FRIDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 1992

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

PRINTING COMMITTEE

Report

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House the first report of the Printing Committee on the tabling of annual reports.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Nundah Shopping Centre

From **Mr Santoro** (102 signatories) praying that any initiative which would lead to the economic decline or closure of businesses in the Nundah Shopping Centre be not implemented.

Logan West Community Centre Inc.

From **Mr Pitt** (808 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will provide recurrent funding for domestic violence in the Logan West district at the Logan West Community Centre Inc.

Cooke Inquiry

From **Mr Santoro** (822 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take urgent action to legislate for the implementation of the Cooke inquiry recommendations.

Petitions received.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid upon the table of the House—

Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts (Mr Wells)—

(1) Determination of Salaries and Allowances Tribunal pursuant to the Judges' (Salaries and Allowances) Act 1967

(2) Salaries and Allowances Tribunal—Supplementary Report

(3) Legal Aid Commission of Queensland—Report for 1991-92

Ordered to be printed

(4) Litigation Reform Commission—Report for the period 16 December 1991 to 30 June 1992.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Absence of Deputy Premier during Question Time

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (10.03 a.m.): I have to inform the House that the Deputy Premier will be absent from question time today.

Mr BORBIDGE proceeding to give notice of a motion—

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BORBIDGE: I am almost finished, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is not the issue. I warn members that notices of motion should be in the form of a motion, not a statement to be debated. I will have to look at this matter during the recess and, when the House resumes, issue some guidelines about notices of motion. The honourable member may continue now.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr VEIVERS (Southport) (10.05 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday, the Treasurer tabled a sworn statement aimed at blackening the reputations of a number of people in this place, including myself and a member of my family.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members!

Mr VEIVERS: Yes.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will make his personal explanation.

Mr VEIVERS: Mr Speaker, I know how you felt about it when your family was blackened. I did not agree with it, either, Mr Speaker. The statement was provided by a man, as Mr Borbidge said, who is a self-confessed criminal, a liar and an informer, and who three very senior Labor politicians are on record as saying has psychiatric problems. The Treasurer deserves the utter contempt of all decent people because, when he tabled that statement and sought to make political capital out of it, he was well aware of the background of Rodney Gordon Groux. One can only question the Treasurer's motives in taking that questionable political action. When will this apology for a Treasurer learn that mud thrown is ground lost?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has to get around to saying how he was personally misrepresented.

Mr VEIVERS: I am getting to that.

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

Mr VEIVERS: The Treasurer should have taken basic precautions and used some principle before he relied on Rodney Gordon Groux to load up the bucket for him. Neville Wran told the New South Wales Parliament——

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr VEIVERS: I am getting to it. Neville Wran told the New South Wales Parliament that anyone getting involved with Rodney Groux should endeavour to persuade Mr Groux to have a psychiatric examination. Bob Hawke, the former Prime Minister——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member has to tell the House how he has been personally affected.

Mr VEIVERS: I will just have to explain——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will not be allowed all day.

Mr VEIVERS: Mr Hawke, the former Prime Minister——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member must say how he has been personally misrepresented or personally affected.

Mr VEIVERS: Mr Speaker——

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat. I am not interested in hearing what Mr Wran or Mr Hawke said about somebody. The honourable member has to say how something personally affected or misrepresented him in this House. He is not allowed to debate the issue when making a personal explanation.

Mr VEIVERS: Mr Speaker, what was said by the Treasurer about me and my family is totally untrue, and I wish to explain about the person whom the Treasurer used to denigrate me. I have to do that so that you can see that I have been denigrated by a raving lunatic—not only him, but the bloke he used to denigrate me and my family.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I ask the honourable member to withdraw that remark.

Mr VEIVERS: I withdraw. Mr Speaker, if I am not allowed to continue, will I be allowed to table this document and ask that it be incorporated in *Hansard*?

Mr SPEAKER: No, the honourable member cannot have it incorporated in *Hansard*, but he may table it.

Mr VEIVERS: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE FOR ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

Report and Submissions

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (10.08 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the report of the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review on archives legislation. This is the seventeenth report of the committee. I also lay upon the table of the House the 18 submissions on this matter received by the committee. The Electoral and Administrative Review Commission reported to Parliament on its review of archives legislation on 16 June 1992. Although such a review was not specifically recommended by the Fitzgerald report, it falls within EARC's mandate to investigate the availability to the public of information concerning decisions made by or on behalf of the Government, and the discharge of functions and exercise of powers by units of public administration, as specified in item 10 to the Schedule of the Electoral and Administrative Review Act 1989.

EARC's recommendations addressed issues, including the nature of archives, record management practices, preservation of and access to public records, the provision of effective access services and the administration of archives. Among its major recommendations, EARC recommended that archives legislation be separated from libraries legislation through the enactment of EARC's draft Archives Bill, that an independent archives authority be established, that an archives advisory council be established and that the archives authority be empowered to ensure that proper records management practices are pursued.

Submissions received by the Parliamentary Committee for Electoral and Administrative Review indicated broad support for EARC's recommendations, subject to certain reservations. After addressing those reservations in its report, the committee has resolved to recommend departure from EARC's recommendations in three respects. Firstly, the committee recommends, in paragraph 3.10 of its report, that the definition of "archival significance" in EARC's draft Bill be widened to recognise the administrative, legal and evidential value of archives as well as their historical and heritage value. Secondly, while supporting in principle EARC's recommendation that regional repositories for archives be established, the committee recommends in paragraph 3.22 of this report that the requirement of decentralisation should not be mandatory. Thirdly, in place of EARC's recommendation that access to public records over 30 years of age

be governed by a document-by-document exemption process, the committee recommended, in paragraph 3.35 of this report, on the basis of submissions by practising, professional archivists, that a series classification of documents be adopted.

In all other respects, the committee has endorsed EARC's recommendations. In particular, in paragraph 3.50 of the report, the committee endorses EARC's recommendation that funding provided to the Queensland State Archives be increased, and recommends that this matter be addressed by the Government as soon as possible. I thank all members of the committee for their contributions on this matter and, in particular, I pay tribute to the outstanding service given to the committee by its former chairman, Mr Matt Foley. I thank all members of the committee adopting this report for their contribution—the deputy chairman, Mr Tony FitzGerald; Ms Laurel Power; Mr Robert Quinn; Mr Marc Rowell; Mr Jon Sullivan and Mr Rod Welford. The committee records its thanks for the expert assistance rendered by Ms Jennifer Searles of the secretarial staff. It records its grateful appreciation to its research director, Ms Janet Ransley. I move that the report be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Minutes of Meetings, Report, Correspondence and Advice

Mr HOLLIS (Redcliffe) (10.12 a.m.): I lay on the table of the House the minutes of meetings of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts of the Forty-fifth and Forty-sixth Parliaments. I am also pleased to present a report on the activities of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts of the Forty-sixth Parliament for the period 1 July 1992 to 25 August 1992. This report finalises the business of the committee during the closing months of the Forty-sixth Parliament and includes a follow-up report upon the implementation of that committee's recommendations by Government. A high percentage of those recommendations have been accepted by the Government, and the committee takes this to be a clear indication of its effectiveness in fulfilling its mission.

I commend the contribution by all members who served on the committee of the Forty-sixth Parliament. Their efforts and dedication have made possible this outstanding contribution to Parliament's role in our system of representative democracy. The committee appreciates the work of its research director, Mr Ted Dahms, and its officer on secondment, Mr Jim Beh, in producing this report and the included implementation review. Finally, I also table correspondence and advice provided on matters contained in this report. I move that the report be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Mr S. Tait

Mr LINGARD asked the Premier, Minister for Economic and Trade Development—

"With reference to the former Secretary to Cabinet, Mr Stuart Tait—

(1) Did he resign from the Queensland Public Service or was he made redundant?

(2) Did he receive, as part of his separation package, either long service leave or the employer contributions to his superannuation funds?

(3) What was the total amount of Mr Tait's separation package including all his entitlements, redundancy payments and superannuation payments?"

Mr W. K. GOSS: I seek leave to table and have incorporated in *Hansard* the answer to that question.

Leave granted.

The question was asked in three parts. The answers are as follows—

(1) Mr Tait resigned from the Queensland Public Service. His resignation took effect on and from 20 October 1992.

(2) Mr Tait received payments in accordance with the usual arrangements applying to any public servant at the time of resignation. These entitlements included long service leave and recreation leave credits and any fortnightly salary component that was due to him at the time of his resignation. In accordance with the rules of the Q-SUPER Superannuation Fund, the employer contributions to Mr Tait's superannuation are compulsorily preserved within the Fund until he attains the age of 55. Mr Tait has not received any payments under the Redundancy and Redeployment Arrangements approved by the Governor in Council.

(3) The total monetary amount of the entitlements paid to Mr Tait at the time of his resignation was $37,322.78.

2. Police Superannuation Fund

Mr LINGARD asked the Treasurer—

"With reference to 1992-93 Budget Paper No. 2 Estimates of Receipts and Expenditure in particular, page 87 Supplementary Appropriation for Unforeseen Expenditure—1991-92 Trust and Special Funds, Policy area—General Public Services, Program Area 014 Superannuation, Police Superannuation Fund $30,006,000—

(1) Has the payment of this expenditure been made?

(2) If so, to whom were the payments disbursed?

(3) If no payment was made, how was this expenditure appropriated to this account and on whose authority was this unforeseen expenditure approved?

(4) Was there a $277m actuarial deficiency in the Police Superannuation Fund and will he be paying this amount to the fund?"

Mr De LACY: I seek leave to have the answer to the question incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The answer to the Honourable Member's question is as follows:

(1) Yes

(2) The monies were disbursed to the Queensland Investment Corporation for immediate investment.

(3) See my answer to part 1 of the question.

(4) In the last sitting week of Parliament I made a Ministerial Statement which addressed the deficiency in the Police Superannuation Fund as disclosed in the Annual Report for the Police Superannuation Board for the financial year ending 30 June 1992. The State Actuary's assessment of the state of the Police Fund as at 30 June 1990, indicates that the Fund was in actuarial deficit at that date in the order of $277.6 million. The deficit arose because the previous Government failed to act upon actuarial advice on the proper employer funding level required. It is not usual for an actuarial deficiency of this size to be paid in one amount. The Government is committed to addressing the deficiency by making additional payments on an annual basis, commencing in 1992/93, as recommended by the Actuary. Actuarial investigations will continue to be held at regular intervals to ensure the

superannuation schemes are soundly based, with the next investigation of the Police Fund due as at 30 June 1993.

3. Performing Arts Companies

Mr BEANLAND asked the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts—

"With reference to recent claims by the Northern Australian Regional Performing Arts Centre Association (NARPACA) that funding for tours by the Queensland Ballet, the Queensland Performing Arts Council, Lyric Opera, Expressions Dance Company, Jones and Co and the Royal Queensland Theatre Company has been slashed—

(1) What is the actual funding in 1992/93 for the State's major touring performing arts companies, excluding Dance North and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra?

(2) How does this compare to 1991/92 for tours throughout Queensland and how have tours by these companies been affected by these funding arrangements?

(3) Will he provide a breakdown of funding for tours by these companies throughout Queensland in 1992/93?"

Mr WELLS: (1 to 3) I am grateful to the honourable member for the question that he has asked. If he had not asked it, I would have had to arrange a Dorothy Dixer.

The amount of money that was donated for performing arts in the form of project grants in the previous financial year was $315,674. The comparable figure this year was $637,397. That represents a very significant increase in touring to bring the arts to the people of the north. Those decisions were reached by the Arts Advisory Committee under standard peer group assessment processes without fear or favour. Those funds are not slush funds into which the Minister dips and about which he makes whimsical decisions. They are a peer process which is not interfered with by the Minister.

I have a very lengthy answer to the question, which includes a number of tables and statistics. I ask that it be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

There seems to be a suggestion abroad that as Minister for the Arts I should change the decisions of the Arts Advisory Committee in relation to touring.

These decisions were reached by the Arts Advisory Committee under standard peer group assessment processes without fear or favour. The principles of the peer process are based on the premise that decisions are not made by one person but by a number of people who in this case are thirteen arts peers.

Arts organisations "affected" by peer assessment

Queensland Ballet in 1991/92 was funded $10,300 for a small company tour and in 1992/93 Unsuccessfully requested an increase of 614% for touring to $73,600.

There is no arts organisation entitled the Queensland Performing Arts Council. Mr Beanland either means the Queensland Performing Arts Trust at Southbank which received in 1992/93 an allocation of $5.798 million, an increase of 12% on 1991/92 funding or the Queensland Arts Council which in line with a number of major arts organisations received no increase in funding in 1992/93 i.e., $847,875.

The Lyric Opera Company is not planning a major opera tour in 1992/93. In 1991/92 the Government provided $170,000 towards a tour of the Lyric Opera of Queensland's production of the Barber of Seville to the 12 NARPACA funding of $45,000 for a schools tour with the Queensland Arts Council.

Expressions Dance Company in 1991/92 was funded $19,200 for a tour and in 1992/93 unsuccessfully requested an increase of 158% for touring to $49,600.

Jones & Co has been funded in the past as a project. In 1992/93 its request for funding as an operational company was not recommended by the Arts Advisory Committee.

As the Royal Queensland Theatre Company is a statutory body and receives a single line appropriation from Government the company has yet to finalise and present to Government for consideration its 1993 touring program. However in 1993 an amount of $100,000 will be paid as the guarantee against loss arising from the 1992 tour of RQTC's Money and Friends to 12 NARPACA centres.

1992/93 Funding for touring

Total funding to performing arts touring in 1992/93 will be $637,397 or $187,509 if Dance North and the QSO are excluded.

The figure of $637,397 is made up in the following manner:

QSO #	$375,000
Dance North	75,000
RQTC Money and Friends tour ##	100,000
Gladstone City Council ###	9,250
Popproperly ###	14,000
Usher, Jeff ###	18,384
Woomera Aboriginal Corporation ###	45,7634
	$ 637,397

Notes:

\# Funding to the QSO in 1992 was $375,000 towards the general operations of the QSO. In 1993 the QSO grant of $375,000 has been specifically allocated towards “touring including the northern regional tour and associated costs”.

In 1992/93 an amount of $100,000 will be paid as the guarantee against loss arising from the tour of RQTC's money and friends to 12 NARPACA centres which occurred in the second half of 1992.

In 1992/93 the arts advisory committee considered 23 performing arts project applications for touring totalling $529,108. Only four touring grants totalling $87,397 were approved to Gladstone City Council, Popproperly, Jeff Usher and Woomera Aboriginal Corporation.

1991/92 Funding for touring

Total funding to performing arts touring in 1991/92 was $500,307. Included in that amount was funding to three performing arts operational grant companies of $104,600 (Dance North $75,100, Expressions $19,200 and Queensland Ballet $10,300) toward special regional tours. If this figure is excluded then touring funding is $395,707.

Also included in that amount is funding for 10 touring performing arts project grants totalling $315,674, including a special one-off grant of $170,000 to underwrite the costs of the Lyric Opera's tour of its production of the Barber of Seville to 12 NARPACA centres (attached is a list of the 10 grants). If the figure for the Lyric Opera tour is also excluded, funding for touring in 1991/92 Is $225,707.

Also included in that amount is $81,033 or 48% of the 1992 project grant of $167,751 to the NARPACA organisation which related to touring activity.

1992/93 touring applications by performing arts companies

In 1993 applications for tours by the major state performing arts companies totalled $310,447:

Queensland Ballet (7 week tour)	$ 73,600
Expressions Dance Company (5 week tour)	49,600
Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra (6 week tour)	65,747
Lyric Opera Company (19 week)	

(Queensland Arts Council Schools Tour Program)	45,000
Dance North (12 week)	76,500
Deficit	$310,447

In the current financial climate and with limited funds available, funding was only able to be provided for the tour by Dance North ($75,000).

Additionally tours for Tropic Line Theatre ($70,038), Queensland Symphony Orchestra ($84,582) and Royal Queensland Theatre Company ($132,000) were not considered by the Arts Advisory Committee for the following reasons:

- Application for the Tropic Line Theatre Company tour was not recommended by the performing arts assessment panel due to poor programming and budgeting.
- RQTC is now funded as a single line appropriation to bring it in line with other statutory authorities and is now no longer considered by the arts advisory committee. Anyway there was insufficient information provided by the company for the application to be considered.
- Funds for the tour by the QSO were already being provided by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

1991/92 Performing Arts Touring Project Grants	
Brisbane Theatre Company	$ 24,654
The Harold Project	25,000
Lyrebird Ensemble	15,720
NARPACA	170,000
Piccolo Productions	6,300
Queensland Wind Soloists	13,000
Street Arts Community Theatre	15,000
Tropic Line Theatre Company	21,000
Woomera Aboriginal Corporation	15,000
Woomera Aboriginal Corporation	10,000
	$315,674

4. Gold Coast Indy Car Grand Prix

Mr BEANLAND asked the Treasurer—

"With reference to the Gold Coast Indy Grand Prix—

(1) When were tenders called for insurance for this event?

(2) How many tenders were received?

(3) Who won the contract?

(4) What is the annual loss of insuring this event?"

Mr De LACY: I seek leave to have the answer to that question incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The answer to the Honourable Member's question is as follows:

In answer to parts 1, 2 and 3 the insurance arrangements for the event have been made using the traditional method of commissioning a broker to place the insurance with panels of insurers. Alexander Stenhouse are the insurance brokers for the event. They were initially appointed by Queensland Events Corporation Pty. Ltd. by letter of 2 April 1990. This appointment was confirmed by the Gold Coast IndyCar Grand Prix Company on 9 August 1990 as part of the initial arrangements for the 1991 event.

Contracts were effected in the main classes:

. Liability—through a panel of Australian insurers;

. Cancellation—through a panel of United Kingdom and European insurers;

. Transit—through a panel of United States insurers.

Question 4—As indicated in the accounts for the event, the annual cost of insuring the event in 1991 was $1,015,664. The cost in 1992 was $966,213. These amounts were subject to some refund adjustments.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Mr R. Groux

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer the Treasurer to his use of a statutory declaration from a Mr Rodney Groux to smear members of this House and their families, and I ask: was the Treasurer aware that Mr Groux was charged over the Victorian meat substitution scandal in the mid-1980s, and that he has been described by the former Prime Minister, Mr Hawke, as a "thorough crook" and by the former Premier of New South Wales as "requiring psychiatric examination"? Will the Treasurer now apologise to the House?

Mr De LACY: In answer to the honourable member's question—I would not have a clue. I draw attention to the way in which Opposition members squeal when the shoe is on the other foot. Day after day, members of the Opposition table documents and make all sorts of unsubstantiated allegations in this Parliament. The only difference between them and me is that I tabled that statutory declaration reluctantly.

Mr Veivers interjected.

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

Mr De LACY: The member for Nerang forced me to table that document. Listen to the members of the Opposition squeal! I tabled that document reluctantly.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

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

Mr De LACY: I will inform the House of the fundamental difference between members of the Opposition and me. Firstly, I tabled that statutory declaration reluctantly. I frequently receive letters and telephone calls relating to those sorts of matters. I merely have a look at them. If some specific allegations are made, I have them checked out. I allow any non-specific allegations to go through to the keeper. That is contrary to the policy of members of the Opposition. As soon as they receive such information, they table it in this place, as Mr Borbidge did yesterday. They then defend that information as though it were fact.

I prefaced my remarks yesterday by stating that I do not believe most of the contents of this document. Even the National Party would not be up to some of those things! I made the point that some funny people are operating on the Gold Coast. All of the allegations about Mr Groux made by the Leader of the Opposition may or may not be correct. As the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing stated earlier, it takes one to know one.

Mr R. Groux

Mr BORBIDGE: I ask the Treasurer: is he aware of claims being made by Mr Groux that he has been offered a security contract by the Treasurer's operations manager for the Indy Car Grand Prix, Mr Ron Dickson?

Mr De LACY: As I said, I normally allow these things to go through to the "Cooper"—to the keeper.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr De LACY: If I let it go through to the "Cooper", he could not catch it. Mr Groux's claim did have a ring of truth about it. He claimed that the National Party would start making allegations about Mr Dickson and attempt to undermine the Indy Car Grand Prix. The only reason that I held on to that information is that it did seem to have a ring

of truth about it. If the Opposition continues to raise this matter, I will start to believe Mr Groux. I have never met Mr Groux. Can the member for Southport claim that he has not met that gentleman?

Mr Veivers: I wouldn't know him. I only met him through you yesterday.

Mr De LACY: I can assure the honourable member for Southport that I have never met that gentleman. As I stated previously, if specific allegations are made, I check them out. For the benefit of honourable members, I point out that Mr Dickson does not have the capacity to award a contract to anyone.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

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

Mr De LACY: I have checked out all of those allegations that have been made about awarding contracts. A process is in place that ensures that no one person can award a contract. The system is such that the department must ask for competitive tenders. It must be a group decision, and that is the way it is. Mr Dickson does not have the capacity to award contracts.

Government Spending

Mr PITT: In view of the Opposition's claims that Government spending in Queensland is getting out of control, I ask the Treasurer: can he advise whether recently published data by the Australian Bureau of Statistics on Government finances in all of the States provides any evidence to support those claims?

Mr De LACY: Members would be aware that the Opposition has claimed that the Government's spending is out of control. I say that Government spending becomes a problem only if it is not matched by revenue. If the Government can generate that revenue to meet its outlays, then that is responsible budgeting. I believe that everybody in Australia recognises the fact that the Queensland Government is a responsible budgeter. If the Opposition does not take my word for it, it should take the word of the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Last Wednesday, 18 November, the Australian Bureau of Statistics published the Government financial estimates for all of the States of Australia. Contained in those estimates was a table that outlined the surplus amounts of all of the Australian States. It indicates which States in Australia are overspending and do not have the capacity to match their outlays with revenue. For 1992-93, the Liberal/National Party State Government of New South Wales recorded a deficit of $1,360m; Victoria, under the Kennett Government, recorded a deficit of $1,538m; South Australia recorded a deficit of $428m; Western Australia recorded a deficit of $471m; and Tasmania recorded a deficit of $143m. However, Queensland recorded a surplus of $488m.

Mr Stoneman: Thanks to the National Party.

Mr De LACY: The National Party! Every year, the underlying surplus in Queensland increases. That is not occurring under the National Party; it is occurring under this Government. The only difference between the figures supplied by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the figures that are contained in the Budget is that the Australian Bureau of Statistics was estimating an underlying surplus of $488m in comparison with my Budget estimate of $411m. If there is a disturbing trend in this State, it is that every year under the Labor Government that surplus is increasing.

Australian Coachline Holdings

Mr PITT: I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development to a report on the ABC news yesterday afternoon that Australia's largest bus company, Australian Coachline Holdings, is moving its national headquarters to Queensland, and I ask: is this report true? If so, what benefit could this move have for the State?

Mr HAMILL: I am pleased to confirm the report that Australian Coachline Holdings, which is Australia's largest bus operator, is moving its national headquarters to Brisbane. In fact, yesterday the board of Australian Coachline Holdings held its first meeting in Brisbane. The move to transfer the headquarters to Queensland is a major corporate decision of a very significant industry in Australia. In order to inform members of the House of the significance of this move, I obtained some information about Australian Coachline Holdings. That company is an amalgamation of Bus Australia, Greyhound and Pioneer. Previously, its headquarters were located in Perth. Its size is staggering. It is Australia's market leader in that it operates a service to approximately 750 listed destinations in Australia and annually carries almost three million passengers. It has a turnover in excess of $100m. It operates 220 coaches and 33 bus terminals around the country, and it employs 110 staff.

The decision that has been made by this significant national company to move its headquarters to Brisbane has already created 50 jobs in Queensland. Furthermore, the company will be relocating its national reservation system to Brisbane, which will generate further jobs in this State. That company's decision is not an isolated case but one of a number of major corporate decisions that have been made in this country to transfer corporate headquarters to Queensland. That trend reflects the confidence that the people of Australia have in the way this State is run. People in this country are voting with their feet in that interstate migration to Queensland is significant. However, industry is following the business and Australian Coachline Holdings has transferred its operations to Queensland in full recognition that Queensland is poised to have a significant tourism market in eastern Australia. Of course, the tourism industry is Queensland's No. 3 industry. Australian Coachline Holdings is relocating its headquarters to Queensland because this is the place where the business exists.

I am delighted that the company has made this decision. I am also delighted that the Opposition has had to listen in silence to this great news for Queensland industry. Members of the Opposition often talk down the Queensland economy and this Government's achievements. However, this Government's great and lasting achievement will be the creation of a climate in which business can flourish and to which businesses and jobs will be attracted. That is the strength of this Government and the Queensland economy.

Industrial Action

Mrs SHELDON: I refer the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations to his repeated statements to this House on 10 November and in the press the following day, which I table, guaranteeing that there would be no industrial action in Queensland next Monday in sympathy with Victorian unions and that he had personal assurances on this matter from senior trade union officers. Yet today, announcements were made that there will be a coalminers strike costing the Queensland economy $17m and that our ports will also be crippled by strike action that will cost money and jobs. I ask the Minister: why did he mislead the Parliament; and is it not true that he does not have a clue what is going on in his portfolio?

Mr FOLEY: I thank the honourable member for drawing my attention to this matter without notice, and for referring me to that article in which reference is made to the reaction of Queensland unions to the national day of action that has been called in relation to——

Mr Elliott interjected.

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

Mr FOLEY: I am deeply indebted to the honourable Deputy Leader of the Coalition for drawing my attention to this matter. Let me quote from the——

Mr Stephan interjected.

Mr FOLEY: I point out to the honourable member who interjects that I was referred to that newspaper article and, as luck would have it, I am in possession of the very article itself.

Mr Ardill: It's a Dorothy Dixer.

Mr FOLEY: Yes. I did not really want to disclose the Dorothy Dix arrangements which I did have with the Deputy Leader of the Coalition on this matter. But out of an abundance of candour to the House, I must take that interjection.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will answer the question.

Mr FOLEY: The honourable member suggested that there was some misleading.

Mrs Sheldon: It's in *Hansard*.

Mr FOLEY: Indeed, it is in *Hansard*. I am grateful for the honourable member's interjection. Let me put that to rest. Let me quote exactly what the *Courier-Mail* reported of my comments—

> "I've had discussions with senior trade union officials and they believed it would be desirable for Queensland workers to carry on with the job . . . I support their view."

I might add that several days after being asked that question in Parliament, and several days after that comment appeared in the newspaper, the Trades and Labor Council did just that; it recommended to its member unions that no industrial action take place. It recommended a range of measures which involved peaceful protest. Let me quote further from what I told the *Courier-Mail* and, indeed, what I told the House at the relevant time. I said—

> "I respect the right of any person, however, to peaceful protest but I think it is important that we maintain the harmonious industrial situation which is delivering good results for employers and employees."

That is what I said, and I adhere to that view. I do not resile for a minute from my support of the wisdom and restraint shown by the Trades and Labor Council of Queensland in resisting the provocation of the Liberal Party of Victoria, which is intent upon a provocative course of action designed to lower the wages of ordinary working people and to produce conflict.

I thank the honourable member for inquiring as to whether there had been any misleading. I assure her that there was not. Indeed, she referred to that article, in which I said also—

> "I think most Queenslanders are very thankful for our industrial relations system where we don't have the conflict of draconian actions like Victoria's Liberal Government."

Cairns Casino

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker——

Mr Mackenroth: Why don't you hit him again?

Mrs SHELDON: I do not really like to hit a cripple twice. In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to comments made on the *7.30 Report* by the president of the State's National Trust, Mr Deryl McConaghy, who states that he had been told by a member of the interdepartmental committee examining Cairns casino tenders that a decision had already been made to locate the casino in the Cairns Customs House, and I ask: is this right? If so, does this not make the Cairns casino tendering process a farce? Will the Treasurer investigate which senior public servant on the interdepartmental committee is leaking this information and have that person removed immediately?

Mr De LACY: Firstly, let me say "No", the decision has not been made. Secondly, if the member has allegations to make, she should make them and tell me who supposedly made those statements.

Mr Borbidge: You're the Minister. Are you going to follow it up?

Mr De LACY: No, I am not going to follow it up. There is no way that I will follow up nonsensical statements made by either the Leader of the Liberal Party or Mr McConaghy. I would believe my public servants before I believed anything that Mr McConaghy said. Throughout the whole process, he has been engaged in a campaign to stop the establishment of the Brisbane casino. He is now engaged in a campaign to stop the Cairns casino. I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party and others will collude with Mr McConaghy, but he will not win. The casino in Cairns will go ahead. The tendering process will proceed as it has been spelt out. There are two sites: the railway site and the Customs House site. The whole process will continue, and the Government will make a decision in the best interests of the people of Queensland and the people of Cairns—not the best interests of the Leader of the Liberal Party or Mr McConaghy.

Auditor-General's Report on Department of Primary Industries

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to accusations being made by the member for Barambah regarding the accounts of the Department of Primary Industries, and I ask: what is the so-called lack of clear direction to which the member refers?

Mr CASEY: I suppose the short answer is that it is probably the member for Barambah who has a clear lack of direction. It appears from the sort of stuff with which the member pervades this House that he is following the lead of the Leader of the Opposition, who likes to put together a number of accusations, whether or not they are relevant to a current situation. Yesterday, the honourable member referred to reports——

Mr Veivers interjected.

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

Mr CASEY: The member for Barambah spoke about the clear lack of direction of some public servants in my department. That reference is totally out of context and has nothing to do with the Auditor-General's report. When the honourable member made the comments, I searched through the Auditor-General's report and could not find any mention of the matter. Then it suddenly twigged with me that it was supposedly a statement made before the Parliamentary Public Accounts Committee on 30 May last year to which he was referring. It was made at the time of an examination by the Public Accounts Committee of the finances and financial reports of the Department of Primary Industries. It was supposedly one of those long, probing examinations that lets the members of that committee know exactly what is going on with the department's finances. Of course, who was one of the members of that Public Accounts Committee? The honourable member for Barambah was a member of the committee. Now he is suddenly claiming that there is something wrong with the accounts. Yet he probably sat through the Public Accounts Committee hearing like Dumbo the clown and said nothing. He probably did not ask any probing questions. He is no longer a member of the Public Accounts Committee because even his own colleagues realise that, when it comes to counting, as I said recently in this place, he is like the old three-fingered shearer trying to count sheep five at a time—he misses a few.

Greyhound Racing Industry

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: can he inform the House of the state of the greyhound racing industry in Queensland?

Mr GIBBS: I am delighted that the honourable member has asked me the question. Members will recall the debate that took place in this House and the disgraceful performance by Opposition members earlier this year when changes were made to the Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland. The thing that has amazed me this week about Opposition members—particularly the member standing at the back of the Chamber who is out of his usual place, Mr Veivers—is that the CJC report that was tabled in Parliament this week makes serious allegations about the three codes of the racing industry. One would think that a report that detailed some of the information that was contained therein, which was obviously controversial, would at least bring one question from somebody on the other side of the Chamber. Not one murmur was heard from the member for Southport or from other members of the Opposition on the matter, apart from some shockingly amateurish performances in making allegations about the operations of Jupiters Casino.

As a result of the action taken by this Government in relation to the greyhound racing industry, I am delighted to be able to advise the House that, under the guidance of the new Greyhound Racing Control Board of Queensland, this year TAB turnover from the greyhound industry is already up a significant 12.3 per cent on last year's performance. Turnover in relation to betting figures is up an average of $136,000 a week for the same period. The pool of racing animals in Queensland is the strongest that it has ever been. The result is that at Beenleigh, because too many nominations are being received, more than 100 dogs are being rejected at each meeting. At Ipswich and Parklands, rejections of nominations at both tracks are averaging in the fifties each week. As well, at Toowoomba, Lawnton and the Gabba, rejections of nominations are, on average, in the high twenties. That indicates an extremely strong resurgence by the greyhound racing industry in Queensland, which is a significant resource and a significant earner of revenue for the taxpayers of this State. The Greyhound Racing Control Board deserves to be congratulated.

Auditor-General's Report on Department of Primary Industries

Mr PERRETT: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to the Auditor-General's report tabled in this House on Wednesday which heavily qualified its assessment of his department, indicating a failure to balance his books of account and serious discrepancies totalling more than $9m between the public accounts and departmental ledgers. I ask: in light of his answer to a question from the Government Deputy Whip this morning, and as the responsible Minister, what explanation does he have for this atrocious state of affairs?

Mr CASEY: I am very pleased to be asked this question again by the Opposition. It reiterates what I stated earlier about the ability of members opposite to count. They should look properly at the Auditor-General's report to ascertain exactly what the position is. In his report, the Auditor-General virtually answers his own questions. The major problem in the Department of Primary Industries is not a cash loss or anything such as the honourable member—or "dishonourable" member—tries to assert. It is a discrepancy between the reconciliation of bank statements and the departmental ledger statements which has got behind because of a situation—which I accept—that came about because, when we came to Government three years ago, we decided to bring all the rural areas together in one major department. The new Department of Primary Industries, which has been widely accepted by the various rural industries, was formed. That is probably why Opposition members are a bit touchy on the subject. We found what could probably be expected to be found, that is, problems with different systems being organised between different departments. That was the case. A firm of consultants was engaged to examine the matter and to ensure that a new system was installed that was common across all departments.

The legacy that the previous Government left us was that instead of three different systems, there were 42 different systems within the department. From that, we have to get compatibility; we have to get all the systems operating in the same manner. That

work was carried out by the consultants, and that was recognised in the Auditor-General's report. Opposition members should read the report. From the way in which they are carrying on, one would think they are a bit blind as well as a bit dumb. If they read the report, they will find that there is no major loss within the Department of Primary Industries. We are bringing those systems together. Since the report by the Auditor-General, the systems have been updated further. A letter received by my department yesterday, under the Auditor-General's hand, clearly shows that that is the situation.

Restructuring of Livestock and Meat Authority

Mr PERRETT: In directing a further question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer to the proposed restructuring of the Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland by his Government, and concerns within the industry that such changes are aimed at removing the LMAQ's control over all aspects affecting the livestock and meat industries of Queensland, and I ask: how does he see the restructured role of the LMAQ? Will he give an assurance that, in the interests of efficiency, any policy or control requirements will be placed under the LMAQ umbrella rather than outside it?

Mr CASEY: Under the restructuring legislation that the Government will introduce, the Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland will be virtually exactly the same as it is today, and almost the same as it was under the previous Government, with the exception that the veterinary public health group has been moved across from the Department of Primary Industries to the Livestock and Meat Authority, as was recommended by the PSMC. The responsibility for administering, operating, and generally looking after the beef industry in Queensland will still be carried out by the Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland. However, a Queensland abattoirs corporation will be formed, which will bind together the five remaining public abattoirs in Queensland—the Metropolitan Public Abattoir and the Ipswich, Toowoomba, Bundaberg and Townsville abattoirs. That will be run as a separate corporation—as a proper business—and be given the structure and style which should have been given to those abattoirs years ago by the previous Government. But the previous Government did not do that. This will happen in consultation with all sectors of the industry.

Mr Stoneman: Is the industry happy?

Mr CASEY: The direct answer is, "Yes." I discussed it with representatives of the industry last week, and this week I discussed it with them again in Townsville. The honourable member would know full well that that consultation has been continuing. There will also be, as has been the style of this Government, a policy council set up under my chairmanship for the beef industry, in the same way as one was set up for the sugar industry, the dairy industry, and the grain industry. If honourable members opposite want further any comment about the way in which they are going, they should ask the member for Western Downs. During the recent election campaign, he got up and said that the things that the Government had done in relation to the grain industry—the new-style Grainco and the legislation that we enacted—were the best things that had ever happened for the grain industry. Those honourable members from sugar producing areas should speak to people from within the sugar industry. They will tell honourable members that the policy council is the greatest thing that has ever been set up for the sugar industry. The good old member for Barambah should ask people from within the dairy industry how happy they are with the policy council, which is under my chairmanship, too.

Sandgate Transport Facilities

Mr NUTTALL: I ask the Minister for Transport: what steps are being taken to improve transport infrastructure and operations in the Sandgate electorate?

Mr HAMILL: In response to the honourable member's question——

Mr Elliott interjected.

Mr HAMILL: I am always prepared to take the inane interjections of the member for Cunningham. There has been significant controversy in Sandgate regarding the location and the design details of the new Sandgate bus interchange. I am pleased to report to the House that there has been further community consultation with the Chamber of Commerce in Sandgate. Recently, I corresponded with the Federal Minister for Land Transport, seeking additional funding for the implementation of that new design. I believe that that will certainly satisfy the travelling needs of the Sandgate community and, indeed, further address the transportation needs of the people who commute to Sandgate from the Redcliffe Peninsula. In addition, significant road construction works are taking place in that part of north Brisbane—the Sandgate area—along the Gateway Arterial.

Mr Lester: Why don't you continue the four-lane highway to Yeppoon?

