial issues. That is why it is so important that, when we consider the legislation, we accept the desperate need for those conservation strategies. We must make sure that our kids understand those things so that they are close to nature and so that, if they have a possum in their backyard, they can appreciate its role and come to understand such animals and where they fit into the ecosystem in which we all live. I am happy to say that in my backyard I have a possum, which my kids admire.

**Mr Elliott:** That's why I say it's so important that the Minister understands the relationship between Fraser Island and the people, particularly in the south-east corner, and in large parts of Queensland.

**Mr BEATTIE:** These issues are difficult. I am saying simply that they can be resolved if we come to some acceptance that conservation planning and nature itself are, to some extent, above politics. One simply cannot use each one of those illustrations as an opportunity to attack another political party or another individual. If we consider what has been happening in the world over the last 200 years, we see the domination of economics since the Industrial Revolution and its subsequent and very destructive effect on the environment. Industrial waste became such a problem that it is only now in some parts of the world—for example, in some places in Wales—that people have been able to restore some of the great industrial cities of the last century to places where people can actually live in all parts of them.

We must be careful that we have a balance in our planning and that we do not simply become dominated by one particular aspect. This conservation planning is about balance. Unless one has the information, one cannot plan adequately. In the past, that was the big problem. If ever there were to be one major criticism of past National Party and National/Liberal Party Governments in this State, it would be that they lived from day to day. They went from one knee-jerk reaction to another. It is often amusing to listen to the contributions that are made by conservative members in this House. They take the opportunity to criticise the Labor Government, which has been in office for about two and a half years, yet many of the things of which those members have been critical they had more than 32 years to do something about. It brings me to the point that, in the past, planning was missing.

I issue the following warning in the debate: any political party—regardless of which party—that ignores the need for conservation planning and ignores the importance of environmental issues does so at its own peril. I know that debate goes on in the community and that some people want to see the argument as development versus the environment. In fact, it does not have to be a case of development versus environment. As I said before, it is a case of balance. We get the required information for the necessary conservation planning and then local authorities and Government departments take the appropriate steps and measures. I say again: any political party that wants to ignore the importance of things such as conservation planning and comes into this House and simply tries to use scare tactics for short-term political gain will in the end meet the wrath of the electors. People nowadays are better informed and better educated than ever before about conservation issues and environmental issues, and they are changing their vote. They are doing that because those are the quality of life issues about which people are concerned. The Minister—whatever his long future will be—will be able to look back with some degree of pride—

**Mr Comben:** It will be a long future.

**Mr BEATTIE:** It will be a long future, yes. I hope that it will be a long future. The Minister will be able to look back with some pride knowing that he has played a key role in this reforming Government that has brought about the sort of conservation



legislation, the sort of planning, that is necessary to protect the environment. If ever this series of Labor Governments leaves a legacy, I hope that it is a legacy of adequate planning to look after the environment in which we live. As we head towards the twenty-first century, every day one sees on television or in newspapers some example of alarming things that have happened which affect our environment or the planet's species. I conclude by congratulating the Minister and expressing my disappointment about the cheap point scoring that we had from the Opposition.

**Mr BEANLAND** (Toowong) (4.37 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in this debate. Prior to its introduction into this House last Tuesday, 28 April—exactly seven days ago—this legislation was not seen by me, the Liberal Party or, I understand, the National Party. Over the last 12 months, some consultation has occurred with various interested groups. I say “some”, because there have been so many drafts of this legislation that I am sure that not every group has seen every draft of it. Over the last 12 months, various groups have approached me, some to support the legislation, some to oppose it, all for a variety of justifiable reasons. Many of those reasons were very legitimate indeed. In many instances, I have found that those very legitimate reasons are not contained within this legislation. As we have seen, the contents of the draft have changed and we are now confronted with this piece of legislation. There has been no time to consult adequately the various interested groups about this legislation. This Bill was introduced some seven days ago and the Government now proposes, with the weight of numbers, to ram it through this House. Because of the significance of this legislation, it is a great shame on the Government of the day that it has not seen fit to include both the National and Liberal Parties, as well as the interested groups, in the production of this legislation and in the final product before it was introduced into this House. In spite of what the Minister might think, all members are concerned about the environment.

**Mr Comben:** Only one person on the other side of the House asked me for consultation or a briefing. That was your own shadow Minister. He was given it. No-one else asked.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I hear what the Minister is saying. In future, he will do these things in secret. If we want consultation, we will all have to line up and ask him for it. I will be only too pleased to do so. There is no rush to put this legislation through tonight. It can be kept for a couple more weeks. The House is sitting again the week after next. It is not just members of Parliament but members of all interested groups who are not fully aware of the contents of this legislation. The Minister cannot deny that. In common with other members of Parliament, I have sent this legislation out to many groups. They are now coming back to me and saying, “We have never seen this legislation before. It is different.”

**Mr Comben:** Which groups are you talking about?

**Mr BEANLAND:** I will give the Minister a list of groups shortly. They are saying that they have never seen this legislation; that it is vastly different from what they saw some months ago or when they saw a previous draft. We do not argue that it is a complicated piece of legislation. However, this Bill comprises 124 pages, 170 clauses, amendments to 18 Acts of Parliament and the repeal of 8 Acts. The Acts that are being repealed are very significant. They include the Fauna Conservation Act, the Fauna Conservation Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1976, the Fauna Conservation Act Amendment Act, the Fauna Conservation Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1984 and 1989, the National Parks and Wildlife Act, which is a very important piece of legislation, the National Parks and Wildlife Act and Another Act Amendment Act 1982 and the Native Plants Protection Act 1930. With this Bill, the Minister is repealing all of those Acts of Parliament.

As I said, the Minister introduced this Bill into the House last Tuesday. Last Wednesday and Thursday, along with other members, I was in this House when other major pieces of legislation were debated. Last Friday, perhaps unlike the Minister, I attended to electorate matters. After that, there was a long weekend. As a result, it was

not possible for me or other members to devote the time that we would have liked to devote to this and other pieces of legislation coming before the Parliament.

**Mr Comben:** Pick up the phone.

**Mr BEANLAND:** It is not a case of the Minister whimpering, trying to interject and making excuses. He is good on excuses. He is good at making excuses for a dithering Government, but that does not get over the problems. He did not consult on this legislation. He has not allowed sufficient time for it to be considered. He has not consulted on the end product. He cannot deny that. The interested groups in the community are aware of that. Over the last seven days, in the little time that has been available to me, I have spoken to many people who said they have neither sighted this legislation nor read it. Of course, yesterday was a public holiday.

This Bill comes before the Parliament in what are certainly the death throes of this Government's promise of open and accountable government. That promise has been well and truly buried with this piece of legislation. There has been only one working day in which members have had an opportunity to consult. As I have indicated, in weeks when the Parliament is sitting, one has to attend to constituent matters at some time, and Friday is the usual day for such attention. Clearly, over a period this legislation has changed for a number of reasons. The Government found parts of it too difficult. No doubt, the chief bureaucrat, Mr Rudd, overruled the Minister on a number of important points which I heard were contained in this legislation but which have changed during the drafting process. I can understand that.

I support the principles of this legislation. I know that the Liberal Party supports the principles and the general thrust of the legislation. Unfortunately, the actual wording of the legislation leaves a lot to be desired. That is where the Minister has completely run off the rails. The Liberal shadow Minister has spelt out some of the reasons—and I will refer to some other reasons—why the Liberal Party will oppose this legislation. At the Committee stage, we will be spelling out more fully and in great detail our concerns about much of this legislation.

It is obvious that the previous speaker, the member for Brisbane Central, did not have time to even read the legislation, because on no occasion did he touch upon the Bill. He talked about a range of other matters concerning the environment, a number of which have some importance but are not related to this Bill. That again highlights how quickly this legislation is being rushed through. This legislation will do a number of things. It will certainly create an empire and no doubt a bureaucrat's dream. The Director-General of the Department of Environment and Heritage, who will administer this legislation, will look forward to building up a large bureaucracy if the legislation is to be carried out in the format spelt out by the Minister in the Bill. Although a large number of people within the bureaucracy have been involved in shuffling paper, unfortunately few people will be involved in the field in actually doing the job.

It has been noted how few people there are managing many of the national parks in this State. Although it does cost money, it is very easy to go out and acquire additional lands for national parks or transfer them from the Forest Service to the National Parks and Wildlife Service, but it is another matter when it comes to the management of those national parks. That is where the real cost and the real work is involved. While the Government has certainly gained some points in acquiring additional land, it has lost those points through its failure to adequately and properly manage those additional lands it has acquired. If honourable members examine the budget document contained in the legislation, they will see that, in the 1991-92 financial year, the Government will increase the national park estate by some 1.7 million hectares across a range of geographic areas. However, at the same time, the number of employees within the department who deal with conservation management has only increased from 678 to 690. In fact, the number has increased by 12. I put it to the Minister that 12 people will not be able to manage such a large area of land, and no doubt some of those people will be taken up in the paper warfare within the department and will not be out in the field managing these national parks. Consequently, that will be the area in which this Government falls down.

In relation to the world heritage area in north Queensland—for the last three or three and a half years, there has been a promise of a management plan, yet there is still no sign of it. There are unlimited resources for that, but the resources are not so unlimited for the national parks covered by this legislation. Without those adequate resources, the Minister's conservation plans and management plans, which have been spelt out within this legislation, will fall apart, because what the Minister is saying here—I ask him to correct me if I am wrong, but I believe that I have read the legislation correctly—is that he will have management plans for each of the classes of protected areas of national park. Set out in the legislation are classes from (a) to (k): national parks (scientific), national parks, national parks (Aboriginal land), national parks (Torres Strait Islander land), conservation parks, resources reserves, nature refuges, coordinated conservation areas, wilderness areas, World Heritage management areas, international agreement areas. In addition to all of those, the Minister proposes to have management plans for each of the national parks within those areas. There may be very good reasons to have differing management plans. However, that will take one heck of a lot of work; it will involve one heck of a cost; and it will certainly take a lot more people to do that work than are currently on the ground. I can envisage a situation which is very similar to the one existing in the World Heritage area. I put it to the Minister that that simply is not good enough, because there must be proper management plans within this legislation for those national park areas. I wish to comment on some other aspects of this legislation which I do not believe have been touched upon to date. They relate to the investigation and enforcement—

**Mr Comben:** You said earlier you were going to mention the groups. Would you give me that list of groups?

**Mr BEANLAND:** If the Minister is patient, I will get around to answering him very shortly.

**Mr Comben:** Give me that list of groups.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I suggest that the Minister should go back home to Pickles. He is lonely at home waiting for the Minister. Let us now discuss the investigation and enforcement. I well understand why the Minister does not wish to discuss that. This is a section to which I will now refer briefly and in more detail when we get to the Committee stage. Very significant powers are given to conservation officers and honorary protectors by this legislation. I know that the Law Society sent the Minister a submission in relation to this section.

**Mr Comben:** No.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I know for a fact that the Law Society has sent the Minister a submission. Honourable members should bear in mind that the Minister brought this legislation into this House seven days ago, and I can understand that the Minister has not received that submission from the Law Society. That confirms the very point that I have been making: the Minister has not given time for the various groups to consult. The Law Society certainly has given the Minister a submission.

**Mr Dunworth:** Kevin Rudd.

**Mr BEANLAND:** The member for Sherwood reminds me that Kevin Rudd has not set it down to the Minister. The Minister's minders have not forwarded that submission to him because he really does not count in the scheme of things in the running of this Government. He is a great irrelevancy in this Government. I can assure the Minister that he certainly has been sent a submission by the Law Society, even if it has not been forwarded to him. The Minister had better hurry up and find the submission, because it is there. He should get his minders to look for it.

**Mr Comben:** It is not there.

**Mr BEANLAND:** It is very significant. The Minister says that it is not there. Perhaps I will enlighten the Minister more about this submission which the Law Society has sent to him. Perhaps I will dig up my copy of it—

**Mr Comben:** Table it.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I will certainly be happy to table it later.

**Mr Comben:** What about this list of groups that you were talking about?

**Mr BEANLAND:** I will get around to that. I am happy to table that submission.

**Mr Comben:** You have got seven minutes.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I do not want the Minister taking up my valuable time in interjecting.

**Mr Comben:** I will move an extension of time to enable you to do so.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I am happy for the Minister to do so. I want him to give me as much time as possible to deal with this legislation, because I have got a lot to say, and the Minister can sit there and listen to what I have to say. For years, the Law Society has raised the point—and this has long been a concern of mine and of various legal people—about the powers of various servants of the Government to enter property and to demand various things. That is what honourable see in this legislation. There are consequential obligations on the citizens of Queensland in relation to that issue. That is what we have here. Citizens will now be faced with new obligations, which most frequently arise during holiday periods. They will be confronted by the significant powers that are granted to conservation officers. Because of the extent and proliferation of powers that the legislation gives to the conservation officers—and the honorary protectors, because they are given the same powers as conservation officers—

**Mr Comben:** Mr Beanland—

**Mr BEANLAND:** The Minister is taking up my time yet again. Because of the powers that honorary protectors are given—and they are given the same powers as conservation officers—I believe the Minister ought to consider providing to conservation officers a detailed list of what their powers are and what the rights and obligations of citizens are under this Bill, which is the legislation under which the officers will be acting. I can well imagine members of the community who are visiting national parks while on holidays being confronted by conservation officers. Under this legislation, they do not know exactly what their position is, or where they stand. Of course—

**Mr Comben:** Most of them don't know where they stand.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Of course. The Minister is right. They will not know because they will not have heard about the onerous and extensive obligations that will be placed on them. People do not feel that they should have to give their name and address, as is required under this legislation. They can be confronted by conservation officers with all types of requirements. Of course, there should be written notice setting out in summary form the powers of conservation officers and honorary protectors. I hope that the Minister considers including such a provision in this legislation.

**Mr Comben:** What's Mr Innes' view about the powers of conservation officers?

**Mr BEANLAND:** The Minister will have to ask Mr Innes what his view is. The Minister can go and ask him. He is free to ask him.

**Mr Comben:** Well, we have, and his view is that those powers are inadequate and insufficient.

**Mr BEANLAND:** The Minister will have time to reply later. He should not take up my time with his concerns. I am telling the Minister about the concerns of the Law Society and a number of people whom I have consulted in relation to this legislation.

**Mr Comben:** Table the submissions.

**Mr BEANLAND:** The concern of the society—

**Mr Comben:** You are vague. Where is the list of groups you are talking about?

**Mr BEANLAND:** The Minister should go home. Again, he is trying to ram legislation through Parliament. From now on, I will totally ignore him and get on with the points that I want to make. Under this legislation, no training is required for conservation

officers or honorary protectors. Members of the community will be confronted by untrained conservation officers and will be required to provide certain information to them without any idea of what their powers are. I will deal with that matter in great detail and I will then make available to the Minister the information that he seeks. As his minders have not raised it with him, I am happy to get the list out of my file and table it so that the Minister may refer to it.

The member for Sherwood raised the concerns of Aborigines and where Aboriginal communities believe the future lies. An article written for the Australian Conservation Foundation by Mr Phillip Toyne states—

“True land rights and self-determination . . . required a shorter lease of, say, 30 years, followed by genuinely free negotiations to determine if the Park would remain a Park. This view was rejected as politically unacceptable by the Hawke Government.”

This legislation is a model for the future land rights of the Aboriginal community in relation to national parks. Although the member for Sherwood has raised this matter before, it is something that the Government has ignored. The rights of Aborigines and their powers in relation to national parks—and the extent of those powers—is an important point. The legislation gives Aborigines very significant rights. Once this legislation comes into force, it will allow them an opportunity to enter national parks and to hunt in them. Many of Queensland's endangered wildlife species will be lost because of the powers contained in this legislation. That is the type of hidden agenda, the agenda for the future, which is mentioned by the Australian Conservation Foundation in the June 1991 edition of *Habitat Australia*. It is quite clear that this Government and some people in the community have a hidden agenda in regard to this legislation. I refer now to the provisions of the Bill as they relate to grazing—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Clark): Order! The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I was going to get an extension of time.

**Mr COMBEN:** I move—

“That the honourable member for Toowong be heard for a further two minutes to enable him to list the groups to which he referred.”

Motion agreed to.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I turn now to grazing in national parks. Grazier groups are most alarmed at the prospect of this legislation because it bans grazing in national parks. Grazing in national parks is very important because it discourages an excessive population of feral grazing animals such as wild pigs or even kangaroos and it assists in the control of fire and noxious weeds. Yet under this legislation, grazing is banned in national parks. The Minister has not in any way tried to explain how he will manage national parks with that particular ban in place. Of course, it is easy for the Minister to say that he will have management plans in place, but the fact is that he does not have any management plans at all. It will be some years before we will see management plans for national parks in Queensland. The ban on grazing in national parks will be very detrimental to the control of those parks.

The Minister has raised a couple of other points to which I will refer, and then I will deal with that list. First of all, mention has been made of community attitudes. In recent times, community attitudes have changed. Bush turkeys have returned to the suburbs of Brisbane, and farmers have become very concerned about land degradation. The general attitude has changed towards the protection of wildlife and plant life. I believe that not just graziers but everyone in the community is concerned about conservation.

Time expired.

**Mr SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton North) (5 p.m.): I support the Bill before the House. I believe that the last two minutes' effort by the honourable member for Toowong deserves some comment. He was going to provide the House with a list of the names of people who had been turned away from the Minister's door—but what did

he do? He continued the rambling rot that he had already carried on with for almost 20 minutes. He certainly had no list to produce. The 22 minutes that he devoted to a Bill that he obviously does not understand and has not read generally did nothing to enhance the standing of the Liberal Party either in this House or within the environmental movement per se. The fact is that there has been widespread consultation on this Bill. I am sure that other members can attest to the fact that conservation groups have visited their electorate offices, as they have mine. Whenever I have raised an issue with the Minister on behalf of a conservation group, I have received an answer and have provided it to that group. If Mr Beanland had bothered to make a phone call to the Minister's office—as did the Liberal Party's spokesman—he might also have got some answers.

As to the power of environmental officers—on several occasions, a former Leader of the Liberal Party in this State, Mr Angus Innes from the Queensland Environmental Law Association, has expressed concern about the power of conservation officers. He has not mentioned the concerns raised by the honourable member for Toowong. Mr Innes has stated that those powers are not strong enough. Somewhere in the community a great deal of fraud is being perpetrated by people who have willingly misunderstood the Bill before the House. Another aspect of this debate that fascinated me is the lack of ability of members opposite to recall past events. The National and Liberal Parties were in Government in this State for 32 years. The history of this State during that time is littered with the corpses of environmental damage. Let me remind members of some of those issues. Do they remember Lindeman Island? Mr McKechnie said that it was a goat-infested hole that should be sold off to Club Med. Do members remember the public outrage that that caused? Do they remember Mount Etna and the Speaking Tube and Elephant Hole caves that were blown up? I remind members of the proposal for the oil-drilling of the Great Barrier Reef by Joh Bjelke-Petersen. Do they remember the uncontrolled land clearing by the previous Government? Millions and millions of dollars were spent by the previous State Government on fighting the Federal Government over the issue of World Heritage listing. I remind members of the logging and mining of Fraser Island. What about the big "For Sale" sign on Cape York that was later changed to "Give Away"? I remind members of the flogging off of the coastline. What about Oyster Point at Cardwell? That was a very interesting incident. What happened there? The former Government allowed bulldozers to flatten the mangroves. The development company then went broke. But what did the people of Queensland get? A mudflat! That is one of the legacies of the former Government.

The last Budget of the previous National Party Government included \$400,000 for national park acquisition. I ask members to contrast that with this Government, which allocated \$10m in its first year and \$11m in its second year to national park acquisition. Since this Government came to power, it has allocated \$21m for that purpose. This Government is also moving rapidly towards doubling the national park estate. It has also introduced a system of volunteers, which was so eloquently referred to by my friend and colleague the member for Brisbane Central. This Government has introduced management plans for national parks. They had never been heard of before. It has also secured Fraser Island for future generations. But members opposite have the hide to say that they will sit down with this Government and draft a Bill of this kind. As the old saying goes, one would want a very long spoon to sup with those members on environmental matters. Their record on environmental matters in this State is an absolute disgrace. I am surprised that any of them has the gall to put his name on the list of speakers for this debate.

**Mr Elliott:** Tell us where you stand on sandmining.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I am pleased that the member has raised that issue, because I was just about to mention it. That member who was stood over by Joh Bjelke-Petersen because he was only slightly green should sit and listen to what I have to say. This Bill contains some good news for the Byfield area, which is very significant. For the benefit of members who have never been to the Byfield area, I point out that the area consists of vacant Crown land, forestry leases, possible mining reserves, freehold land and some national park. The area is an intricate conundrum. The good news is that with this

legislation the Government will finally be able to have all of those areas managed by one department. Under this legislation there will be coordinated conservation areas, cooperative conservation agreements and resource reserves, which fit nicely into the conundrum that is Byfield. There will be a memorandum of understanding between departments on how it should be managed. For the first time ever, the area will be managed environmentally by the Department of Environment and Heritage. People approach me constantly—and I am sure that they approach the member for Broadsound—and ask, “What about the vandalism in those areas? What about the stubby bottles? What about the four-wheel drives driving over the dunes, and the enormous damage that they are causing? What about the fires in the area?” I have to tell them that that area is vacant Crown land and, as such, national parks officers have no control over it. Following the passage of this Bill, that problem will cease. Those officers will have that control, but they will not carry out a sledgehammer attack upon other departments. It will be achieved by consultation and via cooperative agreement. For example, if mining were to proceed at the Byfield site, it would be that area covered by the definition of “resources reserve”. The joint trustees of that reserve would be the Resource Industries Department, which controls mining, and the Department of Environment and Heritage, which controls the environment. That is a first. Private land-holders—there is a strip of private land at Stockyard Point—can, if they want to, have their land managed by the department. Again, that is a plus for the area.

Under the new legislation, a proper management plan can be developed for the Byfield area. I want to reiterate my position on Byfield. Mine is not like the position of the Liberal Party, which is that we should have developed it yesterday; we should have had the bulldozers in yesterday and the sandminers in yesterday. The National Party cannot make up its mind, but my position is very clear. I support an EIS process. This is not like what happened in the old National Party days when a certain amount of money was paid to get the desired answer. This system is open and accountable. Everybody who wants to put something on the agenda can have it on the agenda.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** For the first time in Queensland, I am reminded. It would then be the subject of an EIS which would come back to this Government. It would again be published and therefore the public would have an opportunity to talk about its validity. I cannot think of anything more open than that. That is what I support. In that way, the Livingstone Shire water supply, for example, could be handled accordingly and brought out into the open. It would not be pushed under the carpet as things were when the Liberals were in the coalition Government. This is done so that, at the end of the day, we can achieve a balance between employment and the environment. That is what we must all be about if we are interested in the future. My position is that, if the environment is to be compromised, this does not go ahead. I have said that time and time again.

We heard a good deal from the honourable member for Sherwood today. He said, among other things, that it is all very well to have the legislation but there must be the people on the ground. It has been widely acknowledged by the Minister that we do not have sufficient national parks officers, but he is working on a strategy. The Liberal Party's strategy was to have no officers and no legislation, so it had two out of two wrong. This Government has one of them up and running, and the second will be addressed when the parks have been acquired. That is the strategy upon which we are working. We want to get them, to ensure legislative protection for them and then to have the officers to back it up. It is sensible and reasonable to do so.

The last time any Government addressed fauna protection in this State was 1930. This Bill undeniably establishes the vital link between fauna protection and the protection of their habitat. A classic example exists in Epping Forest, which is north-west of Clermont. In 1971, when the National Party was made aware of the hairy-nosed wombat being under threat, it created a national park in the last place on earth it could be found. At least the National Party saw the need to preserve its habitat. That was the only area in which the National Party did it. Why did it not, 20 years ago, introduce

legislation such as this legislation to guarantee that the two go hand in hand? It made a success of the hairy-nosed wombat issue. It would not exist today if its habitat had not been made secure, but the National Party left it at that. Today, we heard the honourable member for Sherwood babbling on about endangered species. I have, in my hand, a list of endangered species that is 35 pages long. This is the legacy of Liberal Party inaction. What a disgrace! What frauds the Liberal Party members are. This document is evidence of their inability, when they were in Government with the National Party, to protect the environment and the species in Queensland.

I now refer to the third-party appeal. We have talked about the consultation process. How do Opposition members think that the conservationist who came to my office knew about the third-party appeal? Was it some divide intervention? Did he read it in the *Phantom*? Was he walking along the street one day when it suddenly appeared before him? Of course not! The conservation movement in this State has been widely consulted since May last year, and that movement was aware that the third party appeal structure was not going into this legislation. I admit that, when I heard of that, I shared the concerns of that movement. I raised it with the Minister and the departmental officers. The answer I was given rests fairly comfortably with me. Third party appeals are part of a wider agenda. This matter is being addressed by EARC and, in my view, it would be futile to put it into this legislation only to have it changed later. It is an issue that is in the open for everybody to see. It is a very worrying issue. There are pros and cons about third-party appeals. This matter is not restricted to this piece of legislation; it covers a much wider agenda. I am quite happy to leave it in the hands of EARC to come up with the answer.

I end on this note. In this State, it is an absolute disgrace that it has taken 62 years for the fauna issue to be addressed. It has taken almost a century for any form of management plan to be devised where there are tracts of land belonging to different Government departments. It is an absolute disgrace that we have such a long list of endangered, possibly extinct, and certainly under-threat species. It is a disgrace that we have had to go out and raise \$250,000 to save the hairy-nosed wombat. I would like to place on record my thanks to Dick Smith Electronics and his magazine *Australian Geographic*, which I contacted about that issue and which sent me \$5,000 towards that appeal. I would like to thank the school children at Frenchville State School, Berserker State School and Park Avenue State School who raised significant funds for this campaign. None of that would have been necessary if the previous Government had been committed to the environment. It is all very well now for those people to stand up and filibuster in this House about rights and wrongs and environmental protection and suddenly become the great white hopes of the environment. Heaven forbid the day that they ever return to this side of the House with the environmental policies that they had. I support the Bill.

**Mr LINGARD** (Fassifern) (5.16 p.m.): I join with the Opposition spokesman and say that I do not oppose the concept of the Bill. Certainly, I welcome its concept. However, I reject the way the Minister has gone about the debate on this legislation today. I believe that the Standing Orders Committee and the Privileges Committee should have a look at the operation of Standing Orders. After the first reading, a Bill should lay on the table of the House for seven days to allow for public discussion, discussion by the Opposition spokesman and by Opposition members. I do not believe that a Bill which was introduced on a Tuesday night and which is discussed on Tuesday morning of the following week has lain on the table for seven days.

**Mr Bredhauer** interjected.

**Mr LINGARD:** Backbench members wish to interject. Regardless of why the Minister has done it, I would say that it is not right. It is absolutely incorrect. Previous occupants of the chair have rejected it. It has not been allowed previously. Quite honestly, I think it should be examined, especially when there are two days of Parliament, one working day, two days of a weekend and a public holiday before Parliament returns. Regardless of the attitude, regardless of why the Minister is doing it, and regardless of whether we are short of legislation and he is being pushed to do it, I



do not believe the Privileges Committee or the Standing Orders Committee should allow that sort of thing. I welcome the legislation, because most definitely it helps me in areas such as the Scenic Rim. I know that recently the Minister has made certain significant decisions about that area. Areas in my electorate such as Mount Tamborine, Binna Burra, O'Reillys and Spicers Gap will benefit by this type of legislation.

**Mr Comben:** You may be interested to know that we will be expanding the Scenic Rim National Park by some 2 000 or 3 000 hectares—I think fairly shortly—and that as a result there will be a fairly enhanced national park—the dream of a previous Minister for the Environment.

**Mr LINGARD:** I have certainly indicated that I appreciate that. I would also say that the previous Government was involved in the same sort of thing. I want to bring to the attention of the House a couple of controversial happenings in my electorate. Recently, the Minister has been approached in regard to both the A. J. Bush concept and the Davis Gelatine concept in Beaudesert. I know that the Minister has been approached informally about Davis Gelatine, and I know that to this stage he certainly has not indicated any opposition to that concept. However, there is a great deal of concern in my electorate. Firstly, there is a concern that with concepts such as Davis Gelatine, which I believe go totally against this particular legislation, the Minister is prepared to bend over backwards to allow those sorts of things to go ahead rather than impose the full force of this type of legislation. If a shire council decides to allow a concept like the A. J. Bush or Davis Gelatine concept, what rights does the Minister have under this particular legislation to stop such a concept? Before the Minister takes a point of order, I say to him that the platypus is found throughout the Logan River.

**Mr Comben:** A longbow.

**Mr LINGARD:** It might be drawing the longbow. However, if there are platypuses in the Logan River and if, for example, Davis Gelatine release water directly into the Logan River, what will the Minister say? Will he say that it is acceptable for Davis Gelatine to do that because the Government wants that company there and it wants to put the A. J. Bush factory there? In this particular instance, because the platypuses are in the Logan River, the Minister will bypass what he could do to stop it. I can tell the Minister, regardless of whether he responds to it now or later, that the people of Beaudesert are saying, "If there are platypuses in the Logan River and if Davis Gelatine releases all these chemicals directly into the Logan River, how can this legislation stop it?" For the benefit of back bench members, I point out that that Davis Gelatine deals with animal hides, and many gases. When it was situated near Botany Bay, it was asked to release the effluent into the sewerage system. Davis Gelatine refused and said that it was too costly to prepare the effluent for release into the sewerage system, so the company went to Tamworth and asked whether the factory could be built there. Tamworth said, "No", because under Victorian and New South Wales legislation this type of release of effluent is not allowed. Now the company has moved to Beaudesert and is hopeful of getting approval for this proposal from the Beaudesert Shire Council. I say once again that the Minister has been approached informally about this concept and that he does not show any reluctance or indicate in any way that this Government is going to stop that sort of thing. I will tell back bench members what could happen if the Davis Gelatine project goes ahead. Instead of releasing its effluent through a sewerage system, that company will take it down to holding vats on the side of the Logan River—

**Mr Comben:** Ponds.

**Mr LINGARD:** Ponds. The company will then release all of that water onto the flats near the Logan River and beside it. I do not agree with any member of this Parliament who believes that that is a suitable way of releasing effluent. Certainly, in this particular case, the Minister is saying, "Okay".

**Mr Comben:** Give me a chance to respond to you.

**Mr LINGARD:** The Minister can reply later.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member for Fassifern should return to the Bill. He is straying a bit far from its provisions.

**Mr LINGARD:** I am returning to the subject of the platypus. This is a debate on the Nature Conservation Bill, and you, Madam Deputy Speaker, spoke about the seven sections, nature, plants and animals. I am now speaking about animals in the vicinity of the Logan River, where Davis Gelatine produces waste that includes 346 to 493 tonnes of salt, and up to 2 175 kilograms each of cadmium, mercury and lead which are all extremely accumulative types of poisons. Davis will dump its waste beside the river, and I say to the Minister that if he can, he should try to prove to the people of Beaudesert and to this Parliament that the effluent is suitable for storage and release on the side of the river. Perhaps members of this Parliament will believe him, but the point is that the legislation he has brought forward is really powerless to control that effluent. To date, the Minister has not been prepared to tell Davis Gelatine that it cannot dump its waste products on that site, in spite of the fact that the Minister has been approached to do so. Davis Gelatine uses hydrochloric acid, ammonia and 326 litres of sulphuric acid in its manufacturing process. The waste has to be deposited in ponds located beside the Logan River and then the substances are released through irrigation. The Minister has said that soil should not be regarded as an inexhaustible filter and a favoured sink for every type of pollutant. However, if the Minister is not condoning the use of land beside the Logan River for a sink and for the release of pollutants, I do not know who is. The Minister has already sent A. J. Bush down to Beaudesert, but because the people regard the plant as an excellent factory that may be of benefit to Beaudesert, they are not grumbling.

**Mr COMBEN:** I rise to a point of order. What has A. J. Bush's factory to do with the Nature Conservation Bill? It is clearly to do with the Environment Bill, which will be introduced into the Parliament shortly. If the honourable member would allow me a chance to respond, I may not have to resort to a point of order.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the member for Fassifern to heed the warning of the Chair and to focus on the Bill. He is straying onto matters relating to pollution which do not come within the province of this Bill. If he is going to speak on this issue, he must confine himself to the actual fauna that is under threat.

**Mr LINGARD:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I am saying that the fauna of the Logan River, which includes the platypus, will obviously be affected.

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr LINGARD:** I do not care what the Minister says. He knows as well as I do that he has not explained the likely effect of that plant on the area. I ask the Minister to explain to me and to the House how the habitats of fish, platypuses and other animals in the area of Beaudesert, Jimboomba and other districts will not be affected by the activities of the Davis Gelatine plant. If the habitats are likely to be affected, surely the Minister should be able to use this legislation to prevent that from occurring. After all, the other States have had the benefit of similar legislation and in places such as Victoria, that legislation has prevented Davis Gelatine from creating an environmental hazard. That is why the Botany Bay and Tamworth areas got rid of the company. This Bill raises other environmental issues such as ground water seepage that flows directly into the river channel, the erosion of the riverbanks, the vulnerability of irrigation areas to channel-flooding, and the proposed irrigation and water management scheme.

I wish to refer also to the Scenic Rim in relation to a decision made by the Minister. A request was made by a person who owns a property adjacent to the national park at Spicers Gap. I am sure that Noel Dawson—who should be complimented on the preparation of his Bill and for his work in areas such as Spicers Gap and Boonah—would know the person to whom I refer. After receiving that person's letter, I wrote to the Minister approximately five weeks ago. I have a copy of the letter I sent to the Minister, which I would be happy to table if the Minister wants me to do so.

**Mr Stephan:** Has he answered it yet?

**Mr LINGARD:** No. I have not received an answer from the Minister, but I am asking for one now. The person to whom I refer mentioned his cattle.

**Mr Comben:** After what you've just dropped on A. J. Bush and Davis Gelatine, you want me to be nice to you? I tell you, you must be mad.

**Mr LINGARD:** I gave the Minister a chance to make a statement about Spicers Gap. He spoke for about five minutes, but now he is starting to whinge. The Minister does not really think that I would have let him respond if I thought he would carry on in his present manner. I gave him about three prompts, but he was standing around in the Chamber half the time. He asked me for a little gap. The letter to which I have referred states—

“We have a problem regarding the muster of . . . cattle in (the) national park. On Friday 20.3.92 we spent \$2,600.00 trying to muster the park which at present should have over 100 head in it. We have been requested by the D.P.I., Forrestry & National Parks to remove the cattle.

