

WEDNESDAY, 3 MARCH 1993

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

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Pedestrian Crossing, Duporth Avenue

From **Mr Hamill** (102 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to arrange for a pedestrian crossing to be placed on Duporth Avenue near the Picnic Point intersection.

Child Molesters

From **Mrs McCauley** (1 446 signatories) praying that the parole period be removed when sentencing child molesters, that offenders are given and serve maximum sentences and that their names be released for publication.

A similar petition was received from Mr Laming (2 069 signatories).

Petitions received.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

In accordance with the schedule circulated by the Clerk to members in the Chamber, the following documents were tabled—

City of Brisbane Town Planning Act; Local Government Act; Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act—

Order in Council amending the planning scheme for the whole of the area of the town of Hervey Bay by the incorporation of Development Control Plan No.2—Eli Creek Precinct

Orders in Council amending the planning schemes for the following local authorities throughout the State of Queensland by the rezoning of certain land:

City Councils: Brisbane, Bundaberg, Cairns, Caloundra, Gladstone, Gold Coast, Gympie, Hervey Bay, Ipswich, Logan, Mackay, Maryborough, Redcliffe, Rockhampton, Thuringowa, Toowoomba, Townsville, Warwick

Shire Councils: Albert, Atherton, Beaudesert, Boonah, Bowen, Caboolture, Calliope, Cambooya, Cardwell, Chinchilla, Cook, Crow's Nest, Douglas, Duinga, Eacham, Emerald, Glengallan, Gooburrum, Herberton, Jondaryan, Johnstone, Kingaroy, Laidley, Livingstone, Mareeba, Maroochy, Moreton, Mulgrave, Murilla, Noosa, Pine Rivers, Pioneer, Pittsworth, Redland, Rosalie, Stanthorpe, Whitsunday, Woocoo, Woongarra

Town Councils: Dalby, Goondiwindi, Roma

City of Brisbane Town Planning Act—

Brisbane Town Plan (Approval of Amendments) Orders (Nos.1 to 3) 1993

Town Plan (Approval of Amendments) Order (No.4) 1993

Local Government Act—

Longreach Shire Council (Approval of Planning Scheme) Order (No.1) 1993
 Town Planning Schemes (Approval of Amendments) Orders (Nos.1 to 5) 1993

Local Government (Planning and Environment) Act—

Local Government (Interim Development Control—Banana Shire Council) Order 1992
 Local Government (Interim Development Control for Burke Shire Council) Order 1992
 Planning Schemes (Approval of Amendments) Orders (Nos.1 to 9, 12, 14 to 28) 1993
 Planning Schemes (Approval of Rezoning for Staged Development Plan) Orders (Nos.1 to 3 and 13) 1993
 State Planning Policy 1/92 (Development and the Conservation of Agricultural Land) Order
 State Planning Policy 2/92 (Planning for Aerodromes and other Aeronautical Facilities) Order
 Town Plan (Approval of Amendments) Order (No.4) 1993
 Town Planning Schemes (Approval of Amendments) Orders (Nos.4 and 5) 1993.

PAPER

The following paper was laid upon the table of the House—
 Minister for Police and Emergency Services (Mr Braddy)—
 State Emergency Service—Report for 1991-92.
 Ordered to be printed.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**Queensland Budget**

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer) (2.33 p.m.), by leave: I am pleased to report to Parliament today that the Queensland Government is firmly on track to again balance its Budget. The figures contained in the December quarter edition of the *Queensland Economic Review*, which is being released today, show that for the six months ended December 1992, the Queensland Budget recorded an accumulated surplus of \$27.8m in the Consolidated Fund. That compares with a surplus of \$20.7m for the same period last year. Clearly, this result refutes the whisper campaign by the State Opposition to the effect that there is a huge hole in the State Budget. In fact, the only holes are those in the Opposition's arguments. All members will receive a copy of the *Queensland Economic Review* and will be able to examine at their leisure details of expenditure and receipts. However, I would like to take this opportunity to draw honourable members' attention to the feature article on comparative financial positions of Australian States.