Mr HAMILL: The sum for the construction work totals approximately $26m. I heard the comment from the member for Keppel, who indulges in good old fashioned National Party accounting. He might think that $26m will build a road right to Yeppoon. I suggest to him that it would not. The work that is taking place on the Gateway Arterial is significant. I want to stress to the honourable member that, in response to community concerns, particularly regarding the movement of school children, provision is being made, in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council, to provide for adequate points at which pedestrians may cross from one side of the Gateway Arterial to the other. We are looking for further cooperation with the Brisbane City Council. Barriers will be constructed at Barrett Street to prevent, in that area in particular, the movement of pedestrians in order to ensure a free flow of traffic and adequate road safety for the people in that local community.

Attacks on Taxi Drivers

Mr NUTTALL: In directing a further question to the Minister for Transport, I refer to the steady increase in the number of violent attacks on taxi drivers in the Brisbane metropolitan area, and I ask: could he advise what action his department is taking to reduce the incidence of these attacks?

Mr HAMILL: The issue that has been raised by the honourable member is a very serious one. An unfortunate number of assaults, and in some cases assaults causing death or grievous bodily harm, have occurred when some customers of taxi drivers decide that it is appropriate to try to assault the driver and steal the takings for the night. It is a serious problem. The Transport Department has sought to cooperate extensively with the Taxi Council of Queensland in implementing a range of measures designed to improve safety for drivers. Among those measures is the requirement of taxis to have warning lights fixed to the vehicle so that a driver who is in a dangerous situation may activate the lights and draw attention to his or her plight. I am also pleased that a number of companies have upgraded their internal communication system to incorporate into vehicles a facility whereby a driver who is under some threat can get a message back to the radio control room. The system would indicate the location of the vehicle and enable the controllers to listen in to what is occurring in the vehicle and direct the Police Service to come to the assistance of the driver.

In recent times, some comment has been made regarding the fitting of safety screens in cabs. I personally believe that the screens offer drivers a significant enhancement in personal safety provided that passengers are always directed to the back seat of the vehicle. There has been some serious disagreement among drivers and owners in the taxi industry as to the efficacy of those screens being fitted. As recently as two weeks ago, at my instigation, officers of the Taxi Council of Queensland were called in to discuss this very issue of the fitting of protective screens. I asked the representatives of the council what proportion of cabs were using these screens, and I was very concerned to learn that only about 5 per cent of the cabs had them.

Mr Connor: They are too expensive.

Mr HAMILL: The honourable member for Nerang says that the screens are too expensive. It is my understanding that the price of those screens ranges from $200 to $700. I do not care if the price is at the upper end of that range. I do not believe that $700 is too high a price to pay to enhance the safety of taxi drivers. I do not believe that a price should be put on the security of taxi drivers. When one considers the significant investment that is made in the acquisition of a taxi licence, the sum of $200, $500 or $700 is not an excessive price to pay to enhance safety. I have asked the Taxi Council of Queensland to report back to me in the next couple of weeks on the measures that it is prepared to put in place among the council's member companies and owners to address the safety enhancement which would result from the fitting of those screens.

I believe that those screens are important, and I believe that a lot of drivers believe they are important, too. I am prepared to say to the taxi industry that those screens ought to be a part of the safety equipment in a cab. Maybe we should leave the matter to the drivers concerned and let them decide whether or not the screens enhance their safety. The screens that are on the market are easily fitted and easily removed. I am concerned about this matter. I say to the members of this Parliament that the taxi industry in this State has to assume more responsibility for the welfare of the people working in that industry.

Sunshine Motorway

Mr LAMING: I ask the Minister for Transport: does he consider that he misled the public yesterday in his interview with the *Sunshine Coast Daily* in which he was quoted as saying that the tollway traffic on the Sunshine Motorway had increased by 20 per cent in the last 12 months when the actual increase was just 3.8 per cent?

Mr HAMILL: The simple answer to the honourable member's question is, "No". The public has not been misled. The facts of the matter are that traffic on the Sunshine Motorway has indeed increased by 20 per cent. Furthermore, in discussions I had as recently as this week with the board of the Sunshine Motorway, I was informed that there has been a further 30 per cent increase for the first quarter of this year compared to the same period last year.

Gateway Bridge Company

Mr LAMING: I ask the Minister for Transport: can he explain why $24m has been syphoned out of the Gateway Bridge Company into consolidated revenue under the heading "Franchise fees and service fees", leaving the taxpayer to fund the interest on the increasing accumulated debt? Would he agree that the cost of these interest charges to the taxpayer could be significantly reduced if these fees, which are really a hidden tax, were allowed to remain with the Gateway Bridge Company to retire company debt?

Mr HAMILL: Dorothy Dixers are abounding in the Chamber this morning! I am delighted that the honourable member for Mooloolah has asked this question this morning. I have been waiting for the last three years for this question to be asked. The member is a new member of this Parliament, and I think that it will be a considerable education for him to hear the answer to this question.

The Gateway Bridge Company was established by the previous National Party Government to administer the new toll bridge built across the Brisbane River. The borrowings that were undertaken to fund that bridge are to be met by the payment of tolls on traffic going across the bridge. The service fee which is required of the Gateway Bridge Company was an arrangement that was entered into by the previous National Party Government. Contrary to the assertion made by the member for Mooloolah, that service fee which is paid over to the Government is earmarked for a specific purpose. That specific purpose is to meet interest and redemption charges. Those interest and redemption charges do not apply to the Gateway Bridge but to

substantial borrowings undertaken by the previous National Party Government to build the approach roads to the bridge. Consequently, the Gateway tolls are being used to pay, in the first instance, interest and redemption on the borrowings associated with the Gateway Bridge. Secondly, the service fee which the former Government required the Gateway Bridge Company to pay is being used to pay for the roads which vehicles must use to get over the bridge.

Business in Regional Queensland

Mrs BIRD: I ask the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development: can he advise how the Government is assisting business, especially business in regional Queensland, to cope with the business regulations?

Mr ELDER: I thank the honourable member for her question and note that she has a significant interest in business in regional Queensland, as does the Government, because it is very conscious that Queensland is a big State and that a significant amount of business activity takes place outside the south-east corner. There has been a two-pronged attack to dealing with the red tape that accumulated over 32 years of conservative Government in this State. Firstly, the Government established the Business Regulation Review Unit. That review unit has systematically been reviewing legislative and regulatory regimes within the regulatory frameworks and it will report on that process by the end of 1994. Of course, it was something——

An honourable member interjected.

Mr ELDER: I take the interjection, because it was something that the former Government did not have the guts to do. Quite frankly, had the former Government taken on board the recommendations of the Savage report, which dealt with that Government's own inefficiencies and overregulation of business——

Mr Borbidge: There was an Act of Parliament that legislated for it. You don't know what you're talking about.

Mr ELDER: The former Government did nothing. It pigeonholed the report. I will add Sir Ernest Savage's recent comments on the work of this Government's Business Regulation Review Unit—the unit that this Government set up to review the regimes. He said—

> "What the Business Regulation Review Unit is doing now should have been done five years ago."

When Ernest Savage delivered his report, the former Government pigeonholed it. That was five years ago! We as a Government are making a genuine attempt to do the right thing with the report and to take on board his recommendations. Members opposite should be condemned, and their silence is condemning. They should have implemented his report five years ago.

The second thing that I can say to the honourable member is that the Government is making it easy for business to access information on the licensing requirements to do business in this State. The Government established the Queensland Business Licensing Information Centre—another initiative of the Government taking on board the review.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr ELDER: Another inane interjection from the Alfred E. Neuman of the Queensland Parliament. The Government established that centre, which has handled more than 47 000 inquiries for business licences and given out 29 000 information packages dealing with more than 110 000 different licence requirements. On average, that single point of entry unit which gives businesses the licence information that they require, the application forms that they require and the contact point within the various departments, can turn that information around within 48 hours. Within 21 hours, the information will be accessed and, within 48 hours on average, that information is given to the business houses. Surveys that have been conducted show that 98.7 per cent of

those business clients that are using the service find it an excellent service which provides very useful information.

In conclusion, the unit deals with about 112 inquiries a day. For the benefit of the member for Whitsunday, I point out that half of those are from regional Queensland. However, the State Government is responsible for only 12 per cent of those regulatory requirements. The Government now has on board 200 Commonwealth licences on that same database, which will provide a very efficient service for business in accessing information on their business needs and licensing requirements in this State.

Wolfe Crown Lease Rental System

Mrs BIRD: I ask the Minister for Lands: when will Crown lease rentals based on the Wolfe rental system be applied?

Mr SMITH: I thank the honourable member for the question, because it provides me with the opportunity of putting some accurate information on the record to dispel some of the misinformation and scaremongering that has been spread around in recent times. The actual rates for Crown lease rentals as a result of the implementation of the Wolfe rental system are not yet known. My department only recently completed gathering the information on the land usage data for all Crown leases throughout the State. I am certainly mindful of industry concerns that basic rents should be set at a realistic percentage of the unimproved value. The data of all Crown leases is being reviewed so that the department can make a recommendation to me and I can then accurately determine the appropriate rental percentage rates that will apply to the various types of leases throughout State.

I would propose to take a statement to the Cabinet early in 1993 on the implementation of the Wolfe rental system. The details of that will be released soon after. The details will include the various rental percentage rates that will apply to various types of leases as of 1 July 1993. Although the final percentages to apply are matters for Government determination, there has been a very close and productive consultation with relevant industry groups about the process and the method used in considering possible levels that will apply.

Rural Adjustment Scheme

Mr HOBBS: I refer the Minister for Primary Industries to the announcement by the Federal Primary Industries Minister, Mr Crean, of the 100 per cent interest subsidy under the Rural Adjustment Scheme "to provide for a subsidy to cover the whole interest bill of the farmer" and of changes to the agreement between the Commonwealth and the States whereby 75 per cent of the interest subsidy will be met by the Commonwealth with the remaining 25 per cent coming from the states. I ask: in view of the desperate conditions being experienced by farmers and graziers in drought-stricken south-west Queensland, when is the Queensland Government going to announce that it will adopt the Commonwealth proposal and provide the remaining 25 per cent of the interest subsidy?

Mr CASEY: I thank the honourable member for his question, but I indicate to him that matters regarding the Rural Adjustment Scheme are handled by the Treasurer.

Blue-green Algae in Chinchilla Weir

Mr HOBBS: In other words, we are not going to get it. That is the sort of answer we expect. My second question is also directed to the Minister for Primary Industries, and he will not duck this one. I refer to the urgent concerns expressed by the Condamine River Basin Irrigators Association relating to the outbreak of blue-green algae in the Chinchilla Weir and the associated ban on pumping, and I note yesterday's ministerial statement in relation to the findings of the task force. Because more accurate

information is needed immediately to determine what is known about this particular strain of algae, I ask: what action is the Minister prepared to take to initiate immediate research into this particular algae problem and what steps does he envisage being taken to minimise the economic impact of this problem on the whole irrigation community?

Mr CASEY: The honourable member has asked a very important question in relation to this matter. Yesterday, I made a major statement to the House and released copies of the report of the task force so that members could ascertain exactly what is happening. In relation to the particular case of the Chinchilla Weir, I will tell the honourable member of a few more things that have happened, maybe even since he has been talking to people about the matter. Yesterday, at 9.15 a.m., I was advised that there were further indications of build-ups in the blooms of blue-green algae upstream from Chinchilla. Further problems were found at Warra, Brigalow and Cecil Plains.

As I told the House yesterday, because of the action that has already been taken in relation to this problem and because of the Government's anticipation back in May that perhaps there would be problems again this year with the algae, and as a result of the monitoring system that has been put in place, we are working hand in hand with the local authorities in these very regions on this particular matter. Only this morning, I spoke to the chairperson of the task force that was set up to consider the problem of the blue-green algae. That person was most pleased with the way in which we have dealt with the report and accepted its recommendations. The research work that is being done will continue. However, it will be years before the problems will be solved.

The first-recorded discovery of the toxicity of blue-green algae in Australia was in the Lake Alexander area at the mouth of the Murray River back in 1837. It has always been in that region. It is only because of the Government's actions that some research is being conducted into this problem. However, what is important is the monitoring that is taking place. Yesterday, I said that we do not know why the blooms suddenly turn toxic. We do not know when they will suddenly turn toxic or how it happens. As a Government, we are determined to work hand in hand with other Governments, particularly in relation to the work conducted in the Murray/Darling basin, to ascertain the answers to the problem. In the meantime, we have to ensure that the public does not see this as some great problem, some great scourge that is about to happen in every water supply system throughout Queensland. As a result of the preliminary recommendations of the task force in July, the Government introduced testing facilities into Queensland. Before then, this State did not have its own testing facilities. When the outbreaks occurred, the samples had to be sent to Armidale to be tested. This State now has its own testing facilities in Brisbane, Toowoomba and in other areas of the State, and work is being done to overcome the problem.

"Schoolies Week"

Mrs WOODGATE: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: can he inform the House of the progress of the Liquor Licensing Division and the police operation concerning "schoolies week"?

Mr GIBBS: I thank the honourable member. Can I just say that the success or otherwise, I guess, of "schoolies week" should never be judged by the number of people who are found to be on licensed premises illegally. I think it would be desirable if the stage was ultimately reached at which these young people could gather together on the Gold Coast for what is becoming a significant event and enjoy themselves in a responsible manner. I am pleased to say that I believe as a direct result of the initiatives that have been taken in the joint operations between the Queensland Police Service and officers of my Liquor Licensing Division, that was certainly reflected in the behaviour of the schoolies this week. It has in fact been one of the quietest "schoolies weeks" on record in terms of major incidents erupting, apart from two which I think regrettably were out of the control of any person who may have been on the coast trying to monitor the situation.

Although "schoolies week" does not finish officially until midnight tonight, thus far there are four licensees who will be investigated—one from the Sunshine Coast, one from Brisbane and two from the Gold Coast. Over the course of the week, something like 10 under-age people were caught drinking on licensed premises. A number of others are still being investigated. One 18-year old was in fact caught supplying liquor to an under-age person on the Gold Coast and will face a fine of up to $2,400. Inspectors from my Liquor Licensing Division and the police have been greatly impressed with the very responsible attitude shown by the majority of young people enjoying themselves on the coast this week. They have been particularly impressed with the very responsible attitude of bottleshop staff, nightclub owners and licensees generally, who have been very cooperative in this campaign.

As we are approaching Christmas and this is the last question time in the House this year, and as some mirth always emerges on such occasions, I will advise honourable members of one incident that was brought to my notice. I am reliably informed that, in the early hours of Wednesday morning, what was described to me as a big man disguising himself in a long blond wig and wearing a pair of board shorts and a floral, coloured T-shirt with a surfboard under his arm was in fact seen trying to infiltrate the ranks of young revellers, obviously to enjoy himself, and I am told that that person was none other than the honourable member for Southport.

School Refurbishment Program

Mrs WOODGATE: I refer the Minister for Education to the school refurbishment program, which was an election commitment of the Goss Government, and I ask: now that the tobacco tax legislation has been passed by this House, can he advise when the promises will become reality, and could he further elaborate on how this will impact on schools in my electorate, particularly the Kurwongbah and Dayboro State Schools?

Mr COMBEN: I am pleased to advise the House that, on Monday of this week, the School Enhancement Program was launched by the Deputy Premier and me at the Manly State School. Some $60m is now flowing to the School Enhancement Program. The program will create 1 200 jobs. The Kurwongbah State School will be receiving in the order of $51,000, whilst the Dayboro State School will be receiving $44,500. This is certainly a great scheme. It will be combined with computers under the Back to Basics scheme.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Government Spending

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (11.15 a.m.), by leave: I make the point that the Budget surplus to which I referred in an answer this morning is actually in the form of cash reserves, which are put away for future obligations such as superannuation. I have already been approached by half a dozen Ministers for a disbursement of that surplus. I make it clear that it is not available.

LOTTO AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.16 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Lotto Act 1981."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (10.17 a.m.) I move—

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

This Bill will amend the Lotto Act 1981. The Bill will provide that Queensland, through the Golden Casket Art Union Office, will become a partner of the National Lotto Bloc for the conduct of a game of Lotto called Oz Lotto. The current Lotto Act provides for the Golden Casket Art Union Office to join with Victoria—through Tattersall Sweep Consultation—South Australia and Western Australia to conduct a game of Lotto known in Queensland as Gold Lotto. It is anticipated that New South Wales will join with the other States to form the National Lotto Bloc.

The Bill will provide that the total amount of prize money returned to players will not exceed 60 per cent of the total subscriptions received for each game. That provision will allow the Golden Casket Art Union Office, Australian Lotto Bloc and the National Lotto Bloc the ability to make adjustments to the prize allocation when necessary, while maintaining each partner's respective return. The Bill will provide that the on-line computerised processing of coupons for entry into a game of Lotto and for the collection of prizes is reflected within the Lotto Act. The Bill will make minor amendments to the Lotto Act in keeping with current practices of the Parliamentary Counsel. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mrs Sheldon, adjourned.

RACING AND BETTING AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (11.20 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Racing and Betting Act 1980."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba—Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (11.21 a.m.): I move—

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

The purpose of this Bill is to amend the Racing and Betting Act to remove impediments to the effective prosecution of unlawful bookmakers. The amendments will provide for imprisonment to occur as a natural consequence of an offender's default in payment of a fine and will give the courts the additional option, in the case of a second or subsequent offence, to sentence unlawful bookmakers to a term of imprisonment.

The Queensland Government is vehemently opposed to illegal bookmaking. The immediate losers as a result of illegal bookmaking are honest punters and bookmakers, the TAB, the racing industry and the community generally in terms of revenue losses. In the longer term, the losers will be, firstly, the community in terms of the greater burden it

will have to bear as a consequence of increased organised crime activity; and, secondly, the racing industry, which stands to lose community confidence in its operations.

Honourable members will recall the revelations contained in the Fitzgerald report about the magnitude of the problem in Queensland, particularly the links between illegal bookmaking and organised crime. The Criminal Justice Commission's report tabled in Parliament this week confirms that organised criminal activities, such as drug trafficking and money laundering, go hand in hand with unlawful bookmaking. This Government recognised that more punitive measures for unlawful bookmaking were urgently needed, but, on the advice of the Director of Prosecutions, had to delay introducing legislation so as not to prejudice any current proceedings.

Penalties provided by the Racing and Betting Act for unlawful bookmaking and related offences are among the most substantial in the country. However, the absence of a provision for default imprisonment in the current legislation means that there is no coercive measure to ensure that those convicted of unlawful bookmaking offences are, in fact, penalised. Under existing legislation, an unpaid fine for an unlawful bookmaking conviction must be pursued by the Crown as if it were a civil debt. Although the penalties can be very substantial, they provide little disincentive for organised SP bookmakers who know the magnitude of the profits to be made and know how to order their affairs to avoid the brunt of these penalties. It has become the usual practice of unlawful bookmakers to arrange their financial affairs in such a way that they do not—at least apparently—own any recoverable assets. Ordinarily, there is little risk to be borne by the convicted SP bookmaker, as payment of the fines under the civil procedure is entirely dependent upon the convicted person owning assets that can be seized and sold if the fine is not paid. This unnecessarily longwinded and expensive process effectively circumvents any deterrent value that might be found in the size of the fines. Under the proposed legislation, it is intended to provide a major deterrent to unlawful bookmaking by providing for imprisonment to occur as a natural consequence of failing to pay a fine and including options for sentences of imprisonment as an alternative to a fine for a second or subsequent offence.

Fines and default imprisonment will be imposed on the basis of an incremental range depending on the magnitude of the offence. Upon conviction for a first offence, a minimum penalty of 300 penalty units and a maximum penalty of 400 penalty units, that is, $18,000 and $24,000 respectively, at the discretion of the court. The court will be required to order default imprisonment from three to six months depending on the circumstances of the case. Upon conviction for a second offence, a penalty of not less than 401 penalty units, that is, $24,060, and not more than 600 penalty units, that is, $36,000 or, instead of a fine, imprisonment for up to 18 months. Default imprisonment for 12 to 18 months must be ordered by the court if a fine is imposed. Upon conviction for a third or subsequent offence, a penalty of not less than 601 penalty units, that is, $36,060 and not more than 1 000 penalty units, that is $60,000 or, instead of a fine, imprisonment for up to five years. Default imprisonment for three to five years must be ordered by the court if a fine is imposed.

Under the existing legislation, the court has a discretion to impose a penalty lower than the minimum penalty if the circumstances warrant it. Some discretion has been retained to allow the court to impose a lesser penalty in the case of a first offence only. However, in no case will the court be entitled to impose a penalty less than an absolute minimum of $3,000. This balances the need to recognise that, on the one hand, it is a first offence and, on the other hand, that the fine must be substantial enough to act as a significant deterrent.

Provision has also been included in the Bill to ensure that an offender who is ordered to serve a term of imprisonment actually serves the sentence in prison and not by way of community service or on probation. The legislation will prohibit a court from making such orders as probation orders, community services orders, intensive correction orders or any other orders which would have the effect of either suspending or providing an alternative to a term of imprisonment. Parliamentary counsel has also

taken the opportunity to make minor additional amendments to the legislation in certain respects. These amendments are contained in the Schedules of the Bill.

Honourable members would also be aware of my intention to undertake a full and complete review of the Racing and Betting Act in the near future as a direct result of recommendations contained in the Criminal Justice Commission report that was tabled in Parliament this week. As part of that process, I wish to reassure honourable members that an extensive consultation process will take place with all levels of the industry, other stakeholders and the community at large on the issue of unlawful bookmaking and other issues relevant to the Act.

The amendments proposed in the Bill are essential to the effective prosecution of unlawful bookmakers and cannot be delayed any longer. The amendments are a clear signal to the judiciary and potential offenders that this Government takes seriously the issue of unlawful bookmaking and intends to ensure that anyone found to have engaged in unlawful activities is dealt with severely. The proposed provisions are quite clear, and those who continue to flout the law will do so at their own peril. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr FitzGerald, adjourned.

WET TROPICS WORLD HERITAGE PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT BILL

Hon. M. J. ROBSON (Springwood—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (11.28 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to provide for the protection and management of the Wet Tropics of Queensland World Heritage area, and for related purposes."

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

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

Second Reading

Hon. M. J. ROBSON (Springwood—Minister for Environment and Heritage) (11.29 a.m.): I move—

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

It is with pleasure that I introduce to this House the Wet Tropics World Heritage Protection and Management Bill. The path to protection of the wet tropical rainforests has been indirect and winding. Over 25 years ago, Dr Len Webb recommended reservation of 20 northern rainforest areas as national parks "to preserve in their natural state, representative samples of the major habitat types of the region". Dr Webb's selection of those areas on a scientific basis was a new concept. From that time, we have seen a number of landmarks along the long track to preservation of our northern rainforests. Events that come to mind immediately are the public meeting forming the Rainforest Conservation Society 10 years ago, the Commonwealth Government's decision to initiate and fund a National Rainforest Conservation Program, and the lengthy and often painful process that culminated in the inscribing of the wet tropical rainforests of Queensland on the World Heritage List in 1988 against the wishes of the previous State Government.

Following the successful nomination, and a change of Government in Queensland, the Prime Minister of Australia and the Premier of Queensland entered into an agreement for funding and management of the area. It is my hope that this legislation will see the end of the controversial past. Finally we will see protection of the rainforest, and the

vision of the future as captured in the draft Wet Tropics Management Plan discussed, without rancour, by the people of north Queensland. This legislation has been a long time coming. We have been determined to get it right. We have listened to public concerns, and amended the Bill where necessary.

The wet tropical rainforests of northern Queensland are outstanding. They have superb natural values, including scenic vistas, large numbers of rare and threatened species, the majority of Australia's surviving tropical rainforest ecosystems and scientifically important evidence of the distant past. The management scheme to protect the rainforests is based on the intergovernmental agreement signed in November 1990 by the then Prime Minister of Australia, the Honourable R. J. L. Hawke, and the Queensland Premier, the Honourable Wayne Goss. It heralded a new era of cooperation and a large injection of Commonwealth funds. The intergovernmental agreement between State and Commonwealth sets out the primary goals for management under the headings of protection, conservation, presentation, rehabilitation and transmission to future generations. Additionally, the agreement provides for development of Queensland legislation for the protection and management of the World Heritage area. That commitment is being met today. It is Queensland's intention that this legislation will ensure that the Wet Tropics of Queensland will be maintained as a World Heritage area of the highest standard.

There is a continuing major role for the Commonwealth. As a signatory party to the World Heritage Convention, it has ultimate responsibility for ensuring obligations under the convention are met. This it can achieve through the World Heritage Properties Conservation Act, allowing the Commonwealth to regulate and prohibit activities potentially damaging to the area. Three regulations are currently in force concerning logging, clearing of land and construction of a road. But whatever the ultimate responsibilities of the State and Commonwealth, this Queensland legislation heralds a new era of cooperation. The Commonwealth will use its own Act only as a "last resort". Effective Queensland legislation should obviate the need for Commonwealth intervention.

In this legislation, we set the standard for now and the future. Queensland is the first State to have special legislation to protect a World Heritage area. Coupled with the Wet Tropics Plan, this makes Queensland a world leader in protection and management of World Heritage areas. I do not anticipate that special legislation will be needed for every World Heritage area in Queensland. The Wet Tropics is a special case because of past conflicts, large size and the complexity of tenure and ownership.

Let us pause for a moment and look at our wet tropical rainforests. They cover almost 900 000 hectares, they stretch for 450 kilometres north to south, and have a boundary exceeding 3 000 kilometres. The area comprises 620 parcels of land, including 91 freehold blocks, 110 leases, local government reserves, Crown land, national park, State forest and even some Commonwealth-owned land controlled by the Defence Department. Approximately 30 per cent is national park and another 30 per cent is State forest. The remainder is in other tenures. Fourteen local government authorities have an interest in the area, and there are more than 20 distinct Aboriginal communities.

This legislation and the Wet Tropics Plan will not "lock up" the area but provide for its use and enjoyment in a way that does not compromise World Heritage values. There may be selected areas such as habitats for rare or threatened species where access will need to be limited. This is already the standard management practice in some national parks. On the other hand, our management needs to ensure particular parts of the World Heritage area are not "loved to death" by too many visitors. Sound planning is needed, and will be undertaken. This re-emphasises the joint role of legislation and management plans. The *Wet Tropics Plan: Strategic Directions* publication released in August outlines proposed management regimes and policies. Public comment is now sought. The final plan produced will be a statutory plan under the Act. Such statutory planning is the only way to ensure the values of such a complex area are protected while still allowing for its use and presentation.

The legislation and plan emphasise public involvement in managing the area through cooperative management agreements; consultation and public exhibition of plans; and advisory committees. Local government has a valid, valued and valuable role to play. Our intention is to work closely with local authorities in developing plans. As an example, we are already working with Douglas Shire Council in developing a plan for the area north of the Daintree. In the end, however, narrow local interests and priorities cannot be allowed to compromise World Heritage planning. It is time we took a large picture view of the area.

Special attention is also being paid to consultations with Aboriginal people, the traditional custodians of the land. Planning will give recognition to the longstanding and close ties of the Aboriginal people with the land. While the area was not listed for its cultural heritage values, the Wet Tropics Management Authority is assisting a number of communities to document cultural values. This is important information for planning, and will be used to ensure that traditional values and sites are respected in the management of the area.

This legislation is complementary to the Nature Conservation Act 1992 and other Queensland environmental legislation. The relevant provisions of the Nature Conservation Act will be available to assist in protecting and managing the area. For example, interim conservation orders available under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 could be used to protect the area from imminent threat by a highly destructive activity. There has been much political mischief-making in recent times over this legislation. Some deliberate misinformation continues even after Cabinet's decision to remove the former management area provisions. One antagonist has claimed that pigs are breeding in buffer zones and the legislation prohibits pig shooting. This is quite untrue. Not only are there no provisions for buffer zones in the legislation, there is no reference at all, nor has there ever been, to pig shooting.

The Wet Tropics Management Authority first met on 21 September 1990. The management agency commenced operation with the appointment of its first director in June 1991. In the short period since that time, we have seen the development of the *Wet Tropics Plan: Strategic Directions*, with a major public consultation program, the funding of new visitor facilities and important roadworks, and the acquisition of important blocks of land for rainforest conservation. A major research program has commenced, a geographic information system has been installed, a complete set of up-to-date boundary maps produced, and detailed planning for the Daintree and Wangetti areas is under way. A wide range of promotional material, including posters, videos, brochures and newsletters has been produced.

A six-person authority is established by the legislation. Two members are nominated by the State, two by the Commonwealth, and the Chair is appointed jointly. The director of the Wet Tropics Management Agency will be a non-voting member of the authority. The present Wet Tropics Agency will merge into the authority. Members of the authority will become the board of directors. This should eliminate public confusion about the difference between the agency and the authority.

The authority is established with the principal objective of ensuring that Australia's obligations under the World Heritage Convention are met in relation to the Wet Tropics. The authority will be first and foremost a strategic planning authority, with responsibility for advice to the State and Federal Governments via the Wet Tropics Ministerial Council. The council comprises two Federal and two State Ministers, chaired by the Queensland Minister for Environment and Heritage. Other functions of the Authority include—

preparation of management plans;

research;

community education;

promotion of the World Heritage area; and

monitoring the state of the World Heritage area.

This legislation allows the authority to enter into cooperative management agreements with land-holders—entirely voluntarily. As an important cooperative approach to achieving desired management aims, these agreements may provide for financial, scientific, technical or other assistance to land-holders. In carrying out its functions, the authority must have regard to Aboriginal traditions and liaise and cooperate with Aboriginal people. This legislation also provides for administrative matters such as appointments, terms of office, conduct of meetings, staff, and delegations.

The intergovernmental agreement provided for a Scientific Advisory Committee—SAC—and a Community Consultative Committee—CCC. Initially, we planned to make the choice of committees very flexible. However, the Government has listened to the voice of the community on this matter, and the legislation will make the SAC and CCC mandatory committees. This is evidence of the Government's commitment to community involvement in the management of the area and will ensure that the voice of the community continues to be heard. Additional optional committees can also be set up by the authority, and plans are already under way for the formation of an Aboriginal advisory committee.

Statutory management plans are the keystone of this legislation and a crucial element in effective management of this complex multi-tenure, multi-ownership World Heritage area. Local government planning schemes will still operate, but where there is inconsistency in areas of overlap, approved Wet Tropics Plans will have precedence. This is considered necessary because of overlap with a significant number of planning schemes already existing or in preparation which do not necessarily give due regard to protection of World Heritage values. Whilst the authority will liaise closely with local government authorities in its planning role, there is no guarantee that future local government planning schemes will give the necessary emphasis to World Heritage values. This Government is committed to the preservation of special places of World Heritage significance and hence believes this precedence provision is necessary. Also, however, it is committed to a cooperative approach with local government and other authorities with a land use and planning interest in the area, to ensure conflicts are avoided wherever possible.

Local government will remain the first point of contact for private development applications. Local authorities will be required to refer to their own planning schemes and to any relevant Wet Tropics Plan when considering any such applications. Plans which apply to certain lands within the World Heritage area may also be prepared under the Nature Conservation Act. As these plans are all prepared within the Environment and Heritage portfolio and taken to Cabinet by the Minister for Environment and Heritage, inconsistencies are unlikely to occur. Should such an inconsistency arise, in spite of our best efforts, the Minister will determine which plan gives the appropriate level of protection, having regard to the protection of the area's natural heritage and biodiversity, and the community interest. It is most important that where plans are prepared in areas of overlapping legal responsibility, there is good communication amongst all parties from an early stage. As an example, plans of management for Aboriginal claimed national parks must take account of World Heritage values but the Wet Tropics Plans should also respect Aboriginal tradition and concerns. The authority is required to prepare at least one plan for the whole Wet Tropics area and may prepare additional plans as necessary. The authority is required to give public notice of plan preparation, must exhibit plans for a minimum period of 40 days and call for submissions. A report on the submissions received must accompany any plan submitted to the ministerial council for approval. In this process public involvement is emphasised, requiring consultation with land-holders, local authorities, Aboriginal people, interest groups, and individuals.

In line with the social justice policies of this Government, compensation is payable where land-holders' existing rights of use are affected. Compensation is payable by the authority from its normal budget allocations. In appropriate situations there will be agreements reached with the Department of Environment and Heritage for the department to pay compensation after full consultation and agreement on matters which could be seen to be of State significance. The Government recognises that certain activities are simply unacceptable in a World Heritage area listed for the natural heritage values associated principally with its rainforests. The Act therefore also provides for the protection of the World Heritage area from major threats and potential damage by prohibiting practices such as commercial forestry and unauthorised clearing of rainforest areas. Together with the management planning provisions, this part provides the crucial legal tools for protection and management of the area. Commercial forestry operations are already prohibited under Commonwealth legislation. Where other prohibitions on activities constrain an existing right of use, land-holders may be paid compensation.

The prohibited acts provisions are intended principally to prevent the large-scale destruction of forest or forest products. They are not intended to prevent people or public authorities from going about their day-to-day business, where effects on the World Heritage area are minimal. Examples of the latter might include small scale domestic clearing round a house site or routine maintenance of public utilities such as roads and powerlines. Permits will be issued for such activities and broadly based exemptions developed by regulation for routine low-impact activities.

The Act also provides for the appointment of authorised officers to monitor and enforce its provisions. Appointment as an authorised officer will not make the person an employee of the authority. In fact, the majority of authorised officers will already be conservation officers under the Nature Conservation Act. The provisions relating to authorised officers closely mirror those in the Nature Conservation Act. Where an offence against the Act is proven in the courts, the offender may be required to pay the cost of rehabilitation. This is social, as well as environmental, justice.

The intent of the legislation is clear. It is designed to protect the World Heritage wet tropical rainforests of northern Queensland. It will achieve this by cooperation from all levels of government, with a minimum level of disruption to the lives of those living and working in the area today. As Queenslanders and Australians, we can hold our heads high and be proud that one of the most sensitive and biologically diverse parts of the world is protected for future generations. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Slack, adjourned.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ROBINA TOWN CENTRE PLANNING AGREEMENT) BILL

Remaining Stages

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning) (11.45 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

> "That so much of Standing Orders be suspended to allow the Local Government (Robina Town Centre Planning Agreement) Bill to proceed through its remaining stages forthwith."

Motion agreed to.

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 25 November (see p. 958).

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (11.46 a.m.): As the Minister said, this legislation provides for the approval of the agreement between Robina and the Albert Shire for the

development of land for a town centre at Robina. It is not the place of the State Government to delve into the details of that most comprehensive document, which is provided as a Schedule to the Bill, because if there are in the future any problems with that agreement, that will be the responsibility of the Albert Shire Council. I might add that the Schedule is a detailed document, and it covers such matters as sewerage reticulation, roads and roadworks, parks, etc. While I find those matters of great interest, they are not the concern of State Government—they are the concern of local government, and that responsibility must be made clear.

Some three or four years ago, I visited Robina with the then Local Government Minister, Jim Randell, as a member of his local government committee. Since that time, the development in that area has been quite incredible. When completed, the residential areas of the Robina suburbs will house more than 25 000 people in about 10 000 dwellings. I was interested then to see the high density residential development area, where the housing blocks were substantially smaller than the normal 32 perch blocks that we in this country have been so used to. I wondered then whether the demand for these blocks would continue and whether, perhaps, they would lead to social problems associated with urban density. I am pleased to hear that the demand for those particular types of blocks is escalating, and my fears have not been realised with regard to any social problems. State Government involvement is in the form of a school, a proposed hospital and of course the start—or the finish, depending on how one looks at it—of the Gold Coast to Brisbane rail line. No doubt there will be many other State Government offices and facilities in this area as well.

The Robina development has evolved in line with a master plan formulated in conjunction with the local authority—the Albert Shire Council—and approved in September 1981. The area covers some 1 850 hectares, of which some 295 hectares are waterways, canals, lakes, etc. Since 1980, more than half a million trees and shrubs have been planted. The Robina town centre rezoning application was first lodged with the Albert Shire Council in July 1990 and extensively advertised throughout the area. That led to the signing of an agreement with the council in September of this year, and approval from the Albert Shire Council's Planning and Development Services Committee last week to support this Bill.

It is interesting to note the economic impact arising from the first 15 years of development of the Robina town centre, which includes the following: total construction costs, $1 billion; total employment generation, 234 400 annual jobs; economic output from Robina town centre, $17.1 billion; Federal Government revenue, $3.5 billion; State Government revenue, $296.9m; and local government revenue, $38.6m. We are talking not about a million-dollar project, but certainly a multimillion-dollar project. The Robina town centre, with an area of 350 hectares, is planned to be the major commercial business district of the Gold Coast to accommodate 100 000 square metres of retailing, 250 000 square metres of offices, hotels, cultural, recreational and community facilities, a golf course, a hospital, secondary and post-secondary education facilities and over 1 000 dwelling units. I am assured by both the member for the area, Mr Bob Quinn, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Rob Borbidge, that this Bill is welcome and necessary, and I am happy to be guided by them in this matter. I also appreciate the briefings that I have received from the Minister's departmental officers, and Rob Hill and Geoff Rossely from Robina. We support the legislation.