. . .

It is necessary for us to get the cattle out in order to survive. We were burnt out & drought stricken in September . . . and need to renew most of our fencing, including a new fence to be erected where the National Park adjoins our property.”

It has to be erected at their expense. The letter goes on to state—

“We have been informed that the National Parks is prepared to spend as much money as it takes to shoot the cattle out of the Park, but not prepared to spend any money to get them out.”

I wrote to the Minister stating that the people concerned had already spent \$2,600 on the hire of a helicopter and needed extra assistance. They said that another \$2,500 needs to be spent.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! This is also an electorate matter which seems to me to be quite specific and bears no relationship to the Bill being discussed.

**Mr LINGARD:** I thought it was miles better than the other one, to be quite honest.

**Mr Comben:** Wrong again!

**Mr LINGARD:** That is why I mentioned the other one first.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the honourable member that the Chair is listening very carefully. I will order the member to resume his seat if his remarks are not relevant to the Bill.

**Mr LINGARD:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The person to whom I referred has written to the Minister asking for urgent consideration to be given to the matter. He says that that type of treatment “will be greatly appreciated.” I would sincerely appreciate the Minister's responding to queries raised by people about Davis Gelatine and by the person from Spicers Gap who wrote the letter from which I have quoted.

**Mrs WOODGATE** (Pine Rivers) (5.30 p.m.): The Bill that honourable members are debating this evening is what I would call a big Bill—with apologies to the late “Big Bill” Edwards, of course. It is big both in size and in content but, more importantly, it is big in vision. The Bill is big in hours of public consultation for, as the Minister told us in his second-reading speech, it has had as much public consultation as any Bill so far. Because of the size of the Bill, it would be difficult to cover all its aspects in 20 minutes; however, many aspects have been covered adequately by my Government colleagues. I would like to speak on just one aspect of the Bill which I believe has particular relevance to parts of my electorate. I refer to the matter of conservation agreements covered in Part 4 of the Bill.

The nature refuge proposal is especially relevant to Mount Nebo and Mount Glorious in the south-western section of my electorate of Pine Rivers. I might mention here that proposals along lines similar to that contained in this Bill were the subject of

many discussions among the land-holders of Mount Nebo and Mount Glorious and I as far back as 1985. At that time, I was a councillor on the Pine Rivers Shire Council, and the town plan for our shire was being reviewed. It is something that true conservationists have long mooted. The residents of the mountains have always readily admitted to all and sundry to somehow being different from their counterparts in the suburban areas of Pine Rivers Shire—Strathpine, Petrie, Lawnton, etc. Their difference, I find, lies in their intense love of nature, the flora and fauna of their area, and their deep desire to preserve the environment in its pristine form for future generations. When this Bill is enacted, the declaration of nature refuges, coordinated conservation areas and wilderness areas will allow private land-holders such as those caring mountain men and women in my electorate to provide protection and management of their lands for nature conservation and wilderness purposes.

Conservation agreements represent a cooperative approach to land management. Agreements will be entered into between the landowner and the Department of Environment and Heritage and, where the private land-holder wishes, the conservation agreement may also be made binding on future owners of the land. That is what those people really want. The Bill will enable the agreements to cover issues such as incentives, land management and use and, among other things, the management of access. Incentives may include rate relief where the local authority is in agreement. I am very pleased to see that provision included in the Bill. Private landowners will maintain their ownership rights and can be involved in the management of the area if they so wish. These conservation agreement areas will be an important feature of the State's nature conservation and wilderness program and will be an integral part of land use.

However, not all of those concepts are new. The nature refuge proposal is based on the fauna refuge in the existing Fauna Conservation Act. It is proposed to expand the concept to protect plants as well as animals and to emphasise the protection of wildlife and its habitat. The proposed new legal machinery is almost identical to that existing for declaration and management of fauna refuges, except that the existence of nature refuge status is proposed to be noted in the administrative advices file administered by the Registrar of Titles in the Department of Lands. Although that is not a covenant on the deed or lease, it will ensure that any potential purchaser is aware of the constraints on the land.

In the past, fauna sanctuaries were declared over State forests and dam catchment was controlled by the Department of Primary Industries. The declaration of areas as fauna sanctuaries provided limited protection and management of those areas for fauna and habitat protection purposes. The declaration of nature refuges over those areas will enhance that protection of nature by allowing specific conditions to be tailored for areas such as those which have high conservation values. A nature refuge could be tailored to suit the management needs of a particular parcel of land, such as Mount Nebo or Mount Glorious. For example, conditions could be very comprehensive or simply preclude the shooting of any wildlife. Provision is made for compulsory declaration of a nature refuge over private lands. That would occur only where a rare or threatened species, critical habitat or area of major interest was being threatened and where the land-holder had been approached and had rejected the proposal. The restrictions on use in those cases will not justify acquisition. Those provisions are in the Fauna Conservation Act. This Bill will provide additional security for the land-holder through its compensation provisions.

I will refer briefly to conservation plans, which are a key element in the legislation, as they will develop and provide the detailed mechanisms for the protection, use and management of protected areas, areas of major interest, critical habitats, protected wildlife, international wildlife and prohibited wildlife. Conservation plans will involve land-holders and interested persons in the preparation of strategies and provisions to conserve nature. That is involvement of the local people at its very best. Those mechanisms will ensure also that persons who benefit from the ecologically sustainable use of protected areas and wildlife contribute to the cost of preparation of the plans. That is only fair. There should also be some benefits to nature or to the community. Conservation plans will be approved by the Governor in Council and there is a

requirement that they be implemented. All persons will be required to comply with the plan. Compensation provisions apply to land-holders who may be detrimentally affected if a use is regulated on a conservation plan. Conservation plans for classes of wildlife will be prepared before the whole Act is proclaimed. That will enable provisions dealing with any taking or use of wildlife to be developed in consultation with the community.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister on introducing the Bill. I ask the Minister to pass on my appreciation to his very dedicated staff and, last but not least, to all departmental officers who assisted in any way in the preparation of the legislation. I note, of course, the Minister's comments that many of his senior departmental staff gave very freely of their own time. I am more than happy to support the Bill.

**Mrs McCAULEY** (Callide) (5.36 p.m.): Let me first of all state my extreme dissatisfaction with the rushing through the House of this particular piece of legislation when I have not even had time to receive feedback from interested groups in my electorate. For the benefit of those people, to whom I will send a copy of the debate, I point out that the legislation was introduced last Tuesday and is being debated today, one week later, with a long weekend in between. I point out also the total impossibility of communicating with interest groups which, even if they had received the Bill in time to read and digest it, would not have been able to get that information back to me in time for the debate. I am angry that the Minister saw fit to gallop the Bill through the House when it could have been handled in a more orderly fashion. The Minister could have allowed time for a better debate and more feedback from all people throughout the State, not just the chosen few with whom he purports to consult.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister stressed the fact that private land is included in the legislation. He said—

“The legislation will provide processes for the protection of wildlife on declared lands and reserves, other Crown land and on private lands.”

The Minister spoke of his control over the whole of Queensland. As a land-holder, and a responsible one at that, I find this somewhat threatening and ominous. Time will reveal whether or not my misgivings are justified.

Another significant point in the Minister's speech was his repeated reference to conservation plans, which he says are a key element in this legislation. My concern is that, with his plans for advisory committees and boards of management, the whole State will be so bound up in red tape that nothing will get done anywhere by anyone. Let me cite an example of what happened with the Minister's department and a constituent of mine. The constituent rang me and said that about 18 months previously he had purchased some land with the aim of setting up a low-cost tourist venture with a camping ground and walking trails. For 18 months, he tried to get the proper permission to get started, and all the time he was paying interest on the money he had borrowed from the bank to buy the land in the first place. In desperation, he came to me to see if I could help. I was fortunate that the person I contacted within the department was honest, and he told me that the department intended the man's recently purchased property to be a national park and so, of course, a low-key tourist development, or any other development for that matter, would not be approved. Because we then knew what the department intended and because there was no possibility of future development, my constituent was able to sell the property to the department and at least stop paying interest on borrowed money. However, will the people of the area benefit from this national park? No, because it is not open to the public. For 18 months, the business plans of this constituent were in limbo. He was unable to proceed, and the blame for this lies solely with the department. In his second-reading speech, the Minister mentioned a register. I sincerely hope that this register will ensure that the sort of problem that I have mentioned does not occur again.

**Mr Comben:** Are you talking about Kroombit?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Kroombit, yes.

**Mr Comben:** And you think that is freehold land?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I did not say that it was freehold land. I said that it is not open to the public.

**Mr Comben:** What do you think it is? I think you had better see us off the record afterwards.

**Mr Booth:** But you can't get into hardly any of them.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** One cannot get into it.

**Mr Comben:** I think you had better see me afterwards.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I did not say that it was freehold land. I know that it was not freehold land. I turn now to approved conservation plans. I am concerned that the formulation of these plans will hold up projects and primary industry right throughout this State. I am concerned that they will be expensive and that they will be the kiss of death for certain development projects. I am concerned that the conservation plans will be put together by theorists or, to borrow the words of Tom Burns, "academic wankers". For example, people who have talked to the DPI about stocking rates for their property will invariably indicate that they disagree with the DPI's assessment for their particular property. There is a big gap between the theory and the practice, and these proposed conservation plans could see the academic wankers running this State, and then God help us.

**Mr Comben:** That is unparliamentary language.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I did not say it; Mr Burns said it. The Minister for Environment and Heritage spoke also of nature refuges for areas where nature conservation values would preclude mining or exploration, and Tully/Millstream springs immediately to mind—well, to my mind, anyway. It seems quite obvious that there is no way that under the present Government this project will proceed. Its track record on development is absolutely woeful. I cite as an example the space base project and the Boyne smelter expansion. The Minister again highlights his ultimate control over all lands in the State when he says—

"Provision is made for compulsory declaration of a nature refuge over private lands."

When the Minister talks about wilderness areas, he boasts very proudly that this legislation will negate the need for separate legislation each time a World Heritage area is listed in this State. I, for one, want the matter to come to Parliament each and every time a World Heritage area is listed. I want to see a full and proper debate on each and every proposal, and I am dead set against such areas being listed without such a full and proper debate. The fact that international agreement areas will also be created under this legislation does not meet with my approval, either. At the risk of sounding somewhat xenophobic, I have to voice my opposition to overseas countries poking their noses into what is essentially our business. This is our country and we should be making the decisions. We do not need the help of any other country to do it.

This legislation highlights an interesting trait shown by this present Government, a trait which will see it go down the gurgler before this year is out. This Government is starving the services—and I speak about health services in particular—but giving this Minister so much money that he has to arrange for it to be rolled over because he cannot spend it quickly enough. This Government says to hell with the sick, the elderly and the disabled. In the last Budget, Mr "Miserly" Goss gave them an increase of barely 3 per cent, when service costs had increased in the order of about 12 per cent, but he gave millions of extra dollars to Mr Comben, the "Minister for Rubber Vine". As I said at the beginning, I am angry that this Bill is being stampeded through the House and I am very disappointed that the Minister did not even show the courtesy of consulting with the Opposition to try to find some common ground. Perhaps if he had done this, he would not have to sit through such—

**Mr Comben:** I spent six years over there and nobody ever talked to me about a thing.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Has the Minister not heard of turning the other cheek? Perhaps if he had consulted, he would not have to sit through such a lengthy debate now. I hope that his bottom hurts.

**Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (5.44 p.m.):** I am particularly interested in national parks in Queensland in that for many years on a regular basis I have visited them with my family. Having a company that rented and manufactured motorhomes, we regularly took advantage of visiting many of the national parks in Queensland. It is also interesting to note that most of the new electorate of Nerang is national park.

**Mr Comben:** Most of it?

**Mr CONNOR:** Most of it. When travelling, my first choice is to stay at national parks as opposed to any other destination. If any honourable members visit national parks on a regular basis, they should know just how fragile the environment is. It takes only a few four-wheel drives to run over a bit of a sand dune and it all starts to break up. Although I am strongly in favour of any legislation that would safeguard our natural environment and the intrinsic beauty of our national parks, I must in this instance voice my concern in relation to many facets of this piece of legislation. In particular, I am concerned about those parts of the legislation that pertain to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ownership of national parks. I also have grave concerns that the Nerang State Forest is going to be converted to national park (Aboriginal land).

About two years ago, the Kombumerri people, a local Aboriginal tribe, published an article in their monthly newsletter. In part, this article said that they were planning an environmental camp and "the Kombumerri Corporation has applied for Forestry Department land to establish a cultural/environmental camp and convention centre near Nerang". The article went on to state—

"The proposal has been lodged with the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, Anne Warner, and feedback has been very positive."

Further, the article stated—

". . . it would be self-supporting with money raised through the sale of artefacts, souvenirs and native plants grown on site."

The article further stated—

". . . there will be accommodation for a resident caretaker and conference participants."

It is quite clear that the Kombumerri people wish to gain a large portion or all of the Nerang State Forest once it is converted to a national park. They intend to build a convention centre incorporating accommodation. They have stated that the centre would be self-supporting in that money would be raised through the sale of artefacts, souvenirs and native plants grown in the park. Obviously, the centre would provide accommodation for conference participants and would charge for that accommodation as well. This land is only 6 kilometres to the back of Nerang, and, in fact, from the outskirts of Nerang it is only about one and a half kilometres. The land is in close proximity to other similar types of private enterprise-based recreational centres. The initial proposal was to take effectively the whole of the forest. That fact was confirmed in a letter from the Minister for Primary Industries, Ed Casey, to me dated 28 August 1991, wherein he said that the Corporation "originally applied to lease the whole of the reserve"—that is, State Forest 740. This amounted to 112 hectares. The Minister said that he did not support that application. I quote from his letter—

"I did not support this application because there is limited land available for public recreation in the Gold Coast hinterland and exclusive use of the reserve by any one group is not considered to be in the broader public interest."

The Minister did, however, support the granting of secure tenure to the corporation over another area which consists of 30 hectares. My concern about any group of people having secure tenure over such land—whether they be Aborigines, Torres Strait Islanders, Chinese, small-businesspeople or whatever—is that it will restrict access to that part of the national park. As the Minister for Primary Industries has noted—

“. . . there is limited land available for public recreation in the Gold Coast hinterland . . .”

If the Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation is running a profitable convention centre with accommodation facilities and all the trappings that go with it, it will effectively limit the use of that part of the park to its own guests. The corporation will also have an unfair trading advantage over its opposition. Needless to say, over the last two years, when snippets of information in relation to this proposal have come into the public domain, many people have voiced their concerns about such control of this land. I quote from the *Hinterland Sun* of 1 August 1991—

“The Gold Coast Environment Centre has greeted the news with some reservation, expressing concerns about the loss of public access to the State forest if the lease is granted.”

That group was worried about the process just beginning as a lease. What we are talking about now is effectively freehold land; not simply a lease, but a secure tenure. The article further stated—

“Conservationist Peter Farrell said he was worried this application could set a precedent and allow other community groups to obtain leases of large portions of the remaining State forest, restricting further access to the forest.”

When others in the community started voicing their concerns, I contacted the Albert Shire Council and asked the council what it knew of this issue. I quote from its reply—

“It”—

the council—

“has not been advised of the proposal by the State Government, and until the local community has been informed of the Government’s intention through the local authority, council is unable to comment.”

As a result of this issue, the local councillor went public, both in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* and on local radio stations. I quote from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*—

“Albert Shire Councillor Ray Stevens, yesterday hit out at the State Government for not telling the council of the plan. Councillor Stevens said he had great difficulty with the camp because it was discriminatory towards one secular group. ‘There are probably a lot of people out there who have a bit of a problem with flogging off parts of our State forests to secular groups’.”

The article further stated—

“A councillor reporting the matter said 30 hectares of land could be considered excessive. The council had originally agreed to support the proposal in principle, but the decision was overturned when Councillor Stevens made his complaint at this week’s full council meeting.”

As this House can see, the council is certainly being kept in the dark on this issue, and it is not happy with the information that it has received. On 2 August 1991, I wrote to the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, Ms Anne Warner. I also wrote to the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Ed Casey, and the Minister for Land Management, Mr Bill Eaton. I asked whether they would provide me with full details regarding this matter. The Minister for Primary Industries confirmed that there had been an application by the Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation, that he had been in favour of the granting of 30 hectares of land and that “the Kombumerri’s peoples initiative in this matter has the full support of the Department of Community Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs”. In a letter dated 14 April 1992—only a couple of weeks ago—the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, Anne Warner, made these comments in reply to my letter—

“With respect to your comments on the lack of consultation between my department and the relevant local authority, you should be aware that officers of my department have been involved only in facilitating discussions at some of the



meetings and in providing general advice to the Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation.”

Evidently, the Minister for Primary Industries and the Kombumerri people are saying one thing, and the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs is saying another. In the *Kombumerri News*, as honourable members will remember, the Kombumerri people have said that their proposal had been lodged with the—

**Mr COMBEN:** I rise to a point of order. I have heard a litany of other Ministers mentioned, but I have not heard myself mentioned; nor have I heard the Nature Conservation Bill mentioned. I ask that the honourable member come back to the Bill before the House.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I do not believe that is a valid point of order. I will allow the member for Nerang a little licence.

**Mr CONNOR:** I thank you for your consideration, Madam Deputy Speaker. The Kombumerri newsletter stated that the proposal had been lodged with the Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, Anne Warner, and that feedback had been very positive. The Minister for Primary Industries stated—

“This matter has the full support of the Department of Community Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs.”

Ms Warner stated—

“Officers of my department have been involved only in facilitating discussions at some of the meetings and in providing general advice to the Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation.”

Obviously, somebody is not telling the truth. The council did not know what was going on. I have written to three Ministers, all of whom have passed the buck. I have received no information at all from the Minister who, according to Mr Casey, is responsible and fully supports this proposal. On the basis of the small amount of information that I have gleaned from the Minister for Primary Industries, it would seem to be a foregone conclusion that the Kombumerri corporation will be taking at least 30 hectares of the Nerang State Forest for a commercial venture. An article in the *Hinterland Sun* of 19 September 1992 stated that a spokesman for the Minister for Land Management had confirmed that, among other things, the Kombumerri people planned to set up a cultural environmental camp and convention centre that “will have funding from the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs.” Not only will 30 hectares of the Nerang State Forest, which is in close proximity to the township, be given to a specific group of people for a commercial venture, but also they will be given funding from the Department of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. How much would 30 hectares of national park, zoned for a convention centre and accommodation, be worth on today’s market? How much is the Minister giving this group to set up the place?

**Mr Comben:** Which Minister?

**Mr CONNOR:** The Minister for Aboriginal and Islander Affairs.

**Mr Comben:** What has that got to do with the legislation?

**Mr CONNOR:** This is a national park and it relates—

**Mr Comben:** It is not a national park.

**Mr CONNOR:** I am referring to the proposal to convert the land into a national park for Aboriginal use.

**Mr Comben:** We do not know anything about that.

**Mr CONNOR:** I am trying to explain it to the Minister. I have the documentation.

**Mr Comben:** You are not doing a very good job. You’re still in the bush.

**Mr CONNOR:** That is what I thought we were talking about. The fact is that we are talking about the conversion of a forest to a national park, which is what is contained in this legislation. If the Minister refers to clauses 36 and 37, he will find that that is what those clauses are all about.

**Mr Pearce:** The Minister has been looking at it for two years.

**Mr Quinn:** He still doesn't know.

**Mr CONNOR:** Exactly. The Minister still does not know the legislation. How much would 30 hectares of national park, zoned for a convention centre and accommodation, be worth on today's market?

**Mr Comben:** You would not get it if it was a national park. We do not sell national parks.

**Mr CONNOR:** Under clause 36, the Government gives it away.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I rise to a point of order. I can find no relevance in the honourable member's speech to the Bill that is before the House.

**Mr CONNOR:** I am just about to read clause 36.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is one point of order, and I rule that at the moment the point of order is not a valid point of order. I warn the member for Nerang that he has well and truly laboured this point. I do not think that honourable members need to hear the full history. With that warning, the honourable member may continue.

**Mr CONNOR:** I have completed the history of that particular point. It was important to bring to the attention of honourable members the relevant parts of it, as it relates to a major section of the legislation. Clause 36 (1) states—

“This section applies to a National Park . . .”

It further states—

“(2) On approval of the management plan for the National Park land under section 108, the Governor in Council must, by order in council, dedicate the National Park land as National Park”——

**Mr COMBEN:** I rise to a point of order. This is a second-reading debate. We are not in Committee. Under the Standing Orders of this House, the honourable member cannot refer to clauses.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I take that point of order, and I ask the honourable member to continue.

**Mr CONNOR:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The comment I made previously is that the Government is not selling the national park, it is giving it away. Clause 36 demonstrates how that can be done. Clause 85 refers to the other aspect of the legislation which allows for special uses of national parks (Aboriginal land). That clause means that, subject to a management plan, the limited amount of native wildlife in what is now the Nerang State Forest, such as wallabies, kangaroos and possums, would be able to be hunted if it was converted to Aboriginal land. The Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation would also be able—as was stated in their own *Kombumerri News*—to remove certain plants, trees and shrubs for sale to the public. Not only would that Aboriginal community be able to shoot, hunt and fish within 6 kilometres of Nerang, but also they would be able to sell the shrubs and the native plants growing in the national park. In fact, the *Kombumerri News* stated that that was how the community would fund the corporation and the venture.

**Mr Comben:** Do you want an answer to that? You cannot claim a park. You cannot claim it for commercial purposes. It has to be a traditional or historical association. You cannot do the things that you are talking about.

**Mr CONNOR:** The Kombumerri community did say that it would be for a cultural centre.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr CONNOR:** Prior to the dinner recess, I was relating some of the problems associated with an area of national park being used for a commercial venture by an Aboriginal group. Clause 85 relates basically to taking, using or keeping protected wildlife. As to the Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation—if the Nerang State Forest were

redesignated under national park arrangements, subject to a management plan a limited number of native wildlife, such as wallabies, kangaroos and possums and significant bird life will be able to be hunted in what is now the Nerang State Forest. As well, the Kombumerri Aboriginal Corporation will be able to remove certain plants, trees and shrubs for sale to the public. In fact, the corporation has maintained that that is one way in which it could become a commercially viable proposition. I seek an undertaking from the Minister to review the situation regarding the Nerang State Forest.

**Mr Comben:** I give you that undertaking.

**Mr CONNOR:** I accept the Minister's undertaking in that regard. It is a very crucial part of the Gold Coast. Obviously, it is very important to the future of the Gold Coast that the hinterland is protected. The green behind the gold is important to the whole community, including Nerang. Under this legislation, it is proposed to redesignate a forest as a national park. The Kombumerri tribe wishes to convert a section of that land, or all of it, to a commercially viable proposition, including a convention centre with accommodation, and make a profit from its natural resources in order to become commercially viable and to compete with other commercial ventures in the area. I understand that Ms Warner's department is backing it fully. I thank the Minister for his undertaking to review this situation.

**Mr PERRETT** (Barambah) (7.33 p.m.): I appreciate this opportunity to speak to the Bill. I believe that the Minister has gone to water on this Bill. The original version that I saw, which dropped off the back of a truck, certainly contained a lot more teeth than does this Bill before the House. I believe also that the Minister has been done over by various producer groups round the State. I would bet London to a brick on that the Minister has done deals with those producer groups; that he has promised to set up all sorts of ministerial committees to oversee the introduction of the legislation; and that he has told those groups that he will give them representation on the committees. But Queenslanders, particularly primary producers, should not swallow that. I believe that every farmer in Queensland should be having nightmares about this legislation. It is a gun pointed squarely at the ability of farmers to use their land to make a sustainable living. When this legislation is in force, the Minister and the director will effectively control land use and farming practices throughout the State. They will have that power by virtue of the ability to declare various forms of protection over flora and fauna on private land.

All members have read and heard what the Minister said about compulsory declarations being a last resort. They have also had a couple of years in which to judge the Minister on the way in which he treats people when he wants their land. Only someone who is totally blind and deaf could fail to appreciate what this Minister has done in national parks acquisition, which is very closely related to the subject matter of this Bill. The Minister has ridden roughshod over the rights of ordinary Queenslanders who are trying to make a living off the land. People have been intimidated into doing deals to give up their land for national park purposes. Some have waited a very long time to be paid anything at all, let alone the agreed price. In one notable case, the green shock troopers have simply moved in and taken over, with a price still to be agreed. But that price will be based on land values that are grossly depressed by Labor's loony economic policies. If the Minister is prepared to behave so badly with respect to national parks acquisitions, why should we expect him to behave properly in the land use decisions that he will make under this legislation? The Minister's record is abysmal. Why should anyone trust him now?

There are some basic truths in farming. Practical people understand them, and I suspect that the Minister does, too. He simply chooses to ignore them. I shall mention just a few of these matters and then consider the Bill in those terms. Firstly, a farmer must be able to make some use of all the land in his holding. That does not mean that he has to cultivate the lot or intensively graze the lot. It may be that parts of the holding will be used only rarely, for instance, as emergency grazing in times of drought. The fact remains that if that farmer is to remain viable, he must be able to make his own decisions about the use of all his land. A farmer must also be able to make decisions about the

vegetation covering his land. If he is primarily a crops farmer, he must be able to clear new land from time to time. That makes good sense to those among us who do not believe in flogging country. A farmer involved in stock grazing has to be able to improve the pasture potential of his land, and that could involve the clearing of scrub or the levelling of country to plant pasture. Good management could dictate the need to clear particular areas to make way for laneways or stockyards or to clear fence lines. It could also dictate the location of water improvements. A farmer has to be able to make these decisions on the basis of the best management practice for the particular area of land he owns or from which he makes a living.

A third imperative for farmers, if they are to make a living on a long-term basis, has to be the ability to control total grazing pressure and to protect crops. At the end of the day, a farmer must have the ability to control the numbers and locations of native and feral animals. The bleeding hearts on the other side of the House are horrified at the thought of farmers shooting kangaroos but that is necessary from time to time if another form of animal life—man—is to have the food and fibre he needs to survive. It is a fact of life that kangaroos compete vigorously with commercial stock for the available feed in rural Queensland. In times of drought in particular, when feed is at a premium, farmers must have the right to give their commercial stock and our food supply some sort of priority. The same sort of thing applies to crops. Kangaroos have a great sense of direction. They will come from everywhere to feed on green crops when the going gets tough and things get dry, and particularly when crops are coming into head. That is good for kangaroos but it can be a disaster for farmers.

A farmer needs to have the right to make intelligent management decisions about how he conducts his business, but this legislation denies that right. This legislation gives the Minister and the director the effective right to make important management decisions for farmers. They have the power in this legislation to decide what actions a farmer can take with respect to flora and fauna on his own land. I agree that the Bill sets out all sorts of propositions about consultation between the farmer and the Minister's men. It talks about voluntary declarations of protected areas and refuges. It also contains provisions for compulsory declarations imposed by the Minister through the Governor in Council. Whenever the Opposition points out the dangers in legislation, we are accused of scaremongering. Let me use one of the Government's own documents to reinforce the point about the Minister's overriding powers. The Department of Primary Industries was concerned enough about this legislation to point a few things out to its Minister. Here is what that document said about the scope of this legislation—

“Potentially, the proposed Act has enormous application. It can be used to place legislative controls on any activity in a dedicated protected area or in a habitat of a prescribed species of native wildlife including:

- agriculture or any other form of land use,
- clearing native vegetation,
- dam construction,
- construction of access roads,
- commercial and recreational fishing,
- use of pesticides etc;

regardless of whether the area is private leasehold or freehold or Crown land, provided that the purpose of the legislative control is consistent with the stated objectives of the proposed act.

It can be used by the Minister for Environment and Heritage to stop (at least on an interim basis) any initiative (whether government or private) which is likely to have a detrimental effect on a protected area or species of native wildlife, or native wildlife habitat, or any other area containing natural resources of pre-eminent nature conservation value.

The actual extent of the application of the proposed Act will effectively be controlled by the Executive Council through the devices of dedication of

protected areas, prescription of species as native species and the making of conservation plans, all of which will be determined by Order in Council or by regulation, following a recommendation by the Minister for Environment and Heritage."

That Government document says it all. The Minister will gain absolute powers over land use and the chances of ordinary hard-working farmers to make a living off the land. He will be able to do whatever he likes simply by taking a minute to Executive Council. The fate of every Queensland producer will hang on the whim of the Minister and the green activists in his department. This Parliament, when it passes this Bill, will surrender enormous power to a few people who can then legislate by Executive Council minute or by regulation. This from a Labor Party which talks about democracy! If the Minister cannot get his way by persuasion, the law will let him spit the dummy and force his will. If this legislation is not meant to be used that way, it should not be written that way.

**Mr Comben:** What do you do if somebody is going to bulldoze an entire habitat of koalas? What power would you have? Would you let me know what you have in mind?

**Mr PERRETT:** I will take that interjection from the Minister. My family has been using the same land for more than 100 years. The fourth generation is now making a living off that land. We have lived very well with the environment. We have preserved the environment. I dare say that I have aided the growth of more trees and vegetation and preserved more species of animals and wildlife in my area than the Minister is ever likely to do. I stand on my record. I would also like to say that I believe our family is representative of many farming and grazing families right throughout Queensland who know that they have to live with the environment if they are to survive and let me say that they have done a very good job. There will be many so-called voluntary declarations and many so-called voluntary conservation plans. Farmers will fall for the Minister's line because they know he will win out in the end. They have no option. They know that they have had it as soon as they answer the knock on the door by the man from the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Most producers in this State are already on their knees. They cannot find the resources to take on the might of a Government determined to have its way. For many, the only course will be compliance. The only course will be to risk their viability by agreeing to whatever the greenies demand.

A central theme of this legislation is that conservation values override everything else when it comes to land-use planning. One has only to look back at the original material circulated by the Minister when he started selling this legislation to land-holder groups. That document—that was the one that fell off the truck—was very big on ecologically sustainable uses. Not once did it mention economically sustainable land uses. The philosophy is still very apparent on every page of this Bill. The clear intention is to make every land use subservient to the green ethic.

A few minutes ago I mentioned three basics a farmer must have. The first was the right to use all his land. This Bill makes it clear that a great many farmers will lose the use of their land, in most cases without any compensation being payable by the Government. If land is set aside as a nature refuge, there is no way it can still be productive. There is talk about the Government having a word to the local council about rates, but that could never be considered sufficient compensation. That land will be permanently denied to cattle or sheep, even during drought. If stock are to be kept out, the land will have to be fenced, and at what cost? I suggest that it will be at the cost of the land-holder. I suggest that farmers also remember the \$25,000 fine for straying stock that the Minister has talked about from time to time. Will a rates rebate make up for the lower carrying capacity of the property? Of course it will not. Will it make up for stock lost in a drought? Of course it will not. The land will be lost forever to productive activity, and the farmer will pay the price. The Minister will run around boasting about how much land he has preserved in the name of conservation, but he will not have to pay for that land or for the losses he has caused. For a farmer to be denied the right to manage his land is the same as the land being taken from him. The same applies when a farmer is told that only some uses of the land are acceptable. To be able to stay in

business in some parts of the State a farmer has to be able to maintain a diversity of activities. He must be able to follow the dictates of the commodity markets and switch production to fit in with demand. He cannot be put in the position of having to stay away from a commercially attractive activity just because the Minister does not want that activity going on in his particular area. For many people, viability comes down to being able to react quickly to the market. This legislation takes away that adaptability. Certainly, a farmer could ask for a variation in the conservation plan, but how much hope would he have of that being granted quickly, if at all?

Under this legislation, the Minister and the director have the power to prescribe wildlife. When they do that, farmers will be restricted to dealing with whole species only in accordance with a conservation plan. In most cases, one could bet, they will have to stand back powerless as kangaroos, for instance, overgraze pasture. They will have to stand off as kangaroos wreck fences and flatten crops. If that were not bad enough, there will be the ridiculous situation in which farmers will be forced to provide nature refuges in which native and feral animals can breed unhindered. What sort of sense does that make? I suggest it makes absolutely no sense at all. I just cannot imagine approval for a conservation plan which allows a farmer to deal effectively with wildlife issues as they arise.

**Mr Comben:** Would you like to ask me whether it would? Would you like to ask me that?

**Mr PERRETT:** The Minister will have the opportunity to speak later.

**Mr Comben:** Wouldn't you like it now in the middle of the debate, because the answer is that it will give you that right to be able to knock off fauna if they are ruining fences and overgrazing.

**Mr PERRETT:** The problem primary producers in this State have is that they do not trust the Minister and they do not take the Minister's word.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The member for Barambah does not have to take interjections if he does not want to.

**Mr PERRETT:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. I just cannot imagine approval for a conservation plan which allows a farmer to deal effectively with wildlife issues as they arise. I foresee real problems with the wildlife and nature refuge provisions in this legislation and with demands that prescribed animals, for instance, be dealt with in terms of management plans. I put it to honourable members that scientists have been working on management plans for decades, and they still cannot agree. To come up with something definite would cost millions. Are land-holders expected to come up with this sort of money?

**Mr Comben:** No.

**Mr PERRETT:** The efforts the Minister has made in managing the land he has seized for new national parks in this State are a joke. That land for the most part is not being managed at all, and any honourable members who saw the *7.30 Report* recently would be absolutely horrified at the spread of rubber vine and feral animals. The Minister is guilty of degradation of the land. Certainly, actions speak louder than words. It is simply good productive land taken out of production and turned over to the weeds and the feral pests. Not content with that, the Minister now looks for a new source of land to be taken out of production. This time, private owners lose the use of their land, but not the actual ownership. The other great advantage for Mr Comben is that those private owners will be forced to manage on behalf of the Minister the land they have lost. As one who is vitally interested in primary production in this State, I am most concerned that this legislation will certainly take away confidence that is needed for a very viable primary industry. Even in the Government's Leading State economic statement, which was debated in this House last week, the very first section on primary industries says—

“A strong primary industry sector is vital to the prosperity of Queensland.”

I could not agree more. The statement continues—

“The Queensland Government is directly concerned with the joint objectives of maximising economic returns, sustainability of our natural resources and maintenance of a strong and vibrant rural community.”