New Treasury figures published in this article show that the Goss Government's Budget policies have resulted in a significant reduction in State debt. The Goss Government inherited in 1989-90 a net debt for every Queenslanders of \$1,190. Treasury's figures show that this figure will be halved to just \$582 by the end of this financial year. To put that achievement in perspective—the average net debt for all the other States has increased to \$5,181 per person over the same three-year period. I

commend the *Queensland Economic Review* to all honourable members as the most authoritative and independent overview of the Queensland economy that is available.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Delegation from Royal Children's Hospital Foundation to Japan

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—Minister for Health) (2.34 p.m.), by leave: In January this year, the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation asked me, as Minister for Health, to lead a deputation to Japan to assist with its fundraising campaign. The foundation represents a group of community leaders who have dedicated themselves to raising funds for research, education and building at the Royal Children's Hospital. The Royal Children's Hospital is Queensland's leading teaching and tertiary referral hospital for the treatment of childhood disorders.

As many members would be aware, in recent years the liver transplant team at the Royal Children's Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital has established an international reputation for its success, saving the lives of young children from Queensland, Australia and the Asia/Pacific region. But the Royal Children's Hospital itself was housed in aged and decaying buildings which limited the quality of care that could be provided. The Queensland Government, in conjunction with the Royal Children's Hospital, has committed itself to a \$29m rebuilding program over two stages. The Government pledged \$19m, with the foundation undertaking to raise the balance up to \$10m. There has been wide community and corporate support for that campaign to date—a commitment which will be acknowledged at the opening of the new Stage I of the hospital in June this year.

Sixty-seven Japanese children have been transplant recipients at the Royal Children's Hospital. The parents of those children thought that the Japanese community should make a commitment to the new children's hospital since it had become such an important part of the Japanese health care system. Those families launched a campaign in Japan headed by the former President of the Japanese Medical Association, Dr Haneda. To date, they have raised approximately \$1m but have set themselves a goal of raising up to \$5m. Those funds have come from community and service organisations as well as major corporations, such as Sega Enterprises.

I met with the Governors of Saitama, Gifu and Osaka Prefectures, the Mayor of Brisbane's sister city Kobe, and key parliamentarians to discuss corporate and community support for the campaign. Mr Muto, who is President of the Japan-Australia Dietman's League and Mr Shimomura, who is the patron of the fundraising committee and a prominent figure in the Japanese Upper House, indicated that they would be asking their colleagues to support the campaign. The former Japanese Ambassador to the UN and current Chairman for the Japan Centre for Intercultural Communication, Mr Kagami, also assisted the campaign by extending tax concessions to corporations that choose to make donations to the campaign. At all of those meetings, the importance of Queensland to the Japanese community and its role as a key trading partner were acknowledged, as was the high regard for the Premier and the people of Queensland.

The success of the deputation to Japan can be gauged by several yardsticks, both tangible and intangible. Japanese diplomatic protocol required my presence as Minister for Health to successfully open the doors for the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation to leading Japanese parliamentarians and corporate organisations. Each eminent person I met indicated his or her support and willingness to assist the fundraising campaign. This support was genuinely offered out of recognition for the care that Queensland has already extended to Japanese children and their families, and as a gesture which recognises the international goodwill and mutual assistance which ties Queensland with Japan. During the five-day visit, the third in a series of documentaries featuring Queensland and the Japanese children who have received liver transplants was

screened to an estimated audience of over 40 million people during prime time. That is publicity for our State that cannot be bought.

The executive officer of the Royal Children's Hospital Foundation has advised me that the campaign in Japan now expects to receive at least a further \$1m and up to \$3m for the hospital. The staff at the Royal Children's Hospital and the members of the liver transplant team can be justifiably proud of the reputation they have achieved, and all Queenslanders can be proud of what this Government—in conjunction with the community and good corporate citizens—has been able to build at the new Royal Children's Hospital.