Mr D'ARCY (Woodridge) (11.51 a.m.): I rise to support the Bill as well. As the Opposition spokesperson said, the Minister has briefed the Opposition well on this Bill which is passing through the Parliament a little more quickly than usual, because it is necessary to get jobs under way. What was outlined by the Opposition spokesman regarding the history of Robina is accurate. There are a couple of points that I wish to make. One is in relation to the overall planning. Robina is the type of development that is beneficial to Queensland. I have seen the type of development that is proposed in the forward planning for the next decade and probably into the next century. All the features to which the honourable member referred—smaller dwelling blocks, the green streets, and the town centre development—are incorporated in Robina. It is probably

the best development of its type in Queensland. Honourable members would be aware of a few similar developments in which development control plans have had to be prepared. Mr Deputy Speaker, I think one is at Forest Lake in your area and another in Fitzgibbon, and there will be another one soon in Springfield. Those developments do not currently conform directly with the Local Government Act, so in the longer term it is necessary to have legislation such as this.

One of the things that should occur in time is the expansion of the Local Government Act to take into consideration the strategic and development plans for these types of cities. The Western Australian State Government undertook the Jingalor development in Perth, which is an excellent development. The same type of agreement as the one we are discussing also applied to that development. I believe that the Western Australian development has reached the stage at which the railway line is about to be constructed. It is a full city development with more infrastructure than there is at the moment at Robina, where the shopping areas will open shortly. The chief engineer and one of the design architects was Michael Kerry, who is now working with the Brisbane City Council, so he might be able to bring some of the Jingalor ideas to the south-east area of Queensland. This type of development requires overall planning. I am sure that the Minister is looking down the track at reviewing the Local Government Act so that this type of development will benefit south-east Queensland and will be more widespread in the future.

Development of the shopping centre is due to start virtually straightaway and will provide jobs, which is another reason why it is important for this legislation to be passed. The sustainability of jobs and the viability of the Government's job creation program depend on this legislation. The development is estimated to cost in the vicinity of $250m. It has already been mentioned that construction of the railway station, the railway line, the police station and a high school will be completed. The significance of the railway line is felt very deeply by me because, when I was the member for Albert, the railway line was the focal point of election campaigns in the district. All honourable members will recall that it was the previous National Party Government that tore up the railway line. At that time, the Labor Opposition placed on record that members of the National Party represented most of the electorates in the area. The National Party not only pulled up the railway line but also sold the land on which it had been constructed as well as the land on what is now the town centre at Robina. Its action was a tragedy for the Gold Coast area.

The present Government plans to extend the railway line to the Gold Coast. Already, railway officials have visited the area and have spoken to Arthur Earle regarding extension of the rail line. Presently, the railway line extends to the town centre at Robina, but it will be necessary to extend it to the beaches, which will probably occur at some time in the future. Those plans would have come into effect much more easily if the Railway Department had been able to keep the town centre areas and land between Coolangatta and Southport that it owned when the previous National Party Government was in office. Of course, in spite of the advice it had been given at that time, the National Party Government could not wait to sell off the land. I can still recall Cec Carey's involvement when the railway line was torn up and the land sold. At that time, this Parliament was abused by the National Party, and there was little in the way of accountability procedures at the time to bring it to book. It is history now that Cec Carey had shares in the local transport company, Shepherd's, which eventually became Wood's. Over the years, this Parliament has been abused by previous Governments. When looking to the future, this Government must ensure continuity of the accountability it has established.

The railway line from Brisbane to the Gold Coast will be a tremendous bonus to the area, but it will still be necessary to construct tunnels and branch lines to disperse passengers among the beach areas and other areas of the Gold Coast. The Robina development has been a valuable adjunct to the Gold Coast from a business point of view. Although a great deal of money has been made out of the development, it has been well spread around. It has not been a one-off development or messy. It has

complied with every piece of legislation that has been introduced recently and, importantly, the development meets modern standards. Reference has been made to smaller blocks and the green street program. At Robina, the mixture of development, right down to retirement village development, is probably the best that there is in Queensland. It is not as big and does not involve as much work as some developments in other States, but if it progresses well, it could become that type of development in the future. I welcome the legislation. I am pleased to support the Minister in his introduction of it.

Mr QUINN (Merrimac) (11.57 a.m.): I, too, am pleased to support the Bill, especially as Robina constitutes a substantial proposition of my electorate of Merrimac. It is on that basis that I make my contribution to the debate today. The agreement is most comprehensive because it addresses every aspect of town planning that will occur within the defined site. The agreement contains 150 pages and it is probably a ground breaker in terms of an agreement between a council and a developer in Queensland. It provides that the majority of the infrastructure costs will be met by the developer. In bringing the agreement to this stage, approximately two years' work has gone into the master plan. The Robina Land Corporation, which is the developer, has spent in the order of $10m to this time, so it has a substantial investment on the line, without taking into account the ongoing investment which will occur from today onwards. As the member for Callide said, the expected investment will be in the vicinity of $1 billion over the next 15 to 20 years.

The master plan shows that the development covers a site of 424 hectares, which is almost equivalent to 1 000 acres. In designing the master plan, the Robina Land Corporation searched the world to select the best practices and employed internationally known architects and town-planners to come up with a most detailed master plan. The document that forms part of the Bill is meant to be read in conjunction with the set of plans that have been lodged with the Local Government Department. Plan No. 24 is mentioned in the agreement, and I have also seen accompanying plans that go with the agreement which are held by Robina Land Corporation. When one inspects those plans, it can be seen that almost every aspect of the master plan has been designated, right down to specifications for the roads and drainage easements across Mudgeeraba flood plain, which forms a substantial part of the master plan area, through to the library facilities that will be built by the Robina Land Corporation and then leased back to the Albert Shire Council. Provision is also made for the saving of historical trees within the master plan area. One can see that, in the past two years, Robina has done a significant amount of work to bring the plan and the agreement to their current stage.

When one looks at the land use of the 424 hectares, one finds that the open space region—the lakes, the parks and the golf course—will constitute about 38 per cent of the total site. When one adds to that the major road network, which is another 11 per cent or 12 per cent, one finds that almost half of the area is deemed to be open space. The retail precinct, which was mentioned by a previous speaker in the debate, takes in only 5 per cent of the site. The shopping centre is not the major aspect of the master plan. It is, relatively speaking, a very minor aspect to it. There are cultural entertainment facilities, indoor sports, a hotel, showrooms, fast food outlets, education facilities, a hospital and residential and retail areas. The Robina town centre comprises a total of some 424 hectares. The town plan is expertly planned and is of international standard.

The legislation marks the culmination of the project—the last part of the Robina development. Over the past 10 years, Robina has been developing a substantial residential estate on the Gold Coast. This project will establish more residential areas. Robina will become the hub of the mid Gold Coast area. The master plan shows that the transport network has been worked into the development. There is a major bus interchange. The railway has already been mentioned. Robina's proximity to the Gold Coast and the Pacific Highway means that it will be a major public transport centre on the Gold Coast.

The total investment over the 15 to 20 year period was mentioned in terms of $1 billion. Approximately 18 000 jobs will be created. In the medium term, investment of $300m in the first three years is anticipated. From that will flow about 4 500 new jobs. In the short term, following very quickly on the passage of the Bill—within the next six months—Robina plans to let contracts for the construction of the town centre, the commercial precinct, which will create 1 600 jobs. That commercial precinct will take approximately two years to construct. From then on, it will be a sequential development moving from the commercial centre to the rest of the development.

Mention has already been made of some of the Government services that will be provided. I know that the Government is somewhat restricted or constrained by its approach to the provision of those services. I urge the Government to take into account that this is a master plan that is being sequentially developed. Government services—the railway, the hospital and the new high school—are an integral part of the plan. All those services need to come on line at the appropriate time, otherwise the area will suffer from a lack of Government services. Although that may not be within the Minister's portfolio, I urge the Government to take on board that concern. This is not something that will happen overnight. Robina is an ongoing substantial development, which requires the Government to enter into the spirit of the Act.

Although the master plan was well received by members of this House, some concerns have been expressed about its impact on neighbouring properties. The owner of one property—without naming him, I can say that he has classified himself as a farmer—is somewhat concerned. He has a genuine concern. If other agreements such as this are struck, because of the nature of the integrated transport system and the infrastructure that it requires, the development will have an impact on neighbouring properties. It cannot be viewed in isolation—as having no impact on surrounding property owners. A portion of that particular property owner's land will be resumed to provide a major roadway. In the future, should he wish to embark upon a development——

Mr Mackenroth: A garage there or something like that.

Mr QUINN: Yes. In the future, should he wish to embark upon a development application of his own, he may very well be restricted by the use to which the resumed portion of his land is put.

Mr Mackenroth: He's just applied to put a garage there.

Mr QUINN: Has he? I will take the Minister's word for it. When one considers the railway that will stretch across the flood plain and the height of the railway bridges that will be necessary—and there may be canal developments, also—one understands his concern about the impact that the development will have on his property. It is an extremely balanced development plan and agreement. As I said, Robina will be meeting the major infrastructure costs. It will comply with the requirements of the Albert Shire Council. Should any of the land be onsold to third parties, which is part of Robina's strategy, those third parties also will be forced to comply with the agreement.

The development is substantial. It is now one of the very few bright stars on the economic horizon in Australia. For the Gold Coast, it will reaffirm our position as one of the leading places in Australia in which to invest. Certainly, Robina will be a major attraction for the mid Gold Coast. It will provide a way of life and services that currently the Gold Coast does not have. It is an agreement the standard of which will certainly set a precedent for future developments should they come before the House in this form.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning) (12.07 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members for their support. In particular, I thank members of the Opposition for their support in allowing the Bill to go through all stages this week. Members showed their support for the way in which

Robina will be developed. The fact that a development plan is part of the agreement will enable proper development over the whole of that site. It is probably a bit different from the normal way in which developments are undertaken, when rezoning is done on an individual basis. In this instance, the development is unique. We are building a whole new town centre. This is perhaps the best way to deal with it.

In the 1980s, Governments in Queensland found that there was a need to really change from the very rigid way in which matters were dealt with, and we saw the development of Sanctuary Cove and the Paradise Centre at the Gold Coast. It seems that the Gold Coast is leading in this type of development. That is probably because so many people are moving to that area and so much development is occurring there. There has also been integrated resort development. I think we need to look always at trying to move into the future so that the type of planning we approve will allow local authorities and developers to move ahead. Although we still allow people to object, we must ensure always that there is the opportunity for them to object.

Two years ago, people had the opportunity to object to this particular development. It was advertised. Although the passage of this agreement will stop any objections to future development, the opportunity to object existed two years ago. Many thousands of people moved into Robina with the knowledge and the belief that this town centre would be built. I am sure that they would welcome it because it is a part of the area into which they wanted to move and it is a part of the way of life that they have bought into. I thank members for their support of this legislation. Of course, the important thing for our State is that it will provide a lot of development.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 9 and Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (PALM BEACH LAND) BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 November (see p. 488).

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (12.11 p.m.): I am getting a bit concerned about all of this sweetness and light and agreement across the Chamber. When are you going to do something so that I can kick you to death?

Mr Mackenroth: We didn't normally get on so well, did we?

Mrs McCAULEY: No. It is a bit of a worry, actually. I have not been in contact in any way with the families involved in the Palm Beach subsidence problem, but I, along with many others throughout the State, have seen current affairs programs showing the crumbling state of their homes, and the obvious distress of the people who own those homes, people who bought the land and built those homes in good faith. It is a tragic and upsetting situation which has taken many years to resolve, and for this reason we on this side will not be opposing this legislation. It will not suit everyone, that is for sure, but it is a solution, and probably the best one that will be obtained given the large

number of families and houses involved and the long and convoluted history which has led to this subsidence occurring. The Minister said that this matter has been brewing since 1968 and has been a serious problem since 1983. It is good then that this legislation will finalise the issue so that those people concerned can get on with their lives and put behind them this matter over which they had no control and for which they were not to blame.

The Bill provides for two funds to be set up, one to settle claims and the other to provide the operational costs of settling the whole matter. The second fund, the project support fund, will be provided by the State Government and will also stretch to the acquisition of those properties, at current market value, on which are houses which are beyond repair. The settlement of claims fund will have contributions from the Gold Coast City Council, Suncorp and NZI Insurance and will contain an amount of about $3.4m which will be administered by the Public Trustee. I understand that all damage will be assessed on the same basis and that houses will be grouped into different categories and hence will receive a different rate in the dollar compensation. I am not sure that that is entirely correct. That is how I understand it. I would like the Minister to clarify that for me. Of the 112 houses which have been damaged, I understand that the owners of 106 of them have agreed to participate in this scheme.

I fervently hope that this situation does not arise again in this State, but of course we have no guarantee on that. It is a timely and salutary lesson, however, for those who complain about local authority red tape, that the red tape often provides a protection which, if circumvented, can lead to all sorts of heartache and financial pain. The Bill contains disincentives to the querying of assessments, no doubt in an effort to get the matter finally and totally resolved. I commend the Government for tackling this very difficult problem, and I support the legislation.

Mrs WOODGATE (Kurwongbah) (12.14 p.m.): I am pleased to speak, albeit briefly, in support of the Local Government (Palm Beach Land) Bill. As the member for Callide has just explained, the thrust of the legislation is to offer a practical approach solution to a problem which first raised its head as far back as 1968. In 1983, the rumblings began in earnest and it became apparent that there was indeed a serious problem, and the Gold Coast City Council and the then State Government were given notice by the residents in the affected homes at Palm Beach that they expected their elected representatives to come to the party and help solve a most unsolvable situation.

I turn to the history of this matter. In 1980, some 130 houses were located at Palm Beach. Since then, those houses have suffered severe damage as a result of land subsidence caused by a number of factors. The land on which the houses were built was reclaimed from swamps. No party involved in the land development has ever admitted liability, with the extent of liability believed to vary from site to site. Many owners have filed claims in the courts, but most of those owners do not have the resources to prosecute the matter. Because of the Limitations of Actions Act, many of them no longer have any standing.

I place on record that the Government, through this Bill, is honouring a pre-election commitment given in 1989 to those unfortunate residents that, when elected to power, a Labor Party Government would use its best endeavours to resolve the issue. During the first term of this Government, the then Minister for Housing and Local Government, Tom Burns, worked tirelessly in seeking a solution. I place on record my appreciation of the Minister's efforts and the appreciation of those residents who have damaged properties. They are most thankful for his determination to find a satisfactory solution.

It would be easy to stand in this Chamber and heap blame on this person and that person, and argue the pros and cons as to who should bear the brunt of the responsibility for what has happened. However, that does not help the situation at all. The time for recriminations and accusations should be put behind us. With the enactment of this legislation, a more positive position and stance is being taken by this Government. As the Minister pointed out in his second-reading speech, advice received

indicates that complex and variable factors contributed to the damage. Given the fact that this matter has been around for 24 years, I believe the only way to go is ahead, not backwards. With this Bill, the Government is endeavouring to find a practical solution in an effort to provide at least some satisfaction to those householders—or, rather, house owners—fairly and reasonably.

Much investigation has been undertaken to find that practical solution. However, no amount of financial remuneration will wipe out the heartbreak, the stress and the bad health caused as a consequence of seeing one's home literally fall down before one's eyes. Honourable members should put themselves in the position of home owners who, through no fault of their own, have to stand by and watch helplessly as the family home continues to deteriorate as bureaucrats argue between themselves; nothing seems to be being done to remedy the situation, and they believe that nobody seems to care. Let us hope that some easing of their problems will result from this legislation. The passage of this legislation will see the establishment of two funds. The member for Callide adequately described the setting up of those funds. The first fund is to be called the Palm Beach Land (Settlement of Claims) Fund. The second fund is to be known as the Project Support Fund. The legislation clears the way for the Gold Coast City Council to contribute an amount of not more than one and a half million dollars to the fund. It witnesses the fact that Suncorp Insurance and Finance and NZI Insurance Australia Limited have indicated their willingness to contribute to the fund to the extent that they could be considered to be liable under policies held by them. An estimate of moneys to be contributed to this fund is $3.4m, which funds will be used exclusively for settling claims from affected householders.

The Project Support Fund can be broken up into two parts. There is an administration component of $450,000 and a property acquisition component of $750,000. The latter part will be used exclusively towards acquisition of the properties in which damage to homes is so bad that it is considered they are unable to be repaired. I place on record that the acquisition of those properties will be at current market prices. I believe that is a fair thing. Nobody will be forced to sell. The acquisitions will take place with the owners only on a voluntary purchase contract basis. There will be no compulsory acquisition of those properties—I repeat, "no compulsory acquisition"—regardless of the state of the homes. After acquisition of the damaged properties, the damaged structures will be taken away by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning. At that stage, a decision will be taken as to the best use for the land. For example, the department may well elect to sell on the open market; it may elect to use the land as an asset, but that is further down the track and I will leave that to another day. The main thing is that, if they decide to avail themselves of the opportunity to do so, the owners can sell to the department at current market prices. I think that the line will be forming on the right as soon as this legislation is enacted.

I turn to the owners of damaged properties which are believed to be able to be rectified, who agree to participate in the scheme. At this stage, it should be pointed out that the fund can be distributed only if 90 per cent of owners agree to participate in the scheme. It is my understanding that, to date, 106 owners out of the maximum 112 owners have indicated their willingness to participate in the scheme. The properties will be assessed for the value of the damages, after which an offer of settlement will be made to each owner. It is a matter of regret that such offers can only be a proportion of the total value of the assessed damages. However, the Government lives in the real world. It does not have a bottomless bucket of dollars. It realises that money available in the Settlement of Claims Fund is not sufficient to fully cover the total sum of all the damages sustained by the home owners. Some estimates have put the cost of making the dwellings safe and secure as high as $6m. During his second-reading speech, the Minister advised that, at this stage, a figure of approximately 55c to 65c in the dollar—or 65 per cent of the assessed damage value—could be expected to be offered. I am sure that every honourable member in this House would like to see this figure higher. The Minister pointed out that it is probably more than those home owners could reasonably

have expected to obtain if all the parties—of which there are 112—had decided to pursue a course of litigation to its finality.

The scheme will employ the following process: the affected eligible owners will register a claim. Experienced assessors will evaluate the cost of effecting the repairs and notify the owners. All the assessed costs will be totalled and divided into the claim fund. The settlement offer will be 50c to 65c in the dollar. The payment offers will be made to the individual owners or their beneficiaries, subject to their accepting that the payment is for full and final settlement of all claims. Upon receipt of acceptance by the owners, the payment will be made by the Public Trustee, who will manage the claim fund. When all claims have been settled, the scheme will be shut down and the legislation will be repealed. Every cloud has a silver lining. If we look to the future, we can say hopefully that this situation will not arise again—let us hope it does not—mainly due to the greater awareness that council officers have of the various provisions which apply with regard to their responsibilities to exercise their proper duty of care. I am more than happy to support the Bill.

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh) (12.22 p.m.): In joining the debate on this Bill, which is designed to give some relief to the plight of property owners in the Palm Beach area who have suffered for many years from land subsidence, I do so with a sense of sadness for the suffering that those property owners have endured, as other speakers have said, through no fault of their own. They bought land, built their homes or bought existing houses in good faith and, in many instances, put all of their available resources into that investment—the dream of all Australians; ownership of their own homes. Although this Bill may not provide a perfect solution, I thank the former Minister, the Deputy Premier, for setting it up. Throughout this long drawn-out issue, he was the only person who seemed capable of achieving a solution.

Mr Beattie: Well done.

Mrs GAMIN: I thank the honourable member. Although I have not checked *Hansard* fully, I know that this subject has been raised more than once in this House over the past five or six years. Therefore, I will give only a brief outline of the events that led up to this Bill. Over 20 years ago, land at Palm Beach was opened up and developed in various stages. The problems that are now before the Parliament were not evident immediately, although they later emerged in two stages. Ti-tree, other scrub and vegetation were cleared. Vegetation was not removed or burnt, but bulldozed and covered with sand. Dredging took place and some canal systems were formed. Eventually, the development sites were grassed, pegs were put in and the subdivisions were then sold off as building blocks.

The first damage appeared during the 1970s, which was subsidence as a result of decay of vegetation. The second stage of damage surfaced when the Gold Coast City Council, in line with its whole of city sewerage plan, decided to sewer the area. As is customary with sandy areas that have close subsurface water, the process of dewatering was undertaken. As a result, the rotting vegetation shifted and collapsed. As the subsidence became more and more serious, house foundations shifted, cracks appeared in internal and external walls, windows and doors jammed and in the very worst cases, some homes were damaged beyond repair. In fact, one home has been demolished.

However, after almost 10 years of heartbreaking struggle, no point is served by residents going through future years of the futility of endless legal argument and endless legal costs. Indeed, I understand that the advice that they received was that legal action would not result in establishing legal fault. Over the past 10 years, enormous publicity has been given to this problem, which has not helped the stricken householders. Politicians of every shape, size and every political colour across the spectrum—Ministers, experts—have all tried to make a name for themselves. However, they have done nothing for the people whose hopes have been raised, then dashed with monotonous regularity. This situation has most certainly led to a quite unnecessary increased level of stress imposed on the afflicted householders. For that reason, I thank

the Deputy Premier for his efforts, which were the only efforts that bore any fruit for the householders caught up in these sad circumstances.

When the Palm Beach area was transferred to the new electorate of Burleigh, I was careful to refrain from trying to make any political capital for myself out of their suffering. Instead, I contacted the executive of the association that was formed to promote the interests of the residents and offered to support them in whatever way they saw fit. During the course of my campaign, I doorknocked the whole of Palm Beach before Easter. In many instances, the residents who lived in the affected houses welcomed the fact that I had taken the trouble to walk through the area. They invited me into their homes and explained to me their circumstances. Of course, by then I was also aware that the Deputy Premier had set moves in train to try to reach some sort of solution, and I certainly did not want to damage any negotiations that might be occurring. The association's executive was anxious that nothing should be said or done to disturb those negotiations.

At the invitation of the executive of the association that was formed to act on behalf of the owners of the subsiding homes, on 3 September I attended the meeting at which the proposals contained in this Bill were presented publicly to the residents. It was made clear that the amount of compensation that is offered falls short of full compensation that the association, or the action group, had hoped to achieve. I know that some residents expressed extreme disappointment and questioned why the executive did not carry out further negotiations. However, it was also made clear that although the negotiation process may not have achieved fairness or justice, it achieved what was possible in the circumstances. I have referred to the notes that I made of the comments of those people who attended that meeting on that evening of 3 September. One point that was raised was that such problems are not unique to Palm Beach. Other shonky and shoddy land developments have taken place. However, on a more positive note, there is also now an awareness by State and local governments that land legislation will be better enforced in the future.

I commend the work that has been carried out by the Australian Commercial Disputes Centre (Queensland) Limited and the Department of Local Government in the long period leading up to the introduction of this Bill. I commend the former Minister, the Deputy Premier, on ensuring that the matter would be ultimately resolved. As I said, the residents are disappointed that they will not receive as compensation the full cost of proper repairs. Some people will be able to top up their compensation amount and effect full repairs and others will simply only be able to afford relatively minor repairs. The Minister recognised that fact in his second-reading speech when he stated—

> "Unfortunately, the offer made to each claimant can only be a proportion of the total value of the damage assessed, as the amount of moneys available in 'the settlement of claims fund' will not cover the total value of damage sustained."

During his speech, the Minister also accepted the residents' disappointment and stated that it was the best that could be achieved and was more than could be reasonably expected to be obtained if all parties, of which there are 112, had pursued a course of litigation to finality. As I have said already, the legal advice was that any future legal action would not result in establishing legal fault, so satisfactory damages would not be achieved by costly legal action.

This Bill will give the Gold Coast City Council the legal ability to contribute its negotiated amount of $1.5m. Suncorp and NZI Insurance will provide a further amount. The amount contributed by the Government, which is $1.2m, is not designed to create a compensation precedent for claims from all over Queensland. Instead, it will be a support fund to cover administrative costs and in some instances will provide funds for property acquisition where the damage to the houses is such that they cannot be repaired. I have two reasons for being pleased to join the debate on this Bill which, of course, is supported by the Opposition. The first reason is that it is important that the Palm Beach property owners, who have suffered so terribly over so many years, are given the public recognition that they deserve of the heartache, stress, illness, grief and

agony that they have undergone over all this time. Residents have shown me their homes. They have talked to me about their trauma with tears in their eyes, and in many instances tears came to my own eyes.

I pay tribute to the executive of the association that has worked so hard and supported the residents for so long, that is, the Palm Beach Action Group. I refer particularly to Mr Keith Smith and Mr George Done. Those two gentlemen have put in hundreds—thousands—of hours of effort. They have engaged in the delicate negotiations to reach this solution. The people of the affected area of Palm Beach owe Keith Smith and George Done an enormous debt of gratitude for what they have done. This mammoth effort has also taken its own personal toll on Keith and George. I have told them that I will of course continue my support of their efforts, as they plan to continue their struggle to obtain a better deal for their association members. For instance, the subject land and houses were sold by real estate agents, members of the REIQ. The association's executive believes that the suitability of the land for housing was overstated. I understand that it is the intention of the executive to argue strongly for the remainder of the compensation to be provided from the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Fund. The executive has my assurance of all the support that I can give it.

The association's executive has referred me to a statement made in this House by the then Minister for Justice to the effect that the Minister has the ability to approve payout from that fund upon application to himself. That *Hansard* reference is 17 July 1991, page 157. I understand that the action group has been advised recently that these matters will continue to be handled by the former Justice Minister, the Honourable Glen Milliner, from his current portfolio as Minister for Consumer Affairs. As senior departmental officers of the Minister for Local Government said to me in September, and again as recently as this week, it has been an absolute miracle that at least the current degree of resolution of these serious problems has reached this stage. The Palm Beach action group agrees, and hopes that if one miracle can be managed, two miracles are not impossible.

I have also been asked by the association to express its appreciation of the efforts made by the Deputy Premier, as the former Minister for Local Government, the present Minister and the Department of Local Government. The association also expresses its appreciation to the Mayor of the Gold Coast, Alderman Lex Bell, for his part in those delicate negotiations with the Gold Coast City Council. It should be noted that the contributions made by the council and the insurance companies are not made as an admission of liability in this problem, but that agreement was reached without prejudice and as a matter of goodwill.

As I conclude, there is one point that I hope the Minister can clarify in his reply, that is, the matter of pensioners receiving social security benefits, and how those benefits will be affected by the injection of the compensation amount into their financial affairs. This matter was brought up at the public meeting of 3 September. One answer given was that the recipient would be in the same position as if he won a court case. But of course, this is not good enough for those whose pension amount could be reduced, even though the amount received is for the express purpose of home repairs. So I ask the Minister whether he would be willing to negotiate with the Department of Social Security so that pensioner householders are not disadvantaged in respect of their fortnightly pension payments?

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning) (12.33 p.m.), in reply: I thank Opposition members for their support of this legislation. Two matters were raised by the member for Burleigh. As to the last point that she raised in relation to how payments from the fund would affect pensioners—I am unaware of how that could affect them. However, I am prepared to make representations to the Federal Minister for Social Security in relation to these

payments to ascertain whether there would be any effect on social security payments. The point raised by the honourable member as to whether or not it will have any effect is not something of which I am aware, but I give an undertaking that I will make representations to the Minister for Social Security in relation to that point.

The member for Kurwongbah spoke about the 106 people out of a total of 112 people who have now accepted the scheme that is being offered. That leaves six people who have not accepted it at this stage. The reason that those six people have not accepted the scheme is that we simply cannot find them. It is not that they are saying that they will not accept the scheme, it is just that the department has been unable to find them. They are absentee owners, and we have been unable to make contact with them.

As to the issue of further action by the action group—it should be stated here that in relation to the payout that will be made to those people at Palm Beach, they will be signing a waiver of any further rights to claims. This has been explained to them, and it is part of the process. It would be wrong if they felt that they could have gone through this process, had something negotiated to the stage at which they had all accepted it, got it, and then decided to have another go. That is just not acceptable. We have negotiated the settlement that is contained in this legislation. The local authority and the insurance companies are playing their part. The Government is also playing its part with the money that it is putting forward. I do not believe that further payments will be made by the local authority or the insurance companies, and there certainly will be no further money from the State Government. I understand what the honourable member said, but I believe that she will find that if those people were to try to make that sort of claim, it would be very difficult for them to justify it, having signed that waiver of any further rights to claim.

Mrs Gamin: I understand that they have already made that sort of application.

Mr MACKENROTH: Yes, but I believe that they will have to look closely at the waiver that they are signing. There is one point that I would like to raise. The Government is happy to be playing its part in this scheme that is being put together. State Governments, Federal Governments and local authorities do respond to instances in which groups of people are affected—in this case by subsidence. I recall that some people in Kingston were affected by toxic waste. The State Government and the local authority responded to people's needs in that area. As to that matter raised by the member for Burleigh—I believe that although some people are accepting the settlement from the Government of 60 per cent, or whatever it will work out to be in the end, they do so reluctantly and really want 100 per cent. While it would be great if the Government could always pay out 100 per cent for every problem that people get into, for a number of reasons that just cannot be done. If the Government always did that, people would stop insuring their houses. Honourable members should consider what that would cost.

When I was Minister for Emergency Services, I visited Charleville following the flood. The whole township was flooded, and the Government had to respond to that. I met one couple who had had their caravan washed away. They were living in a caravan because two weeks previous their house, which was not insured, had been burnt down. The Government could not do anything for them in relation to their house burning down, but it helped them to rehabilitate their caravan. However, we were able to help the people down the road whose house was washed away in the flood by giving them a new house. The reason that the Government looked at that as being different was that those individuals were all affected at the one time by a flood, whereas in the instance of the person's house burning down it was only one individual who was affected at one time. I have thought about that instance. At the time, I thought that the way in which we

as politicians react to large groups of people rather than to single individuals was very strange. If the Government rebuilt the house for that one couple, nobody would insure their houses any more. They would say, "The Government will fix it up." Of course, anyone who had a house which was not in good condition would burn it down so that the Government would fix it up. The Government would not be able to find the money to do that. When a large area is affected by a natural disaster or a disaster such as this, it is the Government's responsibility to act. In the case of a flood, it destroys a whole town. In this instance, a whole community has been destroyed, as also occurred at Kingston. The Government must respond. The people who are receiving the response that is coming in this instance need to think about the one individual at Charleville who got nothing.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 18 and Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

POLLUTION OF WATERS BY OIL AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 5 November (see p. 76).

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (12.42 p.m.): In speaking to the Pollution of Waters by Oil Amendment Bill 1992, I will raise a couple of points about which I have reservations. The existing penalties for oil spillage off our shores, ocean rivers and canals is long overdue for review. The maximum fine of $50,000 that was struck in 1973 is undoubtedly long overdue for review, and the Opposition supports that claim. However, I will mention a couple of points. Fines to the tune of $200,000 for individuals and $1m for corporate operators can also act as a lever to cause the master of any ship to act with dishonesty rather than come forward in honesty on the occasion of a genuine mishap. We could say that the legislation is a bandage to bring fines up to date under today's scale of costs. Well might it be said that it is not the words that count so much as the interpretation that is read into them. And so it is with this legislation.

To the alert ear of a ship owner reading between the lines, the message is: if we were in the ship repair business, we would probably say, "Have your ship repairs done in Queensland to avoid our enormous fines." I realise that the fines are on an international scale, but that could be read into the legislation. In spite of an inquiry some years ago under Commissioner Frank Costigan, QC, the waterfront remains a wolf's lair of corruption, pay-offs and bribes. This legislation, with its exorbitant fines and nothing else, gives the impression of politely saying that doing business with a Queensland port means having one's vessel repaired here also. It gives the impression also that Queensland would be less disposed to hold the vessel responsible if it were a client of a Queensland ship repairer. Why does it sound like that? Because it fits the overseas impression of the Australian waterfront being rife with kickbacks, bribes and corruption.

Government members interjected.

Mr JOHNSON: Members opposite should listen. Those impressions are particularly strong when it comes to allegations of collusion between the waterfront unions and the Australian Marine Safety Authority, with alleged bribes and pay-offs to detain vessels for safety and seaworthiness shortcomings. After all, it is said that

seaworthiness goes to the absolute centre of oil spill legislation. The latest incident of alleged bribery involving the bulk carrier Aka is only one of a series of reported incidents. At least one major shipping company will no longer call at Port Kembla, regardless of what inducement is offered, whilst others add loadings or conditions to their rates in anticipation of extra charges and delays. Of course, a vessel detained for seaworthiness repairs cannot be repaired by the ship's crew. That is painters and dockers' work or amalgamated metalworkers and shipwrights' work. How many men does it take to make the repair? A good number, it seems!

I will mention Port Kembla again. Last year, Port Kembla employed three full-time painters and dockers and 16 regular part-timers. When group certificates were issued, 200 came back marked "not known as this address". It seems that the practice of employing an extra "phantom" or two on the payroll has gone to ridiculous extremes. However, there are times that we will say, "Yes. But how do these people find a repair that does not exist? But surely more safety is better than less." It seems that this is the case at Port Kembla, and it could happen in this State. This is something that the Opposition fears.

This latest legislation must give the impression that it goes a great deal higher up than just the port authority alone, or at least it could not have been better designed to give that impression if it tried. The Minister may like to remark on recent allegations of corruption on the Australian waterfront, with substantial payments alleged for seaworthiness vessel releases. He may be able to advise the House that this does not happen in Queensland. On the other hand, he may not have had his ear to the ground enough to hear such a statement. I will assume that the Minister is genuine, but is simply unaware of the background of the canvas upon which this Bill is painted. I will assume that the Bill is completely aimed at environmental protection——

Mr Hamill: It is.

Mr JOHNSON: That is what we support.

Mr Hamill: It definitely is.

Mr JOHNSON: Well, that is good—and there is no hidden agenda. I will assume that he really thinks horrendous fines will deter the prospective polluter. However, what I cannot assume is that he is employing the appropriate tool for the job. He would still be transporting convicts for stealing a loaf of bread if it were possible to correct a wrong with a grossly disproportionate punishment. The idea of that bygone century—and in the minds of members of this Government today—was that if one imposes some extreme penalty, one can kerb a negative behaviour. As a result of this thought process we see the Pollution of Waters by Oil Amendment Bill before the House. It is the most unimaginative and uncreative effort possible on preventing oil pollution of our coastline. There is nothing here but fines, and an effort at governing by the big stick.

I am concerned about whether our marine service is going to be adequate. If the Minister wanted more than a mere opportunity to read out motherhood statements about oil pollution in his second-reading speech, why did he not put something positive and useful into the Bill? I am not about to participate in the farce. What the Opposition proposes for Queensland—or what we would like to see proposed—is a well-planned and pro-active oil pollution control policy, with an emphasis on education as the first line of defence, prevention as the second, and containment as the third. I reject the clumsy efforts at the big stick waving with huge penalty increases. This is not my idea of environmental management, even though I agree that fines have to be increased.

Mr Hamill: Are you supporting it or are you opposing it?

Mr JOHNSON: I am supporting it, but I am just pointing out a couple of issues to the attention of the Minister. I have fears that the Minister's announcements of the million-dollar fines will encourage concealment as I previously argued—the worst type of response to any marine oil spill. Resulting delay could produce consequences much worse than they would otherwise have been, had prompt notification been encouraged.

A properly developed plan is required, and the Opposition would ensure that Queensland receives such a plan integrating oil pollution protection with port authority development, marine vessel inspections, vessel design, and training and licensing of industry personnel. Instead of punishing wrongdoers after they pollute, there will be encouragement not to pollute in the first place, or, at worst, prompt notification of authorities if an incident does occur. No doubt that is what the Government has in mind, and we support that. We hope that some of those issues will be built into this agenda.

The emphasis will be on correcting unsafe marine practices, not putting people out of business with fines that would effectively mean bankruptcy for a small marine freighter or a commercial fisherman. My colleague the honourable member for Barambah will address the issue of marine fishing. The question I ask is: how will negligence be proved in the face of an accident? A further part of the plan will be reciprocal arrangements with interstate and overseas bodies to ensure vessels failing inspections in one port do not simply proceed to the next one, as is the method that Senator Bob Collins is envisaging with his database proposal which I support, as well as ensuring that overseas and interstate initiatives are fully supported by Queensland for mutual safety. I notice, for example, that the United States counterpart legislation to this Bill is the Oil Pollution Act of 1990, which requires all newly constructed tankers to be fitted with a double hull. I hope this becomes an international standard and that Australia and Queensland comply with it and enforce it in the construction of all vessels that carry pollutable type cargoes in the not-too-distant future. If we do not become more severe and adopt the harsher standards, such as the United States has, we can expect to see the older more obsolete rust buckets trading in Australian waters. No doubt that is what the Minister is about in eliminating that factor. We support that—I guarantee the Minister that.