It talks about things such as ensuring sustainability of production, but over on the next page this statement indicates that the Queensland Government will also promote the development of a new plantation-based rainforest timber industry on private land. I commend the Government for that, but the part that worries me is that the plantations will provide not only access to a sustainable source of hardwood timber but also for the re-establishment of rainforests on river and stream banks in degraded land. That scheme would be part of the overall integrated catchment plan which is designed to reduce erosion, improve water quality and create new habitats. It worries me that land-holders could spend hundreds of thousands of dollars creating forest plantations on their own private land and establishing new habitats whereas, under this legislation, the Minister can seize the lot. Where are the provisions in the Bill with respect to compensation for all the time, money, sweat and hard work that will go down the gurgler in the creation of a new forest? This legislation raises grave concerns. I join other members of the Opposition in condemning the Bill wholeheartedly.

**Mr ARDILL** (Salisbury) (7.53 p.m.): First of all, I support this Bill wholeheartedly, and I do not think I should miss the opportunity of drawing attention to the effectiveness of the Minister who is in charge of this Bill. It took 83 years for Queensland to reach the stage of 2 per cent of land being preserved as national park. In just over two years, that area has been doubled by this Minister, which will go down in history as a great achievement for Queensland. Despite all the carping criticism, that fact cannot be denied.

On 7 November 1906, Joshua Bell introduced a Bill into this House to establish national parks as part of Queensland's heritage. In this, the member for Dalby—as he was in the Kidston Government—was prompted and even coerced by R. M. Collins, the former member for Albert from 1896-1899, who lived in the Albert and Logan Valleys, to establish that legislation. Collins had visited America and had looked at the Yosemite National Park in Montana. He was so impressed by it that he said that Queensland, and the nation that became Australia, should have the same type of land preservation policy. He worked assiduously, both in and out of Parliament, until the Bill was passed in 1906.

**Mr Comben:** Unfortunately, he did not live to see his great dream of Lamington becoming a national park. He died two years before Lamington National Park was declared, which was a great tragedy.

**Mr ARDILL:** That is right, but it is not surprising that because he lived within sight of Tamborine, the first national park was declared at Witches Falls, Mount Tamborine, in 1908. The first large national park to be declared as a result of the Bill was Lamington, which was proclaimed and preserved by the Ryan Labor Government in 1915. Since then—with, I must admit, a few notable exceptions—the Labor Party has established a proud record of creating national parks, thereby protecting native flora and fauna. The opposition parties, however, have the very sorry record of an uncaring attitude towards protection of the environment—again, with some notable exceptions, such as the concern shown by the member for Cunningham who, against all odds, has done his best. Members of the ALP laid the groundwork which could have been followed, but the National Party threw up despoilers, such as the infamous former member for Whitsunday and many others. I am therefore pleased to see a change of heart evidenced by so many Opposition members who are determined to speak to this Bill.

As stated in the Explanatory Notes to the Bill that was presented to the Parliament last week, this legislation represents an integrated approach which, for the first time in 120 years since the first conservation legislation was introduced by the Government led by Sir Arthur Palmer, member for Port Curtis, is designed to ensure the conservation of Queensland's bountiful gifts of nature. The National Parks and Wildlife Service grew out of the Forestry Department and particularly out of the efforts of officers of that former department in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. In the decade prior to election of the Goss Government, wildlife protection in Queensland reached its absolute post-war nadir

under the unenlightened regime of Bjelke-Petersen and the former Minister to whom I have already referred. In today's National Party, I had hoped that a more enlightened attitude would be abroad and that the member for Cunningham would have got his message across. Instead, we have had to listen to the diatribe of the member for Warrego which was full of cliches, hatred of the Minister and of Aboriginal Australians. His speech was also full of misinformation.

As I said earlier, it took 83 years—from 1906 to 1989—to increase from nil to 2 per cent the percentage of land in Queensland that was designated as national parks. It has taken just over two years for this Minister and this Government to double that figure to 4 per cent. It must be realised that there will always be critics, but these critics must not be allowed to ignore Pat Comben's achievement in doubling the proportion of national park land in two years. I can accept with equanimity the uninformed attitude of the member for Warrego, but I find it harder to accept criticism from environmentalists who believe that progress has been too slow. While to some extent I can excuse the ignorant criticism of some Opposition members, that does not mean that it should not be refuted. The claim that this Government is handing over control of endangered wildlife to be exploited by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is simply nonsense which is intended to denigrate both the Aboriginal people and the Government. What should be said is, "Read the Bill."

In point of fact, some of our land which is now under the control of, or is being used by, Aborigines will become a separate category of national parks. Nobody who has any fairness in him or her would abrogate the right of Aborigines to use that land and the resources that they have used since time immemorial, but that does not mean that the extinction of endangered species will result. This Bill brings together all the aspects of nature conservation management on all categories of land to provide comprehensive protection of this State's most precious asset comprising our land, flora and fauna. The criticism can always be made that the Government has not gone far enough—and we are getting that from some of the environment groups. There can always be room for a difference of opinion on degree. A number of people have spoken to me about the need for third-party legislation to allow people to intervene and prevent certain developments from taking place. That may be necessary at some time in the future; I would not rule that out, but I do not believe that it should be brought in at this point in time. As I said, it is a matter of degree and there can always be disagreements on that. For this particular time, the Bill goes far enough.

The Government is about establishing primary protection of all of our natural flora and fauna and, particularly, endangered species, of which there are quite a few—brought about mostly by the loss of habitat rather than by the killing of fauna and wilful destruction of flora by vandalism; it is simply development. The claim that management is not being proposed and the claim that other land-holders will not be informed and consulted just does not stand up to scrutiny. I repeat: it does not stand up to scrutiny. Despite the stories peddled by some Opposition and crossbench members, the Minister's department is already consulting with adjacent landowners and interested bodies and did so during the formation of the Bill. Tomorrow, one of a regular series of meetings will be held with a group of interested bodies. They are: the Cattlemen's Union of Australia, the United Graziers Association, the Queensland Graingrowers Association, the Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Association, the Queensland Farmers Federation, the Queensland Cane Growers Association and officers of the department.

The member for Barambah has left the Chamber, but I would like to draw his attention to the fact that all of those people are being consulted and that consultation is taking place on a regular basis. The problem is that members of the National Party—and the opposition parties in general—do not consult with those people; otherwise, I am quite sure that they would have been informed that their concerns were misplaced. Some of the topics to be discussed at those regular meetings are: fencing of land; mustering on parks; feral animal control and native animal management; noxious weed control and management of introduced pasture species; firebreaks and a fire plan for the areas; maps to enable people to understand exactly what boundaries are proposed and what boundaries have been instituted, showing fences, roads, tracks, firebreaks,



permanent waters, boundaries—all of those things. All of those issues are up for proper discussion. Unfortunately, members of the Opposition are not aware of it.

Other topics to be discussed are: access roads, tracks and walking areas in those places, firearms and destruction of injured animals and feral animals, spraying of land and baiting of feral animals, disease eradication programs and grazing rights. I have personal knowledge of some discussions that have taken place with landowners who are adjacent to the areas that are being acquired. Other topics are: search and rescue, Aboriginal issues and the environment in general, community nature conservation and land care, and, very importantly, integrated catchment management.

**Mr Comben:** You refer to personal knowledge of grazing on parks. That would be that matter where someone was allowed to have a grazing lease under the former Government five years ago and they never did the paperwork and he virtually has nothing because they didn't finish off the job. I had to finish off the job by giving a 10 by 10 lease over that area.

**Mr ARDILL:** Yes. Of course, it is neglect of the Government's responsibilities to consult with those people and to negotiate.

**Mr Comben:** They never did it. They left that poor young man with nothing.

**Mr ARDILL:** Yet members of the Opposition have the colossal cheek to say that the present Minister is not consulting with interested groups and landowners. One of the claims made by Opposition members, such as the member for Warrego, is that freehold land means that the landowner—or land-holder—has absolute right to that land and it cannot be resumed. Under the monarchical system, which Opposition members espouse and which has been with us for nearly a thousand years, the Crown has absolute prior rights, subject to fair compensation. In many cases in the past, it was without fair compensation.

**Mr Gilmore** interjected.

**Mr ARDILL:** Does the honourable member support the monarchical system?

**Mr Gilmore:** My word I do, but do you? That is more the question.

**Mr ARDILL:** The honourable member must know that the Crown, through the Government of the day, has absolute prior rights on any land.

**Mr Gilmore** interjected.

**Mr ARDILL:** No doubt, the honourable member supports that, yet he comes into this place and criticises the fact that the Minister has, when all else has failed, resumed the properties at fair compensation. The Bill represents a major step forward in managing our most precious assets of land, flora and fauna. It is being done in a systematic way—in a way which has been well thought out and which has been considered by us over a long period not only in Government but also while we were in Opposition. As I pointed out, the matter has been discussed with a great number of interested bodies. The topics are wide ranging, and everything that could possibly be done has been done to give a fair deal to the landowners. We also must take into consideration the public good and the needs of our flora and fauna, because this has not been done in the past. Over the last 20 years, there has been a considerable deterioration in the situation in Queensland. We have been criticised severely around Australia for an uncaring and quite contrary attitude to the environment. All that has changed. The Minister has shown his commitment to that change and to a continuation of care for our most valuable asset. I support in every way possible what is being done, and I certainly support the Bill.

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Carnarvon) (8.08 p.m.): I thank you very much, Mr Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity to participate in this debate tonight on the Nature Conservation Bill.

**Mr Comben:** What is the tie?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It is an excellent tie, is it not? The organisation from which I obtained it has probably given the Minister curry over the last couple of years, and it

probably will continue to do so. I wish to join in the chorus of dissension that abounds on this side of the House and on the Liberal side with regard to the amount of time given to consider this piece of legislation. I know the standard response from members opposite. I intend to tell them why that is, because tonight we are talking about a piece of legislation which alters significantly the environmental direction for Queensland. It is a piece of legislation which amalgamates some seven Acts at least, which I see on the desk of the Opposition spokesman, and which cuts across many other portfolios, including those of Aboriginal Affairs and Land Management. I say that because this is an extremely complex piece of legislation. Anybody who actually reads the Bill will understand that. I have made a genuine attempt to actually read and understand this Bill. In addition, a number of other complex pieces of legislation, also to be considered this week, are before the House. Those Bills, which were introduced last week, include the Electoral Bill and the Liquor Bill. It might be easy for members opposite to say it, but I think it defies reality when they say that—

**Mr Elliott:** They had prepared briefs.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I was about to come to that. It is very easy for members opposite to stand up with their ministerial briefs and add a few personal words about something in their electorates. We in Opposition do it a bit tougher than that. We have to sit down and work it out for ourselves. I am sure that members opposite realise that. As I said, it is a complex piece of legislation. All members who genuinely wish to participate in a constructive way have to actually sit down with the legislation, read it, refer to the Minister's second-reading speech and then refer to other pieces of legislation. I say that with due consideration and in a constructive manner. Much has been heard from the other side about how the Liberal and National Parties in Government did not consider or understand the environment. I say to the Minister and to all other Government members that I do not necessarily believe that to be the case. I believe that if they want to talk about environmental vandalism, they will find that under their Government there will be just as much environmental vandalism and just as many jackboot-style actions as they say occurred under the coalition Government.

In introducing this legislation, the Minister said that Queensland has a proud tradition of nature conservation and national parks stretching back to 1871 when its first conservation legislation was passed. I agree with that. I do not believe that I am quoting the Minister selectively. I think that Governments generally have genuinely tried to conserve the unique range of species, whether they be flora or fauna, in this State. One thing that members opposite have to come to grips with is that there is a lot more to Queensland than that. I do not think they have come to grips with that. It should be remembered that many of them are idealistic social engineers who live in a very, very idealistic world and who are probably very good at representing their electorates in Brisbane—something of which I do not deprive them—or in provincial centres. Just to necessarily say—

**Mr Smyth:** There is Stanthorpe, isn't there?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Stanthorpe certainly is a great place. I thank the honourable member for Bowen for that interjection. Just by declaring 4 per cent or 5 per cent of Queensland as national parks or locking it up in nature refuges will not necessarily achieve the aim in which we all believe. I believe that we have common aims but we are going about achieving them in different ways.

**Mr Dollin:** How would you do it?

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I will come to that later. If 3, 4 or 5 per cent of Queensland is locked up in national parks to which people are allowed access, that is not necessarily preserving the unique biodiversity of Queensland. "Biodiversity" is a word that the Minister uses a great deal. I am sure that he would proudly say in this place that it is a word that he does use. It is possible that, in the past, the National Party Government has fallen into the trap of saying that it will gazette 4 per cent to 5 per cent of Queensland as national parks. However, there are certain logistical constraints and problems regarding that. First and foremost, small unique regions of Queensland, not many tens of thousands of square kilometres, have to be declared national parks and

have to be managed correctly and aptly. Do honourable members know how much land this Bill will lock up or put into national parks?

**Mr Dollin:** Five per cent of Queensland.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** And, if my mathematics are correct, 5 per cent of Queensland adds up to 80 000 square kilometres. That is a lot of Queensland; we sure appreciate that. That area would encompass many electorates. It is an area of 8 million hectares, which is a lot of Queensland. There is no doubt that managing that much land requires a lot of work. A lot of work is involved in managing the noxious flora and fauna in national parks. But that has not been able to be done. Unless the management budget or the budget for national parks acquisition is kept in line, that will not be achieved. Members opposite may wake up in the morning feeling idealistic, rush into this place with a warm, fuzzy feeling and say, "We are going to have an extra 50 000 square kilometres of Queensland." It is more complex than that. They have to understand and realise that. They should not say, "We are going to have it. It is going to be great. It is going to be marvellous for the future." It will not necessarily be great and marvellous. The unique biodiversity of Queensland has to be looked at. The Government's approach is laudable. However, I am concerned about the way in which the Government is going about it and I am concerned also about private property rights. However, I am very pleased that the legislation which has come before the House is not as serious and does not attack private property rights as much as the draft discussion paper did. It is all very well for the honourable member for Salisbury to jump up tonight and say, "Get up there, members of the Opposition, and sell this legislation and do not scare people." The original draft which actually fell off the back of the truck was talking about taking away leasehold and freehold land, with or without compensation.

**Mr Comben:** Like the old Fauna Conservation Act, section 36. The old Fauna Conservation Act, your legislation, did that; mine doesn't.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It is very difficult for members of the Opposition to be able to go out into the community and say to people with a great deal of confidence——

**Mr Elder** interjected.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I will wait for the Minister to answer a number of my questions. I do agree that Australia has a unique diversity of plants and animals. I certainly do agree that they must be preserved for the future. What honourable members have to do is ensure that we do it the right way and that we do not necessarily plough headlong into the process with false pretences. I do very much agree that education is a great way of going about informing our community and making our community aware of the wonderful number of plants and animals we have in Australia. Certainly a number of those plants and animal species have disappeared since European colonisation of Australia, and that is recognised. There is also a school of thought that suggests that some of Australia's unique species disappeared under Aboriginal habitation prior to European settlement in Australia. I am talking about diprotodons, the large species of wombats we used to have in Australia which used to grow to the size of bullocks, and the large kangaroos. It is very hard to prove, but there is also a certain amount of palaeontological evidence which reinforces that fact. It must be recognised that mankind has had a great impact upon Australia. I do not believe that honourable members should be necessarily condemning people in the past for what may have been wrong environmental directions. What was wrong in the past as far as we see it now was often right when those people were actually doing those sorts of things. It is like passing retrospective legislation. It is like someone saying to a factory owner, "You can pump things out into the stream", yet 30 years down the track it is realised that is not the right way to go about it. I do not believe we should be condemning people as far as that goes.

**Mr Ardill:** At least they had the nous to know that it was wrong and did something about it.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Certainly, but we should not necessarily be condemning a lot of people for doing those sorts of things when it was considered to be right at the

time—not only right by this side of politics or that side of politics, but generally conceived as right by many people. Honourable members need to understand that and not get themselves a little bleeding heart syndrome from time to time. I turn now to the issue of feral animals in Australia. It concerns me that this has not been touched upon very much by members who have participated in this debate. Some of the greatest scourges on the unique Australian flora and fauna are the many introduced species of animals. I refer particularly to foxes and cats and some of the wild horses—

**Mr Smyth:** Joh put the deer on the crest.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I believe we are talking about a different thing when we deal with deer. We realise that they are reasonably destructive, but there is a royal heritage surrounding the giving of deer to Australia. I am talking particularly of those species that have more of an impact on the flora and fauna of Australia. I will come back to the foxes and cats in Australia. I realise that the Minister is concerned about this. Honourable members must embark upon a public education program so that we tell people that the greatest scourge we have is, for example, house cats. Sometimes the domestic cat will have a litter and some people will take out that litter of six or eight kittens and dump it in the scrub. We often see examples of that in the community. Those people are causing untold damage to our smaller marsupials. I believe that, as a collective group of responsible parliamentarians, we should be lobbying our Federal colleagues throughout the State more and more—and I realise the Minister is doing that—to support the CSIRO and other groups to come up with ways of controlling these problems, whether it be putting a gene into the feral cats which would make them infertile or some other action. I know that it would take a hell of a lot of education in the community to point out that we would not be out to get anyone's little house moggy, and that we would be actually preserving Australia's heritage by doing that.

I turn now to interim conservation orders, which are a part of this legislation. I can see what the Minister is trying to achieve. It concerns me a little that the Minister will be able to go in and impose a conservation order upon people and actually stop them doing things on their land which they see as their right. I remind honourable members of a question I asked the Minister for Environment and Heritage in the Parliament on 1 August 1990. I asked the question in all genuineness to elicit a sensible answer, and I believe I received a reasonable answer. I asked—

“With reference to the uncertainty that now exists in the rural community with regards to the Government's environmental direction especially in the area of possible restrictions on land clearing—

Will he outline the Government's plan with regard to this matter so as to eliminate the possibility of panic clearing?”

The Minister stated—

“I state categorically that there is no justification for the uncertainty that the honourable member claims exists in the rural community, nor do I for a moment believe that uncertainty exists.”

This concerns me, because when I came into this House I was aware that people were concerned about this matter, and they felt that there were going to be restrictions placed upon their ability to clear their land. People who had never considered clearing it before were actually going up there and clearing it, and they are panic clearing now. They are concerned about what the Minister is going to do by imposing these interim conservation orders on them. I ask the Minister how broad he is going to be in actually describing, defining and imposing the interim conservation orders proposed in the legislation. Is he going to impose it on the tr aproc country around Stanthorpe in an effort to stop land clearing there? I would like a broader explanation of that when the Minister replies, because I believe that is very important. I do not want to see people in the community panic clearing and destroying much of Queensland's unique fauna and flora, and I am sure that the majority of members in this Chamber would not wish to see that, either. We must understand that we need practical, affordable nature conservation legislation for Queensland. I believe what we are putting in place here tonight—and

there is no doubt it is going to happen by the sheer weight of numbers on the Government side—is something which is going to be a bureaucratic nightmare, and it is going to be a bureaucratic industry. Unfortunately, the management of national parks certainly is going to falter as a result of this legislation. What we must understand, and what we should try to ensure, is that the Government looks after what it has first. The Government should not run out and grab all the land, because that will not achieve anything. It should look after what it has, look after it well, and then go out and acquire more land for national parks. It should make sure that that is done on a sound, practical basis, not just to reach some quota, which, I believe, is falsely based, and taps into the environmental empathy that exists throughout Queensland and other parts of Australia. In conclusion, I think that what the Government is trying to achieve with this legislation is quite laudable, but I do not agree with the way it has been done. I believe that the legislation will be a bureaucratic nightmare, and that it has been introduced too quickly. Many members of this House have not had time to sit down and go through the legislation in a proper manner to formulate an extremely informed response, but the Opposition is certainly doing its best.

**Mr ROWELL** (Hinchinbrook) (8.24 p.m.): In joining this debate, I would like to express the same sentiments as were expressed by the previous speaker about the time that has been allowed for speakers on the Opposition side of the House to prepare for this very important debate. The legislation concerns me because my electorate of Hinchinbrook extends quite some distance along the eastern coast of Queensland. Approximately 150 kilometres of land that has World Heritage listing is included in the western boundary of my electorate. Of course, World Heritage listing is an extremely important issue for the electorate of Hinchinbrook. Currently, approximately 60 per cent of the Cardwell Shire is classified as national park land or forestry land, or is tied up as Crown land. I know that the Minister has visited the area on several occasions and is very much aware of many of the attributes of the Hinchinbrook electorate. In the hinterland there are approximately 350 species of birds, and many different types of flora and fauna that are unique to the tropics of Queensland. Those species will certainly play an important role in the development of national parks.

The sugar industry is a very important industry in the Hinchinbrook electorate. A number of factors that impinge on that industry are dependent on what happens in the hinterland of my electorate, the integrated catchment management of the Herbert River, and those streams that flow out of the mountain ranges. Those areas behind Ingham and Tully, and to some extent those around the Innisfail area, have been World Heritage listed. If canefarmers are to continue growing their crops, the wetlands must be drained. If the drainage of those wetland areas is impeded by orders, or concerns about areas that might contain valuable flora and fauna, that must be considered very carefully. I am not totally in disagreement with what the Minister is proposing. I must say that, because when the National Party was in Government, it recognised some of those areas in the hinterland as important core areas of particular value that should be locked up and preserved. As I have said, several unique species of plants and animals exist in that area and, for the sake of posterity, they must be preserved. Having said that, I should point out that, at the time of the World Heritage listing of those areas, there was a battle royal going on over the timber industry, which is an extremely important industry in my electorate. Over the hundred years or so that that industry was in operation, it relied to some extent on part of the area that has been tied up by World Heritage listing. The other reason why the timber industry gained so much impetus was that it cleared the sugar lands that were covered heavily by rainforests. Various Governments—not just the National Party Government, but Labor Party Governments as well—required that those areas be cleared before the determination of leases or freeholding arrangements. As a consequence, a very important industry emerged.

During 1986, around the time of World Heritage listing, Forest Service officers, who are recognised as some of the best foresters in the world—in fact, Queensland's technology has been transferred to many countries around the world—realised that the levels of timber removal of the previous 20 years could not be sustained. So the sustainable logging levels were reduced. Some of the areas that were given World

Heritage listing were logged up to three times, yet after those three loggings they retained sufficient of their value to justify World Heritage listing. I believe that those people who were involved in looking after the forests were doing quite a good job. I think that the recognition that was paid to them by World Heritage listing indicates how dedicated they were to their tasks.

I return to the sugar industry. As I said, drainage is a very important aspect of that industry. A number of the streams in my electorate that rise in the hinterland come from national parks and World Heritage areas. During October/November, it is quite normal for fires to occur in that area. As a consequence, during periods of heavy rain, a high level of sediment enters the Herbert River, and that causes problems. Management of fires in that area is extremely important. The perimeters of World Heritage listed areas and national parks should contain cleared areas that act as firebreaks. Those cleared areas might also prevent fires from spreading to cane land more so than spreading to national park areas.

As to the cultivation of sugar—the burning-off technique is not used in the harvesting process. Because uncontrollable fires sometimes occur in national parks and World Heritage listed areas, people whose properties adjoin those areas face problems. I do not believe that the firefighting equipment provided by the National Parks and Wildlife Service is good enough. In fact, there is an indication that if a major outbreak of fire were to occur in a national park or World Heritage listed area, that equipment would be inadequate to extinguish that fire. In the interests of those people who own properties adjoining those areas, clearing of perimeters should be maintained in association with national parks rangers. I understand that that process may be taking place. There should also be consultation with land-holders along that strip. If that is done, I believe that that will create a satisfactory association between the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the people who grow sugarcane in the hinterland.

Another very important consideration is noxious weeds such as sickle pod, which grows in very low light levels. These noxious weeds are starting to inundate some national park areas. That is quite frightening, and it will take a major effort to control them. If that is not done, massive areas of national parks will be inundated by sickle pod and other noxious weeds. Some members have referred to feral animals, including pigs. Feral animals are a major problem in national parks in the hinterland. They feed off the cane, then seek the cover of rainforests to escape from whoever might be chasing them on the cane farms. The firebreak that I was talking about between national park areas and cane farms could assist in controlling feral animals to some degree. I am sure that the Minister is aware that cats are also a problem. Because the area contains many birds, some species could be eradicated by those cats. Some of the bird life in the area is unique. The Queen Victoria riflebird is unique to the hinterland area behind Ingham.

I turn now to the Tully/Millstream project, which is extremely important. This Bill causes some problems for it. Part of that area is World Heritage listed. The proposals for dam sites and recreation areas on the tableland should be discussed. The area is of extreme importance to north Queensland. The project can generate up to 600 megawatts of power. It is a clean source of energy that will provide energy in the event of a calamity in which the feeder lines from the south could be broken. Barely enough energy would be generated through the two existing hydro stations at Kareeya and Barron River to turn on the lights. It is difficult to ascertain the present state of the Tully/Millstream scheme. The Government has created a number of furlphies to try to stave off this project, which is unpopular with the conservation movement. I believe that to some degree the Government is pandering to that movement. That is a terrible shame, because the virtues of that scheme are great. It could provide some 1 000 jobs, including 500 for the Ravenshoe area. I am sure that my colleague the member for Tablelands will talk about the scheme and its importance to areas such as Ravenshoe.

Ravenshoe is in dire straits. It lost its timber industry. There was a fiasco with the compensation package. Businesses in Ravenshoe are still owed money from that package, and they have not yet been fully compensated. Unemployment levels are extremely high in that area, as they are throughout the Hinchinbrook electorate. The 500

jobs that would be provided in the hinterland and the 500 jobs that would be provided on the coast by that project would have a multiplier effect for six years. It would create additional employment for people, such as the butcher, the baker and the candlestick maker, who provide services. All those people would support the workers on that scheme. It represents a very important employment opportunity for north Queensland. Those opportunities are unavailable at present, and we do not know what is going on. The cost of the scheme was estimated at some \$600m, but that estimate is escalating with inflation. The Government tends to dither around about making a decision on the project.

I turn now to the acquisition of national park areas in my electorate. Mr Bradshaw from Princess Hills came to see me. He is very concerned about the package, what was offered to him by the Government and the loss that he stood to sustain by the intervention of the Department of Land Management in the deal. Initially, he expected some \$2.9m for his property. He settled, I believe, by agreement with the National Parks and Wildlife Service, for \$2.2m. I understand that the revaluation by the Lands Department has brought the price down to \$2,032,000, so he will lose about \$168,000. He has been paid some money, I understand, but he is in limbo at present and does not know what to do. That is an indictment of the acquisition of land for national parks. It is something that must be looked at very carefully. Members on this side of the House have observed the furore about just what the Government is doing with the acquisition of land for national parks and whether it can look after those properties, whether it can provide the rangers and whether it can provide the services necessary for those parks to function properly. Irrespective of the warm inner glow, as has been referred to by the honourable member for Carnarvon, the danger is that the Government might stretch itself too far and exceed its capacity to look after those properties properly. The feral animals and the noxious weeds could quite easily get out of control.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority was approached some time ago in an effort to overcome some of the lack of employment opportunities in the Ingham district by funding the provision of walking tracks. I am sure that the Minister knows quite a bit about this proposal. I invited him to the electorate. Unfortunately, at the moment, he is talking to his mates in the Chamber and is not taking any notice of the proceedings in the House. He was invited to the electorate. We walked through an area that was of value in showing the rest of the world what the Wet Tropics area was all about. On 15 August last year, we put forward a proposal to the Wet Tropics Management Authority by way of a submission and a short video. The whole thing was compiled as a result of community effort. The community was right behind it. Unfortunately, up to the present, we have received no positive response.

**Mr Comben:** What on?

**Mr ROWELL:** If the Minister had been listening, he would know it was about the Wallaman Falls walking tracks, of which he is very much aware. He did spend some time traversing Garrawalt Creek.

**Mr Comben:** That is where you tripped and almost got killed, but we pulled you back.

**Mr ROWELL:** Yes and, of course, the Minister made a great to-do about it. He got the media out there and gave them misinformation about the whole affair. I think that was fairly impolite considering that I had gone to some trouble to arrange the journey into that area for him. The Minister can do what he likes. If that is his modus operandi, fair enough. I have no complaint. I will wear it. If he wants to do it that way, that is all right with me. However, it was a big disappointment that we had to go to that extent to get a bit of publicity. Anyway, that is the way the Minister operates. I am a little concerned about it, but that is one of the things we learn to accept in this business. The walking tracks are of great importance because they could provide another activity in the Herbert River district. As the Minister knows, that area has a number of very good attributes. We hope to centre the whole concept around the Wallaman Falls, which have the longest single drop in Australia. We hope to construct cabins that will meld with the environment and provide the type of attributes that will meet the requirements of World

Heritage listing. About three weeks to a month ago, the planning department guaranteed me that, within a week, I would have acceptance, which would enable the district to put together a proposal for those walking tracks. However, the Wet Tropics Management Authority did not respond. It made promise after promise, but nothing eventuated.

The welfare of Aborigines is a very important part of my shadow portfolio. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“I will state again that it is not the situation under this Bill that uncontrolled hunting will be a normal practice in an Aboriginal claimed national park.”

A letter from the Department of Environment and Heritage to Mr Wayne Butcher of Lockhart River, after referring to clearing, continues—

“We would not want to interfere with your rights to hunt or live in the area.”

I believe that those two statements are inconsistent. That letter was signed by Mr Dan Gillespie, executive director of the Division of Conservation. Because it is of some concern, I ask the Minister to clarify that. If those statements are inconsistent, it is my right to be told why. Perhaps the Minister could respond to a few other concerns when he replies. One of the concerns is who pays the costs of registration of the conservation agreements.

Time expired.

**Mr COOPER** (Roma) (8.44 p.m.): In common with all other Queenslanders, I recognise the importance of conservation. Certain parts of this legislation are simply not necessary. I also put in a word for the land-holders who actually live and work in the environment and have done so for generations. Most land-holders are far more accomplished conservationists than those who wear their hearts on their sleeves, display mock concern, or are being bleeding hearts, just to hold down a job. The people who actually reside out there and earn their living from this land are not mock conservationists at all. They are genuine. They have lived in the environment of this nation for 200 years, and so far they have done it very well. Certainly, they have made mistakes. We have all learnt from those mistakes. I think this legislation is an insult to people's intelligence and, as far as their knowledge of conservation matters is concerned, the Minister has really adopted a schoolmasterish approach which I do not think is necessary. Although they are grown-up people, this Minister says that he knows what is best for them. The Minister has failed on two counts at least: one is the insulting and contemptible way that this legislation has been rushed in here; pushed through by the force of numbers in the minimum time, and this demonstrates—

**Mr Comben:** When?

**Mr COOPER:** The Minister has been told already today. He knows very well what has been done. It demonstrates a contempt for the proper processes of Parliament about which the Minister used to scream, and also a contempt for those people who will be affected by the passage of this legislation. The Minister has become very bitter. He has become very impatient because of the protracted way in which he has had to handle this legislation. Although the Minister was not initially bitter, he has allowed his emotions to affect his handling of the legislation. Had he been more magnanimous along the way, he would have received a lot more cooperation. The Minister should have shown more patience than he has, and he certainly should have been more considerate of people instead, especially in the case of Riversleigh, of being so inconsiderate. That is an event that will haunt the Minister for a very long time, and indicates quite clearly his real attitude. The Minister does not seem to have control over his emotions, and because of that he does not engender in the people who are going to be affected by this legislation the necessary faith, confidence and trust. The legislation is probably the most draconian that has ever been contemplated in this country. One can certainly discern the ramifications of this legislation. It proposes a radical set of laws that give the Minister an awesome and absolute power. It invests him with a power over the use of land that really flies in the face of all that has been known before, of all the traditions of ownership, of all the traditions of privacy, and all the traditions of the acknowledgment of title. Typical of Labor Party legislation introduced by a city-based Minister, it is



grossly insulting to country people whose families have for generations managed a very successful balance between various forms of rural industry and nature conservation.

**Mr Comben:** Come on!

**Mr COOPER:** That is true. They would simply go broke if they did not manage and conserve their land in the very first place. They would not have any land left to conserve, you fool!

**Mr Smyth** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** The honourable member should try to understand that. If he did that, some sensible legislation might be introduced. Those people would have gone broke long ago if they had not practised those sound conservation measures in the first place. It is an utterly demeaning implication for country land-holders in that the Minister simply cannot trust them to manage their own properties.

**Mr Comben:** What about the wildlife?

**Mr COOPER:** Those people have been there for 200 years. They must have done something right in the first place. This whole exercise and all the legislation would be an exercise in utter futility because there would simply be nothing left to save if they had done the wrong thing in the first place. This legislation imposes a form of environmental apartheid by providing different rules for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and others. I have no argument with the provision which states that these people should be allowed their traditional rights to take and use wildlife, but the Minister has to acknowledge—and honourable members know—that those rights are established in the principles that were established by the Australian Law Reform Commission. This legislation says that the traditional rights may be limited or restricted where the conservation of a species is threatened. This provision does have the potential of causing both serious cultural conflict and legal challenge. All that is needed now is for some overzealous member of the Minister's green police—and he seems to have police running around everywhere—to seek to impose that provision. In this day and age when everyone has gone litigation mad, that conflict could easily arise. Taking a long-sighted view of this, there could be this fantastic conflict between the Minister and his colleague the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Although there is some acknowledgment of the need to develop land conservation policies and to improve communication with the Aboriginal communities, there are really no guarantees, and certainly no confidence, that there will be consultation with other country communities except, of course, for the same old dictum—inform and then proceed regardless. We have seen this so often, "Yes, we will consult with you. We will simply tell you what we are going to do. That is your consultation, and then you go about your business." Honourable members know that from past experience. The Minister has also spoken of the need to spend money on what he calls the education and awareness campaign. Really, that is nothing more than another term for self-promotion, for self-justification, and certainly that plain old-fashioned brainwashing. The Minister also says that the days of political mischief and misinformation are over. What on earth he means by that, I do not know. I guess what he really means is that he will simply say that anyone who disagrees with him or criticises him is indulging in political mischief, and that those days are over. That high-handed attitude also bothers me a great deal.

Before examining the provisions of the Bill, I believe it is important to examine some of the definitions of its terms. Clause 72 states, for example, that if the Governor in Council is of the opinion that native wildlife is in danger of extinction or that the survival of native wildlife in the wild is unlikely if what is called "threatening processes" continue, then the wildlife may be prescribed as "endangered". The Government is having two bob each way as a result of either an appallingly sloppy piece of legislative drafting or a deliberately vague piece of legislative drafting. In effect, such a clause means that the Minister can base a decision on nothing more than a whim, an hysterical complaint made by an extremist greenie, or, perhaps, inquiries made by some earnest, do-gooder journalist who is after a "save the cuddly animal" story, of which "Joey" is an

example. That was one of the most disgraceful pieces of journalism I have ever seen. All that is necessary is for someone to conjure up an emotive image suggesting that a species of wildlife is endangered and poof—it is done!