I also had the opportunity to inspect three major hospitals in Japan to learn about the health system there and how information technology was being applied to more efficiently manage modern hospitals. In conclusion, I would like to thank Roydon Daylrimple, the Australian Ambassador to Japan, the Queensland Government Office in Tokyo and the Australian Consul in Nagoya for their invaluable assistance, kindness and special interest in the success of this project.

ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AMENDMENT BILL

Precedence of Debate

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (2.39 p.m.), by leave: I move—

“That so much of Standing Orders and Sessional Orders be suspended to enable the Electoral and Administrative Review Amendment Bill to be the first item of Government business at 3.30 p.m. this day. At the completion of the passage of the Bill, the debate on the Address in Reply will be resumed for a single day.”

Motion agreed to.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC WORKS

Report and Transcript of Evidence

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (2.41 p.m.): I lay upon the table of the House the Parliamentary Public Works Committee's report titled *The Proposed Upgrade of the Townsville Correctional Centre*. I also lay upon the table of the House the transcript of evidence taken at the hearing conducted in Townsville on Tuesday, 8 December 1992, to be included in the Parliament's archives of information.

The committee conducted this inquiry against the backdrop of some turmoil and disruption in the Townsville Correctional Centre. The committee believes that the physical conditions in the gaol were a major catalyst for this unrest. Thus, this report addresses the urgent need for the redevelopment and greatly expanded rehabilitation and education programs within the Townsville Correctional Centre. At the outset of the inquiry, it was plain to the committee that the need for this redevelopment was urgent. The committee has made 13 recommendations, which it hopes will be addressed by the Minister and the commission.

I thank all members of the committee for their contribution to this matter—the Deputy Chairman, Mr Len Stephan; Mrs Margaret Woodgate; Mr Terry Sullivan; Mr Peter Beattie; Mr Bruce Davidson and Mr Vaughan Johnson. The committee records its thanks for the assistance given by the staff of the committee secretariat and its research director, Ms Carol Keliher. I move that the report be printed.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Aust-Asia Pacific**

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to his decision to cease funding Aust-Asia Pacific, an initiative of his Government, whereby he recruited prominent Queenslanders and Queensland companies to promote his Asian trade push, and I ask: why did the Premier renege on clear commitments made to the private sector, and to private sector individuals, including the Chairman of the Australian Advertising Standards Council, Mr Justice Toose, to fund the company for three years in order to entice the necessary private sector participation?

Mr W. K. GOSS: The project known as Aust-Asia Pacific was one in respect of which the Government sought expressions of interest from the private sector. It was one of those elements of the multifunction polis bid that we thought—in consultation with the people who had been involved in that overall submission from the Government, the private sector and our universities—might have prospects. A number of private companies expressed interest in being involved in that. I believe that, ultimately, about 60 private firms did become members. The Government indicated that it would provide financial support. And indeed, it did provide substantial financial support.

It should be understood that the beneficiaries of any work that was generated by Aust-Asia Pacific were the 60 private firms, not the Government. The Queensland economy also benefited indirectly. But those private firms were the beneficiaries. It was also made very clear that, ultimately, that body had to become self-supportive. And ultimately, it depended upon performance. The State Government, through the taxpayers of this State, provided \$507,683 by way of support over the first two years or so. A very small amount was provided by the companies in financial terms. In addition to that—and primarily—they contributed their own time. Regrettably, although those companies and individuals had good intentions, they were not successful. They did not succeed in attracting one major project to Queensland.

Mr Borbidge: Wasn't there a commitment to fund up until June this year?