The current status of this Bill gives the impression that all Queensland needs to do is to create a new fine schedule and suddenly "flag of convenience" rust bucket runners are going to volunteer a million dollars to Queensland every time one of their half-sinking wrecks leaks oil on our coastlines. Nothing of the sort! The capacity of a State Government to police and enforce oil pollution laws is quite limited, and the Bill does nothing to address this defect in legislation. The public grandstanding that accompanied the Kirki disaster off Western Australia last year gave a highly inflated impression of the Western Australian Government's powers to deal with marine pollution. In fact, the powers of the Western Australian Environmental Protection Authority extended to only the three mile limit baseline off that coast. Any major spill is not likely to happen inside the shallow three mile limit, and indeed the Kirki was 185 kilometres off shore when that disaster happened. Australian law has not yet established the full status of oil pollution damages. However, from a recent case in the Supreme Court of Queensland, it is clear that economic loss and proximity to the oil spill are both essential elements of the claim. It would appear, therefore, that if corrective action is taken soon after an oil spill happens and there is no damage to the environment and nobody suffers loss of earnings, a fine of any type would appear to be impossible to enforce. This is the fear held by members of the Opposition. Proceeds of fines will be applied to programs aimed at the prevention of future spills. I believe that prevention has to be placed into its true perspective. I see nothing in the Bill or in the Minister's second-reading speech about any positive uses to which the million-dollar fines will be put. The Minister should remember that it is one thing to levy a fine and announce what it will be, but it is another thing to collect it.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The member for Chermside!

Mr JOHNSON: Oil spill technology will be developed in Queensland. I hope the Minister takes notice of what I am about to say because I believe that that is particularly important for Queensland. Oil spill technology is another aspect of the pro-active and positive approach that can be taken to oil pollution control. I have been following closely recent experiments using various treated products in oil spill clean-ups. Wool

fibre absorbs a variety of oils, not only lanolin, and its property foreshadows a huge potential to develop products for environmental technology. This is not only valuable technology for Queensland, with its long and vulnerable coastline and priceless Great Barrier Reef, but also very important to the development of valuable export technology using Queensland products. The Queensland coastline stretches for 7 400 kilometres. It is therefore paramount that this State be placed in a position to address such a disaster as the one caused by the grounding of the Exxon Valdez, or a less serious disaster such as the absolute rust bucket Kirki in Western Australia.

This State has been unable to attract the kinds of facilities that are necessary to combat a major oil spill. However, there are pollution control stockpiles at Brisbane and Townsville. I understand that an oil recovery vessel worth $450,000 will soon be stationed at Townsville. These measures are good; however, the $10m Australian Marine Oil Spill Centre, with its state-of-the-art suction barge and satellite link to monitor spill movement at sea, is not based in Queensland where the risks are greatest and the consequences so vast. It is based in Geelong, and the Federal Government cannot be blamed for that as the facility is funded by the oil industry. The facility belongs right here in Queensland, adjacent to the Great Barrier Reef, and should have been attracted to Queensland in the first place. I hope that, in time, something comparable can be provided in this State. The proposals in this Bill do not appear to have been discussed with the industry. That is a natural courtesy, and also assures this House that it is not being asked to approve something that those people who are in the best position to comment have not approved first.

Overall, the Pollution of Waters by Oil Amendment Bill is supported by the Opposition. I have pointed out a couple of problems, and I know that the Minister will be looking closely at steps to improve environmental safety along Queensland's coastline. As I said, Queensland's large stretch of coastline, its valuable tourism industry—especially in the north which boasts the Great Barrier Reef and game-fishing—the extensive residential canal developments on the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, and the development of inlets in northern areas around Townsville and Cairns make it imperative that the legislation be adhered to by international shipping companies and enforced by the Government. I think the message has to be sent loud and clear that Queensland means business. I acknowledge the current trend for Australia to adopt uniform laws, but at the same time, the matter is of grave importance to this State. The Opposition has pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (12.57 p.m.): I rise to support the introduction of this Bill, which will contribute greatly to reducing the incidence of oil pollution within Queensland's waterways. This will in turn, of course, do much to protect our sensitive environment, both along the length of our wonderful and fragile coastline and also within the numerous inland river systems and streams throughout this vast State of ours. History has clearly shown that some sectors of industries involved in producing and transporting oil, or in utilising petroleum products in their everyday activities, do not always take the necessary precautions to prevent the discharge of oil into the environment. Clearly, this applies to both land-based industry and the maritime industry, and although media and community attention has primarily focused on the spillage of huge quantities of oil as a result of shipping accidents—often many thousands of tonnes in a single incident—it is reliably estimated that the greatest volume of spilled oil finding its way into the oceans of the world annually, albeit in smaller individual quantities, originates from premises on land. While the shipping industry, and particularly the tanker trade, have been responsible for the majority of disastrous oil spills worldwide, it is also of great concern that land-based industry is a significant contributor to the despoilment of our aquatic environment.

The largest quantity of oil discharged in a single incident occurring in Queensland waters resulted from the grounding of the tanker Oceanic Grandeur in Torres Strait in 1970. An estimated 2 000 tonnes of heavy oil escaped from the vessel following her grounding on a pinnacle of rock. Fortunately, however, the prevailing strong tidal influence carried the majority of oil into the open ocean, with only minor reef and

foreshore pollution sustained on a small number of islands. If a similar incident occurred within the Great Barrier Reef—for example, in the vicinity of the Whitsunday Islands or to the north of Cairns—I doubt that we would be as fortunate in escaping serious impact on our many coastal resources. Since that time, a number of other serious incidents have occurred, and I will cite a couple of the more recent examples. In January of this year, the tanker Reliable Energy discharged an estimated 35 tonnes of oil into Townsville Harbour, sullying port facilities and resulting in clean-up costs exceeding $200,000. An incident of particular concern happened in 1989, when the South Johnstone sugar mill released some 20 tonnes of fuel oil into the fragile South Johnstone River, threatening natural resources. Both of these incidents occurred because of negligent and sloppy procedures. Both could have been prevented, and are testimony to the need for stronger penalties.

The purpose of this amendment is to flag to industry that the Government is committed to protecting and preserving the environment. It sends a clear message that Queensland will not tolerate wanton acts of deliberate or negligent pollution and will penalise offenders severely. I strongly support this Bill and the implementation of increased levels of penalties for offences against the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

Mr J. N. GOSS (Aspley) (2.30 p.m.): Since the introduction of the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act in 1973, the penalties have not kept pace with the inflation over that period. A fine of up to $1m is probably acceptable for serious offences when we take into account the costs of investigating the source of the pollution, the clean-up costs and the damage that can be done—in some cases, permanent damage to the environment. Hopefully, the increased penalties will ensure that shipping in our waters and coastal industries will set up procedures and safety mechanisms that will ensure that mistakes are not made. I believe that many of the spills are accidental. However, some spills, no doubt, are the result of deliberate dumping of oil off our coast. I am sure that many of the responsible industries already have safeguards to prevent the pollution of the environment, and it is also pleasing to see that, in any proceedings, the fine to be imposed would take into account the seriousness of the pollution and the defence mounted.

One aspect of concern to me occurs in suburbia, and it is the disposal of oil into the stormwater system. In hard economic times, more people are changing their own car engine oil, and it is becoming more prevalent that people are disposing of that oil into the stormwater drainage system. Oil waste tanks are now available at three of Brisbane's rubbish tips. However, it is just so simple to pour the oil into the stormwater system, which, of course, discharges into our local streams and creeks, and the oil disposed of by people in Brisbane eventually ends up in the areas around Moreton Bay. This is an increasing problem. Although it is not major at this point, it is something that we should be concentrating on and trying to prevent. With regard to the less serious offences, such as the failure to keep proper records, I am concerned that the minimum fine is $8,000. The court should be able to determine the minimum fine against an individual for a minor offence, particularly in a case in which pollution or any damage to the environment may not have occurred. What is really needed is a good education program. That would go hand in hand with individuals who, as I said, dispose of oil into the stormwater system.

Another matter of concern which covers the safety of ships and, in particular, oil tankers along the Queensland coast is the proposed changes to the licensing of shipping pilots. A 1991 amendment to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Act made it compulsory for ships over 70 metres in length and all tankers to have a pilot when in certain designated areas. That decision was made to protect the Great Barrier Reef, in particular, from oil discharges and spills, as well as damage from toxic and other harmful substances. The proposal that causes me concern is to transfer the administration powers from the Marine Board to the Department of Transport, which, in turn, plans to free up the existing system. Those changes will allow, for example, freelance pilots. The

concern is that some of those proposed changes may allow into the piloting area cowboys who have really no commitment to this State. That is of concern to me. I know that there is a feeling that the company that is currently piloting the ships has a monopoly. We would rather have the so-called monopoly than to take the risk with pilots who may not be acceptable.

It is all very well to introduce fines, but we have to do everything that we can to prevent oil pollution. That is why our first priority should be an education program. The coalition is in favour of the increased fines. The final point that I would like to make is that, if there is an oil spill, I feel that the clean-up equipment in Queensland is inferior. The location of the equipment needs to be reviewed.

Mr BEATTIE (Brisbane Central) (2.35 p.m.): I wish to register my support for the introduction of this Bill, which will result in more stringent penalties for polluters of our fragile marine environment. In the 1991-92 financial year, the Queensland coastline endured 22 oil spills. The preservation of our natural coastal assets is of paramount importance. Queensland has more than 7 000 kilometres of coastline. Although we must acknowledge that there is an economic need to share those resources with other industries which are dependent on the use of or are involved in the transport of oil and petroleum products for their livelihood and, importantly, which are responsible for producing fuel supplies for our everyday use, measures must exist to adequately protect the coastline and, in particular, the Great Barrier Reef.

It is clear that the standards set by this Government for protecting our aquatic environment must be maintained and improved, and the security of our wonderful natural assets must in no way be compromised. The Honourable the Minister who introduced the Bill has spoken of the obvious and glaring disregard for existing penalties shown by a small sector of those important industries and of the need to introduce appropriate restraints to ensure that greater care and attention is paid to environmental responsibilities. There is no doubt that pollution of the seas has become a significant international problem in recent times. Whilst passage of the Bill will undoubtedly cause would-be polluters to think twice and to put in place necessary safeguards against the illegal discharge of oil, the Government is also preparing broader legislation to protect Queensland's maritime waters.

This legislation will incorporate the international convention for the prevention of pollution from ships, as adopted to date by Australia, and ratified by major shipping nations of the world. The convention not only addresses pollution by oil but also includes control over the discharge of noxious and harmful substances and garbage, which are of course also major sources of ocean pollution. The object of the convention, collectively known as MARPOL, is to achieve the complete elimination of international pollution and the minimisation of accidental discharges through international cooperation, strict control over operations and operating systems and the provision and maintenance of specified shipboard equipment. While the existing Pollution of Waters by Oil Act does address some of these problems, this replacement legislation will ensure that Queensland legislation is in line with technological progress in solving the problem of maritime pollution. The Bill before us today, which increases the level of penalties for pollution of Queensland waters by oil, represents a solution to the problem of protecting our environment.

In terms of the issue of education and training, which was referred to by the honourable member for Aspley and, prior to that, the honourable member for Gregory, it needs to be pointed out that they clearly had missed the fact that Queensland's port authorities and 22 local authorities between Brisbane and Cairns have been specifically trained to respond to an oil spill. In the last 12 months, the Transport Department has carried out oil pollution workshops and field exercises in most major ports. This Goss Government initiative will help to ensure that we minimise the damage done by spills.

Under the national plan to combat pollution of the sea by oil, the State Government coordinates organisations involved in responding to an oil spill. The program over the past 12 months has been a key point of that coordinating effort. The

Transport Department's training activities have been well attended by personnel from port authorities, local authorities, the oil industry and the emergency services. The scale of planning, liaison and training that needs to be undertaken in preparing for potential incidents is enormous, considering the length of the coastline and Queensland's decentralised port system. The Transport Department had a mandate to prevent and combat marine pollution. Workshops in regional ports have aimed at informing all individuals and organisations of their responsibilities and response mechanisms when confronting an oil pollution incident. Field exercises simulate oil spill situations to give officers vital hands-on experience in dealing with an emergency.

Increasing the maximum fine for dumping oil in Queensland waters from $50,000—which was totally inadequate and, in fact, a joke—to $1m in this Bill will act as an added deterrent to ship owners and masters and work hand in hand with this training and education program. The 22 oil spills over the last financial year that I referred to before are a concern. Seven incidents are being investigated or were investigated by Crown law and Commonwealth prosecutors, including the discharge of 10 tonnes of heavy fuel oil in Townsville harbour by the tanker Reliable Energy. Other cases have included the MV Alpha Star, for discharging oil in Moreton Bay, which was a matter of some concern to me. That occurred in 1991. Another case was that of the German tanker Ben Flor for the alleged discharge of oil off Caloundra in 1991.

In view of the lengthy debates that have taken place over the last few days, I will not refer to those incidents in detail. However, I will table for the information of the House newspaper cuttings detailing other incidents involving oil pollution and other pollution which I believe accurately reflect the problem and why there is a need for this legislation. Although Queensland's record for responding quickly and efficiently to oil spills was good, there is a need for ongoing training and a constant awareness of the problem and how best to cope with it. The potential for marine accidents involving the release of oil and other chemicals into Queensland waters always exists. The Transport Department's ongoing training program is ensuring that authorities are as equipped as possible to meet the threat of a major oil spill.

There is one matter, however, which I believe needs further attention, and it relates to reef pilots. In November, the Federal Government announced a compulsory reef-pilotage scheme in which all ships of 70 metres and above must carry a professional pilot when navigating through the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The only problem is that if there is failure to comply with that regulation, the fine is only $1,000. As far as I am concerned, that fine is too small. I am aware that the Minister, the Honourable David Hamill, has made representations to the Federal Government, and the honourable member for Cook, Mr Bredhauer, has raised this issue——

Mr Hamill: I have actually written now to Ros Kelly, the Federal Minister for the Environment, in relation to that matter.

Mr BEATTIE: I take that interjection and I set on record my strong support for what the Minister and the honourable member for Cook have advocated because, quite frankly, as anyone would realise, a fine of $1,000 for a major shipping line is chickenfeed. There needs to be a much more substantive fine to ensure that qualified reef pilots look after the ships when they travel through marine parks such as the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park.

I will conclude by saying that the protection of Queensland's coastline, particularly the Great Barrier Reef, is a matter of importance to all members of this House. We have seen overseas experiences in which dramatic damage has been done to coastlines and wildlife. We need to ensure that adequate protection is provided, and these legislative measures go a long way towards achieving that. I support the Bill.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (2.43 p.m.): I am not sure of the significance of white hats on the other side of the Chamber and black hats on this side. But I must say that I would rather look like the Wizard of Oz than a member of the Ku Klux Klan.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order!

Mrs McCAULEY: I feel almost apologetic about making this speech, but this is a topic that I have been concerned about for a long time, as it affects the Great Barrier Reef. When this Bill was introduced, I saw the opportunity to raise my concerns, and that is what I intend to do now. Although the Opposition supports the Government's proposed amendments to bring the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act up to date by increasing penalties to a more realistic amount, what is really needed is not so much punishment but prevention of oil spills and assurances that clean-up techniques are up to scratch, and that has to be an integral part of the picture.

Oil spills in any waters are dreadfully destructive. That such a threat should be posed on a daily basis to the Great Barrier Reef, Australia's great natural wonder of the world, is frightening. But this threat is very real. Some 200 tankers, each carrying up to 100 000 tonnes of oil, transit the inner route through the Great Barrier Reef annually. With the development of oilfields in southern Papua New Guinea and the Timor Gap, this number is likely to increase. A further 1 800 large ships, each carrying up to 500 000 tonnes of fuel oil, transit the reef each year. And the fact is that the ships use the far more dangerous route between the reef and the coastline because it saves about 600 kilometres and, hence, money.

To complicate matters further, the reef is so complex that areas are still uncharted—no-one knows what is there. Clearly, the risk of a major oil spill is fairly high. The probability is further increased when one realises that many tankers are single-hulled, which means that less than 4 cm of steel separates the oil from the reef. Also, most tankers these days are foreign charters, registered under flags of convenience in countries in which taxes and regulations are favourable to the vessel owners. This makes regulation very difficult. Furthermore, few tankers have been built since the glut of the seventies, which has created an ageing fleet and a lot of metal fatigue. This is precisely what caused the break-up of the Kirki, resulting in a 20 000-tonne oil spill off the coast of Western Australia last year. The danger posed by those ships is as obvious as their nickname—coffin ships. The last great oil spill on the reef was in 1970, when the Oceanic Grandeur grounded in Torres Strait and spilled about 1.3 million litres of oil. At one stage, the slick measured 60 kilometres long and 1.5 kilometres wide. More than 18 000 litres of detergent was used to clean it up. It was this disaster which first prompted Government legislation. Having visited that Torres Strait area when I was first elected to Parliament, I would be horrified to see something like that happen in what is really a beautiful part of Australia.

Since then and until the middle of last year, there has been an average of one spill a year in the reef region and 10 serious mishaps in four years. Those include the Oceanic Grandeur and then, six months later, the heavily-laden Mobil Endeavour, which ran aground on the eastern approach to the Prince of Wales Channel and ripped open one of its storage tanks, which, fortunately, was empty. In March 1985, TNT AL1 Trans ran aground on Lady Musgrave Island and suffered hull and structural damage. Luckily, it was not an oil tanker. In August of the same year, the freighter Maritime Gardenia grounded on the Albert Patches just near the Prince of Wales Channel and caused what was described as "a small amount of oil pollution". In 1987, the River Embley, a bulk carrier, also became a victim of the Prince of Wales Channel.

Since July 1991, an oil slick occurred off the coast of Cape York Peninsula which threatened a major mangrove area north of Cairns; a spill polluted 30 kilometres of Sunshine Coast beaches; another 10-kilometre slick affected the Sunshine Coast; and spillage occurred in the Townsville Harbour. Those incidents all occurred in a matter of less than eight months. Nevertheless, we have to date been lucky. But how long will it be before our rabbit's foot warranty runs out? From the list of close calls I have outlined, one gets the feeling that we are sailing close to the wind. Statistically, we are told that a major oil spill on the reef is improbable—a one in a million chance. Murphy's Law provides that, if a disaster can happen, it will. We must examine also what constitutes a major spill. How many thousands of years' damage can one major spill do, and how much damage do all those annual minor spills do? The Great Barrier Reef is a feature of Queensland's tourist industry. It is the biggest drawcard for overseas tourists. It is one

of the world's seven great natural wonders. How can we rest its survival on an ever-changing set of statistics?

During my research into this area, I noted that the majority of spills are not just accidents of fate; they are due to human error, which surely makes such long statistical odds considerably dubious. It is sad that the human element responsible for operating technology is becoming more contemptuous of safety standards and more and more immature in relation to the responsibilities involved. Still vivid in everyone's memory must be the huge oil spill from the Exxon Valdez when it went aground off Alaska. In economic terms alone, that spill will have consequences for local communities for years to come. One of the most frightening aspects of that incident is the ongoing litigation as to cause and who pays. That brings me to the legal worries associated with this area. During the last few years, considerable attention has been paid across Australia to designing statutes which address every aspect of the threat—from prevention to clean up, to civil and criminal liability, compensation and insurance. The result has been a complex web of Commonwealth and State Acts which impose obligations and liabilities on a range of persons in the event of a spill. The penalties vary between Commonwealth and State legislation. The clean-up plans in place are not directly supported by legislation. The legal issues that undoubtedly would arise if significant environmental and/or economic damage were to occur could approach nightmare proportions. I hope that the Queensland Government carefully monitors the situation in Alaska and determines to learn from the problems there.

On a more simple level, apart from the damage and clean-up costs, the disconcerting thing is that it is not always obvious who is responsible. What good is a hefty fine if the responsible person or company cannot be identified? The clippings about the recent spate of spills that have been experienced since July last year seem to indicate that prosecution is not always straight forward.

On the side of prevention, the Federal Government has introduced a scheme for compulsory pilotage through the reef for all ships of 70 metres or longer and for all oil, chemical or liquefied gas tankers. This replaces the previous voluntary pilotage scheme endorsed by the International Maritime Organisation and must be supported and upheld. I find it amazing that ship and tanker operators can take the risk of entering largely uncharted and dangerous waters without the aid of a pilot. As recently as this week, I was dismayed to read that a piffling $1,000 fine had been imposed. That is a nothing; it is a nonsense. Even if we are to reduce the likelihood of oil spills by measures such as compulsory pilotage, we must still be prepared should the worst happen. Even with the developments in this area over the last few years, I question whether or not we are ready. According to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, Queensland does not have the equipment, population and, in some cases, navigational knowledge to fight a large oil spill. It would have no hope of containing a big slick. The key to an effective response to a major oil spill is speed. Wherever possible, the oil should be tackled while still at sea. Tony Preen, an Australian who is advising the Saudi Arabian Government on conservation following the world's largest oil spill, has stated that he believes that at the moment Australia could not mount an effective response until well after the oil had come ashore, by which time the damage would be done.

A marine pollution contingency plan for the Great Barrier Reef called Reefplan was developed to protect the reef in the case of an oil spill. It is a great idea but, unfortunately, it is currently so deficient as to do barely half the job. Reefplan does not anticipate the possibility of a large oil spill. It is designed to cope with a spill of 10 000 tonnes. Tankers currently using the inner route of the reef carry up to 100 000 tonnes of oil. The Exxon Valdez spilt just 20 per cent of its cargo, but that amounted to more than 34 000 tonnes of oil. The small amount of oil-combating equipment available in Queensland could not protect half the sensitive habitats within the boundaries of the Townsville Harbour alone. The second deficiency is that Reefplan makes no provision to respond adequately to any oil spill in the northern areas of the Great Barrier Reef. No equipment is stored north of Cairns, yet it is in this area that the most hazardous sections of the inner route of the reef occur.

The cost of prevention and protection is unquestionably high. However, so are the clean-up costs. A lot of protection can be afforded for the sort of money that is needed for clean-up. Unfortunately, one of the biggest problems with enforcing prevention standards is Australia's limited capacity to modify international shipping practices. Ideally, there should be less use of the inner route by loaded oil tankers. Surely, the cost of travelling an extra 600 kilometres is not prohibitive to reasonable profit. Better charts need to be developed, the marking of channels needs to be improved and the location of large ships should be constantly monitored. Ideally, tankers should be double hulled and ship-based oil containment equipment should be compulsory.

I recognise the difficulties involved in enforcing such measures. However, it is surely the Government's responsibility to be accurately aware of the ideal, and it should work to achieve as closely as possible that ideal. Given the events and developments of the past few years, it is evident that the Government needs to weigh up carefully the prevention of spills, the provision of clean-up plans and the retribution paid by those responsible for the spills. The Great Barrier Reef is too significant a natural phenomenon to be lost to the slime and sleaze of oil pollution.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (2.54 p.m.): I will attempt to be brief in speaking to this Bill because I believe that all members are basically in agreement with its principles and most of the issues have been canvassed already. However, I feel that I have some responsibility to participate in the debate because of the nature of my electorate. Recently, on a visit with the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, Mr Bob Gibbs, I was talking to the engineer employed by the Cook Shire Council. The engineer brought to my attention a very interesting item of trivia, which was that if Queensland's coastline was measured from Tweed Heads, around the tip of the Cape York Peninsula and then around the gulf and up to the Northern Territory, approximately 50 per cent of it would actually be in the Cook electorate. The mid-point of the Queensland coastline is actually a place called Archer Point, which is a few kilometres south of Cooktown. That illustrates the size of the coastline which must be protected. It also illustrates the magnitude of the problem that needs to be confronted.

Mr Johnson: The magnitude of the Cook electorate, too.

Mr BREDHAUER: Yes. I take that interjection from the member for Gregory. Obviously, the Cook electorate is a big electorate.

Mr Hamill: It's got more coastline than the Gregory electorate.

Mr BREDHAUER: It certainly has much more coastline than has the Gregory electorate. That information about the Queensland coastline to which I have referred indicates that the Government can only do its best in trying to deter people from negligent actions that may lead to oil spills. The Government can also only do its best to try to place itself in a position in which it can deal with oil spills that occur. I will cover both of those issues in greater length in future. However, as was mentioned by the member for Callide, the Government needs to consider ways to try to discourage shipping around the coastline. When all is said and done, there is little that can be done in many remote areas to respond immediately to the environmental and other forms of damage created by a major oil spill.

Of course, we have heard about the problems that are caused to the reef, the beaches, the rivers and fishery habitats because of oil spillages. Major oil spills could be a major economic disaster as well as an environmental disaster in Queensland, particularly if one considers the implications that an oil spill could have on the tourism industry and the commercial fishing industry. In the past, oil spills have occurred in places such as the Cairns port and the Sunshine Coast. That demonstrates that the threat of oil spills is real. There are other forms of threat to the reef from oil spills which also indicate how difficult it is to control the problem. Earlier this year, an Indonesian fishing vessel, the Sheng Fu, ran aground on Turu Cay in Papua New Guinea waters to the north of the Torres Strait. Basically, it was a fishing vessel that ran aground on a coral cay. However, it carried approximately 150 tonnes of oil and it could have posed a threat. Ultimately, it was decided to remove that oil from the vessel because of the

potential at some stage down the track for the vessel to break up and release that oil into the waters surrounding those islands.

The Government must deal with those types of issues. Clearly, in that context, the Queensland Government, other State Governments, the Federal Government and—when appropriate international agreements can be made—international Governments need to cooperate and try to manage these problems. Obviously, prevention is better than cure. Queensland must be placed in the best possible position to respond to oil spills. However, the shipping industry should be discouraged from acting in a negligent way which might lead to oil spillages. It needs to be borne in mind that a vessel does not have to crash into a reef and cause a hole in the bow to cause an oil spill. In fact, many oil spills that have occurred off Queensland's coast are suspected to have occurred because of a deliberate discharge of oil from such things as ballast tanks which might contain significant amounts of oil as a result of loading and unloading. The increase in the penalty from $50,000 to $1m will act as a significant deterrent. I believe it is important that we support the Bill before the House.

I turn now to the issue of compulsory pilotage, which I have been following up with this Minister for some time now. On 22 November 1990, the Minister announced to this House that the Queensland Government was to agree with a Federal Government plan for the compulsory pilotage of vessels of more than 70 metres in length and vessels such as oil carriers, chemical carriers and liquefied gas carriers, irrespective of their size, in reef waters. That is an important initiative, which I am sure all members would support. The case that was referred to earlier in the House by the member for Callide and the member for Brisbane Central, and which was the subject of a question that I asked the Minister for Transport earlier this week, has drawn quite a lot of media attention in my electorate. It involved a person in charge of a vessel who was unable to provide the necessary documentation to prove that his vessel had been piloted appropriately through reef waters and was fined $1,000. I was quite happy on Wednesday to receive from the Minister an assurance of action, and am pleased that he has followed up so promptly on my suggestion by telling us that he has written to appropriate Federal Ministers to try to have people who are guilty of breaches of those compulsory pilotage regulations brought to account in a more meaningful way. Clearly, a $1,000 fine is insufficient. I believe that the Minister said that it is cheaper to pay the fine than to engage a pilot for the work that would be necessary. Why would someone pay $4,000 to have a pilot on his boat when, if he could not provide proof of having had a pilot on his boat, it would mean only a $1,000 fine? That makes a bit of a joke of the process. I appreciate the efforts of the Federal Government in this regard, and the support that it has received from the State Government. However, I do believe that there should be another look at this.

I turn now to another issue that was mentioned previously. I refer to Reefplan, which was put together by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority and the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Once again, that was a cooperative effort between the Federal and State Governments to consider mechanisms for dealing with oil spills, should they occur. With the vast expanse of Queensland's coastline, it is not possible to have the very expensive technical equipment readily available at numerous points along the coast. Material is based in Brisbane and Townsville. I recall that approximately 12 months ago, or perhaps a little more, in response to a question from the member for Barron River, the Minister outlined to the House in detail the sort of equipment that is available to fight oil spills.

Last week, Reefplan had its third trial run—its third test— on Thursday island in the Torres Strait. I understand that that trial went quite well. Obviously, the idea of conducting those trials is to identify shortcomings and consider ways in which to improve the capacity to deal with spills. But spills that occur in remote areas, such as that which occurred recently off Shelburne Bay in the Cape York Peninsula region, really do test reaction times. The availability of the necessary equipment makes it difficult to contain those types of spills. That is why it is imperative to ensure that shipping companies that are using those waters on a regular basis look to their mettle to

make sure that they are not abusing the system by negligently allowing discharge or leaking of oil from their vessels. That is why I support this Bill and the substantial increase in maximum penalties from $50,000 to $1m, and commend the Minister for introducing it.

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (3.04 p.m.): I join this debate because of the significance of the legislation for one of the State's great primary industries, the commercial fishing industry. This legislation bears heavily on one of the major concerns of the industry, that is, the damage to fish supplies resulting from oil pollution, particularly in estuarine areas. The commercial fishing industry is one of the major employers in this State. It contributes heavily to the State's and this nation's prosperity. The industry is often underrated in terms of the contribution that it makes to the economy. That is understandable in a way, because much of the industry's activity is hidden from public view—the major harvest takes place well out to sea. Certainly, we have all seen trawlers tied up at major holiday centres such as Mooloolaba, Deception Bay, Trinity Inlet and many other places along our coastline, but they are only part of that huge industry.

Six years ago, the value of the Queensland catch was estimated at $580m per year. In today's inflated dollar values, that works out at about $700m. No real research has been done on the value of the industry today, but we must assume that production has risen—or at least that it has not fallen significantly, in spite of the general economic disaster facing the country. Fishermen tell me that the employment situation in the industry is roughly the same as it was six years ago. At that time, there were 5 072 licensed fishermen in the State. Of course, those people are the employers of many more people, if one considers the deckhands, boat maintenance people, refrigeration people, and people working in the process industry. I believe that the ratio could be about four to one. So if there are in excess of 5 000 fishermen in the industry, there would be about 20 000 people who are employed indirectly by the industry. Fishermen have a great deal of money tied up in their means of production. Six years ago, the replacement value of the fishing fleet was more than $500m. Of course, with the advancement in technologies that fishermen must use, that value would be much higher now.

I cannot overstate the importance of ensuring that commercial fishermen have continued access to an abundant source of product. For two reasons, we cannot afford to see catches drop significantly. The first reason is to preserve the jobs and investment of the commercial fishing industry. In this day and age, we cannot afford to lose a single job in this State. As a society, we cannot afford the continuing high levels of bankruptcy caused by the economic policies of the Labor Party both here and in Canberra. The second reason is the importance of fish and shellfish on the weekly shopping lists of our consumers. The State is renowned for the quality and variety of the seafoods we put on family dinner tables and restaurant menus. Pollution of the fish and shellfish habitat would be a disaster for the industry.

Mr Livingstone: The Bjelke-Petersen Dam is doing well.

Mr PERRETT: This Government has done a lot to deny access by commercial fishermen to important inshore fishing grounds such as the Bjelke-Petersen Dam. Stream closures and various environmental restrictions have done much to force the industry further out to sea. Fishermen cannot afford the denial of more of the fishing grounds, but that would be the effect of a major oil spill. Such a spill would also have a disastrous effect on recreational fishing, which is such an important element in the leisure-time activities of many thousands of Queenslanders. Recreational fishing is also an important aspect of the tourism industry, which is one of the most important in the State. Each year, many thousands of people flock to the Queensland coastal areas for the best fishing in Australia. I am sure that fishing has proved the drawcard for many of the people who have settled in these areas, creating thriving communities which contribute so much to this State. Sometimes, of course, there is conflict between the legitimate interests of commercial and recreational fishermen in some areas.

As the Opposition spokesman on Primary Industries, I welcome realistic moves to make sure that the pollution risks covered by this legislation become a more and more remote possibility. I have applauded prosecution of foreign-owned vessels whose masters have flushed tanks off our shores. As well, I welcome prosecutions of people who deliberately pollute our inshore areas and streams. Those people risk destroying the breeding areas which are so essential to providing a continuing resource for this important industry. They deserve no sympathy at all.

I warn the Minister that we may have a breakdown in proper surveillance of our coastline by the Boating and Fisheries Patrol. People to whom I have spoken in the Boating and Fisheries Patrol certainly have expressed to me their concern that they are not receiving sufficient funding to carry out their duties properly. All honourable members would agree that proper surveillance of our coastline has to be some sort of a deterrent to ships dumping oil at sea. The Boating and Fisheries Patrol in Queensland still does not have a manager, and morale amongst its officers is very low. Continual threats of retrenchments of staff and closure of patrol bases does nothing to put that to rest. It has been said to me—and I believe it is right—that the wrong types of vessels have been built, that some of them have been too costly and too complex. Because money has been spent on the new, large off-shore vessels, they do not have funds for fuel for small patrol boats. I urge the Minister to pass the message on to the Minister for Primary Industries that we all agree it is very important that we have proper and adequate surveillance of our coastline from the south to the north and into the gulf.

The Labor Government can be accused of going over the top with environmental legislation, but I think that, when the measures are sensible, we all agree. I should point out that it was a National Party Minister who initially moved against the pollution of waters by oil. This Bill goes a little further. I am a bit concerned at the level of fines to be imposed. There should be a little more flexibility. I believe also that it is possible that the high levels of fines in some cases might actually lead to more pollution. As the member for Gregory pointed out, people faced with the massive cost of meeting demands for work on a vessel might be tempted to let it sink accidentally. That would be a tragedy. I would hope that the Minister could reassure the owners of ageing vessels which might be subject to such orders that they will have time to comply.

In conclusion, I support the continued operation of the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act. Its continuation is vital for the wellbeing of the commercial fishing industry.

Dr CLARK (Barron River) (3.12 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to this Bill, which substantially increases penalties for individuals and corporations responsible for polluting our oceans and waterways. The Pollution of Waters by Oil Amendment Bill provides for increases in penalties for illegal discharge of oil into any waters from $50,000 to $200,000 for individuals and to $1m for corporations. I personally do not think that amount is too much. As they are maximum amounts, the flexibility mentioned by the member for Barambah has been incorporated in the legislation. But it has to be a very large amount to convey the message that we really are serious when it comes to cracking down on irresponsible operators.

This legislation is also important because it will bring both Federal and State legislation into conformity. Sometimes there is confusion as to whether a vessel is in Queensland waters or Commonwealth waters. Because the legislation is now uniform, there will not be any such difficulties. It is important also that these penalties apply to discharge during transfer operations where it might go into a harbour and also to discharge from land.

Today, we have heard about the very serious ecological damage that accrues as a result of oil pollution. I will make a couple of particular points. First of all, I would like to make members clear on the distinction between the results of a major spill following a collision, the grounding of a ship or the breaking up of a ship, such as occurred most recently off Western Australia, and the pollution that occurs from accidental or illegal operational discharges, mainly from the pumping of oil from bilges. This particular source of oil pollution, although it is not as sensational as the sort of major oil spill that

we had from the Exxon Valdez, is nonetheless very significant, and that is why I would like to draw members' attention to it. The fact is that the pumping of oily bilge water is a common practice by both large and small vessels, despite legal requirements for oily water separators and bilge alarms to ensure that bilge water is pumped overboard free of oil.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority, which will enforce marine pollution legislation in Australia, receives, on average, one report a week from coastwatch with photographs of operational discharges mainly from fishing vessels. Large ships have also been photographed discharging oil on the Great Barrier Reef region. GBRMPA managed the response to three oil spills attributed to operational discharges by large vessels off Townsville in less than 10 months in the period 1990-91. Given the relatively small amounts of oil spilled from each of these operational discharges, and the large volume of water of the Great Barrier Reef region, it might be thought that this sort of oil pollution is negligible. However, according to Steve Raaymakers of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, small day-to-day spills over time will produce chronic pollution much larger in volume and probably more severe in biological consequences than the headline-grabbing megaspills. Numerous studies now indicate that sublethal effects of low-level, long-term chronic pollution can seriously impact on marine ecosystems. Studies of the distribution of hydrocarbon-associated bacteria in the Great Barrier Reef waters show higher concentrations of these bacteria in areas of greatest shipping activity, presumably indicating that the background levels of hydrocarbons are already elevated in these areas.

The other area to which I want to draw members' attention, and which I think is a neglected area, is the pollution that comes from land. There is no doubt that the significance of pollution from terrestrial sources has been underestimated. It has been reported that in the United States in one year, approximately 350 million gallons of used oil are disposed of improperly in drains and waterways, representing 32 times the amount of oil spilled by the Exxon Valdez in Alaska. Crankcase oil drainings have been reported to account for more than 40 per cent of the total oil pollution of US harbours and waterways. Although such figures would be considerably less for Australia, I am quite sure that backyard mechanics abound, and terrestrial sources of oil pollution should be a concern for the managers of the Great Barrier Reef. It is interesting that, in Cairns, studies of water quality indicated very clearly that the water coming from stormwater drains, that is, urban run-off, is seriously polluted. That is an area that must be addressed more adequately. It is certainly a concern in Trinity Inlet where we are attempting to introduce a system of management to improve water quality. I welcome this piece of legislation to assist in that task.

The amendments also give teeth to the legislation by providing penalties for failure to comply with a direction to remedy or prevent pollution from a vessel as well as failure to comply with regulations relating to the fitting of equipment or the management and operation of ships. The wide scope of the legislation gives the Government the ability to require the installation of state-of-the-art equipment and to penalise if regulations are ignored. I agree that it may be necessary to give owners of vessels time to upgrade their ships to conform with this, but it is something that must happen and the message must get through. I do not believe that we should give too much leeway here.