I make these points because the definitions in the Bill are the critical foundations upon which the legislation rests and upon which it will stand or fall. This Bill could be described as an awesome edifice of State control, interference and harassment because those actions are built on the basis of definitions of the type I have described. The Bill contains a number of other equally vague terms which would permit any scenario to occur, ranging from a non-stop barrage of orders to an extreme of total inaction, even in urgent circumstances, depending on who the Minister was. The Bill refers to vulnerable wildlife which could be part of an abundant population of a certain species which is at risk from the so-called "threatening processes". The Bill also describes rare wildlife being classified by, among other criteria, the fact that the species has a relatively large population over a restricted range. I defy anyone to work out the meaning of those provisions. This is just another case of the Government trying to have two bob each way. The foundations of this Bill are cast in terms that are subject to very wide interpretation not only within the scientific community but also within that well-known sheltered workshop for greenies, the Department of Environment and Heritage. Honourable members can be sure that if there is any doubt whatever about the implementation of this legislation, there will be no debate and no real examination of claims or allegations. There will not even be a pretence at impartiality prior to this Minister making a decision.

I turn now to the most infamous part of the Bill which is probably recognised as such by the Minister, namely, interim conservation orders. When introducing the legislation, the Minister tried to downplay the relevant provision by describing it as a "last resort". These orders can be made by the Minister on the bases of very loose definitions. During the Minister's second-reading speech, he referred to "compensation" being payable to land-holders "or persons who are carrying out lawful activities and are detrimentally affected by the order." However, the Bill states that any such land-holder is "entitled" to be paid by the State such "reasonable compensation" because of the making of the order as agreed between the State and the land-holder or, failing agreement, as determined by the Land Court. Plainly, the Bill is far more circumspect about compensation rights than was the Minister when he introduced it and when he was under attack because of it. The legislation says to potentially affected land-holders, "The Government might give you something, but if you think it is a pittance, then take your chances and pay legal bills before the Land Court." Obviously, this attitude could ruin land-holders because, in the first place, the effect of these orders would be to overrule any approved council planning scheme and, in the second place, the order would last for up to 60 days, with the possibility of it being extended to 90 days.

This is a frightening proposition because it threatens to bring about total loss and complete ruin. These provisions could come down heavily on innocent land-holders who proceed to do something with or to their property with local authority consent. Even worse is the fact that these orders can be made to apply to land even if the allegedly affected wildlife or habitat is not within the boundaries of the property, or the land is not, according to the Bill, within an area of "major interest or protected area". It is also deemed by the Bill that the Minister meets his obligation of notifying the land-holder of the order by displaying the notice in "a prominent place on the land." It could be the case that the land-holder lives a great distance from where the notice is displayed. It often happens in varying circumstances that land-holders do not receive written orders, yet continuation of a specified activity, in glorious ignorance of the fact that a sign has been erected somewhere on the property, could result in substantial penalties being suffered by the land-holder. The Bill certainly provides for very heavy penalties in the form of a fine and up to two years' imprisonment, or both. I believe that this provision is totally unnecessary and reflects the high-handed arrogance and unnecessarily self-righteous zeal of the Minister which borders on outright fanaticism.

The last thing that sensible people need is fanaticism of the type reflected in this Bill. This legislation does not make the slightest concession to reality. I remind the

Minister that he will have to implement this legislation and live with its effects. Because the attitude displayed by the Minister is a bit too complacent, I honestly do not believe that he knows enough about the ramifications of this Bill. This Bill does not make the slightest concession to decency, common sense or reality. Therefore, I ask: are land-holders now expected to have scouting parties going round their properties, just in case someone has displayed notice of an order at some particular place on the property? If they do not do so, will they simply have to suffer the consequences?

The decision by the Minister not to outline those provisions of the legislation and their possible consequences when he introduced the Bill at least shows him to have a grasp of short-term political reality, if not longer-term understanding or compassion. This is for short-term political gain, for the Minister to be able to say that he brought in this you-beaut type of legislation, not really knowing—or knowing but not letting on that he knows—the long-term ramifications of it. Quite easily, many developments in progress in this State will be pulled up short, certainly stultified and limited in their future, without any hope of long-term planning.

Part 7 of the Bill deals with conservation plans, which again reflect the Big Brother philosophy behind the Bill. Under the Bill, the Minister has the power to prepare a conservation plan for any native wildlife, class of wildlife, native wildlife habitat or area that is, in the Minister's opinion, an area of major interest. If the Bill becomes law in that form, no land-holder who discusses his or her property with the Minister will dare to even ask him whether he finds it interesting. The Minister should not come out to Wallumbilla and allow me to ask him whether he is interested in my property, because if I were to hear the Minister say, "Yes", I know that it would be chilling, to say the least. Every time the Minister shows an interest in someone's land or property, that person knows very well that there could be a very detrimental effect.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr COOPER:** These days, the Minister needs to take not one food taster but two. The Minister is not even game to set foot outside the City of Brisbane any longer because of the fear that he has engendered in those people. When the Minister talks to people in the country, he should not talk about land matters because he will absolutely terrify them. The Minister should stick to religion, sport or politics, because he does not yet have a conservation order that he can place on those things.

The Bill provides that conservation plans shall prevail over planning schemes. Once again, the integrity and the independence of councils and their right to make appropriate local decisions are to be overturned. Affected land-holders are not guaranteed any full compensation. The Bill merely states that they are entitled to reasonable compensation after agreement with the Government or, failing agreement, by way of successful appeal to the Land Court. Ominously for the land-holders who go to the Land Court because they will not accept what the Government regards as reasonable compensation, clause 115 (3) of the Bill obliges the Land Court, among three considerations, to have regard to what is termed "the public harm that is likely to be caused if the regulation were not made". Therefore, with that little clause, the Minister seeks to tie the hands and the feet of the Land Court. That is nothing short of a deliberate attempt to browbeat the court into submission over possible future compensation payments and, as such, is an outrageous undermining of the independence of our judicial system. The Land Court is expected to be the Minister's puppet and to refuse to consider any compensation level significantly above what had been offered to and rejected by the land-holder affected in the first place.

Finally, an attempt has already been made—and I have no doubt that the campaign will continue—to try to portray opponents of the Bill as irresponsible environmental vandals whose only motive is selfish and short-term personal gain. The Minister has been keen to portray himself as the only friend of the environment, yet I challenge him to go beyond the blinkered views—

Time expired.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Peak Downs) (9.04 p.m.): The thrust of the legislation is generally reasonable. However, we all need to have a real respect for nature and the environment. These days, most people on this earth are trying to be reasonable in protecting our environment. However, I must ask—and this is the real test—whether or not the Government is fair dinkum. Before the last State election, Government members, who were then in Opposition, gave a very definite commitment to the electors that absolutely no sandmining would take place in the Byfield area. That is what Government members said, and there is no way in the world that they can get out of it. Now the Government has sold out the people. It is doing something different. The Government is negotiating with the mining companies. Indeed, it would seem that sandmining will go ahead. Whatever the rights and wrongs of that, the simple fact is that the Government did not tell the truth in the lead-up to the last election.

**Mr Nunn** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** There is no point in laughing or scoffing about it. The simple fact is that Government members did not tell the truth and they got votes by absolute deceit. The Government hoodwinked the people, and they are not going to forget it. The people will make sure that the Government stands trial for letting them down. However, we must try to resolve the problem that exists in regard to sandmining in the Byfield area. There is no doubt that, in some instances, sandmining has been very, very successful and, indeed, the restoration has been very, very successful.

Before sandmining can go ahead at Byfield, a number of questions have to be asked and answered. I want to make that point on the floor of this House to make sure that this matter is treated very, very carefully. There is a lot at stake. We need to be certain beyond any reasonable doubt that the water supply for the Capricorn Coast will in no way be affected. At present, we do not know the answers at all. In spite of all sorts of commitments that have been given, to my mind no real assurance has been given that the water supply will not be affected. We also need to be sure that the fish habitats will not be affected because they, too, are responsible for the generation of a large degree of employment in the fishing industry. We need to ensure that, whatever happens, the Yeppoon water supply and the fish habitats are in no way affected.

My concern with the foreshadowed proposals relates to the environmental impact study that will be carried out. I question the fact that the environmental impact study will be heavily weighted in favour of the mining industry. Indeed, it will be found that the mining company, Cudgen RZ—and I am not knocking that company; it has done some very good work in some parts of Australia—will have a very definite impact on the final decision. Furthermore, it will be found that the mining industry will really have the say. Because in this instance a very delicate part of nature, a nature reserve of the highest order, is being dealt with, I challenge the Government to carry out an impartial environmental impact study. That is my challenge. It should carry out a study that is impartial, not one that is weighted in favour of mining companies or anybody else. That is all anybody asks. We want a totally independent, impartial impact study; then we might get the results that are necessary.

I am quite sure that the people of the Capricorn Coast—and this affects all of central Queensland—will be happy with that result. But, at present, we are not sure what the result will be and we are not sure how the weightage will go. Indeed, the environmental people have come under some criticism because they have not joined the study. The reason for that is that they find they would be compromised. They would be part of an overall study. Although they would not have the numbers and they would not have the say, they would have to be part of the overall decision. Is it any wonder that they are very concerned about being part of that study? All we want is a fair go, and we want to be sure that the decision is the correct one. My belief is that we need to examine whether or not the Byfield area—

**Mrs BIRD:** I rise to a point of order. There is absolutely no relevance to the Bill in what the honourable member is saying.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr LESTER:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I believe that the honourable member must have some difficulty in not being able to relate this to environmental issues. I find it amazing that she represents the area that she does but that she does not know what environmental issues are. I will not say what I think about that; I will be nice to her and leave it alone. However, I will get on with the job. I would like to see how many jobs would be created with the opening up of the Byfield area. That needs to be considered. At present, it is quite difficult to get right up into the Byfield area. Because the road is not the best, four-wheel drives are needed. If this area were promoted as a full tourist area, I believe that a lot of jobs would be created. I am not knocking the suggestion that an impact study be carried out on sandmining. However, it should be an impartial impact study and other options should be considered. The long-term employment prospects need to be examined. We need to determine whether the employment prospects of sandmining in the Byfield area are indeed going to be long term and we need to see the overall benefit to the Capricorn Coast. As I understand it, the majority of jobs will be created in Gladstone and most definitely not on the Capricorn Coast. If there is a difficulty, I wonder why we have to put up with everlasting consequences and not gain from the project the full benefits of the employment. A lot of thinking has to be done. We need to determine what is going to be the best. We need to say to all central Queenslanders, "Get yourselves involved. Find out what the issues are. Go to every meeting that you can where these issues are being discussed. Get fully acquainted and then work for the belief that you have, but work with an open mind so that you can be part of coming up with the right decision." In leaving that point, all I can say is that it is a serious issue which cannot be glossed over. We must be sure that the decision is right. In no way can we inflict upon the people any possibility of a long-term problem such as damage to the Yeppoon water supply. Let us be absolutely certain that that will not be affected and then there may be reason to examine the situation a bit further.

A number of small national parks in Queensland are situated in grazing areas. It is of grave concern and to the real shame of this Government that these parks are not being maintained as well as they should be. In fact, they are being allowed to get totally out of hand, and one of the reasons for that is that this department has not been providing the money that is necessary to fully maintain these national parks. I say to the Government: if it cannot maintain a national park fully, do not have it. This State is now suffering the scourge of the problems—dingoes, kangaroos, wild pigs, feral cats and scrub bulls—caused by this neglect.

**Mr Elder** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** I will talk about wombats in a moment. All of the departmental staff do a good job and work very hard under trying conditions. However, not enough staff are available. The existing staff just cannot fully maintain these parks. They cannot maintain the fencing, with the result that in some areas there is no fencing at all, and animals escape. I ask the Government: why go on this mad buying spree of properties simply for the sake of acquiring them? I also chastise the Government for not honouring property deals in a lot of cases. A number of people from whom properties have been purchased were promised a certain price, and all of a sudden the price came down. Of course, that is not fair. I believe that the Government is now putting some of these graziers into a position from which they cannot fight back. It is okay for the Government; it has got plenty of money. When it went out of office, the National Party made sure that the Government was left with plenty of money. The Government is quite happy to fight in the courts, but quite often the grazier cannot afford to do that.

I will comment now on some of the people who are affected by the World Heritage listing of forests in north Queensland. It is very easy to get carried away and say, "Declare everything a national park. Declare everything a World Heritage area". However, I believe that in some ways honourable members will rue the day these actions were taken. Obviously, no longer are trees allowed to be cut down in the World Heritage listed areas of this State. In days gone by, when logging was allowed in these areas, loggers would cut out only the big trees. Now those larger trees cannot be cut out, and they are tending to rot. When the larger trees were cut out, the light could get through and the smaller trees grew quickly. Because the Government has declared the

north Queensland region a World Heritage area, this timber can no longer be milled for our own consumption. Therefore, Queensland has to import timber from other parts of the world——

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** I will cite an example. Timber is now being imported from Indonesia. We are paying a lot more for that timber. In Indonesia, timber is now clear-felled. The earth is only a small planet, and every country forms a part of its environment. I am concerned that, due to the clear-felling of timber in Indonesia and the prohibition of logging in north Queensland, the global environment will be far worse off.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** There is no point laughing about it. Members of the Government know that that is the situation. All the Government has done is cut off a source of employment in this State, created employment in another part of the world and, into the bargain, the global environment has suffered. The Labor Party must have rocks in its head to have supported this ridiculous listing.

**Mr Elder:** Two years of metamorphosis. Heavens above! The new green, mean fighting machine.

**Mr LESTER:** The honourable member obviously has a problem. I must reprimand the Minister, Mr Comben, in regard to his promotion of the hairy-nosed wombat in the Epping Forest area near Clermont. The Minister was so keen to get some publicity on this issue that he went out there and announced the preservation of the hairy-nosed wombat. I am not knocking him for doing that——

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr LESTER:** I am told that the Minister stayed there and came back as a wombat. The Minister was so keen to get some publicity that he did not even think to notify the Chairman of the Belyando Shire, Councillor Jim Turner, about the campaign. All honourable members are aware that the person in charge of a shire is indeed the chairman. The Minister and the members of his entourage went straight through Clermont without consulting the chairman of the shire. In fact, the first the chairman of the shire knew about the Minister's visit was when he read about it in the paper. I might add that the chairman of that shire does not think very much of the Minister. When I raised the matter in Parliament, what did the Minister do? He was so flabbergasted when he realised the mistake that he had made that he got vicious and mean and he suggested that I had been crossed with a hairy-nosed wombat. That is okay. I can take that——

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. When that comment was made, it was in response to a question asked by me.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! Is the honourable member asking the member for Peak Downs to withdraw the comment?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** Yes, I am asking him to withdraw the comment. I find it offensive and untrue.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member has asked the member for Peak Downs to withdraw the comment.

**Mr LESTER:** The Minister did make the remark, but if it makes the honourable member happy, I will withdraw the comment. The Minister answered my question by saying to me in this House that that is what should happen. Having said that, he has lost many votes for the Labor Party. If ever I have had disparaging comments made to me about the irresponsible remarks of the Minister, I have had it on this particular issue. Many people have come to me and told me that the Minister should resign. Quite simply, the Minister panicked and made personal remarks. The people of central Queensland are awake up to him. In fact, the local newspapers reported his remarks. They did not publish the story in a way that was detrimental to me; they published it in a

way that was detrimental to the Minister. They had never heard such a thing, and people still come up to me to say, "What on earth ticks with that particular person? What makes him say things like that?" Indeed, out of the goodness of my heart, I have asked those people to forgive him. After all, the Minister cannot help what he has done. There was no need to make such a comment and no need, as he tried to do, to bring this House into disrepute. In conclusion, all I can say is that the Minister has made an absolute ass of himself.

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (9.24 p.m.): I join this debate because I have a few things to contribute in a way in which I believe has not yet been done in respect of the legislation. It is for that reason I have chosen to take part in this debate so late in the evening. I would like to begin by reiterating the words of a number of my colleagues who spoke earlier tonight about, the importance and the broad-ranging nature of the legislation. I would particularly like to reiterate the words of the member for Toowong that, regardless of what the Minister has said in his defence, this legislation has in fact not lain on the table of Parliament for sufficient time to enable adequate consultation to take place or for adequate information to be disseminated to the community so that it understands what the legislation contains and what it holds for the future. That is a very important principle that should and must apply to all pieces of legislation, but particularly to pieces of legislation that are so broad ranging and important. Legislation such as this imposes itself upon the daily business of so many Queenslanders. Therefore, I would suggest to the Minister that it would have been far better for the legislation to have been laid on the table of Parliament and to have stayed there for some short time.

**Mr Comben:** It did.

**Mr GILMORE:** Yes, for a very short time indeed. In fact, it stayed there for less than the statutory requirement. If it had lain on the table for a longer period, the people in the community could have had their fears—if, indeed, those fears were irrational—removed, or if those fears were rational, to at least have them answered before the legislation became law. I have received a number of phone calls in my electorate office in respect of this legislation. As I was unfamiliar with it, I was somewhat concerned. It is not my role, and it never was, to be the Opposition spokesman for this portfolio. Therefore, from time to time such matters escape me. Nonetheless, when the legislation was brought to my attention, I rang the department and sought some assurances and assistance with the questions I was asked. There was considerable panic on the part of some land-holders. As the Minister would be aware, and as Mr Deputy Speaker would be aware, there are very large areas of World Heritage listed rainforest within the bounds of my electorate. In fact, with the redistribution, I would say that my electorate would probably contain as much as or more World Heritage areas than would any other electorate in the State. Therefore, it stands to reason that in my electorate a large number of individual land-holders have properties which abut World Heritage listed areas. Many of those land-holders are people upon whom this legislation imposes, and who are the owners and protectors of large areas of rainforest. Those areas of rainforest were originally included in the proposition put by Senator Richardson as part of the World Heritage legislation. Owing to the complexities of the legal position, at that time the senator chose to avoid listing private properties. This Minister would like to get his hands on large areas of rainforest that were not listed. There is no question that this legislation facilitates such action because it allows the Minister to place orders on land that abuts national parks and World Heritage areas. Those land-holders who have been absolutely responsible in looking after this rainforest for periods of up to three and four generations have been thrown into a panic. All of sudden, their choice in respect of their land, in respect of that rainforest, is being taken away.

Although I rang the Minister's department, I could not give reassurances to those land-holders in respect of the legislation. In fact, my worst concerns and my worst nightmares about this particular legislation were confirmed by officers of the Minister's department. Regrettably, I have to report that much of the rainforest in the Tablelands electorate no longer stands because of the Minister's actions and because of the way in which he has handled the legislation. Does the Minister want to dispute that statement? It is the truth. It is a sad condemnation of the way in which this Government has handled

environmental matters. A few moments ago, this Minister was accused of terrorising land-holders, because whenever a Government car drives up a road to a property, people see——

**Mr Littleproud:** Bill Bonthronne said as much.

**Mr GILMORE:** No less an authority than Bill Bonthronne said as much. He stated that when a Government car is driven down a road in a rural area, the bulldozers start up in the middle of the night, because people get in a panic. It is very unfortunate. Therefore, there are areas with great conservation value which may well have been destroyed. When I contacted an officer of the department, I raised with him the issue of pieces of privately held rainforest that are beside or close to a World Heritage listed area. I asked whether, if the property owner chose to knock down all or part of that rainforest for whatever reason and if the matter was brought before the Minister, it was likely that a 60-day immediate order would be placed on that. The answer was, "Yes, it would", simply because it is rainforest. Everybody knows that every piece of rainforest in far-north Queensland contains endangered floral or animal species of some kind or another. The chances are that a proper scientific investigation of any piece of rainforest would find the Atherton antechinus, a prehensile-tailed rat, a glider possum or whatever. Even with floral species, one would be likely to find an endangered variety. Therefore, it is most probable that those pieces of rainforest, which have been held very carefully for 100 years or more in the hands of Queenslanders, would be locked up away from their control and away from their loving care. That is a matter of great importance to me. It is fairly clear that there are enumerable species in the rainforests of far-north Queensland—both large and obvious, and small and insignificant in terms of size if not in number—that will influence the decisions that the Minister and his department make.

**Mr Comben:** If you object to that, what do I do about the upper reaches of the Mitchell River? You saw the uproar about that. You were part of that. People said, "Do something." Tell me how I would do something about that.

**Mr GILMORE:** I am glad that the Minister raised that subject. If he does not mind, I will come back to that in a few minutes. I ask him to remind me about that before my time expires.

**Mr Comben:** I will extend your time.

**Mr GILMORE:** I thank the Minister for that, and look forward to it. Large areas of privately owned land exist in the Mission Beach district. Some of that land is earmarked for future subdivision. It is not unreasonable for land-holders to be able to go through the processes of local government rezoning, etc., and have some expectation of success if they get through the process. Neither is it unreasonable for local shire councils to expect an increase in their rate base from time to time. However, there is not one piece of rainforest anywhere near Mission Beach or that particular area of the coast that would not be declared by the Minister's department to be a cassowary habitat and, therefore, subject to this legislation.

**Mr Comben:** It's already been done. There was a land use study down there at Mission Beach.

**Mr GILMORE:** The Minister says that that has already been done. This raises the issue of compensation. It also raises the question that, if those people have to go to the Land Court——

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr GILMORE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, the hairy-nosed wombat is persecuting me. Would you please deal with him?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The member will withdraw that comment.

**Mr GILMORE:** I withdraw. The matters that I have just raised are insignificant and are not issues that I wish to raise during this debate. The subject of management has been mentioned briefly by a number of members. However, the issue that I raise does not relate to our long-term ability to manage these areas over 10, 15 or 20 years. I



believe that this Government or future Governments will ultimately be able to manage the national park estate by virtue of their budgetary allocations and so on. That is not my concern. My concern is the method and the manner of that management. I refer to a newspaper article that I believe epitomises what I am trying to say. It is headed "Judge attacks tropics agency over evidence" and raises the subject of evidence produced to a planning court in respect of an application for a crocodile farm at Wangetti Beach. The article states—

"A District Court judge has attacked the Wet Tropics Management Agency and its director over their assessment of a crocodile farm proposal for Wangetti Beach after quashing an appeal against it.

Planning and Environment Court Judge Kevin Row said on Wednesday agency director Dr Peter Hitchcock's evidence to the court had been 'lacking balance and objectivity'.

He also expressed misgivings over the guidelines the agency followed when assessing developments within Wet Tropics areas."

The article is long and complicated, and I do not intend to refer to all of it. However, I shall quote from a couple of its sections. According to the article, when Judge Row handed down his judgment, he said that Dr Hitchcock's evidence was inaccurate and that his concerns "have no basis in reality". The article stated further—

" 'His evidence wherein reference is made to the guidelines being based primarily on goodwill, bluff and ultimately the right of the Commonwealth Minister . . . to block a proposal by proclamation is most remarkable and shows a complete lack of understanding and knowledge of what is required when one is assessing an application such as this before the Court,' Judge Row said."

The judge changed tack somewhat, and went on to comment—and it is interesting that a judge should find himself in a position in which he must comment—on future processes and the way that we may protect individuals in our community from the overenthusiastic in our community. The article continued—

"Judge Row also went on to say the Planning and Environment Court should ensure it had the power to properly scrutinise any development assessment from the agency.

'If it be the basis on which the (Wet Tropics Management Authority or agency) proposes to act, then it is most desirable that the normal system of checks and balances be available to the Environment and Planning Court in relation to any matter (relating to World Heritage land).' "

I did not read that article to this Parliament to denigrate Dr Hitchcock in any way. The purpose was to highlight the fact that this Government, and the Minister in particular, have a propensity to hire zealots. The Minister brings legislation such as this into the Parliament, and then hands it over to others to handle and administer. It does not matter what the Minister says in the Parliament, because all of the goodwill expressed by him at the time of the debate comes to nothing when the legislation passes from this place and into the administration. It is at that time that the Minister loses the agenda. It is a pity to see the Minister leaving the Chamber. He wanted the job. He should sit there and take it. The Minister loses the agenda and the Parliament loses the agenda, and the management of the agenda passes to other people whom the Minister has hired and who have regrettably been shown to be zealous in nature, as was experienced by the judge when he pointed out that there was simply no balance or objectivity in the views expressed by this person. That is most unfortunate but, regrettably, it is what I expect to see more of in the future because that is the kind of person we are putting in place.

I shall give a small example of the kind of lunatic decisions made by such organisations as the World Heritage Management Agency. Recently, the Main Roads Department had to clear a number of trees from the side of the road. That department has a responsibility of care to the people who use the main roads. Those trees were deemed to be a danger to the travelling public. They were therefore cut down and stacked on the side of the road. There were 32 logs of varying species including red

cedar, Queensland maple and other species of cabinet value. A number of people made application to pick up that timber and take it away to be turned into furniture or other items of value. The answer from the World Heritage Management Agency was, "No. We have made a decision that it will be cut up into two-foot billets and dumped off the side of the range."

**Mr Veivers:** Good Lord!

**Mr GILMORE:** "Good Lord", he says. The agency intends to destroy that highly valuable, non-renewable resource. None of it is left in Crown resources that can be used by man. Why would we take such a stupid decision? The answer, according to Professor Wiltshire, was that it was for the benefit of the bugs and beetles that live on the floor of the forest. These immensely valuable species of timber should be dumped onto the floor of the forest to rot so that the bugs and beetles could thrive in the World Heritage area. What absolute, trenchant rubbish! It is the kind of thing that we are entrenching tonight. That is the reason I am concerned about this legislation. As much as I admire the Minister's goodwill, the minute it leaves this place, this legislation will fall into the hands of people who will do such stupid things as cut up red cedar logs. The Queensland maple that is lying on the side of that road is 80 centimetres in diameter. It is one tremendous piece of timber. It will be destroyed by the type of people who will be administering this legislation the day after it goes to the Governor. I had to raise that subject because it is of great concern to me.

A few moments ago, when one of my colleagues was speaking, the Minister shouted across the Chamber, "Tell me about the Darling Downs hopping mouse." It is interesting that he should say such a thing, because this evening, he and the honourable member for Rockhampton North blamed the National Party for a 35-page list of endangered species, which was brandished round the Chamber with great vigour and for which we were blamed. I wonder what the Minister is doing about controlling feral cats in the range of the Darling Downs hopping mouse. Feral cats are the most likely agency by which it will become extinct. Yet he has the audacity to blame the National Party for the extinction of species. Another colleague raised the subject of foxes and cats, which are the two most dangerous living beings in this country. Both of them were introduced, and he is doing nothing about both of them. Recently, I read in a magazine about an effort by the South Australian Government to control feral animals in national parks. I am sure that the Minister is aware of the control of goats there. The South Australian Government closed the national park for a period.

**Mr Comben:** I have actually sent to the department a comment on it saying, "Can we not do this sort of thing?"

**Mr GILMORE:** I am glad that the Minister has accepted that sort of scheme, because it is absolutely brilliant. His department could work in with those dreadful people out there who actually use firearms! Heaven forbid! I am a user of national parks and the Minister knows from past experience how I feel about national parks and the dedication thereof in particular areas. I have been to Lakefield on many occasions. It is impossible to get near a water hole there these days because of the way in which the hogs have dug them up. It would be a vast improvement and a great benefit to the people of far-north Queensland and the integrity of national parks in far-north Queensland if the Minister were to follow such a scheme. There is nothing wrong with employing about 200 competent and responsible firearm users. There is nothing wrong with locking up that park for a fortnight and cleaning the pigs out of it. It would do the greatest service to the national park. It would do a great service to the Minister's near neighbours. I am sure he would like to be a good neighbour and have a good neighbour policy, which he has been spouting about in recent times. I would be pleased to support him in that endeavour to remove feral animals from one of our precious national parks, that is, Lakefield in far-north Queensland. I might say he has not done much about managing that park while he has been Minister during the last couple of years.

**Mr Comben:** I have maintained the same management as the previous Government.

**Mr GILMORE:** Yes, but I have always been critical of four staff members and one four-wheel drive vehicle covering one million acres. That is hardly good management.

**Mr Comben:** Six staff and four four-wheel drives.

**Mr GILMORE:** That is great. I would like to ask the Minister once again to dedicate the Chillagoe Caves national park. It is important to us that those important cave systems be dedicated as national parks. We do not want them mined for marble or limestone extraction. I ask the Minister to get on and do the job. I gave it to him on a plate 18 months or two years ago and he still has not managed to achieve it.

Time expired.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory) (9.44 p.m.): I do not know that it gives me pleasure to speak tonight to the Nature Conservation Bill. In his second-reading speech the Minister said—

“Society depends on nature both for our basic needs such as food, shelter and recreation and also our higher needs of spiritual inspiration and refreshment.”

I thought we were dealing with rural and grazing properties which are there to provide food. We have just seen some of the best ones in this State taken away from us.

**Mr Comben:** Where?

**Mr JOHNSON:** In the far west. I will get round to them in a minute. I always thought that, for spiritual inspiration, we went to church. The Bill has nothing to do with churches. Is the Government going to pull all the churches down? The Minister says that it is well known that existing legislation dealing with the protection and conservation of nature is fragmented and inadequate. I think that everybody in this State and in this nation is a conservationist. I have lived in the west of this State all my life, and many other honourable members who have also lived all their lives in rural areas. I make the point that we all care about our fauna and flora. We care about nature in toto. Why we have to have this rape of good rural lands to help the cause of or care for the needs of the greenie movement in this State, I do not know, because all people who live in rural areas, whether or not they live in rural towns, are conservationists at heart. One does not see rural people going out in the back country indiscriminately shooting kangaroos or whatever. I can tell honourable members now that those people do not do that. However, those people do have one problem—and this is something for which the Minister is responsible, and which perhaps in time he will address—and that is the kangaroo problem.

Secure land tenure in Queensland's rural areas today is becoming an endangered species. It is not the fauna that is becoming an endangered species; it is our land tenure. As my colleague the member for Warrego, the shadow Minister for Land Management, stated, security of tenure is being fragmented. The viability of our western and northern rural properties, and the future of the people on those properties, is something about which we are greatly concerned. This Bill is typical of Labor's attitude towards the bush—pacify everybody else first, and then think about milking the sacred cow of primary production a bit more because it is not yet really on its knees. I can tell honourable members that the sacred cow is on its knees. It has calluses on its knees about an inch thick. An old boar pig would not have shoulder flesh that thick. I can tell honourable members that one can count the ribs of that cow, and the problem is becoming graver every day. One might not think so, but the Prime Minister of this nation is not aware of the problem. Because of the success of its primary industries, this nation has survived for some 200 years. I will tell honourable members—Opposition members know, but sometimes they are too proud to admit it—that the real issue of survival in this State is that of primary industry. I could talk about primary industry all night, but the one point I do want to make is about the invasion of the privacy of rural lands. I have mentioned security of tenure, and I am terrified that in time we will see an invasion of freehold land. I hope to God we do not see that, but under this Government, one would not know.

**Mr Comben:** There were 365 compulsory acquisitions of freehold land in the last three years of your Government.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The Minister and his advisers appear to have completely lost sight of the small fact that if it were not for this State's primary industries, despite the worst rural recession this nation has seen in 60 years, Queensland's exports would be down by something like 50 per cent. I remind the Minister about mining, which has been very good, but I want to put emphasis back on primary industry. This Government's neglect will come back and bite it when it finds it needs a dollar. It will be forced to rely on primary industries, just as the Federal Government is being forced to rely on them now. It is their export income that this Government and its Federal counterpart rely on to pay for all the imports being generated by their so-called secondary industry policies, a byproduct of which is obviously exporting jobs overseas. One can see now that jobs in this nation are fast disappearing. The dole queues are becoming increasingly longer. Who is doing the work? The Asian nations! As Mr Keating says, we have to look to the Asian nations. We have to have a flag that depicts something of the Asian region. What hypocrisy! Will we ever forget that now historic utterance of the ALP Treasurer—now, God help us, the Prime Minister—that we were enduring the recession Australia had to have? Before the last State election, the Premier roamed around the inland areas of the State virtually pleading with electors to give him one term of office—and I will give you the mail, he will get one term of office all right—promising that if they did, rural people would be better off under Labor. This Minister knows perfectly well just how rural people are hurting.

I agree with the Minister that we must have national parks. It is great to have national parks; but not the blatant abuse, the blatant takeover of rural lands on which this Minister seems to be hell-bent. I doubt that today one rural person who fell for the Goss line and voted Labor would say that he is going to repeat that performance later this year. This Bill rips the heart out of security of tenure in this State, something that I am sure the shadow Minister, Mr Elliott, will address when he resumes the role of Environment Minister in this State. It not only puts a blanket of doubt over the 89 per cent of this State's land mass which makes up the Crown estate, but it appears that it also puts freehold land—and I have mentioned that as something about which I am terribly concerned—formerly understood to be absolutely the property of the buyer, under the same cloud. I understood freehold land to be sacred from all internal interference, but now I wonder whether it is.

Will the Minister tell this House here and now that the public concern about the ramifications of this Bill, in that it will allow the Crown to seize privately-owned property for conservation purposes, is based on media misinformation? Or will the Minister stand up and confirm that at the whim of this Government and at the whim of any greenie who casts an envious eye on someone's private property, he will bring down the full force of this Bill to rip off the landowner and seize part or all of his productive property? That is a matter of great concern to all and sundry in this State. If Government members talk to landowners throughout Queensland, that is what they will be told. No-one is game to spend money on grazing, homestead or perpetual leases for fear of having the land seized for national park purposes. Currently, rural industries are at such a low ebb that people throughout rural areas of Queensland are very concerned. Will the Minister tell the House the purpose of the purchase of land at Diamantina Lakes in the far-western regions of this State? Will he state that that is not the thin end of the wedge in a move to declare the whole of the Channel Country a World Heritage area?

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** This is a subject that I raised with the Minister two years ago on 4QL in Longreach. Dr Aila Keto had something to say about World Heritage listing. I have referred to this matter in the past, and I will continue to do so. Two years ago I asked the Minister, "Is this the start of a World Heritage takeover of the Channel Country?" I give the Minister the mail—he will meet with strong opposition if it is.