Mr W. K. GOSS: No, there was not. The company made a bid for an additional \$175,000 in this financial year beyond the \$500,000 that had already been paid to it. However, it wanted not just the \$175,000 for the third year; that was in addition to a further \$650,000 for the following three years. Regrettably, we came to the conclusion that, although the original concept was good while the company was prepared to support it, the company was not prepared to put its hands in its own pockets to substantially support it. In the absence of substantial support from the company, we did not believe it was reasonable that it should continue to ask the taxpayers of Queensland to support it. What the company is confused about is that a bid was put forward by the relevant department for an additional \$175,000 for funding for the third year, but the Budget Review Committee decided that, in the light of the lack of performance and in the light of other priorities, it did not justify further support and that it was time the company stood on its own two feet.

Restriction of Hospital Services

Mr BORBIDGE: In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer—

Government members interjected.

Mr BORBIDGE: Government members should listen and they might learn something. We understand that the Minister for Health is running away from question time in the morning. He has to turn on a machine in Townsville.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BORBIDGE: I refer to the shutdown of major Brisbane hospitals for elective surgery over two to three week periods in April and May, and I ask the Minister: can he

explain why Redcliffe Hospital will not be available for emergency operations for two weeks from 4 April; why the Mackay Hospital is closing down day surgery and elective surgery from 9 to 26 April; why a 36-bed ward at Bundaberg Hospital, along with the outpatients department, reportedly will close from the first week of April; and why Nambour Hospital is reportedly closing elective surgery? Will he now admit that, Statewide, his health services are in disarray?

Mr HAYWARD: Recently, similar questions have been asked of me. I repeat very clearly that throughout the Queensland public health system this year 550 000 procedures will be carried out. That is an increase of 10 per cent over the previous year, an increase over the year before that and an increase over the year before that. Let me say—

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Toowoomba South!

Mr HAYWARD: This year, the budget for Queensland Health has been increased by \$80m. That has to be considered in the context that over the last three years that budget has increased by \$393m. One must contrast that with budgets brought down over the previous five years of National Party Government in this State. Over that period, a real decrease in health funding in Queensland occurred.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition to cease interjecting.

Mr HAYWARD: In his question, the Leader of the Opposition referred to the Mackay Hospital. For many years, the Mackay Hospital has not performed elective surgery over the Easter period. At that hospital, accident and emergency treatment will be performed. As an added management efficiency, the paediatric ward, which is hardly used during that period because of school holidays, will be amalgamated with the general surgical ward. Earlier, I heard an interjection from Mr Campbell, the member for Bundaberg, that there was a suggestion that we would close a 36-bed ward at Bundaberg. Again—as the Premier describes the Leader of the Opposition—the Luke Shaw of the Queensland Parliament has been loose with the truth. Two patients were in that ward.

Mr Borbidge: We've got the memo.

Mr HAYWARD: The Leader of the Opposition has always got the memos, but he has never got the results. At Bundaberg, two patients were in a 36-bed ward. In the cause of running an efficient hospital, those two patients were moved and the staff who were looking after the two patients in the 36-bed ward have been integrated into the hospital system.

Federal Government Funding for Queensland

Mr PITT: I ask the Premier: in the improbable event of a coalition win on 13 March, is he concerned about the future of Federal funding for Queensland? Is he aware of any moves to alter the basis on which funds are allocated to States, in particular the abandonment of what is called fiscal equalisation.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Leaving aside the issue which has been the subject of some debate in this place over the last week, that is, the impact on the Budget of Fightback, there is a separate and further issue which should concern all members of the Parliaments of Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania, and the Assembly in the Northern Territory. That issue concerns the policy of fiscal equalisation which, simply put, ensures a pool of a couple of billion dollars which is distributed to those States to ensure a fair go for Australians irrespective of where they live, ensures an equivalent level of services to people whether they live in Mareeba or Kalgoorlie and ensures that there is a payment to those States that ensures that people in those areas receive a fair go.

Mr Borbidge: It's sort of the opposite of one vote, one value.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Is the Leader of the Opposition opposing it? If he intends to oppose fiscal equalisation, I will be interested. We believe that, in this campaign, both sides of politics in Canberra should give a clear-cut commitment to continue the policy of fiscal equalisation.