The recent Spilcon 92 conference entitled "Environmental Care—Responsible Action" brought together key Government and industry representatives to address the issue of oil spills. I draw the attention of honourable members to this conference and the papers that resulted from it. The papers that were presented at the conference gave cause for some optimism and pointed the way ahead. There is no doubt that we have the capacity to improve on the current safety record and respond more effectively in the case of an oil spill. The areas on which prevention appears to be focusing include tanker design, electronic navigational systems, and improvement in training of crews to address the human element that is always involved. The House of Representatives standing committee on transport and communications is also addressing the question of unsafe ships, which is of major concern. That is an area which needs to be tightened up

and to have much more rigorous surveillance of the standard of vessels to ensure that they really are safe.

However, the conclusion of Wendy Craik, the Executive Director of GBRMPA, seemed to me to be very realistic. She had this to say—

> "The prognosis for the next 20 years for a major spill occurring in Australia and particularly Great Barrier Reef waters is not encouraging. Without great leaps forward in technology, it seems unlikely that new efficient environmentally sensitive cleanup methods will be found in the near future."

There are some interesting developments in the area of bacteria that actually eat oil and I think that that is one area that should certainly be encouraged. She continued—

> "That it can be anticipated that while low chronic pollution continues and/or a major spill occurs, there will be some environmental damage and the costs will be high. Given the size of our coastline and the ecological, economic and social importance of the marine environment, focusing on minimising risk of groundings and collisions, improved tanker design, minimising chronic small spills, education of all parties concerned, improved access to ecological information and maintaining a ready response capability are essential. Additionally, we should establish an agreed damage assessment procedure in the event of a spill."

I endorse her final comment when she said that one day we may end up with our own major spill catastrophe in Australia. But let us put that off as long as possible by minimising the risks and being as prepared as possible when it occurs. I commend the Minister for Transport for the introduction of the present amendments to the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act as further evidence of the commitment of the Queensland Government to that goal.

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah) (3.21 p.m.): Firstly, I would like to place on record my support for this Bill. The original Pollution of Waters by Oil Act was passed in 1960 in Queensland. This, together with similar legislation in other States, ratified the international convention for similar worldwide legislation in 1954. In 1969, a further convention allowed coastal States to take measures on the high seas to prevent, mitigate or eliminate pollution. This convention allowed for compensation to be sought from international carriers and penalties to be extracted from those in charge of offending vessels. In 1973, this House substantially increased the original penalties from $2,000 to the present $50,000. I point out that there has been no change in those penalties for 20 years. It was in this last legislation in 1973 that the scope was extended, not only to cover the oceans, but any waters. I will return to that aspect a little later.

Pollution of waters by oil is a modern problem. In the days of sail and steam, it was virtually negligible. The higher populations of the world, the increase in quantity of shipping and the size of ships and the heightened public awareness of the environment have brought pollution into public focus, hence the Bill that is before the House today. The awareness, of course, is greatest in the areas that have the most to lose. If there is any area with more pristine beauty to lose than the Queensland coast, I cannot readily think of it. Perhaps Antarctica might be a candidate, and that continent will be indirectly protected by the legislation that is before the House today. Queensland has many significant areas that are worthy of protection, such as the Great Barrier Reef, the Gulf, the Whitsundays, the southern surf beaches, and Moreton Bay. My own electorate includes Kawana Beach, which has suffered several small occurrences of pollution by oil. I have picked up the tar-like substance afterwards, and it brought home to me that pollution prevention measures must be directed towards minimising those occurrences as best we can.

The legislation provides for penalties. As I said earlier, these have not been altered for 20 years, and it is time they were increased. It is a pity that there are individuals and companies in the world that are careless about the environment, but then most legislation passed by Parliaments is necessary because of the conduct of a minority. It is not just careless to spill oil on the ocean or in our waterways; it is criminally negligent.

Higher penalties will heighten awareness of the fact that society does not accept that type of action. We should not tolerate the despoilers of our environment. Earlier, I mentioned that the 1973 legislation extended to not just the ocean but to any watercourses, and this included any tidal waters, lakes, water storages, rivers and streams. It also includes the watercourses of all bays and harbours, whether natural or man made, and includes the foreshore and banks of all such waterways. Last week in my home town of Kawana, I inspected the damage caused by an oil spill in a canal area. I compliment the various people involved in the very quick deployment of equipment and the clean-up. I mention the harbour controller at Mooloolaba, Bill Bryant, the Mayor of the Caloundra City Council, the engineer, Dennis Shaw, the Boating and Fisheries Patrol staff at Mooloolaba and the marine and port staff in Brisbane who all rallied very quickly to get the pollution cleaned up. The Mayor told me yesterday that there will be a $10,000 bill. The point to which I wish to draw attention briefly today is: who is responsible for the clean-up and the prosecution?

I believe that a marine pollution Bill will be brought before the House in 1993 as a result of work undertaken by the Department of Environment and Heritage. Next year, when that Bill is introduced, I hope that the responsibilities of the authorities involved will be made abundantly clear. The issues are not only who has the authority and responsibility between the Department of Transport and local authorities, but also include, as I mentioned earlier, the division of responsibility between the State Government and the Federal Government. Responsibility for Queensland's rivers is shared between the Department of Transport and the Department of Primary Industries and, when the new legislation is passed, the Department of Environment and Heritage will also be involved. The Government should not wait until a spill occurs before defining those responsibilities. It should make them clear at the outset and have the logistics, manpower and materials ready for deployment. When handling pollution by oil, to delay is to aggravate the problem. Fortunately, this was not the case at Kawana last week, due to the initiative of the officers who did their job. Despite some apparent vagueness about who would be ultimately responsible, the job was done quickly. Once again, I compliment all those involved. To date, no action has been taken to find or prosecute the person or persons responsible for the spill. It would appear that legislation needs to be clearer to avoid a repetition because one polluter looks like getting away with it without penalty, and this must be avoided. Mr Deputy Speaker, I have been allowed to depart a little from the legislation that is before the House, and I thank you for your indulgence.

Mr Hamill: And I didn't take any points of order on you, either.

Mr LAMING: I thank the Minister very much. I was very supportive of him and his department. I support the legislation.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (3.27 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I fully support the Bill before the House today. I wish to take up a couple of points made by the Minister in his second-reading speech. He stated that the deliberate or negligent pollution of our coastal seas, foreshores and islands would attract a penalty of 2 000 per cent or $1m. I am favourably inclined to support that penalty. However, I wonder what the Minister meant when he stated—

> "For less serious offences, such as failure to keep proper records on the transfer of oil, or hindering or obstructing authorised ship inspectors investigating incidents, the new fines will vary from a minimum $8,000 to $20,000."

In some cases, I believe that those penalties would be totally inadequate. Some overseas countries are unscrupulous and they certainly do not keep their ships up to the required safety standards for the carriage of oil. In addition, they do things that not only hinder but also obstruct. In cases where deliberate offences have been committed, anybody convicted by a court should be punished by the imposition of substantially higher fines. I ask the Minister to consider that.

As I indicated, I have no trouble accepting the underlying principles of the Bill. After all, it simply updates the legislation that was introduced by the coalition in the

1970s. At that time, in common with the present Government, the National/Liberal Government was very concerned about oil spills, even fairly small ones, and about the effects that they could have on Queensland's beaches and the beautiful Great Barrier Reef. The penalties have been updated, and I will have more to say on that later.

I wish to refer particularly to the tragic consequences of major spills and the precautions that need to be taken before the event. In common with the member for Whitsunday, I have a deep personal interest in the subject because the areas around Mackay contain some of the most beautiful areas of the reef from which are obtained some of the best seafood. Of course, most of those areas are in my electorate, and the seafood is the best that can be found anywhere in the world. As I was speaking, my colleague the member for Whitsunday commented that tankers do not sail through the Whitsundays. That could be right, but what must be understood is that an oil spill hundreds of miles to the south would no doubt spread right through the Whitsunday area because of the strong southerly winds. I believe the Minister would be aware of that. We just cannot afford to take the unnecessary risk of that happening.

As many members have indicated, not so long ago the world was horrified at what happened when the tanker Exxon Valdez ran aground in Prince William Sound in Alaska. A couple of years ago, I travelled to Alaska by ship, and the citizens and politicians to whom I spoke expressed great concern about what happened. The ship split open and 35 000 tonnes of crude oil gushed into the bay. That was when the nightmare and the comedy of errors got going. It was four months before the spill was under control. Of course, "control" is probably not a very appropriate word. Most of the damage was done in the first two or three days. There is no doubt that the oil killed millions of seabirds and destroyed the natural habitat of just about every creature using those waters to live and breed.

It was not only the oil that killed those birds and marine life such as plankton. Because of the lack of knowledge and expertise in Alaska, some of the treatment afterwards did tremendous damage to the environment. For instance, a high pressure hose was used, and hot water gushed on to the land. It killed just about everything under the rocks and in surrounding waters. It did enormous damage before people woke up to what was happening. The long-term effects are still not known, but we have to assume that Prince William Sound and long stretches of adjacent coastline will not be the same for many, many years to come. No doubt, generations of fish and crustaceans would have been lost. We should be aware of what happens when oil gets into the water. When it starts to break down, it forms sticky tar balls which eventually sink and stick to the bottom. If the oil could be kept on top of the water, it would probably wash ashore and not damage the coral reef. However, when the oil sinks, we can all imagine the catastrophic effect that it would have on the living corals of the Barrier Reef. I imagine that they would not last very long at all.

The other problem would be for bottom-dwelling crustaceans. My colleague the Opposition spokesman for Primary Industries spoke about fish. I would like to mention the crabs—a delicacy that is featured on many a table in Queensland. Following on, as I have outlined, from what has happened in Alaska with the tragic oil spill and the dramatic effects on the wildlife, and particularly the fish and marine life, we must view with great concern what would happen in Queensland if an oil spill of that magnitude were to occur along the Barrier Reef. One does not say that it may happen. Many people say that it is just a case of when it is going to happen. It would be the utmost tragedy to our marine life, such as the coral, and particularly fish and crabs.

Today, in the limited time available, I want to take a look at what the crab industry is worth to Queensland. Some experts say that the industry is worth probably $7.8m, but I would like to look a bit further than that. It has been estimated that 250 000 mud crabs are taken legally from Queensland coastal waters by professional fishermen each year, and that is probably an underestimation. Amateur crabbers who stick to the rules for daily bag limits and pot restrictions could take half a million crabs a year for their own use. If we include the black marketeers—and that is an unknown quantity—we could say

that at least one million mud crabs come out of Queensland mangrove swamps and creeks every year, in one way or another.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: If the professionals take 250 000 and the amateurs take 500 000, who takes the other 250 000?

Mr RANDELL: I am talking about the black marketeers. The honourable member was not listening. I think that he should listen. If one were to go to a restaurant in Brisbane, I dare say that one would pay $15 to $25 for a mud crab. I think that that is an underestimation.

Mr Hamill: Get off the crabs and get onto oil spills.

Mr RANDELL: I am talking about the effect of the oil on the crab industry. The Minister should be concerned about that, too. That industry employs many people, as my colleague indicated. This is the effect of an oil spill. If people pay $25 a head for mud crabs, we have a resource that is worth up to $25m. So honourable members can understand my concerns. A review of the industry is being undertaken. It behoves everybody to have a look at that and to direct their thoughts towards ways in which we can preserve the crab population of Queensland. We have to take all measures possible to prevent oil spills. I emphasise the word “prevent”. We must prevent the oil spills from happening. We should conduct more research into how we can preserve and restock the crab population. We could ban the sale of crab meat. How many undersized and female crabs go over the counter in that form? At present, people can sell female crabs legally in New South Wales. Certainly, we have to put pressure on New South Wales to rescind that type of provision. There should be closed seasons, either by time or geographical locations. I know that that would cause a lot of heartburn and upset in many areas, but, if we are to preserve that popular shellfish, we have to do something urgently about it now; otherwise, we will have nothing left to pass on to our children.

Mrs Woodgate: You were more interesting when you used to talk about Coppabella.

Mr RANDELL: I will deal with the honourable member at some other time. I do not have time today. We should have inspectors who can police the regulations to make sure that we have crabs in the future. If we take Alaska as an example, we know that the greatest harm would come to the shellfish such as oysters and mussels which live in the intertidal zone. The beaches, of course, would be heavily coated with oil, which can be cleaned up as it dries out on the sand. The effects there would be fairly short term, but if a spill happened at the height of the tourist season, the local economy and job situation would pay very dearly, indeed. I cannot overemphasise the fact that we need to be prepared and, as far as I can ascertain, we are nothing like ready for a major oil spill anywhere. I do not know whether we are ready for even a small spill, but the Minister might enlighten me on that.

In July 1991, the 14-year-old national plan to combat pollution of the sea by oil was extended to include a special contingency plan for the Great Barrier Reef. It sounds great when one reads it. Those teams have access to about $6m worth of pollution-fighting equipment, including booms, skimmers, oil-transfer pumps, small boats and chemical agents, stored in Brisbane, Cairns, Townsville, Mackay and other Queensland ports. It is great to see that. If it is necessary, similar equipment is also stored elsewhere along the Australian coast. Depending on where an oil spill would occur on the reef, the human and other resources are theoretically able to be deployed on the site within hours by RAAF Hercules aircraft. Mr Paul Nelson, a spokesman for the Australian Marine Safety Authority’s marine pollution section, said that the speed of the deployment of the anti-pollution resources could vary depending on where a spill occurred but would take no longer than two days for a relatively remote location. Two days! The damage is done in two days. We must consider something a bit better than that. The services might have been upgraded since that report was available, and I think they have been.

In the case of major oil spills—and I am not talking about anything as large as the Exxon Valdez—equipment would still have to be brought from interstate. We should

remember that the critical period in oil spills is extremely short. As I said before, the actions of wind and tide can spread an oil slick very quickly, and we do not need the Alaskan experience to tell us that. We have had major spills off the Queensland coast, such as when the Oceanic Grandeur hit a rock in the Torres Strait early in 1970. That slick resulted in a spread of over 60 kilometres—and that was a relatively minor one—by 1.5 kilometres wide. Other more recent spills have been contained relatively quickly. The point that I want to make is this: we have to get on to it fast. We cannot wait two days. We must have the right equipment. As *Time* magazine said about the delays in getting to work on cleaning up after the Exxon Valdez incident—

> ". . . no amount of finger pointing and money can compensate for a disaster on the scale of the Exxon Valdez spill. Once the oil got away, there was no way to clean it up."

When I looked for the information on the Alaskan clean-up, I found that the operation involved 1 400 boats, 85 aircraft and almost 11 500 people. Honourable members can realise the enormity of that. I pray that we will never have to mount an effort like that.

I am aware that there is a national plan for containing and cleaning up oil spills, and I am glad to note that Queensland has had input into that. But planning is not enough. We need to have the equipment and the response teams in place. It is expensive, but so are the consequences if we fall down on the job. Preparation for this sort of job is very expensive. I realise that money is pretty short these days, but it just has to be found. This is an environmental project which is very important to everyone in the State, and it is certainly a lot more expensive than most of the trendy environmental rubbish that the Government peddles most of the time. We should be calling a halt to the unnecessary things until we have pollution of waters well under control. I am not suggesting banning coastal shipping or imposing restrictions that will end up harming the economy. The private sector cannot take too many more regulations and taxes and still survive in this economy. What I am suggesting is a system of reasonable funding for preparations consistent with the risk. If that has to be at the expense of other environmental projects, then so be it. Perhaps the Treasurer would permit the use of fines imposed under this legislation to be included in the kitty for use in cleaning up any future spills.

This Bill provides for very substantial penalties to be imposed on people who pollute our ocean and estuaries. I draw to the attention of the House what happens in the United States. There, each oil company engaged in transportation off United States waters has to pay a $1 billion bond to safeguard against spills. This money is put into a fund for quick action in the event of a catastrophe. Australia's fund totals $1.7m, and that is just chickenfeed. It is about time that we woke up to what we have to spend to combat the pollution. I agree that substantial penalties should apply in the case of deliberate pollution, and I have no sympathy for the deliberate polluter. However, I want to say that penalties are not the whole answer. We need to have proper education campaigns aimed at the masters and crews of ships using our waters and also, of course, at the owners of those vessels. As I have indicated, the Government has the Opposition's complete support on that. Money needs to be spent on training for fast-response crews and to keep their equipment up to date. If that is done, valuable areas such as the Great Barrier Reef and our inshore fisheries might be given a fighting chance.

Hon. D. J. HAMILL (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (3.40 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate this morning and this afternoon. The general consensus that exists in the House is that the penalties which the Government is introducing with respect to those who would wantonly pollute our waterways through the discharge of oil are in fact warranted. I was a little disturbed earlier when my colleague the member for Gregory described these fines as horrendous. I do not believe that a fine of $1m for the wilful discharge of oil in our waterways is horrendous. It is a maximum penalty. However, one should take into consideration the sort of environmental damage that such discharge can do. I believe that this Parliament is now

only rectifying some years of neglect with respect to the penalties which apply in this State in regard to such environmental damage. The fact that the House is this afternoon amending a provision which has been in place for something in the order of 20 years without amendment I think reflects very badly upon the predecessors of this Parliament. The difference with these measures which are being introduced and which are being supported in the House this afternoon is that the penalties are being expressed in the legislation in terms of penalty units. That will ensure——

Mr FitzGerald: We all do that now.

Mr HAMILL: I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. He said, "We all do that now." Why was it not done at some time in the previous 20 years? It has taken a long time for this legislation to be brought into line with what I believe are the community expectations. This legislation will ensure that the penalties that pertain to these offences will indeed keep pace with the change in the real value of the penalties.

A number of members made contributions regarding the scheme of the Bill. There seemed to be some confusion on the part of some Opposition speakers as to what in fact is involved under the legislation in the event of a vessel or a person on a vessel being responsible when there has been a discharge of oil. The legislation certainly provides these maximum fines. It also provides that those responsible for such discharge are liable for the costs of clean-up, in addition to the fines which are levied. I think that is only appropriate.

A number of members have commented on various facets regarding the dangers to the State's coastal areas, particularly the Torres Strait and the Great Barrier Reef. I appreciate the support that has been forthcoming from members such as the member for Cook. He has shown strong support for compulsory pilotage through the Barrier Reef waters. He also has an ongoing concern at what are perceived—I think quite rightly so—as weaknesses in the enforcement of those compulsory pilotage provisions, the subject of which I have raised this week with my Federal colleague Ros Kelly.

I want to say to those members who are concerned about the capacity of the State to deal with an oil spill that we are currently engaged in discussions, along with other States and the Commonwealth, in reviewing the national plan, under which equipment is provided to the States for the purpose of dealing with spillages of oil. Of course, related to that are our concerns with respect to Reefplan.

Mr Johnson: What capabilities do those services have?

Mr HAMILL: I do not intend to take up the time of the House in detail this afternoon on this legislation, but I draw the honourable member's attention to the answer I gave to a question directed to me in the last Parliament by the member for Barron River. In that answer, I detailed the capability of the various centres along the coast where equipment is stored for the use of the port authorities and Queensland authorities in the event of oil spills in the port areas in the coastal waters of the State. There is considerable capacity strategically located in those coastal centres.

In common with any other fair-minded member of this House, I concede that great difficulties exist in maintaining an adequate response capacity, particularly in some of the more remote areas of the Torres Strait. The member for Mirani concentrated during the debate on the experiences in Alaska, where huge quantities of oil found their way into the waterways in what was a very enclosed area. Tremendous environmental damage was caused by that oil coming ashore on the various islands along the Alaskan coast. Two sets of difficulties are encountered in relation to dealing with oil. Provided that a discharge remains on the open seas, there is a greater ease of dealing with it, because the spillage breaks down. Due to wave action it is dispersed, and when exposed to the sunlight it further disperses. Grave problems are faced when dealing with coastal waters. That is why response capabilities are concentrated in our ports, which are the areas frequently used by vessels and where the dangers are great.

I am pleased that members from all parties have seen fit to give their support to these measures. The commitments that this Government has given and the co-operation

that has occurred with the Commonwealth with respect to compulsory pilotage in the Great Barrier Reef area mean that worthwhile steps are being made with respect to the capacity to deal with the environmental dangers that an oil spill would create. I certainly commend the legislation to the House.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

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

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

HEALTH LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 13 November 1992 (see p. 689).

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (3.48 p.m.): This Bill is the first of a planned series of annual omnibus health legislation amendment Bills which will deal with minor amendments to the substantial legislation that applies to Queensland Health. The Bill contains some 10 registration Acts for statutory health boards; has amendments to the Medical Act to cater for mutual recognition of medical practitioners; and includes amendments to a number of other Acts such as the Food Act, the Health Act, the Hospital Foundations Act, the Health Rights Commission Act and the Medical Act. The registration boards that are covered in this amendment Bill include the Chiropractors and Osteopaths Board, the Dental Technicians Board, the Dental Prosthetists Board, the Occupational Therapists Board, the Optometrists Board, the Pharmacy Board, the Physiotherapists Board, the Podiatrists Board, the Psychologists Board, the Speech Therapists Board and the Medical Board. I wish to refer to some of those various boards.

The Chiropractors and Osteopaths Board was constituted under the Chiropractors and Osteopaths Act 1977-1988. The Act provides for the regulation of the practice of chiropractic and osteopathy. The board currently has seven members—four persons who are nominated by the members, and three remaining members nominated by the Minister from a panel of names which is submitted by the associations. The current board took office in October 1991. There are 403 names on the Register of Chiropractors and Osteopaths, which is an increase of 25 over the previous three years. Later during my speech, I wish to refer to some concern that has been put forward by physiotherapists regarding the definition contained in this Bill about the practice of chiropractic and osteopathy.

The Dental Board was constituted under the Dental Act 1971-l989. Its object is to promote and maintain high standards of dental practice in Queensland through registration of appropriately qualified dentists, dental specialists and dental technicians, and administration of the disciplinary provisions and those relating to the training of operative dental auxiliaries. The board consists of seven members, and the term of appointment is for three years, from 31 March 1992. The addition of two new members will include one person who uses the services—in other words, a consumer—and another person who will be a barrister-at-law or a solicitor of the Supreme Court. The board maintains registers of dentists, dental specialists and dental technicians. In all, there are 1 568 dentists, 136 dental specialists and 547 dental technicians.

The Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Board was constituted under the Dental Technicians and Dental Prosthetists Act of 1991. The objectives of that board are to provide for the keeping of registers of dental technicians and prosthetists and the regulation of dental technical work and dental prosthetic services and for related purposes. This board consists of nine members, and the term of appointment is for three years from March 1992. As at June 1991, the board had not been empowered to register dental technicians and dental prosthetists.

The Optometrists Board was constituted under the Act of 1974 to 1987. The objectives of that board are to maintain high standards of optometry in Queensland, the registration of appropriately qualified optometrists and the administration of the disciplinary provisions. That board comprises seven members. The term of the current board expires in February 1994. Under this legislation, the board will be increased by two, one representing consumers and one who is a lawyer. As at June 1992, there were 469 optometrists on the register, which was a net increase of 30 over the number of registrations at the beginning of the reporting period. The Optometrists Board has had the opportunity to consider the proposals in this legislation and agrees with them in principle. However, the board has expressed the view that the selection of suitable persons to the board may create some difficulties. Although it is necessary that the appointees are supported by an organised group or groups in order to ensure that more than one personal view is expressed, it is paramount that any members who represent all Queenslanders will conduct themselves in a manner consistent with a mission statement that has been issued by the board. The current calendar of regulation review and the matters associated with mutual recognition have led to a complete review of the optometrists legislation and the by-laws. Currently, the board is in the process of preparing a legislative proposal, which it expects to present in 1993.

The Pharmacy Board was constituted under that Act of 1976 to 1987. The board comprises seven members. The term of membership of the board is for three years, and it will expire on 28 February 1994. As at June of this year, there were a total of 2 888 names on the register of pharmacists, which was an increase of 24 from the 1991 figure. That board has dealt with some significant inquiries relating to the involvement of three pharmacists in the abuse of the stimulant drug ephedrine and also anabolic steroids.

The Physiotherapists Board was constituted under the Physiotherapists Act, and it again comprises seven members. Membership of the board expired on 26 July 1992. The board will be increased by two, one representing consumers and another, a lawyer. This is the template for all of these registration boards. There are 1 909 persons on the register of physiotherapists, which was an increase of 103 from the previous year. The Australian Physiotherapy Association (Queensland Branch), as I said, has raised some objection to the definitions used in this Bill in describing the practice of chiropractic. They also feel that the Bill has been prepared in a fairly rushed and precipitate manner without proper consultation with the parties.

Mr Hayward interjected.

Mr HORAN: No, the Minister was not listening to me. He was getting advice—the same as he did every five minutes the other night—about those on whom the legislation was likely to impact. As I said, the association objects to the change of definition of chiropractic and osteopathy as it appears in the Bill compared with the Act which it is amending. The new definition suggests that chiropractic and osteopathy can treat any condition of the human body by virtue of the definition which states that all are covered by the neuromusculoskeletal system, and by reference to the management of the system. There is a feeling that a grave danger could be posed to the public by putting such legislation in place. I do not believe that there is the necessity to rush through the House that particular part of the clause. For that reason, I will be moving an amendment to that clause during the Committee stage.

The document titled "The Chiropractic Profession Today", which is circulated widely by the profession, refers to the safety of chiropractic treatment dealing only with the safety of manipulative therapy of the spine. This document, which was released in

1992, supports the contention that chiropractors are still focused mainly on spinal manipulation and, indeed, see this as the only area of concern for safety. The Australian Physiotherapy Association, which has nationally developed standards of safety in electrotherapy and premanipulative testing, views this lack of concern for safety in all areas on the part of the chiropractic as a danger to the public and a good reason why the definition, as it exists in the current Act, should remain. The association claims that chiropractors admit in their own literature that they have developed full-time or part-time practices in sports chiropractic without further formal training. That statement appears on page 11 of the article titled "The Chiropractic Profession Today". It shows that at this stage there is not a fully advanced commitment to continuing education, which is a fundamental component of professionalism and a fundamental component of those boards. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that that particular definition is sufficient and gives the department and, indeed, the two professions who disagree on this, the time to develop the actual lines of work and ethics within that profession.

The Podiatrists Board also comprises seven members. The term for membership on the board is for three years. This legislation will increase the membership by two. The board maintains a register of podiatrists, which is one of the smaller professional bodies. Currently, there are 217 persons on the register, which is an increase of 25 over the previous year. The Psychologists Board also has seven members. As at June 1992, there were 1 285 psychologists on the register.

I now move to a fairly important part of this Bill, and that is the section that relates to speech therapists. The Speech Therapists Board was constituted under the Speech Therapists Act 1979-1987. The board has seven members. The term of membership on the board is three years. As at 30 June this year, 469 speech therapists were registered. There have been considerable moves by the Speech Therapists Association to express the concern that it has about the possible deregistration of the profession. That concern is also felt by people who are involved in educational therapy. The proposal for deregistration of speech therapy emanates from the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council. Currently, at the direction of the Australian Health Ministers Conference, the council is conducting a review of the various partially deregulated health occupations—including speech therapy, or speech pathology as it will be known after the passage of this Bill—in the context of the Commonwealth and State regulatory reform initiatives that were agreed at the Special Premiers Conference which was held in October 1990.

AHMAC, which is the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council, set a criterion that the absence of statutory regulation of a particular occupation has caused major harm to people or significantly endangered public health and safety, and this is established by documentary evidence. It set that as the major basis of the assessment of the need for statutory regulation of the various partially health occupations that were concerned. AHMAC's working party claims that it consulted widely with States and Territories, with registration boards and with professional associations such as the Australian Association of Speech and Hearing. The working party also considered submissions from educational institutions and from a number of individual speech pathologists and other interested persons. I believe that the claim of wide consultation is rebuffed by the amount of correspondence that has been received by State Parliamentarians on both sides of this House from speech therapists and occupational therapists expressing their concern about this possible deregistration.

The preliminary report of the working party did not support the need for statutory regulation of speech pathology to continue in Queensland and the Northern Territory, the only jurisdictions in which speech pathologists are currently registered. The recommendation to deregulate speech pathology in those two jurisdictions has caused considerable concern within the profession and, indeed, within other professions. The AASH has set out its concerns in a further submission to AHMAC in order to have that recommendation overturned.

At its October 1992 meeting, AHMAC considered the various reports prepared by its working party and the responses which had been received, some supportive and some expressing concern at the proposals to deregulate speech pathology and the other partially regulated health occupations. AHMAC agreed that the matter should be further reviewed in the light of specific responses from the various jurisdictions represented on AHMAC with a view to a recommendation being put to the 1993 Australian Health Ministers conference, and that that recommendation should take into account the expressions of support or opposition to deregulation.

A letter from a north Queensland speech pathologist stated that, despite the significant professional ramifications of the recommendation, AHMAC's limited consultation with the AASH has caused great concern. The time frames allowed have not been adequate to collect and detail all the issues. The criteria which have been used by AHMAC to judge whether or not speech pathology should be registered seem to be extremely narrow and vastly different from those applying to many health professions. The legislative regulation of speech pathologists is the only effective means of regulation, because it is the only form of regulation which can provide proper sanctions. The privilege of registration can be withdrawn or suspended where a practitioner is shown to be incompetent or unethical. Registration assures all users of professional services, including other professionals and employers, the legal system and insurance companies, that professionals may be referred to in confidence. Registration boards also establish complaints and disciplinary mechanisms for redressing situations in which practitioners' standards of professional practice or conduct are considered unacceptable.

While non-legislative means of recognition may be of some use as regulatory mechanisms, a significant proportion of the speech pathology profession is self-employed. Systems of recognition which are not legislatively based are of very limited value in view of this. The broad concept of deregistration appears to include a notion that registration will be replaced by self-regulation by the professional bodies in conjunction with the application of national competency standards. Such an approach is inadequate, because AASH does not have the structures, capacity or resources to perform this role that the community requires. Although AASH has a code of ethics and standards of practice, self-regulation by the profession, even taken together with the existence of endorsed national competency standards, cannot provide sufficient protection for consumers without a legislative base. The power of AASH is limited to the reprimanding or expelling of members. AASH has absolutely no power over non-members.

Legislative regulation of speech pathologists is the only means available by which the community can ensure that services are provided by persons with a proper professional knowledge base and experience. Legislative regulation is the only effective deterrent to unqualified operators preying on the public. Lack of registration for the speech pathology profession would ultimately lead to an increase in social, psychological and physical harm to consumers as a consequence of services being provided by unqualified operators, with significant potential for long-term detriment. The extremely narrow criteria set by the working party do not enable these important considerations to be taken into account. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am sure that you would appreciate that individuals with a communication problem are already severely disadvantaged in our society. I am concerned that the AHMAC working party recommendations will further discriminate against that particular group.

I wish to stress the importance of this matter for the profession of speech pathology and for occupational therapy by detailing some matters outlined in a communication from the Australian Association of Speech and Hearing. That particular body is extremely concerned that the nature and scope of speech pathology services, as reported in the preliminary assessment undertaken by the working party, do need considerable updating and review. The association stated—

> "The criteria which have been used . . . to judge whether or not Speech Pathology should be registered are extremely narrow and vastly different to those applying to many other health professions.
>
> . . .
>
> There has been limited opportunity made available for consultation . . . despite the significant professional ramifications of the recommendations."

The conclusion that has been arrived at is erroneous. Speech pathologists are responsible for all aspects of assessment and management of the communication and/or swallowing problem. Private practitioners do not require medical referrals. In addition, information collated from data supplied from speech pathology referrals and caseloads over a two-month period late last year in 100 health-care facilities in New South Wales shows that nearly 70 per cent of outpatient referrals were from a non-medical source. Many parents were self-referred.

From the point of entry into the work force within Australia, speech pathologists are expected to be qualified and have the competencies to determine and use a wide range of appropriate strategies, including invasive procedures, with their clients. A significant proportion of publicly employed speech pathologists work in sole positions without access to more experienced staff. In addition, approximately 30 per cent of speech pathologists are engaged in private practice. Legislative regulation of speech pathologists is the only effective means of ensuring that all those practitioners have appropriate qualifications and skills, because it is the only form of regulation which can provide sanctions.

The privilege of registration can be withdrawn or suspended where a practitioner is shown to be incompetent or unethical. Registration assures all users of professional services, including other professionals, employers, the legal system and insurance companies, that professionals may be referred to in confidence. Registration boards also establish complaints and disciplinary mechanisms for redressing situations in which practitioners' standards of professional practice or conduct are considered unacceptable. Although non-legislative means of recognition may be of some use as regulatory mechanisms, a significant proportion of the speech pathology profession is self-employed. In view of this, systems of recognition which are not legislatively based are of very limited value. The broad concept of deregistration appears to include a notion that registration will be replaced by self-regulation by the professional bodies in conjunction with the application of national competency standards. Such an approach is totally inadequate. Even though AASH has a code of ethics and standards of practice, self-regulation by the profession, even taken together with the existence of endorsed national competency standards, cannot provide sufficient protection for consumers without this legislative base. In instances in which there are formal complaints about members, the power of AASH to regulate its members is limited to a reprimand or expulsion. It has absolutely no power over non-members.

Legislative regulation of speech pathologists is the only available means by which the community can ensure that the services are professional and provided by experienced people. Lack of registration for the speech pathology profession will ultimately lead to an increase in social and physical harm to consumers. Without national regulation of speech pathology, there is inequity within the professions which will continue to be regulated but whose practitioners are not involved with invasive procedures and with less potential to incur harm. In view of the high-risk areas of speech pathology practice, it is important that the registration of this profession be maintained, as this is the only means of ensuring that properly qualified and competent professionals only provide speech pathology services. Although speech pathologists have extreme concern about the possible deregistration of their profession, likewise, occupational therapists have a similar concern. They are concerned that registration by the Queensland Association of Occupational Therapists again is not a viable option because membership is not compulsory. The maintenance of standards here ensures

that the public has a standard of therapy which is not merely diversionary but has a therapeutic base and which is capable of producing the optimum functional ability for the clients of the profession and thus an improved quality of life for those clients.

With registration in Queensland, other professional bodies—again, like in speech pathology—can feel confident in referring to occupational therapists. In the specialty area of occupational therapy, which provides therapy to children and adults who have severe intellectual and physical disabilities, there are many treatment techniques which, if used inappropriately, could lead to serious short-term and long-term harm to the clients of the therapists. For example, correct splinting is reliant on knowledge of anatomy of the joints and the neurological status of the muscles surrounding the joints which are affected. Knowledge of the appropriate material to be used and the joints' physiological ranges are also of primary importance in determining the type of device which is suitable. Whether the splint is to be a resting, functional or contracture-reducing splint are decisions which need to be made by the occupational therapist. Without therapists having appropriate training, splinting can be dangerous and can result in soft tissue damage, discomfort and possible further increase in muscle tone, a decrease in functional skills, and result in an increase in contractures and permanent disability. Incorrect application of sensory stimulation can also affect muscle tone, and so in the short term reduce functional movement, but in the long term it may be necessary to subject a person to a surgical procedure to regain their previous functional level. Knowledge of neurology and anatomy is also very important in the correct positioning of clients. Incorrect positioning can have an effect on the physical comfort of the client and, in the long term, can result in contractures and deformities.

I understand that the Minister has indicated his support to maintain the registration of speech therapists and occupational therapists. I add my encouragement to that. I understand also that, in the event that through the mutual recognition that is being put in place throughout Australia and in the event that there is a recommendation that either of these professions be deregulated, State rights will still remain supreme and it will be up to the Cabinet of Queensland—the Minister should make a recommendation to Cabinet—to decide to maintain registration for these professions in Queensland. I urge the Minister, firstly, to fight strongly against any deregulation of these two professions. If that unfortunately happens, I urge him to insist on Cabinet assuming State rights and seeing that at least in Queensland we can maintain the high standards of those two professions.

The final board that is covered by the Bill is the Medical Board, which was constituted under the Medical Act 1939-1991. The board has seven members and will be expanded again in line with the other boards. As at June this year, there were 5 695 medical practitioners, which is not inclusive of specialists. As well, there were 2 476 specialists, 56 endorsed specialists and 25 registrants involved with teaching, research and post-graduate studies. In all, there are 8 252 registrants, an increase of 890 over the previous year.

I have mentioned most of the changes that have occurred in the registration boards. Mainly it involves increasing the boards' numbers from seven to nine, and it involves maintaining a majority representation within those boards of the particular profession so that, if there are nine members on the board, the profession has at least five members who represent that profession. It involves also in every case a legal representative and a consumer. There is also the change of name from "speech therapist" to "speech pathologist". In most cases, there are savings clauses to retain those members on existing boards in their positions for a certain period.

I have mentioned the particular problems that relate to the definition of chiropractic work. I have mentioned the particular problems of the two professions, speech therapy and occupational therapy. Among the interesting changes to the Health Act which are dealt with in this Bill is the definition of a day hospital. I suppose one could say that day hospitals are an emerging force or an emerging tool within the hospital system which have great potential for increasing efficiency in that they reduce the amount of time that

patients have to spend in hospital. At the same time, they reduce the costs incurred by hospitals as a result of patients staying in for fewer days and therefore permit better, more efficient bed use.