**Mr Comben:** No, there is no agenda for World Heritage listing of the Channel Country by this Government.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I am pleased to hear that and that the Minister's comments will be recorded in *Hansard*.

**Mr Stephan:** He made the same comment about Fraser Island.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Yes. I will get around to Fraser Island in a moment. The Government said that logging would not cease, but that happened. Approximately seven years ago, the Australian Conservation Foundation drew up a secret conservation hit list for Australia which is known as its World Heritage strategy. Included in that hit list were, of course, Queensland's tropical rainforest areas. My colleague the member for Peak Downs, Vince Lester, referred to that in his speech a short time ago. I remind honourable members of what happened to the people of Ravenshoe who had been promised by this Minister that the Government would redeem their situation. The Government threw their families, their livelihoods and their businesses out the door and destroyed a whole town. The Government will do the same for Maryborough as it did for Ravenshoe.

**Mr Dollin:** What a lot of rot!

**Mr JOHNSON:** The member for Maryborough, Bob Dollin, is a pretty good bloke, but if he continues to support the ALP team on the Government side of this Chamber, he will have the job ahead of him. Prior to the last State election, members of the Labor Party told the people of Wide Bay that logging on Fraser Island would not stop if a Labor Government was elected.

**Mr Dollin:** Not true.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The member for Maryborough knows that as well as I do. Although the Premier said that logging would not cease on Fraser Island, the people lost their livelihoods. That was the way generation after generation of residents of the island had earned their livelihoods.

**Mr Dollin:** Not true. What a lot of rot!

**Mr JOHNSON:** Shame on members of this ALP Government! All they want to do is bleed this nation and deprive it of people who are involved in production by throwing them onto the dole queues. There can be no doubt that the Queensland Labor Government is a social welfare Government. What a shame! I suppose that honourable members can now expect a switch in the conservation lobby's assault and the Minister's plans for the Channel Country. I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that the Minister can expect torrid opposition from a great number of people who live in the far-western regions of this State. The fact that the Channel Country is probably the best natural cattle-fattening country in the world is apparently of no concern to Government members. They intend to strip it of all stock in an effort to ensure the future of native grasses and animals. I inform the House that since the white man settled that country, it has never been abused or destroyed by overstocking. A close watch has been kept on the levels of stock rates in that country, which is why the best bullocks Australia has ever produced come from that remote region. Let me say at this point that the wildlife that exists in that country will continue to do so irrespective of whether the land is stocked with cattle or becomes natural park land. Even night parrots that have not been carried in on the front of prime-movers or motor cars travelling from Western Australia will probably survive there, too. I am not sure of the origins of the night parrot. Perhaps the Minister will enlighten me in his reply.

The main concern that I have about the establishment of national parks relates to the future of rural industries. The results of the Minister's raids not only on the public purse but also on Crown leases have already been noted. In a mad grab to meet the Labor Party's wildly unrealistic pre-election promise of withdrawing 4 per cent of productive land in this State, the Minister has taken over property after property and converted them to wilderness. Many are now overrun by feral animals and noxious weeds. It is a sad state of affairs when a Government creates national parks but has nobody to maintain them and keep feral animals at a manageable level. Why does this Minister spend money that the department apparently does not have and that the people of this nation cannot afford? This nation cannot afford to manage national parks, let alone buy them—or, at least, that appears to be the case. The Government does not appear to be paying the purchase price that has been promised to former lessees of

these properties. A recent ABC television documentary pointed out quite plainly the facts that members of the National Party have known for years, namely, that if a Government does not have sufficient money to staff huge tracts of land or the money to maintain them, the State will finish up with a catastrophe of monumental proportions.

**Mr Veivers:** They call him "crime" out west because he does not pay.

**Mr JOHNSON:** That would be right. I believe that is the case in some areas. Not only will surrounding productive country be put at risk by noxious weeds flourishing on national parks but also marauding feral animals, such as dingos and pigs, will ravage the land. Speaking of dingos, I advise the Minister to send an officer to keep an eye on the Diamantina Lakes area because the dingos will eat every bilby overnight as soon as the white man leaves the region. In addition, feral pigs are the greatest carriers of TB that this country has ever seen. While feral pigs are in mass proportions, the TB eradication program will never be complete. Throughout the Thomson, Diamantina, Georgina and Barcoo River systems, feral pigs are alive and well. While feral pigs are in plague proportions, we will always have the TB problem. Unfortunately, the Minister for Primary Industries is not here tonight, because that matter comes under his portfolio. He did not want to hear about it last week when we were talking about disastrous diseases that could wipe out the livestock population of this State within days.

Possibly an even greater problem for the future is the potential for would-be investors in this State to withdraw their support in droves due to the uncertainty surrounding the tenure of land—even freehold land—in this great State. Where is the future for anybody who wants to make a quid out of going onto the land? The Federal Government pulled the rug out from under the wool industry. It does not care about our exports and, in liaison with the State Government, it does not understand anything about big business or about trying to encourage small business in this nation, let alone looking after the small individuals who are trying to make an honest quid from the primary industries and the rural properties that this Government seems to be hell bent on turning into national parks. In the future—as in the past—we will always need that investment confidence of our overseas backers to continue to develop the productivity capacity of this State and nation. If those investors pull out in large numbers, we might as well have a recession, similar to the one that we had to have, as the Prime Minister said when he was the Federal Treasurer, caused by a collapse in rural enterprise, thanks to the manipulations of this Government, the Minister and the likes of this Bill. I remind the Minister that the Bill will come back in time and bite him—and it will bite him damned hard.

**Hon. P. COMBEN** (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (10.02 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for participating in this long debate, which will continue at the Committee stage. I will endeavour to address the general problems raised and then address one or two specific items raised by members. The debate on the Bill by members on the other side of the House was one of deliberate deceit, deception, distortion and hypocrisy. Never in my nine years in this House have I heard so many individuals so intent on misrepresenting straightforward provisions. It was quite clear that members opposite were reading from their press releases prepared for the *South Burnett Times*, the *Northern Times*, the *Northern Miner* or *Queensland Country Life*. The scaremongering in the rural areas was quite tragic and destabilising. The scaremongering that the Opposition put into the Bill during the past year truly has had a destabilising influence. If members in their electorate offices get telephone calls about the Bill, the calls are not about what is in the Bill; they are about what has been said in the newspapers by certain honourable members on the other side of the House, particularly Mr Perrett. That honourable member said that he had an early draft of the Bill. He had a draft of a Green Paper, and he told the biggest pack of untruths that I have ever heard. That is what really stirred up the western communities; it was not the Bill.

Let us consider the consultation. I will make a general comment straightaway on consultation. Today, it was quite clear to me that none of the members opposite is in touch with rural groups. They are clearly not liaising with people in the community. In

1990 and early 1991, there was a review by the staff of my department of all submissions—all suggestions—from the public. In July 1991, a discussion paper was released. It was widely circulated. Public meetings were held based on the discussion paper. In September 1991, the proposal paper was prepared for Cabinet. It was widely circulated and freely available. Between December 1991 and March 1992, drafts of the Bill were available for inspection and discussion by interested groups. In April 1992, final drafts and draft Explanatory Notes were made available to key producer, conservation and interest groups.

All the conservation groups and producer groups were consulted. The producer groups that had extensive consultation—as much as they wanted—are these: the Cattlemen's Union, the Queensland Graingrowers Association, the United Graziers Association, the Queensland Cane Growers Association, the Queensland Farmers Federation, the Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Association, the Beekeepers Association, the Queensland Commercial Fishermen's Organisation and the Queensland Timber Board—and members opposite say that the Government has not consulted. In addition, the Queensland Mining Council, the Queensland Confederation of Industry and the Australian Petroleum Exploration Association were also consulted. User groups, the Queensland Environmental Law Association and the Environmental Defenders Office, conservation groups and Aboriginal groups were consulted. Public meetings were held and submissions were received.

Producer groups and mining groups had continuous access to the drafts of the Bill. My officers were also available to advise on the drafts and to explain the meanings of the drafts. That process allowed major changes to be made, which improved the final Bill. Land-holders were most constructive and positive with their input into the Bill, with the exception of the third-party rights. So, the Government was out there talking to people, and I suspect that members opposite were not. I make the general comment again, which I make every time I stand in this House: if members on the other side of the House want access to my departmental officers, they should give me a ring. It is there straightaway. At least, Mr Dunworth has done it. I think that Mr Elliott still has not done it. The offer is there at any time. I run an open department. I run a department in which we send out documents, but I get accused of not consulting. After two years and having made that offer time and time again, it is hypocritical that members opposite say, "But you have not talked to us about it." Well, I am sorry. I am not their wet nurse. They should give me a ring. A major set of legislation is coming up. It relates to Fraser Island, Moreton Bay, the environment, the Wet Tropics and coastal protection. Members opposite should give me a ring and come and have a look.

I turn to some general issues that were raised. I make the personal observation that nowhere is wildlife management easy. It is always difficult. It is always complex. The legislation allows the Government to get on with it by having the right sort of plan and being able to plan. On a number of occasions, reference was made to management plans, and it was said that they are very expensive. I am holding now the 1992-94 management program for the four species of commercially taken macropods in Queensland. This is the major piece of management for the whole commercial kangaroo industry. The estimated cost of producing that document is \$5,000. That is a huge multimillion-dollar industry. What we are talking about in terms of management plans for an individual park or an individual species is considerably less, and I suggest that honourable members opposite get it into some sort of perspective.

The management plans will be checked and double checked by the Cabinet and the Governor in Council. There is a weighing up and a balancing act. Park management certainly is difficult. We need more staff. We are constantly seeking more money. However, I remind members opposite that the budget of the Department of Environment and Heritage has already been doubled. Extra money is going into management. One honourable member said that, according to the last annual report, staff had increased by only 12. About two months ago, I took to Cabinet a submission for 72 or 78 places in the department. Those places are now being filled. Staff numbers in the department are going up constantly. There seemed to be some concern that nature refuges could be imposed suddenly. The Bill before us contains provision for compensation and

provision that nature refuge areas be taken to the Cabinet and the Governor in Council. It is not a decision made by me. It is not taken suddenly or lightly. But I do note that, under section 36 of the existing Fauna Conservation Act, I can make a declaration by taking it straight to the Governor in Council, with no compensation payable. That situation has been improved for western people and for land-holders.

As regards interim conservation orders—we have been in touch with departmental counterparts in other States. The Victorian Department of Conservation and Environment has never made an interim conservation order under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act of 1988. In all cases in which an order could be required, the matter was resolved and negotiated without recourse to use of an interim conservation order. We will be following that. Secondly, New South Wales amended its National Parks and Wildlife Act in 1987 to introduce an interim protection order. Four orders have been made, two to protect the koala habitat, one to protect rare plants—and I think that was an orchid—and one to protect the rufous scrub bird habitat. One order proceeded to a voluntary conservation agreement; two proceeded to acquisition and one is unresolved pending action at local government level. That occurred over a period of four years. So in two other States four interim conservation orders have been made. Where is this fear and concern that the Government is going to move in and do all sorts of things to properties? I turn now to civil rights. The civil rights provided for in the legislation are always balanced by the need to be able to get warrants in a variety of situations, and some of the best protective mechanisms are provided in the Queensland legislation. Reference was made to the 4 per cent commitment. I remind honourable members opposite yet again that this Government's 4 per cent commitment was in actual fact a 5 per cent commitment of the previous Government.

**Mr Elliott:** Let's make it clear: we are not on that tram at all.

**Mr COMBEN:** But the National Party was at the last election. Its promise was 5 per cent. Russell Cooper stood up and said 5 per cent. On the Friday, I made the announcement about 4 per cent. On the Sunday, he said 5 per cent. Suddenly, I thought that I should have bid higher. But we are going for the 4 per cent as promised. I return to the question of consultation. Tomorrow, at my offices, the Cattlemen's Union, the United Graziers Association, the Queensland Graingrowers Association, the Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Association, the Queensland Farmers Federation and the Queensland Cane Growers Association are meeting to discuss the good neighbour policy which was so adequately and admirably referred to by the member for Salisbury. At that meeting, we will be discussing a number of topics such as fencing, mustering on parks, feral animal control and native animal management, noxious weed control, fire plans, maps, access, firearms, spraying, baiting, disease-eradication programs, grazing rights, search and rescue, Aboriginal issues, environment, and integrated catchment management. We are out there talking. Again, it seems to me that there is obviously a big gap between the so-called National Party looking after rural people and the real organisations out there getting on with the job. For all of the Opposition's generalisations in seven hours of debate, I did not hear one Opposition member raise the name of one person or organisation that had said to the Opposition that this Bill is inadequate, deficient or inappropriate. It was all broad generalisations. We have found that, as we talk, it takes a long time to get through it, but we do manage to get through it.

The matter of national park (Aboriginal land) and national park (Torres Strait Islander land) was raised. The Government does give notice of national parks which are available for claim, and these may be gazetted. This arises in consultation with communities, especially Aboriginal groups. Secondly, Aboriginal groups may lodge a claim once a park has been gazetted for claim. Before Aboriginals can even lodge a claim, we have to say that it is appropriate that it might be claimed. Mr Dunworth, with his highly racist remarks, does not understand the process in any way. There are two grounds by which a claim may be made. The first is traditional; the second is historical association. Thirdly, the tribunal assesses the claim and determines the grantees of any



successful claim. It may set conditions and the Minister and the grantee agree to release the land. Fourthly, we establish a board of management and we prepare management plans of which conservation must be paramount. Again, it comes back to saying that primarily the parks are there for conservation. Let us talk about the management. Let us talk about any taking. Feral animals are highly appropriate, but for anything beyond there, let us do some hard talking.

A lease or an agreement for the management of that park is then prepared. Finally, on the signing of the lease and approval of the management plan by the Governor in Council, the land is dedicated as a national park (Aboriginal land) and the deed of grant is delivered to the grantees. For the benefit of Mr Dunworth, who is clearly a puppet of Mr Everingham, I point out that this is exactly the same sort of campaign that was run by Mr Everingham in the Northern Territory. Reference is made to that in a number of press releases that I have obtained. I have a press release from Mr Neil Bell, the member for Macdonnell, who, when talking about Ayers Rock, said that Ayers Rock was to be handed over to the Aborigines by the Federal Government, and the Northern Territory Chief Minister, Mr Everingham, was not to attend the ceremony. Yet in 1982—seven years before this—Paul Everingham undertook to recognise traditional Aboriginal ownership. He is hypocritical. He recognised the Aboriginal ownership, but every time he got into trouble he kicked the Aborigines in a display of racism of the worst kind. There was a campaign of fear and smear. On the one hand, Mr Everingham, as Chief Minister, supported Aboriginal national parks. Coburg Peninsula became Aboriginal land—Gurig national park. Yet, on the other hand, Mr Everingham engaged in this racist campaign. That is what Mr Dunworth is doing, too. Obviously, Mr Dunworth has never read the Aboriginal Land Act. Not all national parks will become Aboriginal land by any means, and any traditional rights will be subject to conservation issues.

I turn now to a number of specific issues. In relation to Kroombit, which was raised by Mrs McCauley—the people to whom the honourable member referred have a special lease for grazing over Crown land.

**Mrs McCauley:** I know that.

**Mr COMBEN:** Let me finish. They have a special lease over Crown land adjoining their own property. They wanted to convert it to a tourism lease. The Lands Department would not agree to this for a variety of reasons, including, but not exclusively, because the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service had an interest in the land. The issue also involved appropriateness of location. The piece of land is one which no-one can get into, and it is proposed to put a tourist resort on the piece of land. That is a bit hard. My regional director offered to buy 90 per cent of the property from them and for them to retain 10 per cent to convert to a freehold tenure for tourism. That proposal was probably of great benefit to those people. The land was surrounded by national parks and that would be a fairly attractive proposition. They ultimately decided not to proceed but to develop their tourism venture on their own land. I will not disclose the amount of money involved in the lease. Negotiations are proceeding to declare the area as a national park.

**Mrs McCauley:** Why don't you go out and visit and I will show you around?

**Mr COMBEN:** I think I would rather be invited to the honourable member's proposed area by Mr Harper to meet the local councillor at Monto when he was able to constructively do something. The member for Callide had never raised the issue of grazing leases on a certain piece of land near Cania Gorge; the honourable member knew nothing about that and she let that poor young man swing in the breeze about that grazing. At least Neville Harper—although he is not here tonight—had the decency to ring me and say, "Will you come and have a look?" I said I would. I went out there and we solved the matter. The honourable member, who stands up for the rural community, left a young man of no more than 32 years of age with no viable living area. I had to go

out there and give him leases over national parks, a 10 by 10 lease over national parks—and honourable members call me a greenie—because none of them would do it.

As to matters concerning control of air space and below the ground—we need to control the air space to have control over joy flights over parks, over quiet areas, over the ravines and gorges. Below the ground, we need to be able to manage caves. People go down there and there are some rare species. Mr Lester said various questions had to be answered about Byfield. I agree, and that is why the mining company has been required to undertake an environmental impact study and a statement to detail all of these issues the honourable member raised, and to present evidence before a Mining Warden's Court hearing. No decision on mining will be made until the assessment of this EIS has been made and the mining warden has completed his hearing of objections, and the new-found conversion—the St Paul on the road to Damascus conversion to environmental concern—is quite interesting. I wonder if it has something to do with him deserting his old constituents and going to a new area. I quickly move to a few matters individual members have raised. As to Mr Elliott's contribution—I have to say that he clearly has not read the Bill.

**Mr Elliott:** Come on! I read it until 2 o'clock this morning.

**Mr COMBEN:** Well, the honourable member obviously did not remember it. Dr Clark, the member for Barron River, had a commitment to the environment, which is well known, and a commitment to third-party appeals. I think that this morning the Premier summed up her ability to be able to go in to bat for her own constituents. Mr Dunworth, the member for Sherwood, displayed racism of the worst kind. He said he had a legal opinion that any Aboriginal could hunt anywhere on a national park. My challenge to the honourable member is to table that opinion.

**Mr Dunworth:** I will discuss it at the Committee stage.

**Mr COMBEN:** I look forward to it being tabled, because it is not my legal advice. If he is correct, I will amend the Bill here tonight. In terms of budgerigar conservation plans—I have never heard anything so absurd. The honourable member would be aware that the Fauna Conservation Act 1974 already requires an authority to take, keep, breed or deal in budgerigars, etc., and the regulations are even tighter. What the Government is putting together is a conservation plan for general aviary birds. Budgerigars might be referred to once in the appendix or something like that. This legislation will streamline the processes existing at present. I must say the honourable member's proposition of some sort of conservation plan involving budgerigars and tens of thousands of dollars is a trip to Dreamland. Conservation agreements will have compensation payable. The honourable member referred to conservation agreements as costing people money. Can I give the honourable member a fairly simple example? If my wife and I owned a piece of land—just hypothetically—in the Bunyas—

**Mr Littleproud:** It is not hypothetical. You own it. I have got my eyes on it.

**Mr COMBEN:** I actually sold it about three weeks ago.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr COMBEN:** Mr Speaker, I crave your indulgence and protection. May I proceed with my speech?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Well, why don't you?

**Mr COMBEN:** I will remember that when I am campaigning in my friends' electorates. I commend the Bill to the House.

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

AYES, 49		NOES, 31	
Ardill	Mackenroth	Beanland	Stoneman
Barber	McElligott	Booth	Veivers
Beattie	McGrady	Connor	Watson
Bird	Milliner	Coomber	
Braddy	Nunn	Cooper	
Bredhauer	Palaszczuk	Dunworth	
Briskey	Pearce	Elliott	
Burns	Power	FitzGerald	
Casey	Robson	Gilmore	
Clark	Schwarten	Goss J. N.	
Comben	Smith	Gunn	
D'Arcy	Smyth	Harper	
Davies	Spence	Hobbs	
De Lacy	Sullivan J. H.	Horan	
Dollin	Sullivan T. B.	Johnson	
Eaton	Szczerbanik	Lester	
Edmond	Vaughan	Lingard	
Elder	Warner	Littleproud	
Fenlon	Welford	McCauley	
Flynn	Wells	Perrett	
Gibbs	Woodgate	Randell	
Goss W. K.		Rowell	
Hamill		Santoro	
Hayward	<i>Tellers:</i>	Slack	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hollis	Prest	Springborg	Neal
Livingstone	Pitt	Stephan	Quinn

Resolved in the affirmative.

### Committee

Hon. P. Comben (Windsor—Minister for Environment and Heritage) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (10.30 p.m.): I wish to take the opportunity to comment on the basics of the legislation. It seems to me that there is fear in the general community which stems from the fact that the community accepts that it should have the responsibility as a whole for the environment, but that does not necessarily equate with Government control. The ALP's philosophy is that the Government should have a big say in what happens, but many other people in the community have a different opinion. They think that people should cooperate, that there should be some type of education program, and that, in some cases, and only as a last resort, Government intervention by way of coercion. It is quite obvious that this legislation, and the stated policies of the ALP, have caused fear in the community. I heard my colleague the member for Tablelands speak about people who are afraid that although their land has not been properly developed, it will be under tight control. The honourable member stated that because people were afraid that the land will be locked away, they were going out with bulldozers and actually knocking down rainforest. I can report to the Minister that that has also occurred in other parts of rural Queensland.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I rise to a point of order. Honourable members down this end of the Chamber cannot hear.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I accept the point of order. There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber. I also refer the honourable member for Condamine to the fact that clause 1, as I understand it, is the title of the Bill.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I understand that when discussing clause 1, honourable members are entitled to speak on whatever subject they wish.

**Mr Comben:** It is not the title.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I am nearly finished, but I take the point. There is a fear in the community. Perhaps it is unfounded—and I hope that it is—but it is a fact that because of the fears that they hold, people are going through the process of knocking down scrub on their land. That is unfortunate, because this Bill is all about nature conservation. Members on both sides of the Chamber are in favour of this legislation being passed. However, some people are acting irresponsibly because of their fears about the ALP philosophy of Government control and the way in which this legislation will be enforced.

Clause 1, as read, agreed to.

Clause 2, as read, agreed to.

Clause 3—

**Mr ELLIOTT (10.32 p.m.):** If one can say nothing else about the Minister, at least one can say that he is consistent in the way in which he has approached this legislation and the heritage legislation, in that this legislation will bind the Crown. The public, and particularly the conservation movement, does not believe that this clause is quite good enough. On the one hand, Government members say, "We are going to be good fellows. We are going to do all these things correctly", but on the other hand they say that the Crown will not be liable to be prosecuted for an offence. In other words, this is really a Clayton's clause. Government members are purely and simply mouthing platitudes by saying, "We are going to be good guys. We will look after everything. Trust us." Yet this clause cuts across the spirit of the previous clause.

I mention this clause because I want the people of Queensland to know where the Minister is coming from. Unfortunately, this clause is a fraud. Although I do not wish the Minister any ill will in that respect, I must say that many people in the conservation movement do not believe that what the Minister is doing in respect of this Bill is good enough. The Minister might say that, under previous legislation, the Crown was not bound at all. That would probably be a more honest position than that taken now by the Minister, who is trying to pull in votes for the ALP by claiming that the legislation is binding the Crown. That is not the case. It is an absolute nonsense to say that the legislation binds the Crown when it is not prepared to expose the Crown to criminal liability.

Clause 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clause 5—

**Mr ELLIOTT (10.35 p.m.):** This clause deals with the objects of the legislation, the gathering of information and community education and the dedication and declaration of protected areas, all of which could be regarded as motherhood matters, depending upon which side of the Chamber one sits. Subclause (c), which deals with the management of protected areas, states—

“. . . the management of protected areas in accordance with—

- (i) the management principles; and
- (ii) the interim and declared management intent; and
- (iii) the conservation plans;

for the areas . . .”

Subclause (d) deals with the protection of native wildlife and its habitat. Subclause (e) refers to the use of protected wildlife and areas to be ecologically sustainable. Much of that probably sounds very good, but the Opposition seeks more details on this clause. Obviously, the Opposition was constrained during the debate on the second reading of the Bill. I ask the Minister to spell out how this clause relates to some of the fears that members have espoused tonight. If the Minister is prepared to respond generously to that request, I will accept that, otherwise I will discuss the matter further.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I am particularly interested in subclause (c). In his reply, the Minister mentioned that this week he will meet with representatives of the Queensland Cane Growers Association, the UGA, the Cattlemen's Union, the QGA and other organisations. For a long time, it has been uppermost in my mind that people who neighbour national parks have always been worried about the good neighbour aspect. They worry about feral animals coming out of those national parks, eating pastures and introducing diseases. They have great concerns with the cost of fencing. Their fears were heightened when in recent months they heard comments with regard to penalties if their stock strayed onto national parks. Tonight, I was heartened to hear that the Minister and the departmental officers will meet with these rural bodies to talk all of these things through.

**Mr Comben:** It is an ongoing discussion. It is happening all the time.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I will talk more about consultation when we get to clause 6. I will be interested to know what eventuates after the talks. That is most important. I was pleased to hear the Minister say that he is talking with these people. I will be watching very closely to see whether he comes to an agreement and the landowners who adjoin these parks end up being satisfied.

**Mr COMBEN:** What will come out of those agreements is the same as comes out of the continual discussions that we have. That is why it is hypocritical. Opposition members have all been jumping up and down over there.

**Mr Elliott:** No, it is not.

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member should give me some names or give me some organisations and tell me about the fundamental problems they have with this, because there are none. Today, we received a letter in which the United Graziers Association raised a couple of points. This is what has come out of those discussions. What will come out of the good neighbour policy is putting the old good neighbour policy, which was part of the honourable member's Government and which we have continued, onto a firmer footing, making it more precise and writing down its own set of vague generalisations. I think that that will be a great step forward.

The honourable member for Cunningham asked what clause 5 really means. I refer him to the Explanatory Notes. Really, I think the honourable member is only asking me to put what is there in other terms. Whilst this is a clear English Bill, there is a need to be able to link one part with another constantly. That makes it a little difficult at times to follow. Clause 5 attempts, by subclause (a), having the information, education and research sections; by subclause (b), showing how protected areas will be set aside; and by subclause (c) setting out the three great tiers of management under which areas will be protected and managed, first of all, in accordance with the management principles which are outlined elsewhere in the Bill; and, secondly, by the interim and declared management intent so that, when something is declared after proclamation of the Bill, a management intent will be put in the proclamation. If it is an area for the northern hairy-nosed wombat in Epping forest, the management intent will be the preservation of a rare or threatened species which is the northern hairy-nosed wombat.

**Mr Lingard:** What about my platypus?

**Mr COMBEN:** That is not a rare or threatened species. It is locally vulnerable. That is one of the differences between the Opposition and this side of the Chamber. We are talking about genuinely rare or threatened species. Mention was made of the Darling Downs hopping mouse. Only one has ever been recorded and that was in 1886. I do not think it is there any more. That is what we call a rare or threatened species and it is probably extinct. Thirdly, there is a conservation plan for the actual park. So there are these three tiers. They are the big idea, the middle one about broad principles and then this is what we are going to actually do. Lastly, there is the protection of native wildlife and its habitat. I do not know that I can put it any better than that.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** One of the objects of the legislation is the conservation of nature. Clause 5 (e) reads—

"Use of protected wildlife and areas to be ecologically sustainable providing for the ecologically sustainable use of protected wildlife . . ."

"Use" is defined as—

" 'use', in relation to a cultural or natural resource or wildlife, includes buy, sell, process, move or gain any benefit from the resource or wildlife."

Does that mean that logging will be approved in conservation areas? Would it also cover such things as the culling of kangaroos? Clause 5 (e) also refers to "the taking or use of wildlife". The definitions contain the following—

" 'take' includes—

(a) in relation to an animal—

(i) hunt, shoot, wound, kill, skin, poison, net, snare, spear, trap"—

that is a little bit inhuman, I would say—

"catch, dredge for, bring ashore or aboard a boat, pursue, lure, injure or harm the animal."

We are talking about the objects of the legislation. The definition of "take" also includes—

"(b) in relation to a plant—

(i) gather, pluck, cut, pull up, destroy, dig up, fell, remove or injure the plant or any part of the plant."

We are talking about "the use of protected wildlife and areas to be ecologically sustainable". That sounds contradictory to me. Could the Minister explain it for us?

**Mr COMBEN:** Yes, with no difficulty whatsoever. It will have to be in words of one syllable. I wish at some stage on a Sunday night the honourable member for Sherwood would wander over to his predecessor in his seat, his brother-in-law, and get just a little bit of legal advice. I remind the honourable member again that I am waiting for his legal advice to be tendered here, because if his legal advice that he spoke about earlier is what he says it is, I will pay his bill—but I think he is bluffing. Let us talk about this one. The honourable member refers to "taking".

**Mr Dunworth:** No. I am talking about "kill, skin, poison, net, snare, spear, trap" or injure in any way.

**Mr COMBEN:** You refer to "taking" defined as all those words.

**Mr Dunworth:** Yes.

**Mr COMBEN:** Yes, we got it. Words of one syllable the honourable member understands. "Taking" in this Bill also refers to illegal taking. If someone is out there and snares, traps, poisons, spears, dredges—all those things—the department wants to be able to prosecute. That is why the definition is deliberately drawn wide. What the honourable member is doing is corrupting the definition of "take" in clause 5 (e) and saying, "That is what you are intending to do, Minister. You are intending to be out there snaring, spearing, and all those other sorts of things." No, I am not. I am intending to be able to successfully prosecute.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Again on clause 5 (e), as again we are talking about "taking", perhaps the Minister could further illuminate the terminology for me. Perhaps he could explain this when we get to clause 85, which states—

". . . an Aborigine or Torres Strait Islander may take, use or keep protected wildlife . . ."

I remind the Minister that "use" means to buy, sell, process, move or gain any benefit, and "take" means, as I said, to skin or poison, and in regard to plants it can mean destroy, dig up, fell or remove—is that verbal terminology?

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member well knows that he is already well past the Definitions clause and is now referring to clause 85. That is inappropriate, it is against the Standing Orders, and I am not going to respond.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Just to clarify clause 5 (e)—Opposition members are concerned about this, and I intended to raise it when dealing with clause 11, but the definitions refer to ecologically sustainable use and state that that term “has the meaning given by section 11”. Clause 11 basically says all of the things that I think we are seeking in respect of clause 5 (e). If my understanding of it is correct, then I am prepared to live with it.

**Mr COMBEN:** If you are willing to live with it, that is what it is.

**Mr BEANLAND:** My question relates to clause 5 (c), which deals with the management of protected areas in accordance with conservation plans. I ask the Minister about the setting up of these management plans—what period does he expect it will take to put into place these management plans? There are well over 300 national parks, as I understand it, although there may be a lot more. Because there are certainly 300 national parks of any real size, that will take some time. The Minister indicated that something like 70 additional staff will be required, but, of course, not all those people will be qualified to do this sort of work. This will be quite a major task. Because the management plans are so important to the overall operation of this legislation and are one of the major reasons for its introduction, I think it is only fair and reasonable that the House be given some indication as to the time it will take to set them up. Perhaps the Minister could give the Committee some indication in regard to grazing in national parks, and how he will ensure that they are not infested with feral animals such as wild pigs, or kangaroos, or noxious weeds. Those things must be kept under control. Grazing is going to be cut out over a period, and no doubt the department or the Minister have a good reason for that. Perhaps the Minister could indicate the reason for the progressive cutting out of grazing in national parks?

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member has asked a set of wide-ranging questions. The first one was about management plans and timing. If he reads the legislation closely, he will see that there is a management intent, and that is something that we would put into place fairly quickly. For the National Parks and Wildlife Service, it may well be the management intent of the brigalow national parks or it may be the management intent for the offshore island national parks. That will hold us for a while. There are two lots of planning. One is for the parks, and one is for species. In terms of the parks that need close and intensive management, we would obviously move to those management plans as quickly as we can. I authorised the release of three draft management plans this morning. We have been getting up to speed for the management plans over the last year. We would not have a large number done, but a fair number are now coming through the system.

**Mr Elliott:** Have you costed roughly what each of them is costing?

**Mr COMBEN:** They are generally done by the interpretive officers in the area—by the regional managers. There is no extra cost of any large amount.

**Mr Elliott:** Five thousand dollars?

**Mr COMBEN:** Yes, \$5,000 for one of the largest, most intense uses of wildlife in Queensland. We will cope with the others with no great trouble. A management plan is often simply what was being done otherwise by other pieces of paper. As far as species management plans are concerned, again it will be management intent for, say, caged birds—aviary birds—or the macropods, which are already done. But if a species such as the northern hairy-nosed wombat, the bridled nailtail wallaby or an animal of that sort, is under great pressure, we would move to do them more quickly. They would be done within a period of weeks or months from the proclamation of the Act. Some others may not be done for a number of years. There will certainly be efforts to get as many management intents up as possible so that we know the framework we are working under, but it will take us a while to do the others. On the question of grazing, it is a matter of whether on some parks grazing is impacting upon species diversity. Perhaps the cattle are taking a certain palatable species. The example I would use there is that I used to work on a property called Blue Grass Plains. I never saw blue grass on that property because the sheep ate the blue grass ahead of everything else, and it was

gone. So if the grazing is impacting on the natural values we will want to remove the grazing.

**Mr Hobbs:** The seedling does that.

**Mr COMBEN:** No, I was there for some time.

Clause 5, as read, agreed to.

Clause 6—

**Mr ELLIOTT** (10.51 p.m.): In respect of clause 6, I foreshadow an amendment that has been distributed. Just before I move that amendment I would like to say something about it, because some members might wonder where we are coming from and why we are doing it. At present it says—

“This Act is to be administered, as far as practicable, in consultation with, and having regard to the views of, land-holders and interested groups and persons.”

The Opposition believes that the clause should read “and having regard to the views and interests of, land-holders and interested groups and persons.” I understand the Minister is prepared to accept that proposed amendment. I see it as quite important because one of my concerns—and I will talk on it in greater length when we come to it—in respect of Land Court decisions is that under its present structure, as I understand it, the Land Court makes decisions on points of law, and really is not an equity court. If someone wanted to have his day in court and take the process to the ultimate degree, I believe it would be of assistance to have it spelt out that the Government is not only looking after wildlife and conservation values generally, but also has had regard to the private property rights of people affected by the Bill. Therefore, I move the following amendment—

“At page 12, line 14, after ‘views’ add—

‘and interests’.”

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 6, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 7—

**Mr ELLIOTT** (10.53 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 14, line 11, delete—

‘done’

and insert—

‘agreed to’.”