Mrs Sheldon: We know all about it.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not want to be short-changed by him. Today, I wrote to the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, Dr Hewson, and the Premiers and the Chief Ministers of the other States and Territories to seek their support for continuing fiscal equalisation. I am concerned that comments made by Premier Fahey of New South Wales in the last day or so seem to indicate that there may be some private understanding or arrangement between New South Wales and Victoria, on the one hand, and the Federal coalition, on the other, to end fiscal equalisation. I hope that that is not the case. It can be quickly dispelled by Dr Hewson saying that he will maintain fiscal equalisation. It is a non-party political issue.

Mrs Sheldon: Rubbish!

Mr W. K. GOSS: "Rubbish!", said the Deputy Leader of the Coalition or Opposition—whatever she is called. We continually see a demonstration of a lack of knowledge in relation to which economic matters work in the State. Fiscal equalisation affects the States and the Northern Territory, irrespective of the party politics involved. At the last Premiers Conference, we fought for and secured from the Prime Minister a commitment in principle to fiscal equalisation. We need to have that confirmed as a specific election commitment from him, and I believe that we need it from Dr Hewson as well. If that does not come forward, States such as Western Australia, Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania will be severely disadvantaged. Instead of the carping, instead of the noises that we hear from the moaning, negative nancies opposite, I would have expected bipartisan support. I challenge them—

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. If the Premier was aware of comments made earlier in the day he would know that he has our support on the issue.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I am on my feet. The honourable member will resume his seat.

Mr Borbidge: We get challenged and I can't even take a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr W. K. GOSS: I make two points in conclusion. One is to respond to the interjection—

Mr Cooper: Of course you should be able to perform.

Mr W. K. GOSS: The honourable member should watch his language. The language he used yesterday is the type of language that was used in the gay mardi gras in Sydney the other night.

Mr J. H. Sullivan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Caboolture!

Mr W. K. GOSS: For a moment yesterday, I felt quite unsure about my identity, but all of my Ministers have assured me that none of them looks at me in the way that Russell Cooper does. In conclusion, I acknowledge and thank the Leader of the Opposition for the point that he just made on behalf of himself and the State Liberal Party, that they support me in my call for a commitment to fiscal equalisation from the Prime Minister and Dr Hewson.

Effect of Goods and Services Tax on Small Business

Mr PITT: I ask the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development: can he outline the effects on small business of the goods and services tax as proposed by the Federal Opposition?

Mr ELDER: The honourable member's question is very timely indeed, because I have seen Dr Hewson—in fact, all honourable members have seen Dr Hewson—sitting in front of the TV with a computer beside him that knocks out those economic models which say that if every small business in Australia employed one more person, the unemployment problem would be solved. We have worked out just how he is going to go about that. What he will do, of course, is create a paper nightmare for small business with the GST compliance requirements. Every one of them will be employed full time in meeting the GST requirements. In this document I have in my hand are the requirements in New Zealand and, as Mr Reith said—

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. I ask for a ruling as to whether this is in order. We have had two full days of debate on Fightback and the GST.

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

Mr ELDER: Small business is worried, and, because of the compliance requirements, the honourable member should be worried for the small businesses in his electorate. It will be a bureaucratic nightmare for small business. At the end of the day, businesspeople will spend more time completing those requirements than they will do in productive work within their own small businesses.

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nerang!