While I am talking about the potential for improved efficiency through the use of day hospitals, I want to refer the Minister to the situation at the Kingaroy Hospital, which he needs to review urgently. Under an efficiency review, the Kingaroy Hospital has been asked to reduce the number of shifts for nurses by 49; that is, reduce the number of shifts by seven per day. It is an extremely busy 41-bed hospital. It is a catchment area for a large amount of obstetrics work. A flying surgeon operates from there, and there is extreme concern in the South Burnett that this hospital is going to be downgraded to a very serious degree by the elimination of those 49 nursing shifts. It seems incongruous and stupid, in terms of the efficiency and delivery of service, to be taking away 49 bedside positions and replacing them with five administrative and bureaucratic positions. I ask the Minister to give urgent consideration to a review to see what can be done to retain these important nursing positions at the Kingaroy Hospital.

Mr Smith: Whereabouts in the Bill? I can't find reference in the Bill to what you are talking about.

Mr HORAN: I am talking about the definition of a day hospital in the legislation, and I am talking about the efficiency that day hospitals bring to the system. I am also talking about how efficiency has been mentioned as the reason for that cutback in shifts at that hospital.

The Bill also provides for the delegation of powers from the chief health officer to regional directors, some of whom are not doctors. With this in mind, I bring to the Minister's attention the crisis that exists in the Maryborough/Hervey Bay region that relates directly to the delegation of power from the chief health officer to the regional director. The Minister is probably aware of the special meeting of the health authority this coming Tuesday to consider this issue. This meeting was brought about as a result of the crisis of no confidence in the regional director. It has been brought about by the controversy over the birthing unit at Hervey Bay.

Mr Hayward: By whom?

Mr HORAN: It has been brought about by the fact that only seven out of the 14 doctor positions at the Maryborough Hospital are currently filled. It has been brought about by the lack of a gynaecologist at the Maryborough Hospital. It has been brought about by community concern over a house at Hervey Bay, constructed at a cost of $225,000, specifically for the use of the regional director. Here is a classic example of another Queensland health crisis which needs immediate attention and immediate action. As well as these crises, the other night we had Mr Bob Dollin, the member for Maryborough, embarking on a doctor-bashing exercise——

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! The Bill is quite specific in what it talks about. I will not allow the honourable member to use this time to detail little health problems around the State. This is not the appropriate time. I ask the honourable member to resume his speech on the Bill or, if he has nothing further to say on the Bill, I ask him to resume his seat.

Mr HORAN: As I said at the outset, I was referring to this delegation of power under in the legislation from the chief health officer to the regional director. I was pointing out the crisis that exists and asking the Minister to take some action.

At Madam Deputy Speaker's direction I will move on to the Medical Act, which was proclaimed in 1939. Previously, the Medical Board, which was first set up in 1860, comprised seven doctors. Under this Bill, there will be seven doctors out of a total board of nine, together with a lawyer and a solicitor. The board is self-sufficient, and doctors pay annual fees. Under this Act, the board is financially responsible to the Minister. Under the present Act, there is no requirement for any member to be a medical practitioner. That may have to be looked at in future omnibus legislative amendments.

The chief health officer of Queensland Health is the president of the board. The board has two functions: those of registration and professional conduct standards.

Part 4 of the Bill deals with registration, and will replace Part 4 of the current Act. The replacement is necessary in order to allow for mutual recognition to take place. A detailed review of the Medical Act is apparently planned for 1993. I urge the Minister to undertake full consultation with all groups prior to drafting any changes. This Bill sets out entitlements for general registration for a graduate of a medical school accredited by the Australian Medical Council or a graduate who has successfully completed examinations for registration of practitioners held by the council. It sets out entitlement of registrations for interns, and provides them with conditional registration. It also sets out entitlements for practitioners who are registered elsewhere in Australia. This Bill sets out conditional registration arrangements for special areas such as visiting teachers, visiting researchers and areas of unmet need. It includes non-practising registration for retired doctors, which is subject to special conditions. A new section is included which imposes conditions in cases of impairment. This is important to ensure uniform State legislation in line with mutual recognition.

This Bill maintains the specialist registration which is involved here in the registration board in Queensland. In accordance with mutual recognition, there is a section which provides for sharing information with other boards in Australia. A national data bank is to be set up, and I understand that it will retain privacy rights because it will list only those who have been deregistered. Any further information can only be provided on a one-to-one basis. I have had a detailed briefing on this Bill and I have received an indication of general acceptance from health professionals and other groups that I have contacted about most areas of the Bill. I will be putting forward only one amendment during the Committee stage. The Opposition supports this Bill with the wish that these changes ensure the sound and safe practice of health professions and the operations of Queensland Health.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (Chermside) (4.22 p.m.): There are two aspects that I wish to speak to, namely, mutual recognition and the composition of various registration boards. Many members would be aware of the discussion paper on mutual recognition of standards and regulations in Australia that came out of the Special Premiers Conference in July 1991. Of course, this week the Mutual Recognition (Queensland) Act was passed by this Parliament. The Bill before the House provides amendments to the Medical Act to cater for mutual recognition of medical practitioners. In an effort to improve the competitiveness and flexibility of the Australian economy, mutual recognition of standards measures has been brought forward. That is another example of the good Government that the ALP brings to Australia, in this case at the Federal level. It must be remembered that Labor Governments have set out to reduce red tape and implement reforms aimed at making Australia the clever country and more productive.

The amendments enable the implementation of mutual recognition for medical practitioners as determined by the Australian Health Ministers and agreed to by the medical boards in all States and Territories. The specific aim of this legislation is to ensure that uniform registration provisions, including common sanctions, are put in place throughout Australia by January 1993. The principle that guides the notion of mutual recognition is that the first place at which a person applies for registration is entrusted with the task of assessing that person's competence. The decision of that first jurisdiction is then accepted in other jurisdictions throughout Australia. The amendments will allow for conditional and unconditional registration of medical practitioners. Unconditional registration will be automatically recognised in other jurisdictions.

Members of the Australian medical profession are to be congratulated and commended on their efforts in adopting the notion of mutual recognition. It is the first profession in Australia to adopt the principles that came out of the Special Premiers Conference process. The amended Medical Act will include extensive appeals provisions. For every power or authority to act vested in the medical board, there is a

corresponding right of appeal for the medical practitioner. This is an important improvement to the operations of the registration process. Again, this reflects what Labor Governments do. They make sure that practitioners, such as medicos or blue-collar workers, have a right to appeal a quasi-judicial decision. This is another example of good Labor Party government. It is also important to note that the amendments will result in uniform sanctions. No longer will a penalty that is imposed in one State be unenforceable in another. We have had the ludicrous situation in which someone can be struck off the register in one jurisdiction and come to another State and be registered. This legislation will rectify the previous anomalies.

I turn now to the second point I wish to highlight, which is the importance of the registration of boards. In an examination of clauses 6, 15, 53, 61, 68, 75, 82, 90, 100 and 113, three key themes emerge. One is that the significant proportion of the membership of health boards must be made up of the actual health providers. Secondly, the health users or the consumers are to be represented on the board. Thirdly, a legal practitioner is on the board. Again, it is important that boards take a wide perspective, and one perspective is that of the consumer. The decision to include a consumer representative reflects this Government's commitment to consumer rights. This is another example of good ALP Government. The Government prefers that boards operate in a manner that is sensitive to consumer and community concerns and that they do not act in an overtly bureaucratic manner. The inclusion of a consumer representative will facilitate this method of operation. This work is being carried on by the current Health Minister but is a follow-on from the work of the previous Health Minister, Mr McElligott.

It is possible for bodies that are professionally dominated to become conservative, moribund and lose touch with community attitudes. An example would be the advertising by-laws that are currently being reviewed by medical boards. It is clear that the community approves of the dissemination of information through responsible advertising. The review of by-laws will be assisted by the inclusion of a consumer representative. It is important to never lose sight of the fact that the fundamental purpose of the boards is to ensure the safe and competent provision of professional services to the public. The consumer perspective is vital to that object. Unfortunately, I believe that some boards believe their main task is to protect their members rather than protecting the services that they provide to the public. The boards and the Health Rights Commission form a network of community protection in relation to health services.

Mr Budd interjected.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I note the member for Redlands agreeing with me as he consults with his colleagues in support of these ideas. I welcome his support. In conclusion, let me say that this Bill is an indication that the Goss Government is breathing new life into this Parliament. For 32 years, the tories allowed certain forms of Government in this State to grow tired, but the Goss Government has provided a number of examples where it has breathed new life into this State. I refer to initiatives such as the school refurbishment program. Where this State's infrastructure and assets have been allowed to run down, this Government is revamping them.

Mr Horan: Where are schools mentioned in the Bill?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! Members will cease interjecting.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I take the honourable member's interjection but point out that if he had not been talking to the member for Lockyer, Mr FitzGerald, he would have heard me say that this is one of a number of examples showing not just the actual changes but the attitude underlying the changes. I refer to school refurbishment, the revitalising of the role of JPs, removal from the statute book of obsolete and useless laws, the upgrading of services such as QR, and reforms to the racing industry.

Mr Horan: Oh, come on!

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: These are some of the many examples, and the Bill presently before the House is another example which shows that this Government is a

vital Government. I use the word "vital" in two senses: vital in terms of essential and, if we look at the Latin root of the word, "vita vitae" meaning "life"—this Government is giving life to this State. We are proud to be a part of this Goss Government; we worked hard to win Government. We will have a good break over Christmas because we deserve that.

Mr Horan: Where is Christmas mentioned in the Bill?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Where is the honourable member's spirit of goodwill? It is normally most abundant. It is with great pleasure that I support this Bill.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (4.30 p.m.): It is with some relish that I enter the debate on the Bill, and I appreciate the opportunity to do so. I say "with some relish" because, Mr Deputy Speaker, you will appreciate that patience is rewarded. I have waited for three years since I delivered my maiden speech in this place to say a few words about a group of boofheads who refer to themselves as the Podiatrists Registration Board. I use the word "boofheads" with some sadness. In order to instance that, I will talk about the case of Mr John Luecke, who is a podiatrist living in my electorate. This Bill will ensure that never again in this State can a person applying for registration be treated as shamefully as that board treated Mr Luecke. The reason that the board treated him shamefully is that it had no idea of the Act that it was supposed to be administering. The board had no idea of the legalities of it. This Minister, Mr Hayward, whom I admire a great deal, through the Bill will put on to that board a legal practitioner.

Let me talk briefly about Mr Luecke. In 1966, Mr Luecke undertook a course of podiatry in Victoria and he practised in that State for 20 years. In this Parliament, there are two eminent Victorians. One is the Leader of the Opposition and one is the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development. If they were to be listening in this Parliament and if they were to slip off their shoes and compare their feet with those of their colleagues from Queensland, they would find that their feet are precisely the same; there is no difference. Yet Mr Luecke was denied registration in Queensland. In November 1986, he applied for registration. At that time, in considering his application, the board had available to it the Chiropodists Act of 1969, as amended by the Chiropodists Act Amendment Act No. 37 of 1975 and the chiropody regulations of 1970.

In short, to register an interstate applicant, as Mr Luecke was at the time, the board had particular reference to sections 17 (1) (b) and 17 (2) (b) of the Act and regulation 11 (6). Section 17 (1) (b) said that an applicant had to apply to the board, pay the fee, be of good fame and character, have undertaken prescribed training, hold a current certificate of registration and be competent to practise chiropody. Prescribed training under section 17 (2) (b) was described in part as a course of training recognised by the board as adequate. Regulation 11 (6), which is important, provided for the board to apply a test of competence to assess anybody about whom it was doubtful. That assessment test could be oral, written or a clinical examination, or any combination. None of that was done.

The board met and considered Mr Luecke's application. On 16 December 1986, the board wrote to him, refusing his application. The board's letter gave no reason for the refusal. The letter did not contain an offer to assess him, and it was silent on the matter of appeals, as included in the Bill. There was no reason for the board—it is not required under the Bill—to advise an applicant of his appeal rights. By not doing so, what has the board done? In essence, it has protected a closed shop. If a person is not from Queensland and the board does not like that person, he or she cannot be registered. Had Mr Luecke been advised of the appeal provisions, he could have reapplied and then made an application or lodged an appeal on the refusal. The first time that he wrote to the board to appeal that decision was outside the appeal period. Did the board tell him that it could not consider his request for review because he had waited too long under the Act? No, the board did not tell him.

What did the board do? For three long, sad years, that particular board responded to Mr Luecke in terms of an Act, which it quoted, that had not been introduced into the

Parliament, had not been debated in the Parliament, had not been passed by the Parliament, had not received royal assent and quite obviously had not been proclaimed at the time of the application. For three years, the board wrote to Mr Luecke. The board had the Minister, Mr Gibbs, write to Mr Luecke and the board had the Minister, Mr McElligott, write to Mr Luecke or to me quoting sections of an Act that had not even been introduced to the Parliament at the time when board met to consider Mr Luecke's request.

Mr Hayward: You're right.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I know that I am right. I am bloody right, and I am a bit het up, too. As I said, I have waited three years for the opportunity to say this. What did the board do when it suddenly realised in December 1989 that it may have been a little bit wrong about the provisions of the Act that it had been using for its refusal? The board turned around and wrote to Mr Luecke and said that he was not eligible to be registered under the Act that was in place at the time of his application. That is a bit different. That is getting a bit closer to the truth, if he was not eligible to be registered under the Act that was in place at the time. However, what did the board do? It then quoted sections of that Act. The sections that the board quoted came from the original Act of 1969, and the board quoted sections that had been removed from that Act by the amendment Act of 1975. The board has never yet responded to us in this matter in terms of the Act that was in place at the time.

That is an error that I believe is shameful and disgraceful. I am not legally trained, but I believe that Mr Luecke would have recourse to a legal challenge for compensation. Mr Luecke, of course, chooses not to rock the boat because another signal event in this place in recent days means that he may well be registered in the very near future.

In November 1989, Mr Gibbs wrote to Mr Luecke. Members in this place understand where ministerial letters come from. Ministers are advised by people such as those on boards. The board advised Mr Gibbs to write to Mr Luecke and say that, under the 1987 Act, the one that was not in force when Mr Luecke applied, and prior to the amendments being brought in, the board had some flexibility regarding borderline cases. Surely that board could have considered Mr Luecke at the very least a borderline case. He had 20 years' experience in Victoria. For 20 years he treated the feet of Victorians. Yet this particular board did not even consider him a borderline case. The acts of the board can be described at best, I guess, as reprehensible.

Mr Welford: Absolutely and completely.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Absolutely and completely, as the member for Everton said. I am pleased that he is here. It could be said that the board was incompetent. The reason the board was incompetent was that it did not have any legal expertise. Surely a legal practitioner would not have allowed the board to have made those errors. It could not have made those errors. The lack of legal expertise on the board made the board incompetent. It is certainly discriminatory, and this is the other aspect that concerns me a little. In my view, there is clear evidence that the actions of the board were taken particularly to exclude from registration in Queensland people with qualifications such as those of Mr Luecke. I believe that prior to 1980, people with the same qualifications had been registered in Queensland.

The way in which the board has acted in this case was to exclude him first and to find a reason second. It did not want Mr Luecke to be able to practise podiatry in this State. It excluded him. Then it found a reason. First of all, it found an Act that had not been passed, then it found one that had been amended a dozen years before his application. But all it did was try to find an Act. In the process, the board has managed to give misleading information to three Ministers of the Crown—Mr Ivan Gibbs, Mr Ken McElligott and Mr Ken Hayward. They have been misled by the board. I think that is reprehensible. I do not think that the board deserves any credit for doing that.

In the interests of everybody leaving this place for Christmas, having vent my spleen a little bit I shall wish all honourable members a merry Christmas and look forward to seeing them after they have had a safe and happy holiday period.

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—Minister for Health) (4.40 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to the debate on this very important health legislation. I want to respond to a point made by the shadow Minister concerning the selection of consumer representatives and legal representatives on the various boards. Basically, I am determined to ensure—and the honourable member can be assured of this—that a proper strategy is put in place to obtain those people on the boards. So far, I have consulted with all the registration boards as to people who they think would be appropriate, who are active in the consumer area according to their relevant area, and who are active in the legal area according to the relevant area of the board's operations.

In addition, the honourable member can be assured that I intend to advertise in the *Courier-Mail* seeking applications for people who wish to put their names forward to be consumer representatives or legal representatives on the boards. I agree with the shadow Minister that it is important that those people be chosen correctly and that they work very hard. As the member for Chermside said, it is, I think, symptomatic of this Government that it has made that very clear decision to ensure that all of the boards have on them a consumer representative as well as a legal representative. The member for Caboolture made that very clear.

The other point raised by the shadow Minister related to the issue of speech therapists, soon to be speech pathologists. I am certainly sympathetic to the point that they make about retaining their registration. Ultimately, that will be a decision for Cabinet. However, at present I am certainly sympathetic to that view. The shadow Minister also signalled that he would be introducing an amendment to restrict the definition of "chiropractic and osteopathy". Very clearly, a couple of further points should be made about that, and I will go into more detail should we get to that stage during the debate on the clauses. A wider definition has been requested by the board. When all of us think about it, it does reflect the current practice that exists in this particular area. As a Parliament, we have to make sure, as we are doing with a Bill such as this, that we recognise that changes do occur in occupations. Because of the changing technology and the advancements that are made in health care, we have to ensure that we move along with it, keep pace with it and support it. If we do not, those advances will be made, anyway. I think it is important that we have some relevant control over situations such as that.

I thank the shadow Minister for his support of the amendment that I will be moving during the Committee stage. I know that we are very tired and that it has been a long week. However, I want to make a point about the issues that have been raised by the member for Caboolture. They are important to consider in the context of what we all do as members of Parliament. He has made it his business to support one of his constituents who he knows has been badly done by through the system. I think that is an example to all members of Parliament of the sorts of issues that can be raised and the support that a member can actually provide for one of his own constituents. I can assure the member for Caboolture that I will take on board the points that he made today. I will continue to take a very direct interest in the case of Mr Luecke. The member for Caboolture has made Mr Luecke's position clear. As I interjected, much legislation was quoted in the letters that were sent to Mr Luecke—legislation which, if I am correct, did not exist at the time or certainly had not been proclaimed at the time. Can I just make the point——

Mr J. H. Sullivan: It was either non-existent or was amended out of existence.

Mr HAYWARD: Yes. I thank all the members who have contributed to this debate. I hope that the Committee stage moves along fairly quickly, because it has been a long week.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. K. W. Hayward (Kallangur—Minister for Health) in charge of Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Clause 4—

Mr HORAN (4.47 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 13, omit lines 5 and 6."

The Minister has referred to my amendment. The clause includes the definition of "chiropractic and osteopathy". It states—

". . . means the manipulation, mobilisation and management of the neuromusculoskeletal system of the human body;"

After sitting three days until 3 a.m. and then a Friday, that is quite a mouthful, but I made it. The clause inserts the term "management" and that huge word which covers "neuro", "musculo" and "skeletal". Because that provision is so broad, a chiropractor is allowed to do almost anything.

I referred to some of the concerns of the Australian Physiotherapy Association, Queensland Branch. I recognise that there are some areas of professions that overlap. As a result, practitioners in those fields may be fearful of losing business. That may be part of the reason for the concerns advanced by the Physiotherapy Association, but I think the main reason is a genuine concern about health and safety in professional practice. The concerns relate also to the training which those two separate professions undertake. I understand that it is proposed to introduce a similar omnibus Bill every year. If my amendment were passed and that particular definition were eliminated, it would give the Minister's department a year in which to come to grips with that definition. I do not believe that the implications of that definition have been considered thoroughly.

The general community would agree that the chiropractic practice basically relates to the manipulation of the spine and various joints of the skeleton. That can often help people who have sporting injuries or work-related injuries. That work is very similar to some of the work undertaken by the physiotherapy practice. However, this definition means that chiropractors can move towards virtually any sort of work. It means that everything relates to the spine, and that organs and all sorts of diseases can be fixed by manipulating and adjusting the spine. Such a mandate would be very dangerous. This amendment would delete that definition and leave in place the current definition, which has been satisfactory to date. Under the current definition, the chiropractic profession has undertaken a reasonable amount of work in a fairly successful way. My amendment would let that definition stand for another year so that the Minister can get it right.

During the debate on the Nurses Bill and the debate on this Bill honourable members referred to the safety of the consumer. It is of paramount importance that this legislation ensures the protection of the consumer. I do not think that my proposed amendment will deny chiropractors or osteopaths any significant amount of business. It will ensure safety for consumers. Having regard to the training of those involved in that profession, the proposed amendment will provide a very clear definition of what work they can undertake.

Mr HAYWARD: I oppose this amendment. This wider definition has been requested by the board. It reflects current practice. As I said before, we must recognise changes that occur within occupations. Over the past 10 or 20 years, the profession of chiropractic and osteopathy has undergone significant upgrading. No member of this Parliament would deny that. In Australia and around the world, there are properly accredited chiropractic colleges. The Australian public is protected by legislation governing the practice of chiropractics in all States and Territories. A recent Australia-wide survey of chiropractors showed that 49 per cent of the respondents regularly used extravertebral techniques. We must recognise what is happening within different

professions. It must be recognised that courses are conducted at the Macquarie University, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and a number of other organisations around Australia. As I said, we must look at the world as it really is.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 4, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 5 to 23, as read, agreed to.

Insertion of new clause—

Mr HAYWARD (4.53 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

"At page 21, after line 16—

insert—

'Insertion of new s.29A

'23A. After section 29—

insert—

'Provisional registration for purposes of examination mentioned in s.25 (2) (b) (iii)

'29A.(1) An applicant for registration as a dental prosthetist may provide a dental prosthetic service for the purpose of completing that part of an examination mentioned in section 25 (2) (b) (iii) that involves the provision of the service and, for that purpose only, the applicant is taken to be provisionally registered as a dental prosthetist.

'(2) A person not registered as a dental prosthetist, who is appointed by a committee mentioned in section 25 (2) (b) (iii) to conduct an examination mentioned in the provision, may provide a dental prosthetic service for the purpose of conducting the examination and, for that purpose only, is taken to be provisionally registered as a dental prosthetist.'."

Amendment agreed to.

New clause 23A, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 24 to 67, as read, agreed to.

Clause 68—

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN (4.54 p.m.): Of all the boards that will receive a consumer representative and a legal practitioner under the proposed amendment, I most welcome these changes applying to the Pharmacy Board. Over the past three years, I have gained some knowledge of the workings of the Pharmacy Board. I have some concern about certain actions of the board, especially the actions of its chairman. The expenditure on legal fees by the Pharmacy Board in recent years should receive the close scrutiny of pharmacists, consumers and the Opposition Health spokesman. I welcome the consumer representative and the legal representative who will contribute greatly to the proper and productive workings of the Pharmacy Board.

Clause 68, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 69 to 116, as read, agreed to.

Clause 117—

Mr HORAN (4.55 p.m.): I refer to proposed new section 21 (2), which states—

"An appeal must be made within 28 days (or such longer period as the Registrar may allow in a particular case) . . ."

That seems to give the registrar an inordinate amount of discretion. In other words, an appeal could go on almost forever. I ask the Minister to explain the reason for that long period in which to appeal.

Mr HAYWARD: It simply gives the appellant an opportunity to make his or her appeal. It also ensures that people cannot complain that they did not receive a fair go if a difficulty arose, such as an appellant not being able to be located.

Clause 117, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 118 and 119 and Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, with an amendment.

Third Reading

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

LANDS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 12 November (see p. 657).

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (4.59 p.m.): The Opposition has some concerns with this legislation. However, it understands that many of the provisions that are contained in the Bill are machinery provisions. By the same token, it is important that I refer to the Minister's second-reading speech in which he stated that the legislation will provide greater efficiency by abolishing the statutory offices of the Land Administration Commission, the Surveyor-General and the Valuer-General. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said also—

> "This Bill seeks to amend a range of lands associated legislation to provide for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of land-related services. This is to be achieved in several ways."

That will be done by the abolition of those various statutory offices. I would like to know what sort of efficiencies have occurred. I refer to the Auditor-General's report which was tabled this week in the House. It really has not shown up the Lands Department or any other department in a great light.

I am concerned that some of these changes will have serious effects on the departments, particularly because of a lack of staff. In many cases, staff with the expertise to run the departments—staff who are able to provide information and documentation quickly—are no longer there. They have moved on, been sacked or whatever. The report mentions about $7m worth of retail stock at the Landcentre at Woolloongabba. That section of the report was the subject of a notice of motion that I gave in the House this week expressing great concern about the ability of the department to be accountable. In a nutshell, the report says that the value of inventories on hand recorded in the department's records was not reliable for financial statement purposes. It goes on to say that one of the things that the department intends to do to rectify the situation is to implement training; that once the recently appointed staff are able to get a grip on things, the situation might improve. I am concerned that these changes are coming into place and that there are inefficiencies with regard to the accountability of the departments.

As I said, the Minister stated that the general thrust of the Bill was to abolish the statutory offices of the Land Administration Commission, the Surveyor-General and the Valuer-General, and that they will be replaced with the chief executive. One exemption is the Surveyors Board. This legislation shifts more responsibility away from the Minister and allows the chief executive to delegate. I believe that, in many cases, the Minister can duck for cover. I can cite a very good example of what happened recently in the railways involving the Chief Executive of Queensland Rail, Vince O'Rourke, and the Minister, David Hamill. Some concerns have been expressed about rail services in my electorate. We have been losing services, and the quality of service has diminished. I

was trying to find out who was responsible—where the buck stops, but I could not find that out. I was in a room with Mr O'Rourke and Mr Hamill, and I asked, "Where does the buck stop?" I was told that it depends who is handling a particular matter at the time. In this day and age, the Minister of the Crown should be the responsible person. He is elected by the people and should be responsible to the people. I have some concerns about that.

I turn now to the power of delegation. I cite a Crown land management reform White Paper, which has had reasonable circulation. Apparently, the power of delegation is given to the director-general of the particular department to inquire into the managerial and financial attributes of the potential lessee of Crown leases. I believe that that is fairly wide of the mark. How far do we go to find out whether someone has the necessary managerial or financial attributes? Various people down the line in the department could be inquiring into people's affairs and taking Hitler-type action that could cause some difficulties for many Queenslanders.

The Bill also establishes the Registrar of Titles. I believe that this is one of the most important sections within Lands, because at some stage most Queenslanders will have dealings with the Titles Office, and any unsatisfactory delays will cause problems for them. In the annual report of the Department of Lands, it is conceded that the service standards during the past quarter have not been maintained at the high level to which clients are accustomed. The report states that this is a result of a number of contributing elements, including considerable growth in demand and the restructuring of the operational areas. It says also that the department is working through a number of avenues, including target overtime, staff retraining and job redesign. I do not know whether we really need staff retraining. I believe that we have capable staff there, and that many people at the delivery end of the public service have lost a lot of hope and, in many cases, their jobs.

I turn now to the establishment of a land register. I have no problems with this. It is not a bad move. But I ask the Minister how far he intends to go with that. I understand that the land register will include Crown land, Government land and leasehold land. I wonder whether foreign-owned land and contaminated land will also be included. I understand that some 60 000-odd pieces of contaminated land, or suchlike, are located throughout Queensland. I suspect that if we were to be realistic, and if we were to look at every dip on most blocks of land in Queensland, we would find many more blocks that are contaminated. Will that particular land register be used as an efficient tool, or can it be used to deny some people access?

The report of the Lands Department states—

> "The Registry is responsible for arranging for title to issue over granted or transferred lands. In 1991/92 titles were issued over five areas of transferable land to Aboriginal grantees.
>
> . . .
>
> This component is also responsible for a promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program operations to both interdepartmental and external clients. As a result of this a schedule of information sharing sessions has been planned and conducted for the Department of Lands' regional staff. An important aspect of these sessions is the enhancement of cross-cultural awareness."

I do not believe that the department should adopt the role of being a substitute for the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. The Lands Department has a job to do. It should be a tool to provide information for the people of Queensland. It should not espouse philosophical views that may affect some of the results. The abolition of the Surveyor-General is a retrograde step. I remind the Minister of the old saying, "If it is not broken, don't fix it." The Surveyor-General could have been retained in the structure. I realise that a board has been put in place, even though the number of members of that board has been reduced from nine to eight. However, that reduction in the number of members probably proves that the Surveyor-General did

work well, and that it is a change for change's sake. I have concerns with that provision, but the change has been made and we will have to make the best we can of it.

The legislation provides for an overhaul of section 250 of the Act regarding tree clearing on Crown land. I am pleased that the Government has addressed that issue. During debate on recent amendments to the Land Act, I attempted to have that change made. At the time, the Minister refused to accept my proposal. I am pleased to see that he has now taken up my idea. However, I will touch on a couple of points on which I believe the Minister has gone too far. Previously, the permit was called a permit to destroy trees; it is now called a tree clearing permit. It seems that the Minister is dealing with semantics, but I believe the provision is a good idea in this day and age. I do not agree that the trustees of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deeds of grant should be exempt from the need to obtain a permit. Land-holders are land-holders and land is land.

Does the colour of one's skin ensure that land degradation will not occur on deed of grant land that is separated from other land by a fence? Will land degrade on one side of the fence and not on the other side merely because one person is white and one person is black? Where is the environmental consistency? Where is the equal opportunities movement? Why do we have one rule for some and another rule for others? The penalty for the wilful destruction of trees is too high at $24,000 for an individual and $48,000 for a corporation. I hope that people do not get fined that large amount. However, I suppose some innocent person will end up paying that large amount. Tree clearing permits are available for five years and they are transferable. Permits have always been part of any timber-clearing process, and I agree with that provision.

Another provision in the Bill is that lessees may clear trees for prescribed routine management purposes without obtaining a tree clearing permit. That is almost what we wanted, except that the Minister has included the term "prescribed", which concerns me. He should have provided reasonably wide guidelines as to the type of routine management that can be undertaken on a block of Crown land so that a person could go about his normal management practices. However, when he includes prescribed rates, he is stipulating guidelines that must be met. Could the Minister inform me what the prescribed guidelines are likely to be. For instance, if a person has to clear a fence line, does he make it two dozer blades or three dozer blades wide? In various areas it will be different. It would have been far better to regionalise the provision and stipulate that a permit would not be required if normal management practices were carried out in a businesslike manner in a particular region. The Minister is having two bob each way with that provision.

The legislation provides that trees must not be removed from a lease. If a person is working on his own block and does not obtain a permit, he may not remove those trees from the block. The Minister may not realise that most pieces of land consist of an aggregation of blocks. A person may own a cleared block and have a timbered block beside it. In that circumstance, a land-holder cannot legally take timber from one block to the other. We know that, in the past, people have done that and that they will continue to do it—but now they will be breaking the law. I express my concern at that provision.

I am not greatly concerned by the other consequential minor amendments, which are machinery procedures and associated with departmental restructuring. However, my final point relates to a concern by the Queensland Justices Association that witnessing procedures within the Lands Department may be downgraded, particularly in connection with the Real Property Act. The association is concerned with reports that in the rewrite there is a move to cut out statutory JP responsibilities and replace the independent JP role with new authority for departmental officers to witness and certify real estate documentation. The association believes that the reason why that has been brought about is to provide a faster service and to streamline the administration. If that is the case, I do not have a great problem with that. However, in view of the changes that are proposed, is it the Minister's intention to change the transaction procedure under the

Real Property Act, or does he believe that the Queensland Justices Association should not have any concern with that provision? The Bill contains many other provisions about which I would normally speak, but I have attempted to be brief. At this stage, the Opposition does not oppose the Bill. I believe that I have covered most of my areas of concern.

Mr VAUGHAN (Nudgee) (5.15 p.m.): The part of the Bill about which I want to comment is the part which deals with "tree clearing", and which has just been dealt with to some extent by the previous speaker. The Bill rewrites that section of the Land Act dealing with obtaining permission to destroy trees on Crown leases and licences, reserves and deeds of grant in trust. I understand that since the 1800s there has been some form of requirement to obtain permission to clear trees on Crown leases, and rightly so. While in those early days there may not have been a great deal of attention paid to such a requirement, there is certainly a realisation today that trees are vital to the preservation of our planet and the care of our land.

Around the world there is concern at the rate at which trees are being cut down and the land cleared. I want to point out that, according to information that I have received, the rate of clearing of tropical forests is said to be 76 000 square kilometres a year, which is equivalent to 14 hectares or 280 football fields per minute. I repeat—280 football fields per minute. That is clearing of tropical forest; it does not account for ordinary forest. One has only to travel throughout this State to see the extent to which, in less than 200 years, we have cleared vast tracts of land. Of course, it has been necessary to clear the land for agricultural, grazing and other purposes, but it is the way that the clearing has been carried out and the extent to which trees have been cleared that makes it necessary for provisions such as are contained in this Bill.

The Bill renames the "permit to destroy" as a "tree clearing permit". The change of name to a tree clearing permit was foreshadowed in parliamentary debate in 1991 when the Lands Legislation Amendment Act 1991 was before the House. The terminology is not as austere as using the word "destroy" and implies that "clearing" is to be permitted for a purpose. The Bill provides that a lessee of Crown land, that is, land on which the Crown owns the trees, must not cause a tree or permit a tree to be cleared unless a tree clearing permit has been obtained. There is also provision for a tree management plan or a map that clearly delineates the area to be cleared to be submitted with an application for a tree clearing permit if required by the director-general. The purpose of the management plan or a map is to ensure that clearing, if permitted, is undertaken in a planned, considered, and managed way. The Bill also provides that trustees of reserves or land granted in trust shall obtain a permit before clearing. In the past, permission for clearing on these lands was required under the Forestry Act. However, it should be noted that trustees of land granted in trust for the benefit of Aboriginal or Islander inhabitants are specifically excluded from the need to obtain a permit as these lands are being transferred to freehold under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Acts. That is the point that the previous speaker made. He said that he was concerned that they were being excluded, but the reason they are excluded is that they are being transferred to freehold. If the honourable member was advocating that people who have freehold land should be covered by the terms of these provisions, that is fair enough. I would probably go along with that, because I think that there is a need to have regard to the extent to which we are clearing land. It might be necessary for the Government to have some control over the clearing that takes place.

The tree management plan should identify the main features of the land, including natural features and improvements, major vegetation types, critical areas which are defined in the Bill, stands of prescribed trees, and the areas proposed to be cleared. It should also include all prescribed information, and information that, in the chief executive's opinion, is necessary for the proper consideration of an application for a tree clearing permit. It is not anticipated that the plan will be an expensive item for the lessee, particularly in relation to the cost of major clearing, but it will indicate that the lessee has given thought to all important issues before clearing commences, and that is very important.

In response to rural industry requests—and I emphasise this for the purposes of the comments made by the previous speaker—the Bill provides for exemptions from applying for a permit for prescribed routine rural operations, unless the tree is a prescribed species or is located in a prescribed critical area—as I have said the critical areas are defined in the Bill. Prescribed species will include certain commercial species, for example, sandalwood—and the Opposition spokesman would know the extent to which sandalwood is being exploited across this State—and valuable fodder trees.

Mr Stoneman: All sandalwood or just some sorts of sandalwood?

Mr VAUGHAN: All sandalwood, particularly the sandalwood that is being——

Mr Stoneman: I will get the Minister to clear that up.

Mr VAUGHAN: Yes, particularly the sandalwood that is being exploited around Richmond, my home town. When I was in Richmond recently I saw the extent to which the sandalwood is being cleared. I am concerned about that and the Minister should be concerned as well.

Critical areas, as defined in the Bill, include land that is highly vulnerable to land degradation, a critical habitat or an area of major interest within the meaning of the Nature Conservation Act 1992. A tree clearing permit will not be issued for a term longer than five years, and it must state the purpose for which the trees are to be cleared. The maximum five-year term provides a balance between enabling the lessee to have the flexibility to undertake clearing when the time is most appropriate for the lessee, and the recognition that changing circumstances may make a permit inappropriate after a certain time.

When a lessee contravenes a condition of a tree clearing permit, the maximum penalty in the case of an individual is 400 penalty units. The Opposition spokesman made a comment about the extent of the penalty. In the case of a corporation, the maximum penalty is 800 units. For the enlightenment of the Opposition spokesman, I point out that these penalties are the same as those in the present Act; they have not been changed.

Mr Hobbs: I objected to them then, too. They are far too high.

Mr VAUGHAN: They are the same as those in the present Act; they have not been changed. When a lease is transferred, the Bill provides for a tree clearing permit to also be transferred in certain circumstances. A tree clearing permit may also be cancelled when the conditions under which it was granted have been breached. As I stated at the outset, there is a realisation today that trees are vital to the care of our land, and there is widespread concern at the rate at which trees are being cut down and the land cleared. With continued economic development and population increase, clearing of the land will continue. However, there is an urgent need to control and manage that clearing, and that is what the provisions in this Bill attempt to do. I support the Bill.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (5.22 p.m.): It is noticeable that a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the tree-clearing program, in spite of the fact that nothing has done more harm to rural communities than the bulldozers that are starting up in the middle of the night to clear trees before this legislation prevents them from being cleared, and this is happening at present. If the Minister were to travel throughout this State, he would see that what I am saying is correct. A large area of land has been cleared and a large quantity of trees, which would not ordinarily have been knocked down, have been knocked down. I urge the Minister to look carefully at his attitude. I suggest that instead of talking about tree-clearing, he should be concentrating on forest management. I point out that they are two entirely different things.