I believe it is worth while having the Minister explain to the Committee the reason why he will not accept the Opposition’s amendment. To my layman’s mind, to the mind of the average person who will read this clause and to the mind of the parliamentary draftsman, I believe my terminology is preferable. However, for reasons that I am sure the Minister will outline, my terminology will not be accepted. The clause contains the word “CITES” and the following definition—

“. . . means the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora done at Washington in the United States of America on 3 March 1973 . . .”

To my mind, that definition is quite unreal. I cannot see why the definition cannot be—

“. . . Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora agreed to at Washington.”

I suggest that any student of English would use that terminology, and I think it is very strange that the Minister has not explained why that terminology was not adopted in the Bill.



**Mr COMBEN:** The reason it was not done in that way is that the CITES convention is signed as being "done at Washington in the United States of America on 3 March 1973". Normal legal drafting dictates that as far as possible the same terminology is used, and "done at" was the term that was used. In terms of the provision being in plain English, I must confess that I thought our new Parliamentary Counsel would have inserted a plain English clause in the Bill, but he has chosen not to do so. He has gone for the conservative legal definition. I accept the advice from learned counsel.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I appreciate the Minister's accepting the Opposition's previous amendment and I will not push this point. I simply wish it to be recorded in *Hansard* that I believe the terminology is a little unreal. To my mind, it is a little bit strange. While the Committee is dealing with clause 7, I wish to mention briefly a couple of other matters.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I note that previous legislation uses the term "royalty". It is interesting that not only is the concept of royalty under attack in Paul Keating's debate on the flag but also that British traditions generally are being undermined. In fact, this very Bill undermines those traditions because the term "royalty" has been dropped and has been replaced by the term "conservation value". The republicans are out in force and are represented on the Government's front bench. We have a republican in the guise of a Minister for the Environment. I believe that people should be aware of the significance of the word "royalty" being replaced by the term "conservation value".

Page 16 contains a definition of "keep". It states—

" . . . in relation to a cultural or natural resource . . . the person in relation to whom the term is used or another person), even though another person has the actual possession or custody;"

As far as I am concerned, that definition alludes to a chairman, chief executive officer, or some other party who controls the running of a business or corporation, and could even be extended to a person working on a casual basis in the capacity of a gatekeeper in a big operation. Such a person could take protected native plants and relate that action to the chief executive officer by bringing that action under the words "even though another person has the actual possession" contained in the definition. I would like to hear what the Minister has to say about that matter. Does he want me to go on, or does he wish to deal with this matter first? If I resume my seat, will I have used all my opportunities to speak?

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member has lost two already.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** In that case, I had better continue because there are a few matters in relation to clause 7 that I wish to mention. On page 17, the definition of "mining interest" states—

"(b) a petroleum lease . . ."

I want to hear what the Minister has to say because, in years gone by, a person's right to utilise underground petroleum within a protected area such as a national park or an environmental park was a controversial matter. I want to know exactly what the status of a "petroleum lease" is under this Bill because I believe that the reference to a "petroleum lease" in this part of the clause under "mining interest" is ambiguous. I believe that the people of Queensland deserve to know the position, because very few of them will read the provisions of this Bill.

On page 18, the term "planning scheme" is mentioned. Earlier in the debate, I said I would challenge the Minister in respect of the meaning of this term. Has the Minister thought about what I said in relation to the problem that has arisen and presently being determined by a New South Wales commission? Presently, as a result of the process I mentioned earlier, fetters and covenants on title are being utilised by consultants. The original owners of the land are unable to subdivide because of the covenants or fetters on the title. Through that system—that planning scheme—which has the meaning given by the Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act 1990, the next generation of

people who buy the land for less than it is worth will use those consultants. That is happening and it has caused very real scandals. I have a couple of other matters, but I will run out of time if I touch on them.

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member raised three matters, firstly, the definition of "keep". The honourable member was trying to say that that always means that, if someone well down the line has possession, the corporate manager at the other end has possession. I put it to him that the Government has had more difficulty in the courts' interpretation of who actually has possession or custody. A managing director can direct people to go and catch something. The Government comes along and finds someone with two crimson finches in the car. That person gets booked and goes to the Magistrates Court, but we cannot get the other person. The definition is really included for that reason so that, if the controlling mind or the person with the intent is at the top of the hierarchy, we can get that person if that person has directed someone else to do it.

**Mr Elliott:** It is an onus of proof.

**Mr COMBEN:** It is an onus of proof matter. The defences under the Criminal Code come into play there.

**Mr Elliott:** Have you got a bit of French blood in you?

**Mr COMBEN:** Spanish. In relation to mining interests and the petroleum leases granted under the Petroleum Act 1923—nothing has changed in the problem that Queensland has had for a number of decades that the Federal Act can still be put into place over national parks. The clause about petroleum has been included to cover compensation to a company that has a right to carry out activities and those activities have been stopped. It compares with an interim conservation Act and conservation plans. Beyond there, it becomes very complicated.

In relation to the planning scheme and fetters on a title—the honourable member suggests always that fetters on a title are a great problem. As I started to say to the member for Sherwood, if, hypothetically, my wife and I owned a piece of land at the Bunyas and we chose to put a conservation covenant, a conservation agreement, over that land and we knew that that land could not then be subdivided so that, as a result, we would receive only 80 per cent of the money that we could get had the covenant not been in place, Lyn and I would carry that loss. The next buyer would come along and buy that land for 80 per cent of what it was potentially worth. We accept our loss. The people who are queuing at the Government's doors to be able to put conservation agreements over their land happily acknowledge that. They say that that is the cost of preserving that piece of land for evermore. If they want to keep it going the way it is, they cannot guarantee that their private piece of land will not one day be bulldozed.

Even rural producers agree. Recently, I spoke to Warren McLaughlan from the Cattlemen's Union. He knows a number of people who want to discuss voluntary agreements with the Government. That may well mean a difference of value. In some cases, it might not be, because it might not be land which can be cleared. They are only checking against something. It is not always a detriment. Sometimes, there will be a fetter on title, but there are ways through the Supreme Court that we can remove those things.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I refer to the word "species". The Minister was rather derogatory, and perhaps he missed the point that Mr Dunworth made in his speech. Because Mr Dunworth touched on that matter, I did not. At that time, enough time had been taken up. However, it is very important. It is not frivolous. Does the definition mean that a bird dealer or a breeder will no longer be able to breed hybrids or mutations? We use the example of budgerigars because I guess that is the most popular example in the community. The Minister should not take the matter too lightly, because many people feel very strongly about it. Some people feel almost as emotional towards their budgerigar as they do towards the house cat—if not more, in some instances. The Minister should not think that the matter is some sort of a joke, because it is not. Many people in the community would be very concerned if they thought that, through the Bill,

the Minister would change the existing status. We all understand how the 1974 Act worked. Various people who did not do the right thing were prosecuted. The way in which the Minister has worded the legislation indicates to me that people will no longer be able to breed, sell or deal with the mutations or hybrids because it cuts across the purity of what the Minister is trying to do in the legislation. If that is the case, I suggest that the Minister is once again being impractical and that he should consider the matter very seriously. It will not affect anything that is happening out in the wild.

**Mr Comben:** Can I answer you?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes.

**Mr COMBEN:** The answer to the honourable member's query is, no, they will not be prohibited. They will be subject to conservation plans so that the Government has some handle on what is going on. It would be totally inappropriate for a rare species such as the Gouldian finch to be suddenly hybridised into all sorts of mutants when, perhaps, we may need the genes from that captive stock to be released, or maybe we would be breeding them in such a way that we could not release them at some stage. The Government wants to be able to keep an eye on them. I appreciate that the question of a conservation plan for budgerigar breeding is not frivolous, but to suggest that the Government will do that all the time is frivolous because it belittles the management—the conservation plans—which are intended to get onto the real issues. With respect, the breeding of budgerigars will not be the highest priority of the management plans. Looking after cassowaries in the north will be. Looking after Gouldian finches might be and rufous scrub birds might be. They are certainly all threatened. The straight answer is, "No". The Government does not particularly like the breeding of mutants, but it will continue, subject to conservation plans and talking.

**Mr STEPHAN:** In a number of areas, there is rather a lack of interpretation than an actual interpretation. For example, this clause states that an "International Agreement Area" means an area declared under this or another Act as an international agreement area. The same wording applies to the definition of "international wildlife", "Nature Refuge", "National Park" and "Resources Reserve". I would like to know what the clause means when it states that a "Resources Reserve" means an area dedicated under this Act as a resources reserve. Does that apply to all resources, including mineral, as well as the plant life that is growing there? Just what does that interpretation refer to?

**Mr DUNWORTH:** I ask the Minister to clarify the definition of "area of major interest", because it is a very important definition in this legislation. Under this clause, an "area of major interest" means an area that contains natural resources of significant nature conservation value. "Natural resources" makes reference to "an area of major interest". Maybe the Minister could explain that a little bit more fully. Secondly, the definition of "executive officer" could catch the bookkeeper who is being paid \$16,000, \$17,000 or \$18,000 a year. Under this definition, that person could be classified as an executive officer, because part of the definition reads "or takes part in, the management of the corporation". Many small businesses employ people in relatively insignificant positions, but because it is a small operation those people could be classified as management. Could the Minister expand on that a little?

Part of the definition of "indigenous to Australia" means wildlife that was not originally introduced to Australia by human intervention. Does indigenous wildlife include the dingo, or is it believed that it was introduced by our indigenous people? The other definition on which I would like the Minister to expand is that of "use". As I said before, does this definition mean that timber or various plant species can be sold off? I see the word "use" being read with the expression "ecologically sustainable". Does the expression "Queensland waters" in the definition of "waters" include waters to the outer Greater Barrier Reef?

**Mr COMBEN:** Obviously, the "area of major interest" refers in its own definition to areas which are of significant conservation value. It may well be that that is a question of fact to be decided by a court at some stage. But that is where it starts off. We are not talking about anything of low value, etc. It is also an area to be managed in accordance with the management principles set out in clauses 15 to 26, and that is the

most important thing. In relation to the matter of "executive officer"—the honourable member said that there are some small corporations or undertakings in which fairly lowly people take part in the management. Often, if something is that small, it will not be a corporation. However, it is more likely in actual fact that a major corporation with a branch office or something would have an executive officer who is not a director and such a person has to be able to be caught by the legislation. The definition is broad to be able to catch them. It goes both ways. I am very content with that definition. The dingo is not included in wildlife that is indigenous to Australia. In relation to the question of whether Queensland waters go out to the Barrier Reef, I point out that that expression does in actual fact include the Barrier Reef.

**Mr HARPER:** I ask the Minister a simple question which probably defies a simple answer. Under clause 7, the definition of "Aboriginal people" means people of the Aboriginal race of Australia. The definition of "Aborigine" means a person of the Aboriginal race of Australia. For years, a definition of Aborigine has been sought, and it is not as simple as it may first appear.

**Mr Braddy:** It is the same definition you used in your legislation.

**Mr HARPER:** If the Minister in charge of the Bill answers that way, that is fine. However, I draw his attention to the fact that the Commonwealth has had difficulty with such a definition, so much so that my understanding is that in many respects the Commonwealth accepts as an Aborigine a person who is actually domiciled with people of the Aboriginal race. People who choose to live with and as Aborigines are accepted as being Aborigines. For the sake of the record, as the member for Cunningham said, we are really looking for a clear definition or a clear intent of what is intended in this clause by the definition of "Aborigine", "Aboriginal people" and, of course, "Aboriginal race".

**Mr COMBEN:** The High Court has considered the question of what is an Aboriginal person, and I do not recall, from my own knowledge, whether the court actually interpreted Aboriginal people or whether it was not in actual fact the Aboriginal race of Australia. Broadly, that definition defined an Aboriginal as a person who claimed he was an Aboriginal and who was recognised as an Aboriginal by Aboriginal people.

**Mr Stoneman:** Oh, yes.

**Mr COMBEN:** It was a very waffly definition. It was a definition which would have been handed down by the High Court at a time when the honourable member for Auburn was the Attorney-General of Queensland. This would tie into that. It is easy for the member for Home Hill and Ayr to say, "Oh, yes." Probably the best parliamentary draftsman available in Australia today has worked personally on this Bill. If that is the best definition that he can come up with, I suggest that it is probably the best in Australia. From memory, three of the five justices of the High Court went to some pages to try to find a definition. The dictum that came from there was that the claim to be recognised as——

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr COMBEN:** Well, give me a better one.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** I refer to the definition of "executive officer". Do I understand the Minister to say that he is quite content that under this legislation people in rather insignificant positions in small private companies can be classified as being the management of a corporation and that, under the Bill, they can be prosecuted? Is that what the Minister intends?

**Mr COMBEN:** The intention is that the people who have the control in the corporation, who give the orders, will be prosecuted. It may well be that a small, insignificant person—those derogative terms the honourable member is so fond of using—is someone who has control and direction of a small corporation. If one takes the example of a small corporation such as a small dry-cleaning company—the two partners of that company decide after a while to form a corporation, and they in effect retire. If there is a third person who gives direction and management in that corporation, that person is liable. The legislation intends that person to be liable, because if that

person has breached the Act, that person must be able to be caught. That is what the honourable member is forgetting. The Government is not targeting small people; it is targeting the people responsible for an action which is in breach of the Nature Conservation Bill of this State.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Again under the definition of “area of major interest”—and one will find that litigation under this Bill will depend to a certain extent upon that definition—the area of major interest is designated to a large extent by the Minister, so it is highly subjective. Can the Minister elucidate a little further on what he would consider an area of major interest?

Amendment negatived.

Clause 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

**Mr BEANLAND** (11.18 p.m.): Clause 8 refers to the definition or the meaning of “nature”. I can follow clause 8 (1) up to subclause 2 (c), which refers to “natural dynamic processes”. I ask the Minister what exactly the clause means when it refers to “natural dynamic processes”.

**Mr COMBEN:** Processes which are dynamic and natural.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Clause 8 (1) states—

“ ‘Nature’ includes all aspects of nature.”

Subclause 2 (d) refers to “the characteristics of places”, and the definition of “place” includes a boat or a hovercraft. Is the Committee to understand under this Bill that “nature” is a boat or a hovercraft? The subclause states—

“. . . the characteristics of places, however large or small, that contribute to—

. . .

(ii) their intrinsic or scientific value.”

Could the Minister expand a little more on that, because that again is highly subjective?

**Mr COMBEN:** I wish the honourable member would go and find a first-year law student and get him or her to give the honourable member some sort of statutory interpretation handbook.

**Mr Casey:** It would only confuse him.

**Mr COMBEN:** It would confuse the honourable member, because there would be at least two words in there with two syllables in them. It is not up to the honourable member to look at this and give some glib answer. The courts would look at the clause in its entirety, including the definitions. In some cases a word which is inappropriately there, which may be defined somewhere else, is said to be not part of the definitions. If the honourable member reads that entire clause, he will see that the meaning of “Nature includes all aspects of nature, without limiting subsection (1).” Subclause (2) refers to a number of things, which includes the characteristics of places. It is not hovercrafts; it is about nature, natural places, national parks, caves—those sorts of things. That is what it means. What their intrinsic or scientific values are is exactly what it states. This is a clear English version. The honourable member should have seen the old Act before he was in this place, where “bill of exchange” was defined as a bill of exchange. When I went to the University of Queensland, I remember being told in statutory interpretation that if one wanted to see bad drafting, one came to Queensland. That has gone. The word has its normal, natural meaning. “The characteristics of natural places, however large or small, that contribute to their intrinsic or scientific value.” Their “intrinsic value” is their intrinsic value; their “scientific value” is what scientists want out of them. It is as simple as that.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clause 9—

**Mr ELLIOTT** (11.21 p.m.): In respect of clause 9, the Minister should clarify once and for all—I ran out of time before—whether, under this definition, timber harvesting would be allowed in north Queensland?

**Mr Comben:** Where? On national parks, on private land?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Well, if one goes through, obviously there are the national parks and all of the Aboriginal land, and there is the Torres Strait Island land, resource reserves, nature refuges and so on.

**Mr Comben:** Which ones are you talking about?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Under all of those categories. Could a situation arise where timber harvesting would be allowed under clause 9 in any of the categories set out in this Bill and, if so, which ones? The question is as simple as that. It is not very difficult.

**Mr COMBEN:** Of those higher tenures, no, it will not. In regard to national parks (scientific), national parks, national parks (Torres Strait Islander land), national parks (Aboriginal land)—no. When one moves to some of the other categories such as resources reserves and so on, then potentially it is, although “forestry” has been removed from resources reserves. Resources reserves cannot be placed over forestry areas but under those definitions in coordinated conservation areas and nature refuges people will be able to log. That will not be able to be done in high-value preservation areas, but it will be able to be done in the lower-value areas in which one is talking about a range of different uses.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Could the Minister confirm that under this legislation, “conservation” can be defined as the hunting, shooting, wounding, killing and poisoning of animals and the gathering, plucking, cutting, pulling, destroying, digging up and felling of plants? Does that mean that “conservation” includes the culling of kangaroos or other non-feral animals, and does it mean, as the shadow Minister for Environment has previously stated, the logging of rainforests or timber in national parks?

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member is so out of touch with the feeling of this legislation—

**Mr Gibbs:** He should be culled.

**Mr COMBEN:** I think the honourable member should be culled. I also think the honourable member distortedly loaded four different questions at me. I am unable to answer that convoluted question.

Clause 9, as read, agreed to.

Clause 10—

**Mr DUNWORTH** (11.24 p.m.): Could the Minister please give a clearer outline of the meaning of “species diversity” and “genetic diversity”? As I understand it, “diversity”, is the number of species occurring naturally within a given area. Could the Minister expand on that a little bit? Is that what the Minister understands it to mean?

**Mr COMBEN:** I do not believe that the terms are in quotes.

Clause 10, as read, agreed to.

Clause 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—

**Mr COOPER** (11.25 p.m.): I would like the Minister to explain the meaning of “threatening process”. At the outset, I would say that everyone in this Chamber does not want wildlife made extinct through the actions of man. I also mention that there are certain forms of wildlife such as the feral cat and the feral pig that all people should pursue to the nth degree. They should wipe them out, and make no excuse for it. I also mention that the kangaroo, wallaby and emu are our national emblems and are certainly very much in the minds of all Australians. However, those animals can occur in plague proportions. The Minister mentioned in his second-reading speech that he was considering not only the 4 per cent of national parks and protected areas of this State, but also 96 per cent of the State that needed to be looked after. When kangaroos,

wallabies and emus occur in plague proportions, can the Minister outline who will decide whether the animals are in plague proportions? Is the other 96 per cent of the State in danger from kangaroos, emus and wallabies occurring in plague proportions? Will the Minister give me a more definitive answer as to who, in fact, decides and what mechanisms are used to decide whether native wildlife is of plague proportions, because they can do just as much damage to the environment and natural habitats as feral animals.

**Mr COMBEN:** I think what the honourable member is asking is that if something is in plague proportions, can one knock it off? Yes, one will be able to do that. The basis of this legislation is "ecologically sustainable" development. We need to be able to say that ecologically sustainable development can be used in a given area if wildlife is in plague proportions. We already kill kangaroos in this State. We cull them.

**Mr Cooper:** I know that.

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member would know that far better than I do. If the proper research can be carried out to show that there is a problem, then under this legislation one will be able to receive the necessary permit and the necessary assistance. The "threatening process" clause relates to when the very survival of an area is challenged, or if the capacity of an area to survive is challenged. The Government can then remove the "threatening process". As the honourable member has quite rightly said, the "threatening process" is normally regarded as feral cats and feral pigs. Under this legislation, they are not protected species, so the Minister can go in there—and I will be out there with him in regard to feral cats. Pigs tend to bite a bit more. I think the answer to the honourable member's question is that pest species will be able to be removed without any difficulty at all, as long as it is a pest and the research has been carried out.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** Would "threatening process" include tourist numbers or diving activities on the reef near places such as Heron Island? Could "threatening process" mean a factory emission or something like that near Brisbane Forest Park? Under this Bill, "threatening process" is very broad. Could the processes that I have mentioned be classified as "threatening processes"?

**Mr COMBEN:** They would not. The number of people visiting Heron Island would not normally be classed as or be seen to be a "threatening process". The number of visitors to Heron Island would be managed by the management intent or the management plan. No, that is not something which would normally classify it under this clause. If, for some reason, something has to be done about the number of people visiting areas, that may be possible, but it would not normally come within the management of this legislation.

As to factory emissions—that depends on the processes, but they will be controlled, regulated and permitted under the State environment legislation, when it comes into this place in approximately three months' time.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clause 13—

**Mr DUNWORTH** (11.29 p.m.): This clause refers to the meaning of "critical habitat" and states in part—

" 'Critical habitat' is habitat that is essential for the conservation of a viable population of protected wildlife . . . "

Can the Minister expand on that a little? Who would make that decision, and what does the Minister believe that it would be?

**Mr COMBEN:** Scientists would make that decision.

Clause 13, as read, agreed to.

Clause 14, as read, agreed to.

Clause 15—

**Mr ELLIOTT** (11.30 p.m.): The Opposition will use this clause as a basic principle. If the Minister wishes, I can go through the tortuous process of dealing with all the clauses that relate to this particular subject. However, the Opposition intends to divide the Committee on this particular clause because it embodies our principal concern about this legislation. This clause typifies the fact that, firstly, it is impractical to take the legislation to this extent; secondly, it will be so costly that no Treasurer will continue to provide the necessary funding; and thirdly, quite frankly the Minister is undermining and putting in issue the very principles of freehold land in Queensland. For that reason the Opposition does not believe that the Minister will be able to manage the national parks of this State, as instanced recently on the *7.30 Report*.

I know what it is like when management has a budget that is too small. That is not new. However, the Minister is exacerbating this matter by pushing for a high percentage of acquisitions in a short time rather than saying, "Yes, we are buying those areas that we feel are necessary and very important for biodiversity reasons", or whatever other reasons the Minister might care to mention. I find it totally impractical—

**Mr Comben** interjected.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** If the Minister does not intend to provide any answers, I might as well keep talking just to keep him amused. I challenge the Minister to tell members what his role is. He is supposed to be in charge of this Bill. Within reason, he is supposed to answer questions about it. I do not believe that he understands the Bill. He is being handed notes from his advisers. If they were not in the lobby, the Minister would be in strife. He suggested that various members have not read the Bill. I suggest that the Minister does not understand his own legislation.

**Mr Comben:** Can you just tell me which part of clause 15 you are talking about at the moment?

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I am trying to save members' time. If the Minister wishes to still be here at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock in the morning, I am quite happy to be here then. I do not believe that any sensible member would want to drag out this process any more than is reasonably practical.

As I said, clause 15 is being used as an example to typify the Opposition's concerns about this legislation. For the reasons that I have outlined, I am not giving the Minister my unqualified support. This legislation is not practical in respect of the costs involved in continuing the management plan, including the cost of paperwork and mailing-out processes, and officers' time being tied up. The Minister is not doing a very good job of trying to run the national parks system, because he is wasting taxpayers' funds by procuring and buying all the grazing properties of Queensland which, in many instances, are perfectly safe. The Minister is giving graziers vibes such as, "Look out. Pat Comben is after your property." The fear campaign caused by the Minister's correspondence resulted in people bulldozing rainforest areas.

The Minister is threatening the very viability of many of the important conservation areas of Queensland. Quite frankly, they will not be as well looked after in the Minister's hands—with no budget to look after them—as they are today in the hands of well-meaning, well-intentioned, long-experienced grazing operations that are already able to look after those properties. Probably the best example of that in Queensland—although, as it turns out, that operation will probably be quite happy now, if the Government ever pays it—is the Undarra lava tubes. That operation was totally in control and under no threat whatsoever. It could have been left for another 10, 20 or 30 years. The people of Queensland were able to enjoy that natural feature. The Minister could have put together a scheme with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the family that runs that operation with its savanna gulf guides. As the Minister knows, a ranger from Kakadu has already been brought in. I am not talking about inexperienced people or a half-baked operation. I have heard the Minister acknowledge that it is a very professional operation. Because of the Minister's inability to obtain the budget that he requires to run the national parks estate of this State of the Commonwealth, he is putting at risk the lands of this State. If he continues to acquire land without a budget to back him up, he will be putting those properties in jeopardy rather than looking after them.



**Mr COMBEN:** I remind the honourable member that, in his second year as Minister, the annual report that was sent to him had a spirited defence by Dr Graham Saunders about the need to acquire parks at that time, even though the public and some political forces did not want that acquisition. He gave a range of reasons why the parks had to be acquired. He spoke about the availability of land at that time. He spoke about biodiversity by a different name at that time. He said that properties became available at certain times, that budget was available and that it was difficult to change the budget. For those same reasons given by the honourable member's senior adviser when he was Minister that we had to acquire the parks at that time, so also would I give him those reasons. I also quote to the honourable member the release that he sent out in late 1972 which referred to acquiring the major areas in the west and north of the State which had not previously been acquired for national park purposes. I have had a copy of that release on my desk for a year. Of course, when I wanted it this morning I could not find it. I happen to know the author of that press release because he is a good friend of the honourable member for Cunningham and he is a good friend of mine. The honourable member said the same things.

Effectively, the message I am giving him now is that it is easy in Opposition to say, "Don't do these things." It is easy to get a run in the *Queensland Country Life* or the *Chinchilla News*. I think that the honourable member would know more than most of his colleagues that, at the end of this acquisition program, we will have a world-class system of parks. I have never hidden, in the public agenda and the public forums in which I stand, that this is about acquisition and management; putting people in, having the feral animals controlled, having the fire breaks, putting minimal staff in there, and keeping the properties at times under their old management. Welford is still looked after by the Buttons from whom we purchased it. The property owner is on Currawinya today. Undarra will be there for a couple of years yet. We are doing everything we can.

I look to the Treasurer to supply more money for management in forthcoming years. We will try to convert the acquisition funds into management next year. We are rationalising the staff to make sure there is staff on the big western properties where they are needed. We are looking at a range of options to raise the money, as well. We are doing everything we can out there. It is not perfect, as I said on television. I will stand in any forum and say it is not perfect. But we made a promise to the people of Queensland to double the park estate and to have a world-class system of parks. We are doing it. We are also holding the management as far as we can. I certainly look forward to another three years in my portfolio because in that time we will see real management, interpretive centres and the control of feral animals.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr COMBEN:** I have one vote there, and I think Lyn is here, so I probably have two. In those times we will probably manage those areas to the standards of every other State, and to the standards of the land-holders around us. It will not be easy. It is easy to knock while on the other side and hard to defend on this side, but I will continue to defend this. If this is the clause on which the honourable member for Cunningham intends to divide, so be it.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I did intend to speak on clause 17, but I will speak to this clause as the honourable member for Cunningham intends to divide on it. I express some concern, as I did in my earlier speech, in regard to the management of national parks. For all the reasons I outlined before, it is very easy to set ourselves a quota, whether it be 2 per cent, 4 per cent or 5 per cent, and set about achieving that quota. I repeat, because it is a very important point which we are degraded for mentioning, that it is very hard to manage those particular areas competently and accurately. I do not think people understand how large 80 000 square kilometres or 100 000 square kilometres of Queensland really is—except those who have electorates that size. I would like an indication from the Minister about how he will go about controlling the feral animals in those parks. What sort of practices will he adopt? Will he have more staff? Will he take part in experimental programs to eradicate those animals biologically? Where is he heading? If he could give to this House and to the people of Queensland

an accurate assessment of where he is going, his prediction and his plan, he would allay a lot of concerns. People are concerned about the viability of surrounding property and about maintaining those parks in a pristine state and not having them overrun by wild animals and particularly noxious flora.

**Mr COMBEN:** Could I first correct the honourable member? He referred to 80 000 or 100 000 square kilometres. He is perpetuating the distortion that he raised this evening. We are looking at about only 6 000 square kilometres. What we aim to do in the management of feral animals and weeds is to see what our neighbours are doing. If they are properly controlling those things, we will adopt exactly the same method. That is the good neighbour policy.

**Mr Stoneman** interjected.

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member laughs. What he is laughing at is the lie which is being perpetrated over there that somehow the parks are the places from which all rubber vine comes and from which all feral pigs come. Cape York has a massive pig problem. No land-holder on Cape York is controlling the pigs. A few of them are not controlling scrub cattle, either. We are not a land-holder. If our neighbours do something about pigs or rubber vine, we will do exactly the same. That is all we can do with these things. We have constantly fronted the growers' organisations and the grazing organisations and said, "You make generalised comments on radio about feral animals in national parks. Tell us where." When we started to run at least one major organisation down a bit, the first comment was, "It was my mate who told me." We said, "All right, well let us go and find him." We actually found a three and a half year old story.

**Mr Elliott:** You had a bit of a witch-hunt.

**Mr COMBEN:** We had a witch-hunt to find where these matters were coming from. It was a three and a half year old tale about a single park which had been resolved. If any honourable member has any genuine concerns about the hole in the fence through which the pigs, the dingoes, the cats and the foxes are coming, tell me about it. We will fix it; we will bait; we will shoot; we will do anything—but we will do it. I think at times it is too easy to say that we are the reservoir of all things nasty. No, we are not; the National Party is.

**Mr HOBBS:** My question to the Minister relates to cost. Obviously, a lot of time and effort has been put into this Bill. It is a very big Bill. I presume that the Minister would have considered what the cost to the taxpayers of Queensland is likely to be. I will ask a question in two parts. What does the Minister expect the management costs to be in this very next year? Obviously, next year's Budget is coming up, so a lot of work would have been done on that. That question is very relevant to this Bill. The Minister is asking the Opposition to support the Bill, yet there has been no real indication as to whether the amount put aside for maintenance is sufficient. I think that some indication should be given as to the amount that is likely to be spent on the maintenance of those areas, and perhaps roughly what percentage would be envisaged as having a snowballing effect on future Queensland Budgets.

**Mr COMBEN:** My department has made certain submissions to the Budget committee, and the increases that have put to that committee are very substantial, to put it mildly. It is now up to my good friend the Honourable the Treasurer to make the right decisions about conservation in Queensland.

**Mr ROWELL:** In my speech during the second-reading debate, I mentioned fire in national parks. It is a very important issue. I can assure honourable members that there has been an instance of a person being taken to court because he cleared a firebreak along a World Heritage boundary. Is the Minister aware of that? The situation has not improved regarding property holders whose land adjoins national parks. I am given to understand that the equipment they have is insufficient to cope with break-outs of fire in the event that that happens.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order!

**Mr Gibbs:** Who is this fellow?

**Mr ROWELL:** Who are you, anyway? In the event of a serious fire breaking out in a national park, it would be impossible to stop it crossing those boundaries. There was some prospect that something might be done about it in the future, but it has not eventuated. I have spoken to the National Parks officers in Ingham, and they are still looking into the matter. I think it is important that something is done in consultation with those property owners who adjoin World Heritage areas, and I have given the Minister a specific instance.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I had not planned to speak in this debate, but I must say that some of the comments I have heard the Minister make have been most provocative and, I might say, strange and interesting. I understood the Minister to say that he would give an undertaking to adopt exactly the same management practices as were adopted on neighbouring properties. I am aware of the country in which some of those properties are located. Thistlebank is a good example. I understand that negotiations are going on with Shirley. I am aware that a study is being conducted in respect of Yarrowmere. I am pretty well up to date, the reason being that I know that country intimately. I have driven through it very recently, and I understand the fear and trepidation that is felt by the people who live there. First of all, they do not know what their future is. They have a cloud hanging over them. They acknowledge that, by one means or another, the Government of the day is able to undertake a process of resumption or acquisition of their land. However, while they acknowledge that, they also worry about the time and money that they have put into those properties, and their future, because they did not build those properties up overnight. It has been the result of the planning of generations. Properties have been joined onto others in order to maintain their viability. Then along comes the resumption or acquisition process and they are wiped out. The Minister is dealing with people's lives. The properties in the areas that I am talking about—with the exception of one particular place which I will not name—are being better run now than they have been for generations, because the actual owner—a sole owner—is located on them and is managing them properly. Not only are the properties well managed but also the livestock are probably better looked after—by default, if you like—than ever before.

I refer also to Welford, which the Minister mentioned. As I understand it, the improvements on that property are being removed, with the exception of the homestead—a very old, large and much-admired home—which is a National Trust property. The property will be returned to its pristine state.

**Mr Comben:** Who is taking them off? The owner or us?

**Mr STONEMAN:** No. My understanding is that that is being done by National Parks officers. I would like to know whether it is planned to remove the improvements from those properties that are acquired. Let me say that I am aware of the huge cost of maintaining those improvements. If they are not maintained, before long the property begins to fall down, and the animals that are sustained—in many cases the very reason why those properties are part of the acquisition process—are lost. As to fires in that country—it is laughable to suggest that such fires can be controlled without a full-time presence and without bulldozers, graders and all manner of equipment. I have spent months at a time fighting a fire in that country—not a series of fires, a fire.

People do so because they have to preserve the property for future generations and maintain it at a value that will allow its continuation as a viable operation, yet the Minister is saying that he will do exactly as the neighbours do. What will he do about wild cattle? After all, wild cattle are simply ordinary cattle that have not been mustered for periods of 18 months or more. In most cases, because there are young scrubbers all over the place in the country to which I refer, a property owner would be lucky to get stock through the yards once every 18 months. Gradually, a build-up of wild cattle occurs. When stock is removed from properties and the processes to which I have referred are undertaken, the property becomes a refuge for all the wild cattle in the area, and I can tell the Minister about the damage that the cattle can do to improvements. The Minister thought that there was something humorous in the question I asked him, but I can assure him that I was laughing in derision. If what the Minister has said is correct, he

is imposing a huge burden on the taxpayers of this State—regardless of whether or not the Treasurer is benevolent—not only in relation to the properties acquired by the Crown but also, and more particularly, in relation to the surrounding areas. These properties will become bushfire refuges for wildlife, pests and other animals. I ask the Minister to give the Committee an outline of what he means by managing these properties in exactly the same way as neighbouring properties are managed and of his plans for operating them in such a way that bushfires, etc., can be controlled. I seek that clarification from the Minister before I make further comments.

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member began by referring to Welford and said that improvements had been removed. I do not believe that a decision has yet been made to remove improvements from that property.