Mr ELDER: As I have said on a number of occasions, small businesses look forward to the GST like young turkeys look forward to Christmas. They are continually concerned about the compliance requirements. I will cite a couple of examples for members opposite, because they have them in their own electorates. They illustrate the complexity of this tax and the requirements on small business. Take, for example, a hot bread shop. A person goes into a hot bread shop and asks for a bread roll. If the person takes that bread roll away, it will not be taxed. However, many hot bread shops in my electorate and in other electorates, have tables outside the shop to attract customers. The customers sit down at those tables and enjoy the atmosphere. If they happen to buy a bread roll and eat it with a cup of coffee, it is subject to the GST. Worse still, if they wander in and buy a cold pie and take it home, it is not taxed. But, if they buy a hot pie, it is subject to the GST. Small businesses have to ask the questions. Do customers want to take home their bread rolls? How hot do they want their pies? Dr Hewson wants to turn this nation into a bunch of cold pie eaters. Honourable members do not have to take my word for it. I know that they find me a very understanding Minister and very compassionate about their concerns. They do not have to take my word for it—normally, most do. Let us consider a letter from a small businessperson to the *Business Review Weekly*. That person is a small business coin laundry operator. He wrote—

“The goods and services tax . . . far from being a friend to small business, will wreck many businesses—especially those”—

and this is where they all miss the point—

“providing services.”

He makes several points. I will not go on with all of them but simply deal with a couple.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr ELDER: Members of the Opposition do not like it because they have missed the point.

Mr BEANLAND: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is debating the question, surely.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister.

Mr ELDER: Thank you, Mr Speaker. As I said, it is about time the member spent the time that I have spent—

Mr BEANLAND: Mr Speaker, can I reply to the Minister's question?

Mr SPEAKER: No, the honourable member cannot.

Mr BEANLAND: The Minister has just challenged me, and I would be happy to respond.

Mr SPEAKER: No. The member for Indooroopilly should try me again tomorrow. I suggest that the Minister should complete his answer.

Mr ELDER: As I said, I will not discuss all the examples. This person is a small business operator and he is concerned about the impact of the GST on the service industry which is his business. Members of the Opposition should be concerned about that. Firstly, he pointed out that in his case he will have to pass on the full 15 per cent or more, and there are no inputs that are subject to the seven taxes that will be abolished. He says that the company turns over \$100,000 a year and that the arithmetic is simple: it will have to pay \$15,000 in tax. It is a simple equation. For the information of members of the Opposition, most of the small businesses in the services sector have already worked it out.

Australian Loan Council Guidelines

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker—

A Government member: Stand up, Joan.

Mr Turner: Don't ask him a question.

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker, do we have to put up with the morons down the back today?

Government members: Ha, ha!

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Speaker, naturally, I was referring to members on the Government side of the House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is enough. I call the Deputy Leader of the Coalition.

Mrs SHELDON: I ask the Treasurer: in the light of the report released on Monday by a special Senate committee which shows that the Victorian Labor Government embarked on its \$3 billion breach of Loan Council guidelines in 1989-90—the year in which he joined a majority of Labor Treasurers on the council—what did he know in relation to the Labor Government's \$3 billion borrowings in excess of Loan Council guidelines, and when did he know it? Was he involved with Federal Treasurer, John Dawkins, in the disgraceful cover-up of the Loan Council breach to help protect Labor?

Mr De LACY: I thank the Deputy Leader of the Coalition for the question. I make the point that she ought to remember that those morons at the back of the Chamber have a vote. The honourable member asked me about my role on the Loan Council, and I think the short answer is that I did not know what the total borrowings of Victoria were, and I was not very interested.

Mr Cooper: Weren't you on the Loan Council?

Mr De LACY: I did not see that as a responsibility of the State Treasurer of Queensland. Might I also say that the farcical report produced by the Democrats in collusion with the Liberal Party was just that—a farce. The committee asked all of the States, including Victoria, to make a submission to that Senate inquiry, and no State did because all States saw it as a farce—the politically motivated farce that it was.

Mr Borbidge: You don't know and you don't remember.

Mr De LACY: The Opposition asked for my opinion. The Loan Council arrangements were purely voluntary arrangements entered into by the States. There was no mandatory requirement to disclose anything at all. For the record, let me point out that I have never supported global limits. Although in Queensland we have always abided by the global limits, I have never supported them and the Queensland Government has never supported them. We have always believed that if there was going to be an attempt at a central level to control public borrowings in Australia, it should be done on the basis of some sort of prudential criteria rather than on the basis of absolute limits which would create the kind of behaviour that has occurred in recent years.