As the previous speaker stated, the Bill refers to a tree management plan. If the Minister is addressing only tree management and forest management plans by this legislation, then he is missing the point. Forest management involves the process of growth, death, decay, and then regrowth. Growing young trees does more good for the

environment and the economy than the cessation of clearing. If the Minister prevents clearing from taking place completely or restricts it to the extent indicated by this legislation, he will do far greater harm to the environment than he thinks and than most people would accept. If the Minister interferes with nature's cycles, he will find that he has taken a step in the wrong direction. The Opposition supports a greater emphasis being placed on forest management and on the replacement of older trees by young, vigorous and fast-growing trees in plantations or the natural environment. I urge the Minister to look closely at the direction that his policies are taking. In the last 10 years, land care has evolved as a significant issue. Land-care groups have been working throughout the State and have been doing a marvellous job which is worthy of recognition. While on the topic of land care and the growing of trees, it is worth noting that grass will do a far better job of protecting land than trees will, in certain circumstances.

A Government member interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: It is not rubbish.

Mr Beattie: No, he said, "If you can get it growing."

Mr STEPHAN: I am sorry.

Mr Beattie: We do not disagree with everything you say.

Mr STEPHAN: I thank the member for Brisbane Central. I do not disagree with everything he does, either.

Mr Smith: I might point out that if you get on with this, we might get out of the House before 6 o'clock.

Mr STEPHAN: I am doing my best. I am trying to point out that fast-flowing water running over tree roots will erode land faster than would be the case if grass were growing there. There are two other aspects that I wish to mention, and the first is foreign ownership of land, which concerns me a great deal. The department's annual report indicates that in 1989-90, 849 000 hectares in Queensland was foreign-owned. At present, over 5 million hectares is under foreign ownership. I well recall that when the Government was in Opposition, members of the Labor Party made a loud noise about the amount of Queensland land that was foreign-owned, yet during the term of this Government the extent of foreign ownership has increased five or six times. I ask the Minister to indicate his attitude to the foreign ownership of land and clarify the Labor Party's policy in relation to it. It was only a few years ago that members of the Labor Party said they were completely opposed to foreign ownership.

Mr Smith: Tell me where that is mentioned in the Bill.

Mr STEPHAN: The Bill refers to the Foreign Ownership of Land Register Act. I realise that the Minister does not like me speaking about that. I am sure he has a policy in relation to it—or, at least, I hope he has—because it seems to be different from the policy adopted by the Labor Party in 1989.

Mr Smith: Keep to the Bill.

Mr STEPHAN: All right. The Bill also refers to mining homestead areas. I refer to the Minister's second-reading speech, in which he stated—

> "Some parcels of land were unsurveyed at the time of allocation, and are slightly above area limits for freeholding. The amendments remove the area limitations."

The Minister was referring to residence areas known as RAs and business areas that are located in mining fields. This situation came about during the freeholding process. Some surveyors were going about their duties and were freeholding blocks of land that had never been freeholded before. When it came to apply for freehold title, it was discovered that the area of land was above the allowable maximum for residence areas. I suppose it could be regarded as a mistake, and for quite a long time nobody knew what to do about it. However, a large number of blocks of land are being held up while the

surveys are completed to include areas of land which at present are over and above the area allowed in mining fields. I compliment the Minister on introducing this legislation to enable the survey to be completed. Having said that, I am mindful of the controversy that exists in relation to freeholding requirements for mining leases, and it remains to be seen what the Government will do after 1993 if the land has not been changed to freehold title. This is a matter that is causing a great deal of concern in mining communities in Queensland.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (5.29 p.m.): It is not my intention to talk at any great length to the Bill. The shadow Minister has eloquently covered the main areas of concern. I was a little concerned to hear the reply by the member for Nudgee to my interjection in respect of a particular tree type. I ask the Minister to clarify that at the Committee stage. There seems to be a great deal of hysteria, particularly amongst those in the community who have no practical understanding of what the situation truly is in many parts of this State regarding the regrowth of native trees, the thickening up of native timbers and the influx of woody weeds, particularly those that have been introduced, such as prickly bushes and Parkinsonia. Those plants were probably introduced in a well-meaning way, but they have created an unbelievable management problem. I would hope that in the parts of the Bill that refer to prescribed species, some timber such as Parkinsonia and prickly acacia will be listed as being available for open slather destruction. Quite frankly, they are nothing more than a pest, such as a dingo or a wild pig.

An Government member: Russell, don't feed him.

Mr STONEMAN: No, we have got that under control. He was just talking about sandalwood. I will ask the Minister to clear up that problem. I am worried about the positive statement made by the member for Nudgee that all sandalwood would be protected. That gives me cause for concern. In many, many instances, the Lands Department description refers to country that has sandalwood ridges and sandalwood flats. For many years, on my own property I had a battle with sandalwood. It was a pest. It was designated as sandalwood within the description of the property on the maps. As I said, the comment made by the member for Nudgee following my interjection gives me cause for concern.

I want to return briefly to the increase in the number of trees, particularly to the immediate west and east of the Great Dividing Range, in other words, on either side of the Great Dividing Range. I refer particularly to the eastern slopes of the Great Dividing Range. The increase in the number of trees has been of great concern to many people since the practice of burning largely ceased as a management tool. Burning is a management tool that goes back hundreds and maybe thousands of years. It is a natural process. Through bushfires started by lightning, timber density was controlled naturally. There was a regrowth and a replacement of timber, which maintained the balance. Burning was a continuing process. However, since the land in many instances has been stocked, that practice has largely ceased. Now, with the advent of graders, bulldozers and supplementary feeding, there is not enough dead stand of grass to carry a fire that would control timber.

It is of grave concern to me that there tends to be a feeling within the Government and some of the conservation-type groups—who are well meaning but in many cases ill advised—that all trees have to be protected. In many cases, the pastoral industry needs to be protected from trees. From experience—in some cases, bitter experience—I can instance properties on which the timber has increased to the extent that properties that previously were 70 per cent open or broken country and 30 per cent timber, after 40 or 50 years now have exactly the opposite proportions of timber and open country. In the coastal strip and just to the south of Townsville and in my electorate, graziers have shown me country on which they used to be able to ride a horse with absolute ease and to see for miles and miles when mustering. Now, they are flat out opening a pocketknife in that area, much less mustering it with ease. That has caused a snowballing effect in

terms of the capacity of that country to be utilised. Genuine, proper and correct land management has become even more difficult.

Many of these amending Bills that have been brought in by the Government tend to emphasise management, control, permits, penalties and so on. We need to be very, very careful. The true custodians of the land, the only people who can truly manage it and understand it, are those who love it and live on it all the time. People coming from a department, regardless of how much experience they have had, cannot expect to have the knowledge that, in many cases, has been handed down in a family for generations. That is not to say that the State does not have a responsibility. It should have and it does. However, it has an even greater responsibility to be realistic, practical and understanding, and not to give in to the pressure of those who might otherwise suggest that, if all clearing operations were to cease, that would benefit not only the industry but also the community. Quite frankly, the reverse will be the case.

I will leave any further comments to the Committee stage. I conclude by saying that I have a particular concern about the clauses of the Bill that relate to prescription of certain routine management purposes. The Bill leaves that matter wide open, which emphasises my concern about the practical understanding of timber management and property management. I am concerned about the provisions relating to the areas of land that are allowed to be cleared, for example, along internal and boundary fences. In many cases, people need to clear timber on the prevailing breeze side so that windmills can have access to wind. I am extremely concerned about the way in which those prescribed purposes might be put in place. Although I have entered into the spirit of trying to conclude this debate within a reasonable time, I believe that we as legislators have a responsibility not to be clockwatching when such important legislation as this is before the House. I think my remarks encapsulate the basis of what I wanted to say. I await with interest the response that the Minister will give when we deal with the clauses during the Committee stage.

Hon. G. N. SMITH (Townsville—Minister for Lands) (5.38 p.m.), in reply: I thank the members who have contributed to this debate. I think there has been a positive attitude of support, and so there ought to have been. I would describe this Bill, by and large, as an operational Bill. It actually puts formally in place what has occurred over recent years and, for that matter I suppose, recent months. To a great extent, it will facilitate the very extensive amendments that have to be made to the Land Act in the future.

In addressing the comments of honourable members, I would particularly like to welcome the contribution made by the member for Nudgee, Mr Vaughan. I draw honourable members' attention to the fact that that was the first time since the honourable member has left the Ministry that he has made a speech on a Bill. I was very pleased that Mr Vaughan became a member of my committee. He comes from Richmond. Despite what Mr Stoneman said, Mr Vaughan is one member who has a very good idea of what goes on in the bush.

I turn now to the comments made by Opposition members. Mr Hobbs mentioned the 1991 Auditor-General's report. What we are really talking about now is the future. The deficiencies that were identified by the Auditor-General were relatively minor. I think a very good way of describing some of the things that have occurred would be to put them down to the fact that the department has made major progress in reorganising to become a regionally based department, and essentially that is the main problem with the matter raised by the honourable member. I particularly take issue with one comment made by the honourable member. I point out that no-one—I repeat, no-one—has been sacked from the Lands Department since the restructuring occurred. In fact, one would have expected that there may have been some more difficulties with a department of this size. The downsizing and integration of that department have been very well handled, which is a tribute to the senior management of the department.

The next point that the honourable member raised, which does deserve some comment, relates to delegation. One has to understand that in a large department

delegation has to occur. Ministers have to delegate; directors-general have to delegate. I do not know how one could make alterations to that practice. However, retraining is certainly essential for some of the staff. The department is now very much an integrated department. It is not four departments running in tandem, but a totally integrated department, and one would expect that some retraining would be necessary. The other point is that none of the material that was discussed today is really very new. A White Paper has been available for some time and I think that most members have had an adequate opportunity to peruse the matters that were discussed. The honourable member raised a point about the land registry, and I will respond to that. It will cover Crown land, leasehold land, freehold land and land that is the subject of foreign ownership, which I think was the point made by the honourable member. In respect of contaminated land, which was another point raised by the honourable member, the procedure is that an administrative advice is attached to the document, which means that some further research has to be undertaken, but the actual document indicates that there is some problem pertaining to that particular parcel of land.

I can understand the comments that have been made, not in this place but in other places, about the Surveyor-General, which is a historic position. I admit that I have some regrets about the necessity for the elimination of that position. However, we have to look to the future. Governments today operate very much more on the corporate level. I guess that with the passage of time that position is just one of the positions that will have to go. I point out that none of the functions of the Surveyor-General will be lost to the department. The tree-clearing penalties are maximum penalties. The legislation provides scope to determine what the level will be. I am not aware of a penalty being imposed recently. With respect to witness procedures being downgraded—I point out that that is not part of the Bill.

Mr Stephan has raised the matter of miners' homestead leases on many occasions. I have actually spoken to him privately about it. I really do not think there is much more to be said. I think the tree management plan is something that is becoming increasingly understood. The actual requirements of this Bill are not all that great. All that is needed is an aerial photo, which can be bought from the department for a small fee, and a brief description on a piece of paper. Mr Stoneman made some comments about the definition of "tree". The definition on page 39 of the Bill states that—

> "'tree' means a tree within the meaning of the Forestry Act 1959, but does not include a noxious plant or a prescribed plant"—

such as a woody weed. The prescribed exemptions from the need for a permit will cover the use of fire for fuel reduction or maintenance for pasture. Again, that is a fairly commonsense provision. With respect to sandalwood—many trees are referred to as being sandalwood. The commercial tree that is described in the Bill is the only variety which is actually exempt. I think that is as much as I want to say.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Hon. G. N. Smith (Townsville—Minister for Lands) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—

Mr STONEMAN (5.46 p.m.): I take up the remarks made by the Minister in his reply about woody weeds and noxious plants. I assume that noxious trees include some of those prickly nasties, although I hasten to add that some pricklies are very good trees. I seek further clarification on sandalwood. The Lands Department has described many areas as "sandalwood". A great deal of concern will be generated in the general community when people become aware that sandalwood is to be prescribed as one of those species that cannot be removed. I suppose that the Minister is referring to true

sandalwood. I would like him to clarify which sandalwoods are not included. I cannot tell the difference—although I know that one exists——

Mr Vaughan interjected.

Mr STONEMAN: The honourable member is probably correct. However, in most areas of the State, the sandalwood to which he refers does not exist. I know that it exists in the Richmond area. In many other places, huge stands of sandalwood present major management problems. Because of savage regrowth, sandalwood country cannot be cleared. People need to be able to clear along fence lines and roadways. Sandalwood is a pest of the first order. This is a very lengthy clause. I seek clarification on the definition of "prescribed routine management purposes". Clause (18) states—

" 'Despite subsection (2), if—

(a) a lessee complies with the requirements of subsection (19);

(b) the lease—

(i) is used for agricultural or grazing purposes; and

(ii) is not a lease over a State Forest

. . .

the lessee may clear trees for prescribed routine management purposes without obtaining a tree clearing permit under this section."

There should be the greatest clarity in respect of that clause. People could fall into the trap of thinking that they are covered when they are actually in contravention of the Act and require a permit.

Mr Santoro interjected.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The member for Clayfield is interrupting the member for Burdekin. He is making it hard for the Minister to hear.

Mr STONEMAN: The other concern is the meaning of "routine". For instance, if a person subdivides a paddock for not only management purposes but also grazing purposes, does that person have to obtain a permit to clear a line for fencing? Another issue is the prescribed distance. What distance will be prescribed either side of an existing fence line or a new fence line? In some places, a person may only need to clear the width of a grader fire plough. In other areas, such as in box country, which contains a mixture of timbers, a person may need to clear back 30 or 40 feet. On some properties that I have owned, during a storm trees have fallen down and ruined fences, which allowed stock to escape and dingos to enter. If a specific distance is to be prescribed, it is vital that it be a large area rather than a small area. They are the types of management processes that I believe——

Mr Vaughan: Commonsense.

Mr STONEMAN: I agree with the exercise of commonsense. However, this Act provides that a distance will be prescribed. I inform the Minister that, in some instances, a large distance may need to be cleared. Hopefully, the Act will prescribe that larger distances can be cleared. If the distance is open, it will present no problems. I put that proposition to the Minister in all sincerity, because potential problems exist with the measurement of prescribed areas. Conditions vary quite considerably right across the State. I reiterate also the point about new areas.

Mr SMITH: I believe I have answered the first question about the sandalwood. Essentially, it is a species which is described as a forest timber under the Forestry Act. I felt that I covered that before. The specific species that will be prescribed will be identified by way of regulation. There will be plenty of time to address that question. I have here a whole page of species that could be included, but I do not wish to waste time going through them. I give the honourable member an assurance that they will appear under the regulations, and there will be an opportunity to address it at that point.

Mr STONEMAN: I ask the Minister to comment also on whether measurement will be included in the prescription for routine management processes—for such things as roads, new fence lines and clearing along existing fences. Will there be a prescription, or will it be a practical process? It may not necessarily be half a mile either side of the fence, but the adoption of that practical process would allow the genuine management processes to be applied rather than a specific dotted-line process.

Mr SMITH: In response to the honourable member's remarks, I would have to say that the matters pertaining to the land and the areas that he has mentioned are obviously going to be a matter for commonsense and discussion between officers. I do not think that it would be possible to put precise measurements in the legislation to cover all the circumstances. It would be ridiculous to do so. I am quite confident that the landowner and the departmental officers will be able to reach some common ground which will satisfy both parties.

Mr STONEMAN: I am heartened by the Minister's remarks in which he said that it would be ridiculous to put specific measurements into the legislation. That is precisely the situation. I look forward—although still with some anxiety—to the tabling of those regulations in due course.

Clause 19, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 20 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

BREAD INDUSTRY AUTHORITY REPEAL BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 5 November (see p. 79).

Mr PERRETT (Barambah) (5.58 p.m.): The fact that this Bill has been placed on the notice paper is a shocking indictment of the Minister for Primary Industries. It is testament to the absolute incompetence of the Minister to be in control of any department, let alone one that has such a tremendous impact on the people of Queensland. The Bread Industry Authority Repeal Bill sends some very clear messages. The first message is obvious, that is, that the Minister does not have the capacity to see issues clearly and to think them through logically. The second message is equally obvious, that is, that he has lost control of his portfolio responsibilities. He lacks the staying power to see things through. The third message is that the Minister will walk away from the hard options. The fourth message is chilling. When the Minister walks away from his own legislation and his own rhetoric, he will abandon all of those people he pretends to be taking care of.

Mr Santoro: That is not good, is it?

Mr PERRETT: It is very bad. Consumers, who pay a 6c a loaf rise every seven or eight weeks, are starting to get the message. This Bill is a classic cop-out. It is the biggest backdown since the two Waynes had to go to Canberra and tug the forelock to Keating after backing the wrong side in the Hawke assassination.

On 29 March 1990, the Minister for Primary Industries bounced into the House with a blueprint for the destruction of the bread industry. However, he did not call it that

at that time. The Minister was the reformer who came in from the wilderness. He was the white knight who was about to put everything right. The Bread Industry Authority Bill was change for the sake of change. It was a case of the brand-new Labor Government sweeping away everything that had happened before 2 December 1989. Of course, the truth is very different. The Minister was a newly appointed Minister, desperate to make his mark. He decided that he would change things. He wanted to do away with a system that gave everybody in the bread industry a fair go.

There are a number of important interest groups in the bread industry, and they all have a rightful claim to consideration. The bakers have an obvious interest, as they are in there to make money. The bread market is finite and competition for the available market always means that there will be casualties. Country bakers need protection against the national and multinational bread manufacturers. The interests of hot bread shops are also legitimate, and any legislation should ensure that they do not face the unfair price competition available as a weapon to the big manufacturers. There are the vendors, who are also vulnerable to predatory arrangements. There are the retailers—the corner stores and the big chains—that are able to use bread as a temporary loss leader, especially if the manufacturers cooperate. Finally, there are the consumers—whom the former member for Warwick called the bread eaters—and their interests must be considered along with the interests of all the other groups. The Minister claimed to be doing that. However, he has let down the consumers and he has let down most of the other legitimate interest groups.

When the Minister for Primary Industries introduced this Bill, he stated that the Bill provided—

> ". . . the mechanism for removal of existing regulation of the marketing of bread in Queensland . . ."

The legislation would wind up the affairs of the Bread Industry Authority, which the Minister said had been brought into existence to remove what he called "a high degree of instability" in the industry, and will provide all participants with a reasonable degree of business surety. The Minister admitted the total failure of his legislation. However, he glossed over his own abject failure in the following terms—

> "Unfortunately, significant sectors of the industry chose not to comply with the legislation in their quest for market share. This resulted in on-going uncertainty and penalised those in the industry who were attempting to comply with the Act."

Tut-tut! The naughty boys took advantage of loopholes that were big enough to drive a bread truck through. They took advantage of the Minister's absolute incompetence. They took advantage of legislation prepared in accordance with flawed instructions from political operators rather than experienced public servants.

The Minister cannot blame sections of the baking and retailing industries for the chaos that followed his flawed legislation. To call that chaos instability is the understatement of the year. Bread prices went mad—to the ultimate detriment of consumers. Vendors were placed in an impossible position. They were the pawns in a price war between the big manufacturers. Many of them went broke, with families losing their life savings invested in their runs. Corner stores lost a collective fortune as the sharks of the retailing system—the big four chains—moved in with crazy bread prices, often in collusion with the big manufacturers. That is what happened in the wake of the Minister's ill-conceived legislation—what he calls instability!

Family businesses all over the State have suffered—vendors and small retailers. Smaller bakers are facing up to the fact that they will have to get out or, at the very least, go into the specialist hot bread market. The real survivors—the big bread manufacturers and the big retail chains—are now free to carve up the State's bread

markets. Consumers are still able to hunt out bread bargains—for the moment. Look out when the majors have settled on the winners and losers! We are already paying a lot more for bread, partly to make up the losses that those people have suffered in their market-share wars.

Sitting suspended from 6.02 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr PERRETT: Since the Government stopped any pretence at enforcing even its weak regulations, the price of bread has gone through the roof. In the State's biggest market, the Brisbane metropolitan area, the most common retail price for the standard 680-gram sliced loaf has risen 12c. Surprise, surprise! Tip Top, Buttercup and Cobbity Farm each had two 6c rises. Each time, the rises for each manufacturer have been on three successive Mondays. Coincidence is such a marvellous thing. The rise to $1.47 for that standard loaf from the big three is just the start of a move to recoup the profits lost in the market-share wars. Goodman Fielder Wattie is one of the big three. It manufactures a lot of bread here and in other parts of the world. In Queensland, its Buttercup brand has a big share of the market. Goodman Fielder Wattie has published an annual report claiming a big loss for its Australian bakery division last year—$30m. I am not aware of the financial results for the other two major manufacturers, but price wars are expensive. It will need a few more price rises to make up the losses that Buttercup claims to have made.

It is too late to undo the damage done by the market wars in the bread industry. The Opposition is not suggesting a return to regulation as a means of protecting the legitimate interests of all parties to the baking and sale of bread. It is too late. The horse has bolted. We are all stuck with the results of the Minister's grandstanding of 1990—ably assisted by some Labor people who should be just as red faced as the Minister. Let me look at some of the things Labor members said when they ganged up on elements of the bread industry. First, the Minister. Here are his first words when he introduced his ill-fated legislation on 29 March 1990—

> "The purpose of this Bill is to repeal the Bread Industry Committee Act 1979 and replace the former Committee with a new, effective body, the Bread Industry Authority. Bread is the most staple of food commodities. It must always be available to consumers throughout Queensland at fair and reasonable prices."

The Minister went on to boast that this would be legislation with real teeth. He told us that penalties were incorporated; in his words, they were of a sufficient scale to act as a real deterrent. He went to tell us—

> "The aim of these penalty provisions is to protect consumers from unfair pricing and to protect from destructive pricing practices those sections of the industry complying with the Act.

It got better. The Minister ended with a flourish when he said—

> "The introduction of this Bill is concrete evidence of the Goss Labor Government's desire to provide for the continued proper and orderly development of the bread industry in Queensland without risking workers' jobs or disadvantaging consumers."

What rubbish! The southern boardrooms ordered champagne by the case—and with very good reason. The Minister handed them the bread industry on a platter—baking and sales. He refused to set a minimum selling price. He put nominal controls—and I emphasise "nominal"—on only a part of the industry's product. He gave the new body no effective teeth and no real charter for enforcement.

Let me see how the Minister was played off a break—some of the scams used to sidestep the Minister's professed ideals. Bread sales were often invoiced interstate to get around the weak pricing controls. The major chains were given some bakery products free, such as rolls, different sized loaves, and all the rest. The manufacturers were thus able to supply the regulated product to the major chains at effective give-away prices. The chains, of course, were then still able to sell bread at ridiculous prices

as sucker bait to entice people into their stores. Smaller bakers, and particularly those in country areas, were given no chance to compete. Neither were the smaller retailers. That must have been Labor's idea of protecting jobs. Promotions and manipulation of returns were cynical devices used to put pressure on bread vendors and make them wear some of the brunt of the price and market wars.

Most bread runs, of course, are small businesses. They are generally run by families and represent the investment of family assets such as the home mortgage. When those runs went under for the benefit of huge companies, families were wiped out financially. Many lost their homes and just about everything else that they had. The Minister was deeply sympathetic, of course. Milk vendors would well remember the Minister talking about their investment as nothing more than a clapped-out truck and a pair of sandshoes. Perhaps his attitude to the bread vendors was identical. That legislation not only risked jobs, it lost jobs all the way. How does anyone seriously believe that the industry can largely move to bread manufacture in factories without losing jobs?

Naturally, the other major group to suffer was the consumers. As I said before, prices have risen substantially in the chaos which the Minister created, and they will continue to rise, with the industry now dominated by only three major players. I would have thought that identical price rises by three manufacturers in successive weeks would have roused the interest of the Trade Practices Commission or, at the very least, the Government's own Consumer Affairs Division. But apparently not! I challenge the Government to do something positive to protect consumers and the small players in the industry. But nobody had better hold his or her breath on that one. Now, I know that the Minister is just dying to say something about the success of hot bread shops. Before he does, I want him to think about a couple of things. Where do they get their supplies of flour? What are the connections between flour millers and the major bread manufacturers? With the supermarket lines now shared out, how long will the majors tolerate the existence of hot bread shops?

The Minister must bear the major blame for what has happened in the supply and marketing of bread. He was not alone in supporting a scheme that destroyed jobs and put consumers at the mercy of price rises far beyond inflation. He had willing helpers in the House. The former member for Glass House—and it is unfortunate that he is not in the House tonight——

An honourable member: He has just walked in.

Mr PERRETT: How very timely! The former member for Glass House, who now represents Caboolture, was a great supporter of the Minister. He made a passionate plea for regulation. He proudly told the House that the only States not to have price rises for a particular period were the two States that had regulation. The price of bread rose in all other States. What was his conclusion from all this? Perhaps we can have his exact words from *Hansard*. He said this—and I would be interested to know whether he has changed his mind—

> "Obviously, the consumer gains some benefit from a regulated price market in which the range of prices and price increases can be held."

The member enlisted the words of the Queensland Bread Manufacturers Association general manager, Ken Ball. He quoted Mr Ball as saying that only a minority of consumers would benefit from deregulation. He also quoted bread vendors, the Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association, the Transport Workers Union and consumer advocates such as Gabby Horan and Brenda Payne in support of regulation in the industry.

Mr J. H. Sullivan: It was a good speech, wasn't it?

Mr PERRETT: If ever I saw anybody with egg all over his face, it has to be the honourable member for Caboolture. Now we presume Mr Sullivan is happy to join the Minister in walking away from regulation and abandoning those whose support was enlisted just over two years ago. Before I leave the honourable member's remarks in the

last debate on the bread industry, I want to point out something else. He made great play on enforcement. He said that the penalties were high enough to deter large companies from ignoring the legislation. He said that inspectorial powers were relatively comprehensive. I wonder how the honourable member reconciles that with the Minister's bleatings when he introduced this Bill. Let me remind honourable members that the Minister complained that—

> ". . . significant sectors of the industry chose not to comply with the legislation in their quest for market share."

How on earth did the Minister and his supporters expect anyone to comply with legislation so sloppily drafted? Members on this side of the House are not keen on overregulating everything the way Labor is, but when we regulate, we make sure that the regulation scheme is workable. The essential difference is that we know what we want to achieve and how to go about it. We would never make a mess such as the Minister now asks us to forget about. The House no longer has the services of the former member for Warwick, Des Booth. He was a pretty wise man—certainly a lot more so than the Minister. When Des Booth spoke in the debate on the Bread Industry Authority Bill on 29 August 1990, he had this to say—

> "I have to say that the Minister is dead wrong about this Bill. It will come back to haunt him."

As he usually was, Des was dead right.

Mr CONNOR (Nerang) (7.40 p.m.): I am very happy to rise to speak on this Bill. In August 1990, both the Liberal and National Parties said that this legislation would not work. The Minister at that time, the current Minister for Primary Industries, Ed Casey——

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The member for Chermside will not interject from other than his usual place.

Mr CONNOR: The Minister basically held a gun at the head of both the Parliament and the industry by saying that, unless we got behind the legislation, because the legislation was up for review in 12 months, he would deregulate. He urged us, somehow or another, to support the legislation otherwise he would hit us over the head with deregulation. That is exactly what is happening now. The then National Party spokesman, Des Booth, said that the fact that the Minister was prepared to review the legislation in 12 months was a sign that the legislation was obviously flawed. Without any consultation, the Minister dropped this piece of legislation on the table of Parliament. It sat there, I might add, surrounded by a great deal of controversy, for five months. At least the Minister was consistent. He had no support from any sector of the business community or the industry. To remind the Minister of what the former member for Warwick had to say, I quote—

> "It will not work. It will put many people out of work and will not be in the best interests of Queenslanders."

He added—

> ". . . bread vendors will be pushed out."

He said also—

> "Some of these manufacturers would be quite happy to boot bread-vendors out of business."

He said further—

> "The Opposition will oppose the Bill in its entirety."

Mr Deputy Speaker, it is very difficult to speak in this debate when the Minister for Education is sitting beside me.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will return to his seat.

Mr Casey: He's trying to pick up the crumbs.

Mr CONNOR: As a matter of fact, the Minister was looking a bit like that last night.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr CONNOR: That is the case. He would not if he was in the condition he was in last night. Des Booth said that the Opposition would oppose the Bill in its entirety. He said that members of the National Party thought the legislation was such a mess that there was no point in moving amendments. In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

> ". . . to protect consumers from unfair pricing and to protect from destructive price practices those sections of the industry complying with the Act. No longer will small elements of the bread industry disrupt the successful operation of the whole industry. Yet, at the same time, consumers will be able to enjoy the advantages of bread discounting when offered by retailers."

This was the member's reply—

> "He cannot have it both ways. He cannot say 'we will have a stable price but we will have rampant discounting.' "

Mr Casey interjected.

Mr CONNOR: I was quoting the Minister. However, with a certain amount of browbeating and, as I said before, the holding of a gun at the head of the industry by threatening deregulation, the Minister was able to extract a certain amount of support from some sectors of the industry. But one has to ask what the real agenda was back in August 1990. The Minister knew then, as the industry knew, that the legislation would not work. One cannot be a little bit pregnant. At the same time as this legislation was brought in, the Minister and the members of the Government maintained that the only way to go was regulation, because without regulation there would be a price hike. It was acknowledged that there would be the odd instance of discounting but that the majority of sales would occur at a significantly higher price. I add that at that time in Queensland, a 680-gram loaf of bread was selling at retail outlets for around $1.25. At the same time, in New South Wales—the price of bread in Queensland is compared regularly with the price of bread in that State—bread was selling for $1.50 per loaf. At that time, the Government, through its spokesman Mr Jon Sullivan and the Minister, maintained that without suitable regulation the price of bread would hike. I want to remind the Minister of what he said during that debate—

> "What the Government is trying to achieve by introducing this legislation is control of bread-pricing in the State. Unless those regulations are introduced, Queensland will go to total deregulation. If it does that, the first group of people to disappear will be the vendors. This State will no longer have vendors, which is the position in some other States."

The Minister stated further—

> "The second thing that will occur is that the pressures that will be brought to bear by monopolies in other States will be such that the major Queensland company involved in flour-milling and baking, which is holding the line for and on behalf of Queensland against those international consortiums, will be pushed out."

Does the Minister still stand by those words?

This is a time when inflation is supposedly running at around 1 per cent. I acknowledge that there have been some imposts on the industry such as the training levy, superannuation and the 38-hour week. It is claimed that these increases have been offset by productivity gains and, therefore, bread should still be able to be manufactured at a similar cost. Nevertheless, there has been a 20 per cent increase in price. One then has to ask: what benefit have Queenslanders gained from the Government's dabbling in the bread industry? I might add that, back in August 1990, the Opposition's position was that the existing legislation, the Bread Industry Committee Act of 1983, should be retained but given more teeth. On that basis, the Opposition would have supported minor amendments to the existing legislation; however, that was

not to occur. With all the swapping and changing, a lack of commitment to the legislation at the time by the Government and the lack of a clear direction and commitment to regulation of the industry, many within the industry—especially the small operators and the bread vendors—were left out on a limb. They were in no-man's-land. They were not in a position to be able to gain compensation because of any Government deregulation of their industry and, at the same time, they were not in a position to be able to sell out of the industry. That remained the position for quite some time, and many small businesspeople went to the wall.

The current situation is that the big three bread manufacturers are generally doing away with their contract bread vendors, as the Minister said before, and swapping to paid employee bread carters. One wonders what was the real agenda of this Government, because what it has achieved is a general increase of between 15 per cent and 20 per cent in the cost of a loaf of bread, the movement of bread vendors from contractors to employees, and the movement of the majority of the sales of breads to chain stores. This Government is certainly no friend of small business. One of the most important questions I want to ask of the Minister is: exactly how much has all this cost? What was the total cost in dollar terms to the bread industry? What about the overall cost to the community? The contract bread vendors are effectively being forced out of the industry. The bread industry manufacturers are buying out their runs, but that does not provide them with a continued livelihood.

I would like to read a letter dated 11 July 1990 that the Minister was aware of at that time. I want to remind the Minister of the direction in which he has taken the industry. The letter states—

> "As a bread vendor's wife I am writing to ask that you give very serious consideration to the Bread Industry Authority Bill and the effects of deregulation in the bread industry.
>
> If deregulation is introduced into the bread industry the effects will be many and varied, the prices go up and vendors are squeezed out. The only beneficiaries will be the large supermarket chains and large bread manufacturers.
>
> Research by the Transport Workers Union into deregulation in N.S.W. shows that after the initial price wars the price for a loaf of bread settled at $1.60, 44 cents higher than our price now. The Bureau of Statistics figures bear this out.
>
> Bread vendors will be ruined financially because their small business will have no place in a deregulated industry, (they were the first to go when the industry deregulated in N.S.W.) and there has been no suggestion that they will be compensated."

That is a reference to those involved in the bread industry in Queensland. The letter continues—

> "My husband will be in debt to the sum of $78,000 with no forseeable means of support as he is over 45, and there are not many jobs offered to people in that age group now. The majority of bread vendors are over 35 so there will be a lot more unemployment in the community.
>
> If you allow deregulation to be introduced, please demand that vendors be adequately compensated.
>
> The Bread Manufacturers encouraged vendors into the industry, one manufacturer even gave bread runs to some employees. Therefore having endorsed the presence of vendors or contractors into their industry they should be made to accept the responsibility of buying the vendors runs back at a reasonable market rate, i.e. the rate bread runs were being sold for before price wars began.
>
> The rate last year for a bread run was $9—$10 a unit.
>
> Please consider this matter very seriously. Do not accept a year's trial."

That is what the Minister has done. I repeat, "Do not accept a year's trial." The letter goes on—

> "Our business will not survive six months, let alone a year, with deregulation.
>
> The legislation must be either regulation of the industry or adequate and immediate compensation for bread vendors."

That letter was from Janet Davis. I table that letter. That is the voice of the bread industry itself. The Minister was totally aware that that was the situation. He had five months after the legislation was tabled to be warned of the repercussions, but for the last two years the Minister has allowed the industry to go through this restructuring without the slightest hint of compensation or any sort of remorse for what he has inflicted on the industry. What are these people expected to do once they are no longer contract vendors? Many of these people will not be able to get a job. Where do they go? Are they just to be thrown on the unemployment scrap heap like the other one million unemployed in Australia?

I would also like to ask the Minister what sort of compensation package he will put in place for all the people who have been hurt during the last couple of years. At least in New South Wales the Government was honest about it. The people accepted that, in that particular instance, deregulation was the way to go and they accepted the fact that some people were likely to get hurt, so a compensation package was put together. The question that must be asked is: what sort of compensation is the Minister proposing for all the bread vendors, the small business people, the corner store operators and others who have been hurt by this Government vacillation? Last but not least, the question I do not expect to get an answer for is: what was the real agenda? Was it really about deregulation that the Minister did not have the guts to carry out, or was it just incompetence on the Minister's part? One thing is for sure: a few of the players are very happy about the outcome. Not only did they achieve the total deregulation that they were after, but also they did it without having to pay compensation and almost without any political fallout. To conclude my speech, I quote the words spoken by the former member for Warwick, Des Booth, who stated in a previous speech on this subject—

> "Not every good backbencher makes a good Minister. I am beginning to wonder whether Mr Casey belongs in that category."

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.54 p.m.), in reply: Mr Speaker, I am humbled by the patsy-like ferocity of the Opposition attack. In sorrow, may I say mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Let the Bread Industry Act requiescat in pace, amen.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 November (see p. 471).

Mr LINGARD (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (7.57 p.m.): I understand that this is an historic night. From the searches undertaken by the

Parliamentary Library, it appears that never before has the Queensland Parliament sat four nights in a row after dinner. So far, this Parliament has sat on 34 nights. Of that total, the Parliament sat after midnight 16 times, or 47 per cent, of those occasions. Mr Speaker, I draw to your attention the fact that this has never happened before.

Mr MACKENROTH: I rise to a point of order. I suggest that this is not relevant. If people made relevant speeches, we would not be here until after midnight.

Mr LINGARD: Any person who puts forward27 Bills for discussion in two weeks is doing very well to get it all done. I rise to support the Professional Engineers Amendment Bill. Although I support the concept and thrust of the amendments, there are some issues I would like the Minister to clarify during the course of this debate. The Professional Engineers Act 1988 was enacted to ensure that professional engineering services are provided by people who are fully qualified and trained in the appropriate field, and that a system of registration of people or bodies entitled to practise as engineers exists to protect the people of Queensland. A review of the Act has been undertaken. As a result, it has been found that the existing legislation does not allow major commercial companies, which engage in a wide range of activities, including the provision of engineering services, to be registered as a professional engineering company. Therefore, there have been technical breaches of the Act by major engineering companies when they undertake engineering work in Queensland.