**Mr Stoneman:** But it is in the air.

**Mr COMBEN:** The Government is acquiring a national park, not a working sheep station. There is a difference, and the improvements will not be needed. However, if the Crown can make a quid from the sale of the portable yards or the press, that will probably occur. It is important to remember that the property will become a national park and will not be used as a sheep station, but the Government is thinking of selling the improvements. The first thing a buyer would do is look around the property to find out what the assets are. The Government spent over half a million dollars on improvements at Welford. A large part of that money was spent on the house but, naturally, the Government will look to see whether a return can be obtained for the other pieces. The owner of Welford came to see me and began asking me whether a couple of improvements could be taken from the property. I was actually quite agreeable to the proposal until a very senior officer of the department butted in and said, "Of course, the Minister would not agree to that because that is in breach of the audit Acts of the State. We have bought those things, and what you are suggesting would mean that he is giving them to you." I was very pleased that that senior officer butted in at the right moment.

The property's assets are not going to be given to the owner of Welford. The Government may well move some of the sheds, etc., but the management plan will dictate where members of staff will be located and the arrangements that can be entered into with the Stockman's Hall of Fame in relation to a major display. The Government is looking at a joint project whereby the Stockman's Hall of Fame will suggest that tourists have a look at a heritage property, namely, Welford. If people are interested in the house and some of the improvements, those improvements may be left on the property so that people can interpret the past of the area. If those assets are not wanted, they will be removed. Obviously, the property will need a machinery shed because vehicles have already been purchased. It is all up to the management plan. The Government does not yet have possession, in spite of the fact that a large amount of money has been paid for the property. It has been reported in the press that \$3.2m was paid for the property more than a year ago, so the owner has done very well by being able to enjoy the continued use of the property over that period. The member for Burdekin referred to the property falling down and animals becoming lost. I must point out to the honourable member that Australian animals have survived fairly well for 25 million years without the use of every track on a working sheep station. I am confident that they will continue to survive very nicely in that area. The management problems revolve around fires, feral animals and the control of people, not around wildlife which generally looks after itself. The wildlife of the area consists of marsupials and mammals that know the natural survival techniques and continue to increase in numbers. I have no fear that, just because the property is no longer a working property, the wildlife will not survive.

The honourable member mentioned the fact that these properties in some way become refuges. He also said something about cattle that I really could not follow. If cattle are located in a national park and the Government makes a management decision to get rid of them, we will get rid of them. At the start, we muster the cattle in much the same way as would any responsible property owner—such as the member for Burdekin.

We would then fence off the water and wait for the cattle to go into the enclosure. The important thing is to get the couple of scrubbers that remain, and the member for Burdekin expressed his fears that there could be a build-up in numbers of wild cattle. If that is the case, the officers of my department know what a .243 rifle is for. That is the way this Government operates. We make a management decision in exactly the same way as a property owner does, and we get on with the task. The honourable member referred also to taxpayers' money being spent on the property, but I point out that revenue is being generated by places such as Welford adding another day to the itinerary of a tourist travelling to Longreach. Presently, tourists travelling to Longreach arrive at approximately 5 p.m. and find that the Stockman's Hall of Fame is closed. They then either set up camp or stay at a local motel. At 9 o'clock the next morning, they go to the Stockman's Hall of Fame and remain there until approximately 12 o'clock. The beautiful Welford property is a short distance from Longreach and contains beautiful formations. Tourists can camp at the property, stay another day and then return to Longreach. By doing so, they will spend more money on petrol, etc. The average expenditure of a single tourist in the western districts is \$95, or \$134 if he or she stays at a good motel. This property will result in a net gain to the local economy.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I am somewhat devastated by the Minister's reply. I am familiar with Welford, and the Minister's comments have confirmed the rumours that have been circulating in the area. Apparently, there is a plan for removal of the property's improvements.

**Mr Comben:** No.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I acknowledge that that is not confirmed, and there is no problem about it. However, the Minister obviously does not understand that the reason why the surrounding country can sustain wildlife as well as introduced cattle and sheep is that there is now more wildlife than there was when Captain Cook arrived. Every four or five miles there are man-made waterholes that mitigate the effects of drought. I can tell the Minister that prior to settlement of the white man in the area there was not a single waterhole to be found for hundreds of miles. Without waterholes, wildlife animals will die in their hundreds of thousands. The Minister is saying that that is all right and they will look after themselves. That is fine, but the Minister must realise that it will not be that easy. I owned a property in the middle of that region, where I employed a kangaroo shooter for five years. He did not go outside the boundaries of that property and, each year, he shot 10 000 roos and obtained several thousand skins. In all those years, he did not once go off the property. If he had not kept down the number of those kangaroos or if water had not been available—which would have been the case if that property was not managed—the kangaroos would have moved next door. They would have moved onto the other properties. If property owners do not maintain the fences, how can they muster? How will the property owners know where the cattle are? The Minister said that he would go out and shoot them with a .243. With all respect, on many of those properties in the area about which I am talking, one can go several years and not see a particular beast.

**Mr Comben:** They are not doing any harm.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Yes, they are. The scrubber bull is wandering around, going through fences and gathering his own herd. Let us consider Yarrabee, which was the home of TB. Except for the lake, which is salt, it is not a bad place to muster. It has all man-made bores and no natural dams. At Thistlebank and Shirley, it is virtually impossible to muster, yet the Minister tells honourable members that he will do exactly what the neighbours do. By making quite outlandish statements of that type, the Minister is fooling himself and the people of this State.

I return to Welford. The Minister says that he is generating income because businesses will go there. What about the shearers who no longer go there? What about the builders who no longer maintain the facilities? What about the fencers, the dam sinkers, the ringers and the carriers who carry the wool and the stock? They will not go to Welford any more. They will not have any income to plough back into that community. The Minister should be very careful about suggesting that Welford will

become a Mecca for tourists. Once people go to Welford, after the first shower they will not get home because there is no sealed road within cooeee of that country. The Minister might be aware that the owners, from whom he purchased the property, have their own aircraft. I have known them for 30-odd years. The reason why they have the aircraft is that that is the only way that they could maintain a family in the isolated circumstances of that property.

The Minister says that tourists will tootle down to Welford. They will—when they are able to do so. We will have a proliferation of parks in this State. Up the road is Thistlebank, which is the same sort of country. I ask the Minister to put on record that he will positively maintain the management of those properties exactly as the neighbours do now. That is all I want. The Minister has said that. I say that that is unbelievably misleading and the Minister should be ashamed of making that statement. Certainly, the people of this State must understand that the Minister cannot honour that commitment. If he says that in public, he is misleading the people.

**Mr HOBBS:** As I said before, the Opposition has great concerns about what the Minister has allocated for the management of national parks. He indicated that he had put in an application. That is all very well, and I presume that it would be enough to cover the position. However, as the Minister said, it is up to the Budget committee and the Treasurer. The Minister may not get that money for those national parks. He is putting an albatross around the neck of the Queensland taxpayers. He is being irresponsible. Who in private enterprise is able to go out and buy and buy and buy without it costing them? Ask Mr Bond. Ask Mr Skase. Perhaps, we could ask Mr Comben what has happened.

**Mr De Lacy:** Don't you worry about that.

**Mr HOBBS:** I will not say anything. I can give a response to the Treasurer about financial management, but I will refrain from doing so. The Minister mentioned the tourists who will drive out to the Stockman's Hall of Fame, have a look around for three hours, nip on down to Welford—

**Mr Stoneman:** It would take three hours.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is right. Anyone who would spend three hours there would be crazy. They would have to spend the better part of a day doing that. It is three hours' drive to Welford, if they can find their way there. People do not understand that it takes days to drive around places such as Welford, which cover 300 000 acres. Will the Minister have people in all those places to control those so-called tourists? He is saying that the tourists will be there. I do not think that very many tourists will go there. The Minister will need a lot of people to manage those regions. For the life of me, I do not believe that he has anywhere near the funds available. On behalf of the Queensland taxpayers, the Minister is buying a pig in a poke.

**Mr ROWELL:** I spoke earlier about firebreaks, which are very important in the 100 kilometres of national parks and World Heritage areas in the Hinchinbrook electorate. What criteria does the Minister have in the management plan for the firebreaks? It is essential that we determine exactly what the management plan provides with respect to firebreaks and adjoining properties. As I said in my speech, there has been a change in the culture of growing cane. Once upon a time, people used to burn the cane and those fires got into national parks. With the trash blanketing principle that we are now adopting, the position has been reversed. Very often, those properties are in a very tenuous position in terms of fire coming in from national parks. As a result, it is very important that the Government has some policies and some criteria on firebreaks. One of the people in the Herbert River district got himself into hot water when he made a firebreak and found out afterwards that it was in a World Heritage area. As a result, he was taken to court. I can quote his name, but I will not be quoting it in this place. I can give the Minister evidence. He has asked for specific circumstances, and I can give them. All of those property owners whose properties adjoin World Heritage areas should consult with National Parks and Wildlife Service officers to determine just exactly what is required. I can see the Treasurer nodding his head. He is in full agreement. That is very good.

Question—That clause 15, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 46		NOES, 28	
Ardill	Mackenroth	Beanland	Stoneman
Barber	McElligott	Booth	Watson
Beattie	McGrady	Connor	
Bird	Milliner	Coomber	
Braddy	Nunn	Cooper	
Bredhauer	Pearce	Dunworth	
Burns	Power	Elliott	
Casey	Robson	FitzGerald	
Clark	Schwarten	Gilmore	
Comben	Smith	Goss J. N.	
D'Arcy	Smyth	Harper	
Davies	Spence	Hobbs	
De Lacy	Sullivan J. H.	Horan	
Dollin	Sullivan T. B.	Johnson	
Eaton	Szczerbanik	Lester	
Edmond	Vaughan	Lingard	
Elder	Warner	Littleproud	
Fenlon	Welford	Perrett	
Flynn	Wells	Randell	
Gibbs	Woodgate	Rowell	
Hamill		Santoro	
Hayward	<i>Tellers:</i>	Slack	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hollis	Prest	Springborg	Neal
Livingstone	Pitt	Stephan	Quinn

Resolved in the affirmative.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind honourable members that all future divisions will be of two minutes' duration.

Clause 16, as read, agreed to.

Clause 17—

**Mr HOBBS** (12.15 a.m.): This clause establishes the management principles of national parks. The Explanatory Notes state—

“These areas will be managed in accordance with the Cardinal Principle for National Park management.”

I want to know whether ongoing grazing rights will be acceptable as a cardinal principle.

**Mr COMBEN:** New grazing will not be acceptable.

**Mr GILMORE:** Regrettably, I must refer to another clause when I am talking about this clause. In terms of the management principles of national parks, a number of things are provided in the Bill, including the permanent preservation of the area's natural condition, etc.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber, especially from the back benches of the Liberal Party.

**Mr GILMORE:** This clause does not mention uses such as those mentioned in clause 20, which refers to the management principles of conservation parks. I just wonder what is meant by the expression “protect and present the area's cultural and natural resources and their values”. Subclause (2) states—

“The management principles mentioned in subsection (1) (a) and (b) are the cardinal principles . . .”

That means that subclause (1) (c), which is the only one that might have a let-out in it, seems to be overridden to a degree. Is recreational fishing and that kind of activity still to be allowed within these national parks? The Bill does not clearly say so. I spoke earlier in the second-reading debate about this legislation falling into the hands of zealots. If the Government does not dot the i's and cross the t's, as it were, it could well face a little bit of a problem in terms of the future management of the park.

**Mr Dunworth:** Can you fit any more in down there?

**Mr COMBEN:** I had noted that, actually. My wife was in the public gallery earlier, but she has gone home. The difference between clause 17 and clause 20—the difference between, effectively, a national park and a conservation park—is fundamental to the Bill. The definition of a national park, under the provisions of this legislation, will be purer than it has been in the past. It is the Government's intention to remove conflicting uses and conflicting intentions within a national park. The Government will, of course, as this Bill goes through and gets proclaimed later in the year, examine all the national parks and environmental parks of Queensland to see which should be going where. Fundamentally, national parks become national parks; environmental parks become conservation parks. What happens with some of them, of course, is that they have grazing, fishing and other uses which are not ecologically sustainable. Those sorts of areas would then become conservation parks. The reason why the conservation parks have included fishing and grazing is that the parks which at present may be national parks but which have fishing and grazing will become conservation parks. The pure national parks will remain as national parks.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I direct a query to the Minister following the answer that he gave to the member for Warrego. As I understand it, the Minister said new grazing will not be allowed on national parks. Is that to mean that after the existing owner or tenant fulfils his contract or agreement as part of the sale or acquisition of the land with the department, there will be no opportunity for future grazing on that land? Exactly what does the Minister mean by the term "new grazing"? In order to get some clarification, I refer to the fact that the Minister said in certain circumstances the property or land would not be able to sustain, in the ecological sense, further grazing. By what measure does the Minister make that determination, and how has he made that in respect of the areas that he is acquiring now?

**Mr COMBEN:** I have not made that determination, nor could I ever be competent to make that determination. That is a matter for the technicians, the scientists and the administrators of the National Parks and Wildlife Service. That is a technical matter. As to whether grazing is damaging, whether it is appropriate—that is something on which I certainly take advice.

**Mr Dunworth:** You need it.

**Mr COMBEN:** I do not need it. As to when the department will be saying "no more grazing"—I remind honourable members that some of the national parks of Queensland have 30-year grazing leases over them.

**Mr Stoneman:** When that term runs out, is that it?

**Mr COMBEN:** I think then the parties would negotiate it, would they not? If a lease runs out, the parties negotiate it.

**Mr GILMORE:** I ask the Minister——

**Mr Comben:** Didn't you explain it to him?

**Mr GILMORE:** No; that is the Minister's job. I suspect that the Minister will need that piece of paper in a moment, so I advise him to go looking for it. I would just like to flesh out a couple of points that the Minister made a few moments ago. The Minister did not answer my question, but he did raise more questions than he answered. We are discussing clause 17, the management principles of national parks. I said that clause 20 raises the matter of fishing and grazing. Clause 20 (c) refers to commercial uses of the natural resources, which include fishing and grazing, and the fact that the commercial use of natural resources must be ecologically sustainable. I was not referring to commercial fishing; the Minister was. I asked the question about such parks as Lakefield National Park, where there is a very large recreational fishing resource. Large numbers of people go there——

**Mr Comben:** It is a recreational fishing resource. It is not a very large one.

**Mr GILMORE:** The Minister has still not answered my question, so I will continue to ask it. Do I understand from what the Minister has just said that if people are still



going to be allowed to fish in Lakefield National Park that it will have to be turned into a conservation park rather than a national park? Clause 17, which we are currently debating, apparently does not allow for recreational fishing in national parks. The Minister simply has not indicated that, whereas in a later clause he has set out in chapter and verse what may be done in a conservation park. When the Minister attempted to answer my question previously, he said that if fishing is going to be carried on, he will have to change it from a national park to a conservation park. Is the status of the Lakefield National Park under threat?

**Mr COMBEN:** No, because the waters in Lakefield where the fishing is carried out are tidal waters and not part of the national park. That comes within Mr Casey's portfolio.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** It is interesting to see where the Minister is coming from. What type of assurances has the Minister given to producers in regard to grazing? If one considers the problem which confronted the Minister in regard to the Sandstone park area this year, I suggest that we were all very lucky. If the Minister had wanted to play politics, the Opposition was in a position to politically annihilate the Minister for what was going to happen to the national park. The Minister received an inch of rain at the right time and the fire was put out, with a little bit of help from above. All I am saying—

**Mr Comben:** You'll never annihilate me.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** I am only being facetious, and the Minister knows that.

**Mr Comben:** I think you also know where the fires came from, but I will answer you.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Yes, I know, but what I am saying is that if grazing is not permitted in many of those parks—and I fully accept that there are some parks in which grazing is inappropriate, and I do not think that anyone would suggest that there should be carte blanche grazing permits over national parks—commonsense must be used. There are horses for courses. In regard to areas of central Queensland, particularly the area of the Sandstone park, Carnarvon, Mount Moffatt, Salvadore Rosa, the Blacktown Tablelands and so on—if people are not careful, the Minister will obviously have a problem with fire regimes. I suggest to him that there is tremendous disquiet among producers in respect of those types of parks and also the parks in far-western Queensland which to date have not been large. However, the Minister has taken over larger areas and, obviously there will be very real potential for fire problems in some of those areas. What does the Minister propose to do? If he is not prepared to allow grazing in some of those parks, does he honestly believe that he has the management on the ground to be able to handle all of the necessary preventive burning programs that need to be put in place? Are we going to see the extremist viewpoint adopted with preventive burning programs and controlled burning not being carried out because that is not in line with the purist attitude?

**Mr COMBEN:** In regard to the honourable member's opening remarks about politically annihilating me in terms of what happened on the Sandstone belt—I would like to place it on public record that there were a number of fires burning outside the park that were heading towards the park. All types of rumours were circulating, including those that were started by people on the opposite side of the House, that the fires were in the parks and were burning out surrounding properties. I place on the public record my sincere gratitude that Ruth Wade, the executive director of the Cattlemen's Union, was up there at the time with my regional director, Dick Grimes, and she was able to say very publicly on the public air waves that the National Parks and Wildlife Service did not have a problem and that people should forget the rumours.

**Mr Elliott:** It was heading towards the park.

**Mr COMBEN:** It was heading towards the park, but officers from my department were standing on the lines of the fires, beating them out. They were there. They were standing shoulder to shoulder with the land-holders who the honourable member claims to represent. We brought them across from central Queensland. Again, the message that I am receiving tonight is that members of the Opposition are not talking to their

support groups. They should talk to members of the Cattlemen's Union and other groups, because obviously they are not talking about those types of things. The end of the story is that the fires were beaten, manna from heaven came in the form of rain to help the property owners and the park, but I will be ever indebted to Ruth Wade for being willing to go on the public record and say that the rumours were wrong, that the National Parks and Wildlife Service did the right thing, and that it was not its fire. Once again, the generalisation that the fire, the rubber vine and the wild pigs always come from the national parks was shown to be a furphy.

What will the Government do in that area as it eliminates grazing? The reality is that when the Government has the money to use aircraft dropping incendiaries to light fires and so on, it will probably be able to manage fires in much of that country better than do many of the land-holders. As to the country between the Robinson Gorge and Expedition Range—any private land-holder, any person with a grazing lease over a forestry area, and there is a very large forestry area there of 70 000 or 80 000 hectares, cannot manage a fire. The Government has a greater ability than those people to manage fires. Pure grazing will not stop the fires in that area because there will always be areas which are away from water. It is hard country and there is not much water. Those areas will still burn up, as they did a couple of years ago. That is why the Government knows about paradise parrots in that area. It is a hard question to answer. The Government is in the same position as every other land-holder in that country. The Sandstone consultative committee is monitoring those parks, which are being expanded throughout that area. It is probably a very good example of where officers from the National Parks and Wildlife Service stand shoulder to shoulder with the local land-holders. The Government has got it together. The honourable member did not cite a good example.

**Mr GILMORE:** I must tell the Minister that I do speak to my constituents. I will have to ask the Minister again, because I am simply not satisfied with the answer that he gave in respect of Lakefield National Park. The areas where fishing is carried out in Lakefield National Park are not just tidal areas. The whole of the national park is dotted with lagoons and rivers that are well above the tidal areas. From time to time, all those areas are used for recreational fishing. I have been there and caught fish in lagoons that were never tidal.

**Mr Comben:** You had better give me some details.

**Mr GILMORE:** I want this on the public record, because if the Minister wants the headlines tomorrow, this is the time he is going to receive them.

**Mr Comben:** I do not want the headlines, I want the details.

**Mr GILMORE:** We are talking about the recreational use of one of our major national parks. Obviously, the principle applies to all national parks in which recreational fishing takes place or has ever taken place. The Lakefield National Park is a very good example. Apparently, this legislation allows the recreational use—the fishing use—of Lakefield National Park to be taken away. The Minister indicated previously that he is going to reappraise the national park system and determine where these kinds of ecological and sustainable activities could take place. He stated also that, if fishing was to continue, he would change the status to conservation park. I asked the Minister a clear question: is the recreational fishing use of Lakefield National Park at risk? If not, is the status of that park going to be changed to a conservation park? I remind the Minister that, according to this legislation, fishing in conservation parks is for commercial use, not amateur use. There is a hell of a difference in those uses. Lakefield is a very popular recreational area for the people of far-north Queensland and the rest of the State. Last year, 24 000 four-wheel-drive vehicles went through that park. Many of those people wanted to wet a line. The Opposition needs to know the answer.

**Mr COMBEN:** I have said it once, and I am just checking to make sure that I did not get it wrong. No, I did not. My first answer stands. Anything in national parks will be subject to a conservation plan. We will look at each of those areas as we will look at the lakes in Currawinya National Park, where there is fishing at present. Recreational fishing

is carried out at the Davenport dam. I am not saying that we will cut out those activities totally; I am saying that we will consider their present impact.

As to fishing in other areas at Lakefield—it is quite likely that the member was guided to particular areas outside the park. At present, the major fishing in the park is undertaken in the tidal area. It has declined considerably, although I believe that there are still some professional barramundi fishermen up there. If the member wants to know the truth about fishing on Lakefield, I point out that the two spouses act as interpretive officers up there. If the member wants to go fishing there, he asks those interpretive officers, "Where can I catch a fish?" They will tell him about two good waterholes that are actually outside the park.

**Mr STONEMAN:** This is one of the most important clauses in this Bill simply because it sets the scene for the management of a huge area of this State. I remind honourable members that, unlike all other States, Queensland has virtually no areas that are unable to be used for agricultural production in one form or another. New South Wales has a huge mountain range—the Great Dividing Range—running generally along its coast, and that land cannot be grazed. The range also runs into Victoria. Unlike South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, Queensland does not have huge desert areas. Although it has large desert areas such as the Simpson Desert in the far-western corner around Birdsville, virtually every other acre of this State can be grazed in one form or another and with one rating or another. This clause sets the rules. I would not like anyone to think that I am denigrating the national parks officers with whom I have had any dealings. The management was very practical and appropriate. However, the situation will become impractical, and the Minister will have to adopt inappropriate measures even if he is to partly manage the national parks.

I turn now to the matter of the Townsville common, which involved the do-gooders in the preservation movement, not the conservation movement. The Bill talks about preservation more than conservation. When those people said, "Get the cattle off the Townsville common", the wetlands instantly commenced to degrade. This information comes from highly qualified national parks officers who pleaded with the greensies not to force that issue. For one reason or another, someone gave in. I live in a wetlands area. One of the reasons that it is able to maintain its status is that it is grazed. In the good old days, it was fired. I was interested to hear the shadow Minister talk about that. If animals do not graze on a property, the natural process is to fire the wetlands. I understand that the Minister has some understanding of birds, waders, and so on. They cannot compete with grasses once they start to overtake an area. As well, tea-trees and other scrub trees take over and absorb those areas. It is very important to understand that grazing now takes the place of the old management processes of burning.

Subclause (1) (c) states—

“. . . ensure that the only use of the area is nature-based and ecologically sustainable.”

The legislation is really stating that grazing processes will not be allowed in those situations. I am not talking about the lease on a property that the Government may have acquired; I am talking about existing national parks, particularly wetland areas that are subject to a high degree of fluctuation of moisture, the inundation of tides, flooding, and so on. That is a major component. In the past, I worked very closely with national parks officers in the Townsville region. If we adopt the preservationist attitude, we will lose that practical understanding and management.

In the case of the Townsville common, the impractical manager said, "Take the cattle off and let the birds have it all." That area has degraded to such an extent that anyone who knew that town common 20 years ago would not recognise it today. However, a little further south in the Bowling Green Bay area where cattle grazing has been consistent, no degradation has occurred. Nothing stays the same. We cannot preserve anything forever. I would like the Minister's response because it is an essential component of the overall management of those national parks. Will he allow unnatural

acts, as defined in the Bill, or will he allow semi-natural acts in terms of the grazing of cattle so that those wetlands can be sustained as they should be?

**Mr ROWELL:** Could I get some indication of whether the Minister will adopt a fire management plan with those adjoining property owners? It is very important that he respond to that question that I have asked for the third time.

Clause 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—

**Mr DUNWORTH** (12.38 a.m.): This clause provides—

“A National Park (Aboriginal land) is to be managed as National Park.”

Under clause 17, the cardinal principle in the management of national parks is to—

“(a) provide for the permanent preservation of the area’s natural condition to the greatest possible extent; and

(b) protect and present the area’s cultural resources and their values.”

Under clause 18, those cardinal principles will be subjugated to Aboriginal tradition. I should like the Minister to inform the Committee whether the following parks will be gazetted as claimable: Fraser Island, Cooloola, South and North Stradbroke Islands, portions of the border ranges, Bunya Mountains, Carnarvon, Jardine River, Lakefield and Lawn Hill? Would the Minister confirm that those parks are to be proclaimed? In answer to one of my questions today, the Minister confirmed that there would be hunting with rifles in national parks. He is on the record as saying that Fraser Island will be gazetted as claimable so that, in the future, we could be driving around Fraser Island and come across someone firing a rifle and killing game, and that is acceptable. At Awinya Creek on the Hervey Bay side of Fraser Island, we could find someone shooting dugong and catching turtles. Could the Minister comment on how that is consistent with managing national park (Aboriginal land) as a national park? People will be living in national parks. How will the numbers be controlled? How many cars will be allowed in? Will the people be allowed to have dogs, cats and birds? How many people will be able to hunt with rifles? What percentage of game will be allowed to be killed or taken?

**Mr COMBEN:** That just confirms that the honourable member is nothing but racist. I do not know how many questions he asked. I counted 18 and I think there were more. The only answer I will give is in relation to his statement that the management principles of a national park as defined under clause 17 will be subjugated to Aboriginal traditions. Could the honourable member find himself a first year law student, who could explain to him how to read a Bill? Clause 18 (1) provides—

“A National Park (Aboriginal land) is to be managed as a National Park.”

Straightaway we adopt the cardinal principles which are set out in clause 17 (1) (a), (b) and (c). Then clause 18 (2) provides—

“Subject to subsection (1) . . .”

Subject to it being managed as a national park and conservation being there, then we can manage it—

“as far as practicable, in a way that is consistent with any Aboriginal tradition . . .”

Firstly conservation, and then, subject to that, Aboriginal tradition. It will not be subjugated to Aboriginal tradition. Aboriginal tradition is subjugated to conservation.

**Mr ROWELL:** In my speech I indicated that there was some concern among Aborigines about their hunting rights in newly acquired national parks. Could the Minister determine that position?

**Mr COMBEN:** I will not determine hunting rights. I will determine the intention. The claiming of parks will be a difficult process, because they have to be gazetted for claim, then they have to be claimed and the grantees have to be found. Aboriginal tradition may be practised in those parks subject to the conservation plan and subject to the conservation management of the area. There may be a small cave somewhere which is a dreaming place or something similar, as there is at Ayers Rock. As people

walk around the base of Ayers Rock they come across a sign reading, "This is a dreaming place for an Aboriginal tribe. We ask you not to enter and to carry on along the track." People do that, and they enjoy doing it. It adds to the enhancement of the interpretation of those areas. We will do that sort of thing in some areas. In other areas, if the elders want to take the young men and show them where special places were, that is fine. If they want to camp as part of the outstation movement on the huge parks of Cape York for a while, that could be fine. They are the sort of things we expect them to do. They might gather some rushes for basket weaving.

Hunting will be subject to the conservation plan. If the Aboriginal people want to hunt for a pig in a national park away from public areas and away from the roads—and we are talking of national parks covering 500 000 or a million hectares—it would be the same as happens at Uluru, Kakadu and Nitmiluk. If we can do those sorts of things subject to conservation principles, we will allow them. These things have to be worked through long and hard.

**Mr CONNOR:** In my speech during the second-reading debate, I mentioned that, in the Nerang State Forest, which is towards the back of Nerang, the Kombumerri people are in the process of trying to get 30 hectares of land for the purpose of building a cultural and convention centre. This convention centre, on 30 hectares, is to include accommodation. It is proposed that it will be a commercially viable operation. Native flora and fauna will be sold from the park. At the moment, it is a State forest, but it has been earmarked for conversion into a national park. That is part of the process. I would imagine—and I asked the Minister about it—that it would be under the national parks (Aboriginal land) provision that access would be gained to this land. I would ask the Minister to confirm that. Under clause 18, it would be managed as a national park. As a national park, would it be able to be run as a commercial operation, with access limited to guests of the Kombumerri people, and would it be able to be used only by those people? Would they be able to remove flora and fauna for sale to the public or to their guests?

**Mr GILMORE:** In his previous answer, in which he spoke about Aboriginal hunting operations in national parks, the Minister indicated that he thought they should in fact move away from the roads into the interior of these million-acre parks. I would point out to the Minister that an animal is still an animal within a national park, and that the fact that it is not within a hundred metres of a road does not diminish the Minister's responsibility to protect that animal within the confines of the national park. I ask the Minister: in terms of these hunting rights—and let us assume that they are going to be there—

**Mr Comben:** That is an assumption I am not willing to make.

**Mr GILMORE:** What is the protection mechanism for protected species or endangered species?

**Mr COMBEN:** A quite simple one: anything done will be subject to the management plan—the conservation plan—for the park. That conservation plan will state quite simply that no spotted cuss cuss or bridled nailtail wallabies can be taken. It is as simple as that. Anyone who is in breach of that plan—whatever the colour of his or her skin—will be prosecuted.

**Mr GILMORE:** In that case, it seems to me that in the management plan for each park the Minister will try to determine what might be an endangered species or a species—

**Mr Comben:** We won't "try"; we will.

**Mr GILMORE:** Could not the Minister's department simply produce a document that says, "All of these endangered species are protected within all these parks, and anybody taking those species will be prosecuted"?

**Mr COMBEN:** We may well do that. That is just another way of doing the same sort of thing. It may well be that there is a major management plan for, say, three or four offshore islands. At present, there may be 20 parks in the area of the Whitsundays, and it may be decided to have one management plan for those 20 parks. That one

management plan for the offshore islands might state that no red-footed boobies can be taken. However, if it were shown to be part of Aboriginal tradition and important to their culture and heritage, twice a year they might be able to take a brown booby, which is a very common bird. In the United States of America, a compromise was reached in regard to the bald eagle, which serves as a very good example. The bald eagle is pretty much a threatened species. It is no longer an endangered species. However, the carcasses of any bald eagles that die in the United States of America are kept and the feathers are given to the Indian people who respect them and use them as a religious symbol. As a result of that, they do not have to take any bald eagles for their religious purposes, because they get the feathers. Those are the sorts of constructive and creative methods that need to be adopted.

**Mr Gilmore:** I am referring to endangered species.

**Mr COMBEN:** The red-footed booby is certainly a rare species in Queensland. The brown booby is quite safe, so there may be an opportunity to take one or two of those. As the red-footed booby is endangered, or at least rare, the management plan would state, "No, you cannot have it". There may be a big, overall management plan and several smaller ones as well.

**Mr ROWELL:** Aboriginals are traditionally hunters, and they have primitive weapons. Will they be entitled to carry firearms in national parks?

**Mr Comben:** Sure will.

**Mr ROWELL:** Could the Minister give me some indication as to the extent and nature of the weaponry that they are entitled to use in going about their traditional hunting methods?

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member should have listened to the previous question and answer, because I think Mr Gilmore has now got the picture. Each park, each species, each undertaking, will be the subject of a separate management plan—a management plan for the park. It may well be that in regard to Lakefield we say that someone can use a modern rifle. It may well be that on a small island somewhere else—as I think is the case with the traditional killers of mutton birds in the Bass Strait islands—we say that a rifle is not allowed to be used. I can think of no parallel, but if the mutton birds of the Bass Strait islands were found in this State, we would say, "No weapons". It will depend on the circumstances. The conservation plans are of paramount concern, and certainly whilst I am the responsible Minister, no rare or threatened species will be taken as part of a management plan.

**Mr CONNOR:** Again in relation to the Nerang State Forest, assuming that the Kombumerri people were granted this 30 hectares—

**Mr Comben:** Is this important?

**Mr CONNOR:** It is important because it is in my electorate.

**Mr Comben:** It is not important.

**Mr CONNOR:** It may not be important to the Minister, but it is to the people of Nerang.

**Mr Comben:** I have given you an undertaking. I will not be answering you again. I have given you the answer.

**Mr CONNOR:** I will put it on the record anyway. What I would like to know is: if this convention centre is going to be built, would council approval be required under this clause?

**Mr COMBEN:** I do not have a clue.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** It is a very cheap shot on the part of the Minister to harp about my being racist because I believe that national parks are held in trust for all Queenslanders, not a minority group. From the feedback I have received, it is obvious that a very large percentage of Queenslanders agree with me. Land in the Northern Territory, including places such as Uluru, that became the subject of Aboriginal claims four years ago is now the subject of further discussion. The Aboriginal tribe concerned

is now beginning to agitate by saying that the 99-year lease is far too long and that the tribe should not have given such a long-term lease. They are saying, "It is our land and it is our freehold title. We should not have had to sign over the land for 99 years." They are now agitating and saying that the lease should have been for 30 years and that at the expiration of that period the lease should be renegotiated, with the question of whether or not the land should be a national park at all being reopened. That is the future agenda, and the Minister's problem is that he does not look far enough down the track. He does not foresee the problems that will arise, but I can tell him now that, within our lifetime, that will happen.

The second point I make is that the Government is indulging in a cheap shot. This is a way for this Government to have its policy put on the record and get a double counting. It can say that it has increased the area of national parks and when the national parks are gazetted it can also say that Aboriginal groups can claim them. It then becomes Aboriginal national park, and the Government can then say that it has also increased the area of Aboriginal land in Queensland. This is a very cheap shot. The Minister referred to conservation and management plans. Honourable members probably laugh about Mr Comben being the "Minister for Rubber Vine", but the name of the game is that there are very few people available to manage national parks in this State. The Minister says that the Government will devise a management and conservation plan and that certain species of wildlife will not be allowed to be taken or shot. Perhaps the Minister can tell me who will enforce those provisions. The Minister does not have the staff numbers on the ground. The department has only three people working in 500 000 hectares at Lakefield. There are only two people to manage 250 000 hectares at Lawn Hill. Presently, Fraser Island is becoming overgrown with lantana, groundsel and weed infestations, and people are saying it is being degraded. The Minister does not have sufficient staff to manage that national park, yet he has the audacity—in between notes—to say that he will enforce the provisions of this Bill. They will not be enforced. This legislation will be a farce and will result in an enormous backlash.

**Mr CONNOR:** Again, I hark back to the Nerang State Forest. I do not really care whether or not the Minister considers the Nerang State Forest important, because I do. I want the Minister to state on the record the rules that will apply to that area. The Minister has already said that he does not know whether the areas will be subject to council approval. If council approval is not required, on what basis will the building be constructed? Will it be subject to local government rules? It should be borne in mind that this site is located a bit over a kilometre from the outskirts of Nerang. How can I assure the people of Nerang that this will be a reasonable development? Will humpies be erected along the banks of the river? What is the story? I would really like to know what is going on.

**Mr COMBEN:** I have already indicated today that I will give an undertaking to look at that problem.

**Mr Connor:** I want it on the record. Why aren't you prepared to put it on the record?

**Mr COMBEN:** That is what I am standing here for. Earlier today, I gave an undertaking in the House—which is on the record—that I would look at the problem. I gave that undertaking.

**Mr Connor:** Three Ministers have been buck-passing for two years and won't give me any straight answers.

**Mr COMBEN:** The member now mentions a small piece of Queensland Forest Service land which does not have a high priority from the point of view of conservation.

**Mr Connor:** It mightn't have to you, but it does to the people of Nerang.

**Mr COMBEN:** It may well have, but the member cannot complain in this Chamber about a lack of consultation because he has had the Bill for only one week and then bring up a matter which involves a great deal of detail. After all, I have already said that because a claim cannot be made on the land other than by traditional and historical

connection, this matter is not on. I believe there is some difficulty with the proposal. The member expects me to provide the finest details in relation to this matter, but I do not have those answers.

**Mr Connor:** I am asking you about the principle.

**Mr COMBEN:** I invite the member to write to me because he has not done so for two years, or he can come up to the department and talk to me. I also think that the member should see the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Casey, because the land is managed by the Queensland Forest Service. The member may want to jump on the bandwagon, and I will happily come down to Nerang to discuss the issue with the editor of the local newspaper. However, I do not think the member would wish me to come to his electorate and talk about how much lobbying he really has done.

Question—That clause 18, as read, stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

AYES, 44		NOES, 24	
Ardill	Mackenroth	Beanland	
Barber	McElligott	Connor	
Beattie	McGrady	Coomber	
Bird	Milliner	Cooper	
Braddy	Nunn	Dunworth	
Bredhauer	Pearce	Elliott	
Burns	Power	Gilmore	
Casey	Robson	Goss J. N.	
Clark	Schwarten	Harper	
Comben	Smith	Hobbs	
D'Arcy	Smyth	Horan	
De Lacy	Sullivan J. H.	Johnson	
Dollin	Sullivan T. B.	Lester	
Eaton	Szczerbanik	Lingard	
Edmond	Vaughan	Littleproud	
Elder	Warner	Randell	
Fenlon	Welford	Rowell	
Flynn	Wells	Santoro	
Gibbs	Woodgate	Slack	
Hamill		Springborg	
Hayward	<i>Tellers:</i>	Stoneman	<i>Tellers:</i>
Hollis	Prest	Watson	Neal
Livingstone	Pitt		Quinn

Resolved in the affirmative.

Clause 19—

**Mr GILMORE** (1.02 a.m.): Earlier in the debate, the Minister indicated to the Parliament that the legislation covers the Great Barrier Reef. In answer to a question on clause 18, the Minister gave an assurance that no endangered or threatened species would be included in a management plan. I ask the Minister what he will do about dugong and green turtle in the Torres Strait. As I understand it, they are traditional foods of the Torres Strait Islanders but are both, in an international sense, considered to be endangered or threatened. How will the Minister get around that, or will he deny those people that right?

**Mr COMBEN:** I will certainly not deny those people that right. In international terms, dugong and turtle—depending on which of the seven species of turtle they are—are considered sometimes vulnerable. The green turtle, which is the large take in Australian waters, is not rare or threatened. It is locally threatened, at best. The present practices will largely continue until the Government considers a wider conservation plan for those species.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clause 20—

**Mr STONEMAN** (1.05 a.m.): I draw to the attention of the Minister clause 20 (c), which states—



“ensure that any commercial use of the area’s natural resources, including fishing and grazing, is ecologically sustainable.”

I refer to the process whereby the Minister will determine what is ecologically sustainable. Will the Minister maintain an interface with primary industries or local committees, or a combination of both? How will the Minister determine whether, for example, grazing is ecologically sustainable? Given the preservationist thrust of the Bill and of the department under the Minister’s patronage, how will the Minister maintain that structure so that those people who enter into leases and arrangements will know that they will not have the dab hand of some enthusiastic environmentalist tapping them on the shoulder and telling them that they are over-grazing. I do not say that facetiously. It is a very, very important question because it could impact not only on the livelihoods of many, many people but also on the continuing development or the full stock development of this State.

**Mr CONNOR:** Again, I refer to the Nerang State Forest and its proposed conversion to a national park—or a conservation park. Clause 20 (c) states—

“ensure that any commercial use of the area’s natural resources . . .”

That is what I have been talking about and that is the proposal—to establish a convention centre, which I would believe is a commercial use. If the area is to be used commercially, the Bill requires it to be managed to ensure the ecologically sustainable use of resources. As it is a commercial operation, will it be required to supply staff to ensure that it is ecologically sustainable, or will someone from outside—for example, an inspector from the department—come in and check that any development, work and sale of shrubs and wildlife from that area is ecologically sustainable?

**Mr DUNWORTH:** I ask the Minister to confirm that, under the management principles of conservation parks, mining will be allowed. Clause 20 (c) states—

“ensure that any commercial use of the area’s natural resources . . .”

The definition of “natural resources” includes mining. I would like the Minister to confirm that in conservation parks people will be allowed to mine.

**Mr COMBEN:** No, they would not be, as the honourable member would know if he had read the full Bill.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I rise again to ask the Minister if he will give any indication at all as to how he will ensure this particular management principle. I make the point, and it is a well-known fact of life, that in many, many instances there is a considerable difference between the scientific theory of management and the practical applied process. Will the Minister have a desktop model whereby he measures the means by which this clause will be applied? Will he take scientific advice? What are the mechanisms so that he can look at the specific application? In other words, will he recognise the applied component? As I say, there is a worldwide recognition of the difference between those two components. It is a most important part of this clause.

**Mr CONNOR:** It is the intention to build a convention centre on 30 hectares of the Nerang State Forest. If approval does not have to come from the council, from where will the rules come for site coverage, setbacks and everything else relating to development of the national park?

**Mr COMBEN:** I will give the honourable member an answer on Friday, on which I understand we are now likely to be sitting.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I would like to place on the record of this Parliament that on two occasions prior to this I asked the Minister to give a basic understanding of how he intended to apply the management principle outlined in clause 20 (c). I think the Committee and the record of this Parliament should note that on each occasion the Minister sat mute and refused to indicate or even respond to a valid question, to a sincerely put question, and a question to which I believe the people of this State are entitled to know the answer.

**Mr COMBEN:** We will decide it in consultation with the Department of Primary Industries, grazing groups, scientists from my department, environmentalists, and ecologists from my department.

**Mr CONNOR:** I am now asking not specifically in relation to the Nerang State Forest but in principle under this clause: if there is to be any development on any national park (Aboriginal land), will that land, as far as any building is concerned, be subject to council approval? If not, from where will the Minister get the principles and the guidelines outlining how that development will be controlled and managed?

Clause 20, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 25, as read, agreed to.

Clause 26—

**Mr HOBBS (1.12 a.m.):** This clause deals with the management principles of international agreement areas. As I said earlier, it always amazes me why we want to give away our own sovereignty. Perhaps the Minister might give some examples of what he would implement in international agreement areas and also examples of when he would reject an international agreement.

**Mr COMBEN:** Ramsar and JAMBA.

**Mr HOBBS:** I do not really think that is a satisfactory answer. The Explanatory Notes make mention of treaties dealing with the management of wetlands with China and Japan and of treaties dealing with the protection of migratory bird species. Can the Minister give an example of a case in which there would be an international agreement for the protection of such birds? Does that refer to just coastal Queensland, or does it refer to anywhere throughout Queensland? Is the Minister able to give some examples of what he would do in the case of an international agreement for migratory birds?

**Mr COMBEN:** Two examples which are presently being worked up are for the international waders on the mudflats in certain areas of Moreton Bay, and up at Cape Bowling Green over the areas which are already a fish habitat and a national park. An inland example is the Currawinya Lakes, which were examined as a possibility, but since they are already totally protected, that was dismissed. They are the sorts of areas. They have little impact apart from defining an area which cannot be the subject of major disturbance.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** I ask the Minister: could the biodiversity treaty be related as one of these international agreements?

Clause 26, as read, agreed to.

Clause 27—

**Mr DUNWORTH (1.15 a.m.):** On prohibition of mining, the Minister says that a "mining interest" means a lease, a claim or other interest or permit that is granted under the Mineral Resources Act. Does this mean that, with the prohibition of mining in national parks (scientific), national parks, national parks (Aboriginal land), national parks (Torres Strait Islander land) or conservation parks, there will be no mining under the Mineral Resources Act, but there can be drilling for petroleum under the Petroleum Act?

**Mr COMBEN:** That is correct.

**Mr DUNWORTH:** So that means that in national parks drilling for oil will be allowed; is that correct?

**Mr COMBEN:** It is a Commonwealth Act. We cannot impact on that. Do not blame me. Talk to the feds.

**Mr Dunworth** interjected.

**Mr COMBEN:** I cannot do anything about it.

Clause 27, as read, agreed to.

Clause 28, as read, agreed to.

Clause 29—

**Mr STONEMAN** (1.16 a.m.): As I read clause 29, the Governor in Council may, by Order in Council, dedicate a specified area of Crown land as a national park (scientific) or a national park or a conservation park or a resources reserve. This clause really, in effect, gives the Governor in Council—in other words, the Executive Government—the power to declare the stock routes of this State, the roads of this State, the railways of this State, the schoolyards of this State—all of those other areas that are vested in the Crown—the capacity to declare them, in a blanket, individual or group sense, to be one of those four areas.

**Mr COMBEN:** It continues the present law of Queensland.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I know that the Minister is saying that all of those things could be done before, but with the covenant, the Minister is able in fact to lock up a huge resource under the terms of this legislation.

**Mrs Bird:** It has always been possible.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I know it was possible before, but not under the terms and conditions of this legislation.

**Mr COMBEN:** The honourable member is wrong.

**Mr HOBBS:** I did raise this issue in my speech in the House yesterday afternoon. The Bill says that the Governor in Council may, by Order in Council, dedicate a specified area of Crown land, and it can be a specified depth below the surface of land and/or a specified height above the surface of the land. The Minister did mention that it could be a fairly limited area above the land. He also referred in the Bill to the Uluru system operating in Kakadu. That system does refer to 5 000 feet above the ground. I really do not see the need for a limitation such as that. This clause is dealing with the protection of animals and so forth. It does not deal with the Aboriginal content, and I think there may be confusion between the two issues. I would like the Minister to give a clear undertaking that he would not be looking at something like a mile-high limit over those areas.

**Mr COMBEN:** The Government will consider what is appropriate in each circumstance.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I return to the point that I was making before, which seemed to generate so much mirth from members opposite who do not understand the implications of this legislation. I draw the Minister's attention clause 29 (2), which states—

“The order in council must specify the interim management intent for the area.”

Under those terms, the Minister can declare a very considerable area of stock route to be a conservation park or a national park or whatever the case may be. He can then lock that area away from the use that it was intended for, its natural use, and say, “The drought is so bad or the conditions are so bad we are going to declare that area, even in the interim, a national park, declare a management covenant over it and say it shall not be used for the purposes for which it was originally designed”—that is, a stock route—“and it shall become a nature reserve for the exclusive use of animals in the natural sense as from or in between the periods nominated”, because there has to be a management specification of intent for the area. I am not sure who will respond to this question.

**Mr CASEY:** I will respond to the honourable member's question. The reply is the same as that given by the Minister: the honourable member does not know what he is talking about.

Clause 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30—

**Mr CONNOR** (1.22 a.m.): With the Minister for Primary Industries in the chair, we may, with a little bit of luck, get an answer to a question. In the past, up until now, the Minister has answered my letters. That is unusual, compared with the practice of some other Ministers. The Minister seems to know a fair bit about this particular issue. Clause 30 relates directly to this problem in that it relates to the conversion of State forest, via a motion in the Legislative Assembly, to a national park. I ask the Minister: does he know anything about the conversion of this forest to a national park? If he does, could he detail the circumstances for me?

**Mr CASEY:** It will be carried out in conjunction with the Nature Conservation Act.

Clause 30, as read, agreed to.

Clause 31—

**Mr ELLIOTT** (1.24 a.m.): Under the old Act, quite often environmental parks made the local authority the trustee. Does the Minister have a philosophy, a direction, or a preference in respect of which way he is prepared to act on this? If he will not use local authorities as, in most instances, the previous Government did, whom would the Minister nominate as the trustee?

**Mr COMBEN:** The Government will continue to use local authorities, the Director of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, or occasionally a private individual. The Government is open to suggestions, but basically the trustee, if it is appointed, will again be the local authority.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** It would appear that in most instances the local authority would be a sensible party to choose.

Clause 31, as read, agreed to.

Progress reported.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. P. J. BRADDY** (Rockhampton—Leader of the House) (1.25 a.m.): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

#### Adam Scott

**Mr COOPER** (Roma) (1.25 a.m.): I dedicate these words to Bob and Sue Scott, the father and mother of Adam, to Fiona—who is affectionately known as Skegg—his sister, to his girlfriend Louise, to my son Warwick, who was his closest friend, and to Penny, my wife, who adored Adam as one of her own. I read the words that I have written as I do not wish my mind to wander.

Adam Scott was 21 years of age. To me, he epitomised Australian youth and all that it should be. It was my view that if all Australian youth were in the mould of Adam and Warwick, then Australia would be in good hands. Adam had an engaging personality. He was exuberant, magnetic, infectious and captivating. He was talented in the sports arena. He was a natural at cricket, baseball, football, tennis—anything. He had a mischievous sense of humour. I do remember that only recently at a Test match at the Gabba—it was England versus Australia—Adam and Warwick were in the outer. They had had a few beers, as quite a few people do, and when they came to see me in the Executive Viewing Room, they were slightly the worse for wear—but only slightly, as any normal person would be. Their shirts were a bit dirty as well, a little bit torn, and perhaps a little bit damp from a substance that certainly smelled like beer. I told them that they looked dreadful and I asked them what on earth was going on. They said that there were a few poms nearby who needed some attention. I said that it looked as if the reverse had happened, but they insisted that it was definitely the case of, “You should have seen the other blokes.” After introducing them rather apologetically to such celebrities as Ray Lindwall and Tom Veivers, I sent them on their way. Adam’s parting offer was to, “Get a few more poms for you, Mr Cooper!”

I remember that, at a later game, Warwick was in charge of my cricket ground membership badges. He lost one and was rather concerned about what my reaction might be. His good friend Adam made the call to me to break the news. Having done so, he passed the telephone to Warwick saying, "Gee, Warwick, it's your old man on the phone and isn't he wild. Boy, he's going to get you", and so on. I can easily understand why it took Warwick so long to come to the telephone. Adam was only six months away from completing his cadetship in journalism. He had also spent much of his youth on farms and enjoyed that existence. All his life was in front of him. The world was his oyster. Only a few days ago, he returned from an evening in Brisbane with his girlfriend, Louise, to where he lived on the Gold Coast. He was to play baseball that day and then take Louise out again that night. It was a completely normal weekend for a completely normal person. He had a couple of beers and watched some television with friends, said his goodbyes, got into his car and drove away. A few minutes later, he was dead. For whatever reasons, he took his own life and we know not why.

Where does that leave my vision of the flower of our youth? The vision splendid is now a vision shattered. When I told Don Brummell, the manager of my property at Wallumbilla, who is a very down-to-earth character, he said, "They"—our young—"seem to have lost all hope." My question to the members of this House is: have they lost all hope? Are we doing enough to keep the gap bridged? We constantly hold out our hand for help. We always do; we always will. So I ask the question: why did Adam not reach out for help when he needed it most? The answer does not seem to be to throw more money towards programs. Our youth need a reason for living. They need security, and they need career prospects. Enormous pressures exist, but we are all there to help each other, and I believe that we do. We already do much to keep the gap between our youth and ourselves narrowed, and we know that we must never cease to strengthen the ties that exist between us, and to tighten the bonds. But Adam had all of this. His family were extremely close.

So I say to Adam, who was my young friend: you have some explaining to do. Your problems could well be the problems of hundreds of others, but now we will never know. If we do not know, how on earth can we help? On your behalf, our hearts go out to your mother and father, your sister and all who love you. They, we, will have to live with the unanswered questions until we meet again. And when we do, then you can tell us why you did this. In the meantime, we will all have to do the best we can to prevent the same thing happening to others of our youth. Rest quietly in peace, Adam Scott, and know that you take with you the love and affection of all who had the pleasure of knowing you.

### **Crime Prevention**

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central) (1.30 a.m.): I rise tonight to discuss the issue of crime. On 13 April this year, I officially opened a fraud and management seminar of the Insurance Council of Australia Limited at which I pointed out that, over the past couple of years, the Criminal Justice Commission has put in the public arena important and vital research that will enable not only the Police Service in Queensland but the insurance industry to plan effectively crime prevention strategies. I pointed out that there are two broad approaches to crime prevention, which I believe are worth discussing tonight. The first involves community policing. Honourable members would know that community policing is the prevention of crime with protection through better construction and locking of homes, Neighbourhood Watch schemes, and so on. However, proper and effective crime prevention programs should also include corrective prevention, which improves the social conditions that lead to crime, such as overcrowding, unemployment, ill health and poor facilities, punitive prevention, that is, less counter-productive punishments and a fairer legal system, and environment protection through better design and use of the environment. Resources are generally applied to policing and punishment. While necessary, in my view those resources are not in themselves sufficient and can be too narrow in their focus unless there are other strategies.

The CJC is currently preparing a report with respect to possible crime prevention initiatives. That is something which the State Government and the relevant Minister are also pursuing. That CJC report will no doubt review programs in France, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and other States and Territories. Most of those jurisdictions, except France, Canada and Victoria, have developed only community policing models such as Neighbourhood Watch, community surveillance, property marketing and environmental design, which includes better lighting, removing hedges and shrubs, etc. Corrective and punitive programs are costly and difficult to administer, but probably would have more fundamental results in the long term. The French Bonnemaïson program is an example of this kind of initiative. It resulted in a 10 per cent reduction in crime in the areas of France in which it was implemented.

Therefore, the No. 2 strategy, such as the French Bonnemaïson system, and corrective and punitive prevention programs, is the broader approach. The Bonnemaïson model requires a total commitment from the whole community instead of blame simply being put at the Government's doorstep or the insurance industry's doorstep. It requires all sectors of the community to give a total input in a positive way in reducing crime. In my view, in the long term that is the only meaningful solution to crime. However, such a scheme will work only if there is a detailed understanding of the problem, the extent of the problem and the nature of the problem. That is why the CJC's report released a couple of weeks ago titled "Crime Victims Survey" prepared in cooperation with the Government Statisticians Office, the CJC's earlier report titled "Crime and Justice in Queensland" and, indeed, the report released last week titled "Youth, Crime and Justice in Queensland" are vitally important to understanding the problem. Never before in Queensland have we had such comprehensive research that is not only of vital importance to fighting crime but also of vital importance to the insurance industry in preparing its strategies for insurance.

The other important ingredient is the recommendation by both the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and the CJC that there be a statistical unit in the independent CJC that would have the responsibility of collecting this information and preparing it in an objective, independent way without any fudging, which happened under previous police administrations. That was identified at the Fitzgerald inquiry. The public will then have a full appreciation of the real situation, and not a distorted one prepared for political considerations. The insurance industry should be a key part of this new strategy, not only financially but also from a strategic point of view to ensure that, in the final analysis, meaningful, long-term solutions are worked out so that crime prevention strategies will be effective measures to combat crime because, in the long term, it means saving the industry money. Unfortunately, from time to time conservative parties have sought to whip up hysteria about crime. No doubt they will seek to make it an issue in the forthcoming State election. I hope that they would be honest enough to consult the statistics that were provided in the CJC report that Queensland has never had before and to look realistically at the statistics. For example, it is pointed out that the age groups with the highest incidence of victims of crime are those under 30 years of age, and not the senior citizens as has often been thought to be the case. Last week's report about juvenile crime showed that in Queensland it had reduced in recent times. It is about time that we had fewer scare tactics and a lot more honesty when it comes to these issues so that we can deal with them and look to long-term solutions. For example, the highest at-risk age group for females is those aged between 15 and 19 years.

Time expired.

#### **Australian Flag**

**Mr SANTORO** (Merthyr) (1.35 a.m.): As part of his plan to deflect community attention from the Labor Government's economic mismanagement of this country and the real issue—jobs—we have seen Prime Minister Keating trying once more to raise the tired old arguments about the need for us to become a republic and to have a new flag. Although it is incorrect to say that thousands of Australians died for the flag—they

actually gave their lives for the people and principles that the flag stood for, not for the cloth itself—there are many returned service people in the community from World War I to the Gulf war who are very proud of our current flag and the message that it sends to the world. Paul Keating—the world's most grating Treasurer and now Australia's most embarrassing Prime Minister—began this little foray into the minefield of deception by telling us while he was overseas that we should look for a new flag. We would be better off looking for a new Prime Minister, but I should keep to the point.

Some misguided souls seem to froth at the mouth at the sight of the Union Jack in the top left-hand corner of our flag. Why, I do not know. I believe that it is a sign of their own immaturity and insecurity. It is extremely childish to suggest that Australians should try to hide the history of their country—our country. Whether we like it or not, the British were responsible for the white settlement of Australia, at which time it became a part of the world community. Because of British settlement, we developed a legal and constitutional system based on the British model. Both those systems have served us well, and are still doing so. Canada decided to remove the Union Jack from its flag, but that does not mean that we have to do the same thing. Indeed, if we just play follow-the-leader, it shows that Australians are indeed immature and unable to decide things for themselves—the very reason that many people give for wanting a change. It is interesting that the State of Hawaii has retained the Union Jack in its State flag. It will come as a severe shock to the new flag brigade to hear that Hawaii is probably the most multicultural place on earth, and certainly not a British dominion, but the Hawaiians and the Americans are proud of their history and do not want to hide it. So there is no validity in the argument that we need a change. No-one with half a brain thinks that the Union Jack on our flag means that Australia is not independent. Probably the most valid argument for change is that New Zealand's flag gets confused with ours. This is more New Zealand's problem than ours. Maybe New Zealand could get a new flag with the Union Jack and a Kiwi or a sheep on it.

On top of that, all the polls show that a majority of Australians want to keep our flag just as it is. Some polls show 70 per cent support for it, others are in the 60 per cent range and the latest poll today is in the mid fifties. They all indicate that the majority of Australians want to keep our flag. Some 90 per cent of people believe that the flag should only be changed by referendum. That is something the Prime Minister recoils from, knowing without a doubt that he would be trounced. It is interesting to note the Prime Minister's comments about his great heroes. In the *Sunday Mail* of 2 June 1991, Paul Keating said—

“Churchill was the greatest reservoir of my inspiration.”

This came from the same person who says that we must cut our ties with Britain, take the Union Jack off our flag and forget our history. The same person has loudly criticised Churchill's conduct in the Second World War. This is the height of hypocrisy, but this is also something which we have all come to expect from this Prime Minister—this typical Labor leader—who is intent on destroying the institutions that we have built up in our society. Keating's middle names must be “Hypocrisy” and “Opportunism” to latch onto Churchill as his great inspiration while, at the same time, rubbishing everything that Churchill stood for. What do the Premier and his Government think about all of this? We do not really know, because the Premier will not tell us. He is not game to stand up for the people of Queensland and their wish to retain the flag and he is not game to stand up to the Prime Minister. Instead, his silence on the issue is deafening and we can only assume that the Premier supports the Keating plan to change the flag by stealth.

Having disposed of the new flag brigade we come to the republicanism argument. This is the classic case of, “If it ain't broke, don't fix it.” This brings me to my central point, which is the argument that is raised regularly that, because our population is becoming more multicultural, we should become a republic and cut our ties with the Queen. Let me tell honourable members something. I point out that I am one of the few people in this place who is qualified to say this. The reason that migrants moved here is that they like Australia as it is. My parents saw opportunities in this country for themselves and their children. For that matter, so did I. They saw a strong, proud

culture with a stable political and social system—all thanks to our historical inheritance which I intend to help preserve.

### **Closure of Scarborough Caravan Park**

**Mr HOLLIS** (Redcliffe) (1.40 a.m.): Last Saturday, I took the opportunity of visiting the clubs in my electorate to look at the new poker machines and their effect on the general community of Redcliffe. I am pleased to agree tonight with the words of the Treasurer yesterday morning, that those machines are bringing increased viability to the clubs, are improving the social aspect of the clubs, which was missing in the past, are increasing the membership of clubs and, most importantly, are creating jobs, jobs, jobs. With initiatives from this Government, including those contained in the Liquor Bill, which was introduced into the House last week and hopefully will be passed this week, there is a great opportunity in Redcliffe to have poker machines not only in clubs but also in hotels and licensing restaurants to encourage people to use restaurant facilities as much as they are using club facilities. This would bring people out of their homes just as is the case on the Continent where you, Mr Speaker, come from, and where social life is the most important part of any community, where liquor can be drunk in comfortable surroundings—and not to excess, either—and where restaurants provide very important jobs for the community. These are the positive actions of this State Government. They are positive actions which, over the coming years, will have a great effect on the lifestyles of most of us.

It is of great concern to me that the Redcliffe City Council has a view that is opposite to the positive actions of our State Government. It is of great concern to me and to many residents of Redcliffe that the Redcliffe City Council, with its forthcoming closure of the Scarborough caravan park, is adopting a negative approach to tourism and jobs. Over the past five or six months, more than 2 000 voters' signatures have been sent to this Parliament and more than 5 000 voters' signatures have been sent to the council. That is a total of more than 7 000 signatures out of an enrolment of 30 000, yet the council has ignored them. Last weekend, the Lord Mayor of Brisbane received 7 000 objections from an enrolment of 110 000 and he chose to listen to and to take notice of them. Because of that number of objections, he was quite willing to change the town plan. The Redcliffe City Council has a duty to listen to the people of Redcliffe.

It is not only the denial of accommodation for tourists and families that is a problem, but also the spin-off effect on the shopping centre at Scarborough. What is being done is pretty cruel. The shops have suffered immense financial losses. Several businesses have already disappeared and the empty shops bear testimony to this council's insensitivity. What is more frightening is that the two endorsed candidates for the State seat have not mentioned a word about this local disaster, yet their parties are supposedly the champions of free enterprise. One of them, the National Party's Alan Boulton, is even on the council's strategic planning committee that condemned this caravan park to closure, and he has not even offered any assistance to the stricken business community. Thousands of signatures on a petition went before the full council last month and, as I said before, the council, without batting an eye or lifting a hand to help these businesses, voted not to rescind its decision.

My consultations with the Scarborough businesses revealed that most of them had suffered a 75 per cent drop in turnover in recent months since the tenants had been forced out of the caravan park. While the majority of aldermen on the Redcliffe City Council are also businessmen, they have a total lack of concern or compassion for the plight of businesses in the area. This also highlights the inability of both the Liberal and National Parties in Queensland to address the issues of small business and unemployment. The council's apparent eagerness to turn the heart of Scarborough into a dead centre revived speculation that there was an ulterior motive for its inactivity. Is it all part of a grand plan to buy up prime beachside real estate at a cheap price? I hope not, as I also hope that rumours of an overseas consortium sniffing around the area are unfounded.



### Coal Freight Rates; Gas Supplies

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (1.45 a.m.): I refer to the recent launch of the Leading State document by the Premier in this Parliament which purports to be a blueprint for the economic future of Queensland. Within that document is considerable reference to the energy sector—coal and gas. I take this opportunity to raise questions about the substance of some of the claims made, particularly about rail freights for the coal industry, and the future of natural gas as an energy source. The documented policies brought down by this determinedly egalitarian Government have divided the coal industry into three parts—the haves, the might-haves, and the definitely have-nots. The Government, it seems, is unashamedly biased towards new developments, which is not a bad way to be, except that it could cause the continuing decline of some of our current producers. These mines were the pioneers, and now they are to be thrown to the wolves.

This document will provide a divided industry with some mines, which could be internationally competitive, going to the wall, and others, new mines, being the cause of that demise. The Government claims that the royalty element of rail freights has been removed, and this is only partly true. No such move has been made for the existing mines. This move immediately creates division in the industry, and, more importantly, in the marketplace. It could bestow a benefit as much as \$4 a tonne on new players in the industry—moneys which could be used as leverage in the tendering process. There is a rail freights credit scheme that is spuriously claimed to be worth \$100m to the industry. This scheme provides a credit of 50c per tonne on rail freight for existing mines which have the capacity for expansion, or existing miners who are able to open new mines. The majority of operators in Queensland today will not gain one iota of benefit from it. Further, in the foreseeable future, because of this package, there will be not one tonne of coal put on rail for one dollar less. The industry is haemorrhaging because of low export prices, and there is an urgent need for assistance now rather than in the future. That assistance should be available across-the-board—it should not be sectional—and it should be immediate.

There is a rearrangement of the rail freight escalation formula which imposes a CPI increase. While I believe that change was urgently needed, I cannot conceive of a worse formula to bring about that change. If rail freight increases were calculated over the past 10 years using historical CPI figures, it is likely that the industry would be in a worse condition than it is in today. Whilst we currently have low inflation, history would suggest that such will not always be the case. We could therefore, in a very short period, once again find ourselves in an unmanageable rail freight system. Other claims of \$80m on the clawback arrangements, and \$200m on the cancellation of additional charges after the tenth year of operation of the mine, are at best spurious and misleading. There is in fact considerable debate in the industry about the quantum of the savings, and there is no doubt whatsoever that neither charge would ever be invoked in any case. While the removal of these contingent items from balance sheets is welcome, it is far from the bonanza that it has been proposed to have been. In fact, I am reliably informed by those in the industry that not one new mine will open because of this package. Others will open, but not because of that package in particular.

I turn now to gas, which is also mentioned in this document. The document provides for an investigation into the provision of an 800-kilometre pipeline from the Jackson oilfield to the Surat basin to provide gas in future to the City of Brisbane and to the industries of central Queensland. Interestingly enough, the document also suggests that gas should be provided to Mount Isa and other areas in the north-west province of Queensland. Proven and probable gas reserves in the Jackson oilfield are currently insufficient to provide for more than two major schemes. Recently, the Premier signed a major agreement to provide gas to South Australia. If he intends to provide gas to Brisbane and the central Queensland industries, then he is not going to be able, in the foreseeable future, to provide sustainable gas supplies into Mount Isa and that other area. Similarly, gas is going to have to compete with coal as an energy source in that area, and while ever coal is provided to—

Time expired.

### Operations of Queensland Rail in Toowoomba Area

**Dr FLYNN** (Toowoomba North) (1.50 a.m.): I wish to spend a few minutes congratulating Queensland Rail on a number of very important initiatives that have occurred in Toowoomba in the last couple of months. Queensland Rail certainly has become more efficient under this Government, and that, I suppose, has led to some problems with the restructuring of the work force, which is inevitable. But certainly Queensland Rail has not lost its heart, and in the last couple of months there have been a number of good news stories involving Queensland Rail in Toowoomba.

The most important of these stories, of course, is the successful conclusion to the Spring Bluff story. I have in front of me an article from the *Toowoomba Chronicle* dated 25 April. It is headed "Cooperative effort saves Spring Bluff train station". Basically, that article goes on to explain how a rare example of total cooperation between three local authorities—Crows Nest, Gatton and Toowoomba—as well as Queensland Rail has led to a sensible management plan being worked out for the future of Spring Bluff. For the benefit of honourable members who do not know, I point out that Spring Bluff is a small railway station in the foothills of the range. In July this year, it will cease to be an operational railway station, basically because of the introduction of new technology. Computerised control of rail traffic will mean that it will no longer be needed as a signal station. This change has been on the books for years and has finally come about. Over the past 18 months, a great deal of concern has been expressed about the future of Spring Bluff. As the local member, I can remember the debates and that the issue was used on a number of occasions as a political football, as such matters often are.

However, right from the start I ensured that the Minister and I were involved in the issue. The Minister took an interest and made it clear that it was always the intention of Queensland Railways to take steps to ensure that this important tourist attraction was not lost to Toowoomba or the surrounding areas. A management plan has now been worked out whereby the Railway Department will shortly hand over land to a management trust comprising representatives of the three local authorities to which I have referred. There will also be a very generous cash contribution of \$35,000 towards the operation of the new trust. QR has also made a very substantial non-cash contribution in terms of improvement of safety by the installation of new railings and signalling systems. By doing so, Queensland Railways has ensured that people who come to the station when it is unattended will not stray into the path of a train. In addition, a large amount of maintenance has been undertaken in respect of railway buildings.

On 25 April, all the councillors from the three shires to which I have referred were invited to attend Spring Bluff so that those who had not seen the improvements could view them. Mr Speaker, everybody was impressed. It has been great to see the initial scepticism on the part of some councillors being replaced by enthusiasm. I congratulate Arthur Trim from Gatton, Pauline Alroe from Toowoomba and Carole Lyons from Crows Nest—the three councillors who motivated their respective local authorities to take an active interest in the project. Everybody can now see that Spring Bluff has a future. I should imagine that the last chapter in the story will be the official signing over of the trust agreement in the not-too-distant future.

In early April, a heritage fair was held at Toowoomba which also coincided with the 125th anniversary of Queensland Railways. Participation by Queensland Railways in that heritage fair made it a huge success. I understand that 10 000 people attended the fair in Russell Street and the railway station precincts on that afternoon. QR provided free steam train rides for the citizens of Toowoomba. I believe that initially two services were scheduled to Wyreema and back, but Queensland Railways ended up running four services. I do not know how many people boarded the trains, but from my point of view and from the viewpoint of the people who organised the fair and the QR staff, it was wonderful to see at least 2 000 people on the railway station platform crowding together to get a ride on the train. The people also thronged around the various stalls, and it was

great to see the station once again throbbing with a semblance of its former life. Finally, the Minister announced expenditure of \$300,000 on renovations to the Toowoomba Railway Station which will result in general refurbishment of the railway station buildings, replacement of roofs on platform shelters and renovation of tea rooms.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.55 a.m.