Consequently, it has been decided to amend the Act so that the companies that provide engineering services as only one part of their activities are legally able to do so. Under the proposed amendment, it is intended that the person who is responsible within a company for providing engineering services will be registered under the Professional Engineers Act 1988 as a professional engineer, thus ensuring that the company concerned is acting legally and the public interest is protected. The proposed changes to the legislation are designed to ensure that registration of part of a company undertaking professional engineering services in Queensland will be covered by the Act, and to amend the existing legislation to ensure that it conforms with current legislative practices.

The proposed changes to the Act will allow a relaxation of conditions for registration of companies to enable some of Australia's most experienced companies or consultants to practise under the 1988 Act. Further changes are being made to the Act to ensure that multinational and major commercial companies which offer engineering services as part of their activities will be able to register those services, and it will be the responsibility of the professional engineer in charge of these services to be accountable and see that the Act is complied with.

The tenure of members of the Board of Professional Engineers of Queensland will now be limited to a period of two years, irrespective of whether they are nominated by the Minister or elected by the profession. The remainder of the changes are mainly of an administrative nature. However, changes to the investigation and disciplinary provisions so that they conform with the principles of natural justice is something on which I will later seek clarification from the Minister. I understand that there has been close liaison between the board of engineers and selected interested parties, which include the Institute of Engineers Australia, the Association of Consulting Engineers of Australia and the Association of Professional Engineers of Australia. In addition, companies such as BHP Engineering, Comalco Aluminium Limited, the Snowy Mountains Engineering Corporation Limited and many local governments and local authorities have also been consulted. In summary, all of those organisations have, for the most part, given their support to the proposed changes.

I turn now to my major concern with the Bill, which involves Part 8—"Complaints and Discipline". This Part gives an investigator working for the Board of Professional Engineers considerable powers when engaged to investigate a complaint against an engineer. For example, clause 46 provides that an investigator has the power to enter a place and to require a person to attend, answer questions and produce documents. Clause 47 (b) gives the investigator powers of entry and search in relation to the

collection of evidence. The investigator is able to apply for a warrant to search and inspect documents, and the clause also provides that the investigator can lay disciplinary charges on certain grounds. It will be necessary for the investigator not only to have considerable professional experience but also to be well versed in legal matters before being able to undertake an investigation. The investigator is not indemnified for any actions that he or she may undertake under the Act, and it is quite likely that he or she could incur personal liability as a result of carrying out his or her duties.

I understand that the Minister's departmental advisers believe that any investigator who acts in good faith and whose conclusions are based on factual evidence should have no concerns about legal action being taken. They believe that a thorough briefing of the investigator about his power and duties should ensure that he or she acts reasonably. I ask the Minister whether he is concerned that an investigator who is basically an engineer could easily be placed in a situation of being given powers similar to those of a police officer but without the necessary training to enable the exercise of those powers in a legitimate and restrained way. I also ask what action the Minister proposes to take or what action does he propose that the Board of Professional Engineers should take in briefing investigators to ensure that they are fully cognisant of their powers and responsibilities. The last issue to which I would like the Minister to respond is the question of what impact this legislation will have on the smaller engineering firms and consultancies in Queensland. We have now removed any obstacles to the large engineering firms or their parent companies from operating in every engineering field in Queensland. I wonder whether the Minister and his department have given careful consideration to any impact that this may have. As I said at the outset of my speech, I support the amendments that the Minister proposes but ask that he respond and give careful consideration in the future to the points that I have raised.

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.03 p.m.): I am pleased to take part, albeit briefly, in the debate and to pay tribute to the role of engineers in our community. It goes without saying that our society could not exist as it does without the continuing input of the engineering profession, which turns the ideas of others into practical realities. It seems that the Bill is intended to tidy up some problems that have arisen in the administration of the Professional Engineers Act. As several members have noted, the Bill will allow the registration of companies which are not engaged solely in professional engineering. For some time, companies have actually been breaching the Act because of its restrictive nature, and the Government should be commended for making this commonsense move to remove unnecessary impediment. The professional engineer in charge of a company's engineering division will be registered under the Act, meaning that all the public protection and public interest tests will still be met.

However, the engineers board says that, to be registered as a professional engineer, one must hold a degree and be a member of the Institute of Engineers Australia, or an appropriate equivalent body. In addition, the engineer in question must have at least five years' practical experience in the profession. There may be many engineers with diplomas but not degrees who currently undertake design and consulting work but who would not meet the criteria for registration as professional engineers under the Bill. I mention that because it may well be that some engineers or companies could end up being disfranchised because of the definition. Speaking of definitions, it has been brought to my attention that there is no clear definition in the Act of the term "professional engineering services". That, in turn, may make enforcement of the part of the Bill dealing with prohibited practices very difficult.

In this brief contribution, I want to raise two other matters, and both are matters which engineers within my electorate have brought to my attention. The first is to ask the Minister why no mention is made in the Bill of Q-Build. I also ask the Minister whether the provisions of the Bill apply to Q-Build and its engineering functions. That matter has been of some concern to professional engineers and I look forward to hearing what the position is from the Minister. The second and rather more substantive

matter relates to Part 8 of the Bill—complaints and discipline—which was covered quite adequately by the previous speaker in the debate. I will still say a few words about it. Engineers and legal practitioners have expressed to me their concern that this Part will not work in practice as it will make it virtually impossible for the board to locate an investigator with the appropriate professional experience, coupled with the necessary legal expertise to undertake any investigation. The board would feel almost compelled, I would imagine, to inform any prospective authorised person that he or she may incur personal liability as a result of carrying out his or her duties, as there is no provision for statutory protection or indemnity. This differs from the situation enjoyed by, say, a royal commission.

Indeed, in his second-reading speech the Minister noted that the previous provision which gave the board the powers of a commission of inquiry has been omitted. Many engineers fear that this is a backward step and will cause the board to be hamstrung in going about its investigations. Why was that deemed to have been necessary? Sadly, the likely end result of that omission is that people of sufficient competence will be unwilling to accept such a commission. It would probably be preferable if, within the powers provided by the Bill, a disciplinary committee were set up by the board, comprising suitable persons who were not actually board members. The role of the disciplinary committee would be to investigate all complaints and decide whether a prosecution is warranted. In the event of prosecution, a member of a disciplinary committee could then present the case to the board and, subject to the normal rules of natural justice, the person who is the subject of the complaint could make relevant submissions. The board could then make its final decision.

I ask the Minister to consider making the changes that I have suggested or to provide some indemnity to the investigator, if not through amendment to the Bill during this debate, given the stage of the year that we are at, perhaps through regulation, if that is possible. In closing, I reiterate the high regard in which the engineering profession is held, and I look forward to hearing the Minister's responses to the issues that I have raised on behalf of the profession.

Hon. T. J. BURNS (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Administrative Services and Minister for Rural Communities) (8.08 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate. When we moved to address the problems of companies and we handed the matter over to the parliamentary counsel, they suggested that we should alter some other matters associated with the Bill as well. So all of the matters that the honourable member for Clayfield has raised have been recommended to us through the parliamentary counsel and have been discussed fairly widely with all sections of the industry, and they agree with them. However, it has to be remembered that mutual recognition is coming to Australia and to Queensland, and some of the standards that are laid down interstate will be acceptable here, and we will have to do those things. At that time, it could be that some of this legislation might not be needed any more.

Concerns were expressed about investigations. In the past, the board carried out its own investigation and heard the charges. It selected an engineer, or someone else, to carry out the investigation. The whole board did not go out and investigate an engineer. Instead, the board selected an engineer, he carried out the investigation, came back and gave the board a report, and the board then charged the person and dealt with him. I think that natural justice says that that is not exactly the right way to go. The way we see it, and the way in which the recommendations have come to us from our legal advisers and from parliamentary counsel, is that the board should appoint an investigator. He is just like an inspector who works for the council. Council inspectors do not get any legislative protection at all. There is no protection for them if they do the wrong thing. In my three years as Minister for Local Government, I never heard of a council inspector being charged with an offence for going about his duty in a normal, responsible way. The only time that the investigator will be in trouble is when he starts to be overbearing or does things that he is not allowed to do under the Act.

When legislation is introduced, I always say that if there are any problems with it, we will amend it. It should never be set in concrete. It should be there to see how it works. Recommendations were made to me by the board and the engineering profession, and I have no reason to doubt that they have thought things out fairly seriously. I do not share the honourable member's concerns. However, I am aware of the concerns. They were raised when the Green Paper was issued some years ago. Those concerns were discussed in detail with the various groups. Since the Bill has been introduced again, we have heard no more complaints at all. We have tried to brief everybody we possibly could about it. I think the Bill will receive wide acceptance. However, I give the assurance that if there are problems with it, it will be amended.

Mr Santoro: What about Q-Build?

Mr BURNS: It is like any other business unit. It will be required to meet the requirements of the Act. Because I am not in possession of all the facts and cannot answer all the questions that have been posed, I assure honourable members that I will write to them and provide the information that they have requested.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 19, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

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

PARLIAMENTARY AMNESTY GROUP

Human Rights Violations, Uganda

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (8.12 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That this House resolves to convey to the Ugandan Government its concerns about ongoing human rights violations and in particular—

(1) urges the Government to ensure the army respects the rule of law;

(2) expresses concern about the use of serious charges as a pretext for detaining suspected opponents of critics, and the widespread use of detention without charge or trial and about summary and unfair trials of soldiers under military law, especially those which lead to executions;

(3) urges the Government to fully implement the international human rights treaties which it has acceded to, and to submit its periodic reports on the implementation of these treaties (the Convention against Torture and the African Charter on Human and People's Rights); and

(4) urges the Government to ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights."

Mr Speaker, this is the third year that the Parliamentary Amnesty Group has moved a motion in this House. In 1990, we moved a motion against the human rights abuses in Sri Lanka. In 1991, we moved a motion against the human rights abuses in Mexico, and this year we move a motion against the human rights abuses in Uganda. Despite all the past turmoils in the Queensland Parliament, I am pleased that the tradition of moving a motion on behalf of Amnesty International continues and that human rights violations halfway around the world give Queensland politicians something on which to agree.

As it is my last year as chairperson of the Parliamentary Amnesty Group, I wish to publicly thank Mr Speaker for his patronage of the Parliamentary Amnesty Group and Mr Terry Postans for his services as the group's secretary. In common with Amnesty groups the world over, our group campaigns for the unconditional release of prisoners of conscience, fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners, and an end to the death

penalty and torture. We believe that human rights violations are worth fighting, wherever they occur.

When the National Resistance Army took power in 1986, Uganda was a devastated country. It had been torn apart by civil war and 20 years of political violence under the rule of Idi Amin. Human rights had been persistently and grossly violated. The economy had been ruined. Several early Government actions indicated that the National Resistance Movement intended to translate its stated commitments to human rights into practice. In areas firmly under the National Resistance Army control, gaols were opened and the arbitrary harassment, killing and torture of civilians largely ceased.

However, since the second half of 1986, a new pattern of serious human rights violations has emerged in Uganda. Massacres of unarmed civilians and prisoners by soldiers of the Government's National Resistance Army have taken place every year. Government officials frequently blame those violations on the legacy of the past or invoke Uganda's history to suggest that, relatively speaking, the human rights situation is better than it was before. It appears that the Government is prepared to use the past as a smokescreen to hide both its complacency and, in some instances, the deliberate and cynical violation of human rights by high-ranking military and Government officials.

We acknowledge that some Government action in relation to human rights issues has brought results. A cruel form of tying known as three piece or Kandooya was banned throughout the National Resistance Army. Other positive steps have included the release in 1989 and 1990 of over 4 800 uncharged detainees who had been arrested in rural areas. Despite those moves to ensure some human rights, Amnesty International is concerned that many abuses still occur in Uganda. It is therefore necessary for both Ugandans and the international community to look closely at the National Resistance Movement Government's record on human rights. We believe that Government must take determined and urgent action to ensure that Uganda's horrific past does not continue to dominate the country's future. I thank the House for the unanimity of support for this motion. I thank the Opposition for seconding it.

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa) (8.17 p.m.): On behalf of the coalition, I am proud to support this motion. All honourable members can remember the days when Idi Amin was President of Uganda and consistently made the front page of newspapers through the atrocities that he committed against the people of his country. I personally remember being absolutely horrified reading of the harsh and inhumane penalties he inflicted on his people. I am sure that, for most Ugandans at that time, life was a long nightmare of fear and hardship. After massive international pressure and an invasion by a neighbouring country, the monster Idi Amin was forced out of the country to live in exile. President Yowery Museveni must have given some hope to the people of Uganda on his election in October 1987. At a time when all may have been seemed to be lost, the people of Uganda must have been absolutely delighted with the election of their new president.

In common with all other members of this House, I realise how lucky I am to live in a country that has no first-hand knowledge and has never experienced the scale of oppression and, in some cases, genocide inflicted on the people of Uganda during the reign of Idi Amin. Although President Museveni has been in power for only six years, many people—not just Ugandans, but from all over the world—would have expected him to have righted all the wrongs in that time. Unfortunately, change has not come quickly enough for the people of Uganda. The cycle of violence which has crippled the African country since Idi Amin came to power remains largely unbroken. Tribal rivalries and the abuses by Government troops still mean that most Ugandans live with the knowledge that oppression and violence are just around the corner. Many injustices, torture and occasionally even bloody massacres still occur in this strife-torn and very sad country.

For more than 20 years, Amnesty International has kept a close eye on Uganda. However, in the last few years, world attention has been focused on other trouble spots. The starving in Ethiopia and Somalia, the racial problems of South Africa, the Iraq war, the trials of the Kurds and now the civil war in Yugoslavia have all demanded

headlines, television time and the stretched resources of world charity organisations. What has largely gone unnoticed is that the situation in Uganda is still, at very best, tragic. Recently, Amnesty International has attempted to bring world attention back to Uganda.

I wish to digress for a moment to remind the House about the aims and ideals of Amnesty International. It works across the world to prevent the gravest violations by Governments of people's fundamental human rights. Its ideals are to free all prisoners of conscience; to ensure fair and prompt trials for political prisoners; and to abolish the death penalty, torture and other cruel treatments of prisoners. Amnesty International also opposes abuse by opposition groups, hostage taking and torture, and killing of prisoners and other arbitrary killings. The organisation has had its work cut out for it in Uganda.

Amnesty International is financed by subscriptions and donations and has worldwide membership. No funds are sought or accepted from Governments to safeguard the independence of the organisation. All contributions are strictly controlled by guidelines laid down by the International Council. I ask members of this House to find time to dwell on the problems of Uganda and perhaps think about taking direct action to help the people of this ravaged country. Any type of donation by an honourable member could help bring human rights back to a country and a people which does not currently know the meaning of those words. As I mentioned earlier, many human tragedies are being played out in the world at present, but the people of Uganda should not be forgotten. They need the help of all Australians, and I hope that Queenslanders will reflect on their plight and give them a hand. After all, they need it more than most.

Motion agreed to.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (8.21 p.m.): I move—

> "That the House, at its rising, do adjourn to a date and at a time to be fixed by Mr Speaker in consultation with the Government of the State."

VALEDICTORY

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (8.22 p.m.): I wish to take this opportunity to extend my personal good wishes for a happy and safe Christmas and a relaxing break to all members of the Parliament and to all of those associated with the Parliament who assist in its running in various ways and for whose efforts and assistance we are grateful. This is the beginning of the Forty-seventh Parliament. It does not seem much like a beginning, in the sense that I am sure that most members are feeling a little bit tired and a little bit worse for wear. It is perhaps a sobering thought to think that this is only the beginning. I suspect that it has been a long year for all of us.

Mr Mackenroth: They all fought hard to get back here.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yes, they all fought hard to get back here; that is right. It has been a long year, but it has been a very productive year. Obviously, the Government would be very happy with the results at the end of the year. However, I believe that all members from all the parties of this Forty-seventh Parliament, particularly the new members, can take satisfaction in terms of the important issues that have been debated throughout the year and the significant issues that have been debated since the election in this current session of Parliament.

I would like to endeavour to individually name and thank various people who have played a role, either by name, or the area of the Parliament in which they work. It is not

out of any sense of sycophancy, but rather it seems appropriate to thank Mr Speaker first for showing all of the wisdom, patience, tolerance, perceptiveness and any other adjectives that Mr Speaker would like me to use, if it has any effect.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: However, it is always a worry when one is the subject of a string of superlatives and the audience laughs spontaneously. However, I believe that that reflects the fact that all the members are very tired. I do not believe that anybody would cast any doubt on the comments that I have made. However, Mr Speaker, seriously, your job is a difficult one. We all know that. The Forty-seventh Parliament started off on a difficult note for you, but I think all of us from both sides of the House are aware of the difficult roles played by the Speaker, the Chairman of Committees and the various Temporary Chairpersons of Committees from both sides of the House. Their effort and contribution towards the running of the House is appreciated. As I said previously, I would also like to thank the Chairman of Committees, Mr Palaszczuk, and the other Temporary Chairpersons who have all assisted us.

I also express my appreciation from the Government's point of view to the Leader of the House, both Mr Braddy and Mr Mackenroth, for their efforts in making sure that the House ran smoothly, and to their counterparts on the other side of the House, the Liberal and National Party, or now the coalition——

An honourable member interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: My speech is not going to be like the honourable member's valedictory speech last year. I believe that the cooperation that largely occurs between the respective players is important, and it is a positive aspect of this place.

I would also like to thank in this Chamber the Clerk, Mr Doyle, the Deputy Clerk, Ms Cornwell, Mr Randle and the other staff who are associated with the table; and Mr Fraser and the other parliamentary attendants, for their prompt and courteous attention to the needs of the members in this place. Their background role is much appreciated by all members in the Chamber and around the premises of the House, and I believe that that should be acknowledged.

I would also like to thank Mr Watson and the Hansard staff for their assistance, particularly during weeks such as this when the pressure is on them as much as it is on anybody else in the Chamber itself. Up there next to the Hansard staff, of course, I would like to extend my traditional appreciation to those members of the press gallery who have managed to report the Government's activities fairly and accurately.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not think that that group of people is yet an endangered species, but hopefully we will have legislation in by the time they get to that state to ensure the preservation of that role which is an important part of this place as well.

I would also like to thank my Deputy, Tom Burns, who has been good enough to join us tonight. From my recollection, this is the first of the valedictory speeches that I have made which he has been able to attend. I understand that he does not have an invitation to be anywhere else. Notwithstanding that, I appreciate Mr Burns' attendance here tonight. On a serious note, although some people, particularly on the Government side of the House, appreciate it, many people do not have a full understanding of the very tremendous support that Tom Burns gives me in my job and the tremendous amount of work that he does in the background, which is often unrecognised, but without which my job as Premier would be very much more difficult than it is.

Those people who service the Parliament and members of Parliament in the immediate vicinity of the Chamber should also be acknowledged and thanked. I would like to thank the Parliamentary Counsel, Mr Lahey, and his staff. In recent years we have seen some very good improvements in the quality of the drafting. I am not reflecting on any people who were previously involved in that particular office, but I think that there has been a new approach, which has been a positive one. I believe that legislation

passed by this Parliament arising out of the EARC process in respect of the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel has improved the position as well. That can only serve to improve the performance of this institution which we all serve.

I would also like to thank the parliamentary committees, Public Accounts, Public Works, Electoral and Administrative Review, Criminal Justice, Privileges, Standing Orders, Subordinate Legislation, Travelsafe, library, printing, building and catering, and any others that I have forgotten. Committees are playing an increasingly important role, although in recent times they have had to find their way a bit. However, I think that they have played a very positive role, and that role can only grow in the future as they find their way.

I did not hear the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition but he reminds me that, of course, the Opposition members are an important part of this place. I would like to acknowledge and thank them for their contribution. I am not sure that I can remember them all, but I think it includes, of course, Mr Borbidge, Mr Cooper, Mr Santoro, Mrs Sheldon and Mr Lingard.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I am sorry for waking up those members. I will change the subject. I would also like to thank a range of other people. I hope that I do not forget anybody. I would like to thank Mr Fick from Corporate Services; Mr Bannenberg and the library staff; Mr Klein; Mr Andrew Coley, the catering manager, and indeed all the catering staff for their very cheerful, pleasant and efficient service, which I believe is appreciated by all members. It is something that we should stop and think about occasionally, because it is easy to forget their courteous and uncomplaining role in this place. The work of the building manager and his staff, the maintenance and cleaning staff, the gardeners and all the other ground staff who keep the premises and gardens of Parliament House in fine condition should also be acknowledged. The work of Mr McDonough and all of those people is appreciated, as well.

As we wind up in this place, and I see so many friendly faces here, I should also acknowledge the role of the Whips from the various parties. In particular, from the Government's point of view, I thank the various Government Whips, Mr Prest, Mr Pitt and Mr Livingstone, for their assistance. It is hard to replace the "Charm School", but I am sure that they will work on it. Although they might not match that unique charm and lyrical——

Mr Borbidge: Very special style.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Yes, that charm and lyrical style of Mr Prest. I am sure that Mr Pitt and Mr Livingstone will be efficient, as well.

I would now like to thank my own staff, especially Hazel, David, Joe, Jackie and Maurie for keeping me on the track and making sure that I get to the right place at just about the right time. I would also like to thank my departmental staff under Eric Finger for their patience and support throughout the year.

Last but not least, I acknowledge the role that our spouses and families play. I believe that one really has to be a member of this place to understand the additional load or burden and the very invaluable support that is provided by one's spouse or partner and family. It goes without saying that it is a very positive and invaluable contribution. Sometimes it involves for them as well the kinds of stresses and worries that members have to endure. To the extent that we are volunteers, we ask for that. But they are not volunteers, and they are deserving certainly of more consideration than we are in terms of the stresses and concerns that they have to bear as well. From my own point of view, I know that I could not do the job without that sort of support. So I certainly express that appreciation in a personal sense, but I am sure that all members know too well what I am speaking about.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, I wish you and all other members of this Parliament a very happy, relaxing and safe Christmas. I hope that all members will have a very

relaxing break and come back in 1993 recharged and renewed for the continuing work of the Forty-seventh Parliament.

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (8.34 p.m.): I join with the Premier in wishing honourable members on both sides of the House, their staff, spouses and families a very happy and safe Christmas break. On behalf of the Opposition, I pass on our respects and thanks to all those people associated with the increasingly complex operations of the Parliament.

Being an election year, it has undoubtedly been more hectic than average. But in retrospect, it means that we all put in that extra amount of effort which is a natural instinct when political lives and political futures are at stake. In the wake of the election, and the recent parliamentary session, which has been in terms of sitting hours a baptism of fire—certainly for the new members—we all have an opportunity to take a well-earned break, if not for our own sake, then for the sake of our families.

I take this opportunity to pay tribute to both the members of my party and also my coalition colleagues in the Liberal Party. This year, as it has turned out, has been a watershed for conservative politics in this State, with the re-formation of the coalition. In this regard, I pay tribute to my Coalition Deputy Leader, Joan Sheldon, for her cooperation and support for the non-Labor cause. I also place on record my appreciation for the efforts that have been made by both members of the National Party and the Liberal Party to form a cohesive team in here. I believe that the spirit of teamwork and genuine camaraderie that has developed among our members in a relatively short period has been quite remarkable.

I thank my Deputy Leader, the member for Beaudesert, Kevin Lingard, for his support, and also the efforts of his Liberal counterpart, the member for Clayfield, Mr Santoro. To our Whips, Lawrence Springborg and Bruce Laming, I pass on my thanks for the way that they have both approached their job. I extend on their behalf my thanks to the Government Whips. I believe that in what has been a relatively tortuous few days of sitting, the degree of cooperation that exists between Whips on both sides—if I dare say it—is a distinct improvement.

Mr Speaker, I wish you and your family my best wishes and the best wishes of the Opposition for the festive season. There is no doubt that you have the most difficult role in this Parliament, and that we at times may be inclined to contribute in a small way to the state of affairs that exists. I know that, during the past year, we have had our differences—sometimes serious differences—but I can assure you that, whatever may arise from time to time, they do not impinge on my personal respect and our personal respect for you and the role that you undertake. I note, Mr Speaker, that despite certain High Court rulings you will be staying with us. I particularly pay tribute to you for your cooperation in making available a room within the precincts of Parliament House for the Opposition closer to the Chamber. In retrospect, Mr Speaker, you have implemented one of the few EARC recommendations to actually see the light of day from the review of resources available to non-Government members, and I express my appreciation for it. I pay tribute also to the Chairman of Committees, Mr Palaszczuk, for the role that he plays in the operations of this place.

I commend especially at this time the table staff for their assistance, capably led by the Clerk, Mr Robert Doyle, and his Deputy Clerk, Michele Cornwell, and the Sergeant-at-Arms, Doug Randle. We must all ensure in the new year that the independence of this place and the role of the Clerk is protected. To the Chief Hansard Reporter, Mr Alan Watson, and his staff; Mr Nick Bannenberg, the Parliamentary Librarian, and his staff, we all owe a vote of thanks for their efforts on our behalf during the year. Politicians like making resolutions, and one that readily comes to mind at the end of a week like this is the intent of any Government that seems to be in power that it will put an end to late night sittings. We recognise that the intent was good, but, like a new year's resolution, there is usually a difference between what is intended and what eventually transpires. The situation whereby members debate legislation until the early hours is an ancient

tradition in this place, but it is not necessarily a proud one, and it should not be necessary in a Parliament in the 1990s.

I place on record that this year the House has sat for 34 days, including today, and 16 of those have involved sitting after midnight—almost half the sitting days. I would like to believe that we could do better. In the last eight working days of this session, six have involved sitting after midnight, mostly until about 2 a.m., which, by the expressions on honourable members' faces, most would hope will not be the norm for the Forty-seventh Parliament. I believe that, with cooperation, we should be able to plan to have, if necessary, extended sitting days in the interests of a better run Parliament.

While we as parliamentarians continue to subject ourselves to early mornings, this has a flow-on effect to the parliamentary staff. The resilience from the Table Office staff to John Fraser and his attendants, from the Hansard reporters to the librarians, never ceases to amaze me. We tend to forget that, if we go to bed at 3 a.m., it may be 4 a.m. or 4.30 a.m.—or, I understand, one morning this week it was 5 a.m.—before the Hansard staff finishes their work. Their dedication to the Parliament and its process is exemplary. They do so without complaint. We take them, as we take so many of the staff in this place, too much for granted.

There are also the people who play important roles behind the scenes but whose contributions all reflect on the running of this Parliament, and I join the Premier in commending the parliamentary catering staff, and make special mention of the parliamentary computer section—too often they do not get acknowledged—the gardeners and the cleaners—all the people who contribute to the efficient running of this establishment.

I take the opportunity to express my appreciation to my own staff for their undying efforts, particularly this year. Their performance, particularly in the lead-up to and during the election campaign, was excellent. On behalf of the parliamentary Opposition, I thank them for their dedication and their professionalism. My private secretary and principal policy adviser, Steve Johnston, has been of great personal support. My press secretary, Frank Jackson, has worked tirelessly to spread the Opposition's message, ably assisted in this regard by my chief of staff, Dick Forsyth, and Vanessa Wiltshire, Kim Stratford, and our research staff, Wendy Armstrong and Bill McKinley.

To my personal secretary, Sue Lowrie, I offer my sincere thanks for her tolerance and patience in organising my diary and travel requirements. I also pay particular tribute to my electorate secretary. At a time like this, we should acknowledge the pivotal role of electorate secretaries in the running of the Parliament and in the running of the democratic process in Queensland. My electorate secretary, Ros Bennett, has made an enormous contribution in attending to much of my electorate business in a challenging year. If I could make a plea, Mr Speaker—I know it is not your responsibility, but it is the responsibility of the Government—that is: for heaven's sake, let us get the electorate offices up and running. I must express disappointment and say that I am appalled that we still have a number of members of Parliament who still today, all this time after the election, do not have electorate offices. I urge the responsible Minister and the Government to make sure that those members who have not had their arrangements finalised have them expedited.

I mention also Mrs Andrea Peters, who left my office after the election to work in a family business, and thank her for her work over the years. I thank Juliana McInnes and Truss Klein of the Margaret Street office, the staff of the Deputy Leader, Greg Jones and Sue Mitchell, and last but by no means least—unless we want to walk everywhere—my driver, Ron Walsh. I thank them all and wish them and their families a safe and happy Christmas.

Finally, I commend the Government Printer for his organisation's efforts in support of the Parliament. I believe the printers are in the same category as the Hansard, table and library staff in terms of putting up with the demands we place on them with our sitting hours.

To the members of the press gallery who, unlike us, are well advanced in terms of their Christmas drinks, I offer the Opposition's thanks for their support and assistance throughout the year. I know that we do not—and will never—always agree with every news assessment or the emphasis placed on various stories, but, in common with the Premier, I think that we get a fair run, and a fair run is all that any member of Parliament can ask for. In fact, I believe that the news coverage in the lead-up to and during the election campaign was both fair and well balanced. I believe that, in this Parliament, we are seeing the media adopting a more responsive attitude to issues that are raised.

In conclusion, I wish all honourable members on both sides of the House, their spouses—who play an enormous role in the institution of Parliament, in the democratic process of this State—and their families a merry and safe Christmas. I know that there are times when debate in this place is energetic and robust, but I hope that, until we meet again in February, honourable members will take the opportunity to spend some well-earned time with their families.

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (8.45 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to join in this valedictory on behalf of the Liberal Party. I rise to support the comments of the Leader of the Opposition and also to tender the apologies of Liberal Leader Joan Sheldon who, because of a prior and most important commitment in her electorate, had to leave the parliamentary precincts earlier this afternoon.

As the Leader of the Opposition quite correctly stated, this has been a year of considerable change for the conservative parties in Queensland and, particularly, for the Liberal Party. One of the positive changes has been the re-establishment of formal relations between the Liberal Party and the National Party. I am sure that members opposite would agree that the arrangement of coalition has enhanced the status of the Opposition, both within this place and outside it. We look forward to the next parliamentary session and, over the quiet Christmas period, cementing the very good relations that have been formalised by the formal coalition.

Mrs Sheldon asked me to remind the Government of several facts, some of which have already been touched upon by the honourable the Leader of the Opposition. She asked me to remind the Government that there have been only 34 sitting days this year, and I suppose that goes hand in hand with the very long hours that we have all been keeping. From time to time, members of the Opposition cop flak. I suppose that last night was one night—and I am not making these comments because I had a small amount of say in how late we sat last night, or this morning—that we copped a little bit of flak. I have been grateful for the recognition by members opposite in private discussion today of the role that the Opposition must play when legislation as important as that which came before the House last night is debated. That role is a very important one, particularly when important legislation that clearly defines the differences between the two parties comes before the House, and despite some mirth and some laughter that perhaps the partisan positions of the people in this place force on them even during a valedictory. I am grateful to those members—and there have been quite a few—who have expressed support for the role that the Opposition plays, particularly during debates conducted late at night.

The Leader of the Liberal Party also asked me to remind members that we have been allowed to ask only 518 questions throughout the year. That is an average of which I do not believe we should be proud, and we look forward to further streamlining and further reform of the Standing Orders during the next year, as promised by Mr Speaker several times now. Mr Speaker has made commitments which the Opposition believes are honourable commitments. With the assistance and the goodwill of members opposite hopefully that will be generated during the peaceful and quiet Christmas period, those reforms, with support from Mr Speaker, will come into effect in the new year.

I support the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition in relation to electorate offices. Over dinner we discussed the situation in which one member from the Opposition finds herself in relation to her electorate office. She mentioned that the

bureaucrats are very keen to satisfy the rules but sometimes, because of the lack of availability of certain types of premises—because these stringent requirements cannot always be implemented within certain building structures—it is not always possible to satisfy those particular requirements. I think it is important that the people who are appointed by the Parliament to serve the members of the Parliament should be a little bit more aware of the necessity to get up and run.

Mr Mackenroth: EARC and CJC would never want us to go outside the guidelines.

Mr SANTORO: I will take the interjection from the honourable member. I honestly do not want to speak for very long.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SANTORO: I think that in the interest of benign contribution, I should be heard.

Mr Hamill: The clan Santoro tie.

Mr SANTORO: The MacSantoro tie, there is no doubt about it. If honourable members give me these interjections we could be here for a lot longer than they anticipate. I am told that I am the only non-Australian born member of the Society of St Andrew of Scotland. I am sure, Mr Speaker, that if you put your name forward, given your excellent appreciation for the fine traditions of Westminster, that would be a qualifying factor that I am sure will be held in high regard.

In making some concluding remarks and in thanking various people, let me say that I am speaking particularly from the perspective of a party in Opposition. As we have highlighted previously in this Parliament, resource allocation to Opposition parties in this House is not a bountiful experience. Thus, the resources of the Parliament assume a great importance in the overall scheme of things, and many people need to be thanked. The staff and officers of Parliament House are professionals. They are totally dedicated to the service of those who the people of Queensland sent to this place. In a more direct sense, many of the officers are dedicated to enhancing and enshrining the democratic traditions of a Parliament of the Westminster tradition. Perhaps the office that has most responsibility for this enshrinement is the office of the Speaker. I want to pay particular tribute to Mr Speaker. As others have said in this place, his role is a very difficult one, as the Hansard record clearly shows. But, in the main, we are happy to go on the record to say that Mr Speaker displays a certain degree of dignity which enhances the role that he occupies. We commend Mr Speaker for that. I would like to go on record also as thanking the office of the Clerk—the current Clerk and the Deputy Clerk. I want to also place on record a word of thanks to the previous Clerk, Mr Alan Woodward. Members opposite will recall that Mr Woodward came in for some criticism before he departed this scene, but I am sure members opposite, particularly the longer-serving members, will appreciate that he served this Parliament with distinction and that he brought to the office of the Clerk of the Parliament a degree of professionalism and dedication that needs to be clearly recognised in a valedictory.

Mr W. K. Goss interjected.

Mr SANTORO: I did not hear the interjection made by the Premier. I hope that it was a complimentary one, despite the mention that the former Clerk obtained in dispatches. The advice from the Clerk about the running of this Parliament is always independent, punctual and courteous. Other officers associated with the running of this Chamber also need to be thanked by the Liberal Party—Bills and Papers, Hansard, the Library and particularly the audiovisual section. There are certain people within this Parliament who make very, very heavy use of the audiovisual section.

An honourable member: You are one of them.

Mr SANTORO: I certainly am one such person because much is said by people who conduct the affairs of this State, and a lot of it is said outside this Parliament. It is

good to keep a record of that and the audiovisual section certainly assists with that. The Chamber attendants have certainly been mentioned, but I must say I never fail to be pleasantly surprised by the courteous disposition that they all show towards members, even in late hours. I also thank the Parliamentary Counsel, catering, and corporate services. I also thank the press gallery, particularly the reporters from AAP, the ABC and the *Courier-Mail* who stick it out right up until the very last moment. The performance of the press in attending Parliament has been recognised, but reporters from those three organisations—who vary from time to time—need to be recognised. Departmental heads and also the staff of departmental heads need to be thanked.

Government members interjected.

Mr SANTORO: There are some people I am mentioning who need to be thanked because they have not been mentioned previously. A failure to mention them is extremely discourteous. Quite frankly, all honourable members can walk out and I can be the only one left standing here, but I am going to thank the people who I believe have served us well. They need to be thanked because they have served not only members of the Opposition but also other members opposite.

I join with the Leader of the Opposition in thanking the personal staff of the Leader of the Liberal Party, Nick Maher, Peter Murphy, Paul Turner, Derek Hume and Jaye Risson. Mrs Sheldon also particularly asked me to place on record her appreciation of Gracie and Kathy. Our families, particularly our spouses and children, during an election year must also be thanked and must be recognised.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SANTORO: As I can hear from the background, we have all earned a rest. We will avail ourselves of the opportunities with which the festive season provides us with to rest and reflect on the lessons of the past year and the challenge of the next. On behalf of the Liberal Party, I wish other honourable members and everyone else involved with the running of this place a joyous and relaxing festive season.

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I will be extremely brief. I would like to thank all honourable members for the respect, tolerance and understanding shown to the Chair. I would like to thank the Clerk of the Parliament, Robert Doyle, the Deputy Clerk, Michele Cornwell, and my personal staff, Damien, Colin, Marilyn, Judith and my electorate secretary, Judy. Everybody knows how much work electorate secretaries do in an election year—and all the time, for that matter.

I thank all the other staff of the Parliamentary Service for their commitment and dedication. They do a good job to make members' lives in this Parliament as pleasant as possible. I wish all members and staff a safe and enjoyable Christmas. In my experience, by far the best Christmas one has in politics is the one after an election year. Perhaps I will achieve unanimity in this Parliament one day by forming the Non Election Party, because then we could have good Christmases all the time. I hope that the Forty-seventh Parliament will go down in history as being a Parliament that has contributed to good government and to the benefit of the State. I wish all honourable members good luck and good resolve in playing their roles, whatever they may be.

I would like to say hello to my wife, Maria, who is present in the public gallery. It has been said before, but I think the biggest price paid in politics is the one paid by our spouses. There can be no doubt about that. I can remember the early days of my political career when I had three young kids and I was running around and was very busy trying to conquer the world. One does not realise until one looks back and in retrospect sees the price they pay.

I invite each and every honourable member and their friends to drinks just around the corner in the Strangers Dining Room.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 8.59 p.m.