I am pleased to say that at a meeting which was held in Perth in December, the Council of Australian Governments came to an arrangement which I believe is very much superior to the arrangements that have prevailed in the past. This will require more regular reporting and a more standard form of reporting, which I think is a step forward. It also proposes a borrowing limit based on what is called PSBR, that is, the net debt of the States. Of course, if that is implemented, it will mean that Queensland will have very few limits because Queensland's net debt is now so low that we have infinite capacity to borrow, should we desire to do that. I think that there has been substantial progress made, but not so much as a consequence of that ridiculous politically motivated inquiry which released that report yesterday.

Government Air Travel Budget

Mrs SHELDON: I ask the Treasurer: since he has seen fit to make the Queensland taxpayer a major shareholder in Compass Airlines, why did he wait until the last 24 hours before moving to break the apparent public service boycott of Compass which has cost the Queensland taxpayer-funded airline its market share of a Queensland Government air travel budget amounting to \$30m annually?

Mr De LACY: The Leader of the Liberal Party implies that there was a State public service boycott of Compass. That is not true.

Mrs Sheldon: Ask DBIRD.

Mr De LACY: I might say that the State public service has not sought access to the cheaper fares available from Compass to the extent that I would have hoped. I make this point: just because the Queensland Government had an investment in Compass, that does not mean that the Government should provide discrimination in favour of Compass. The important thing is that we keep those two areas completely separate. I was disappointed, as it seems the honourable member is disappointed, with the amount of patronage that the Queensland Government has given to Compass. In recent days, I have made some comments that a heavy obligation is on all departments, on all politicians—on everybody—to access the cheapest fares, or, for that matter, the cheapest hotel rates, that are available. Those departments that are not accessing the cheapest fares that are available probably are sending a signal back to me that they have more money than they need.

Industrial Relations

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I ask the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations: what would be the effect on Queensland workers if the coalition's plan to override the Queensland industrial award system were implemented?

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Crows Nest!

Mr FOLEY: The impact of such a proposal would be highly adverse to Queensland workers, because the proposals would impact not merely upon Queensland

workers under Federal awards, that is, some 316 000 people, but they would impact also upon some half a million Queenslanders under State awards. That is so because of the operation of the Commonwealth's corporations power. That provision is indicated at page 6 of the Jobsback policy, which states—

“A future Coalition government will seek complementary legislative action from state and territory governments to achieve the objectives of this policy. It will, if necessary, use whatever constitutional power is available to it, excluding the external affairs power, to ensure that the benefits of this policy are as widely available as possible to Australians.”

In short, that means that a Hewson Government would move to use the Commonwealth's power to make laws with respect to trading corporations to override the industrial relations systems of the States that do not fall into line. That would have the effect of exposing Queensland workers under Queensland awards to the law of the jungle under Dr Hewson's employment contracts legislation. It would, in fact, be a return to the dark days of master and servant contracts. It would expose those workers to the position of unequal bargaining power and it would throw them for their remedy largely on to the operation of the common law, under which they would have to take their place in the court system.

Lest it be thought that all is rosy and that those fears are misplaced, I rely in that regard upon no less than an adviser to Dr Hewson, Professor Sloan, who, in the newspaper today, highlighted that very point about the lack of job security. Although it is claimed that workers under the Fightback policy would be entitled to remain in awards, there is nothing in the way of protection for the transition situation in which an employee is sacked by the employer and then required to negotiate an employment contract. Such a person would, in the opinion of Professor Sloan, be placed into a position without the benefit of the award protection. She is, with respect, perfectly correct in that point. It means that the purported protection of Federal awards would not in practice be available to workers, and that would expose those Queensland workers, particularly those who rely for their take-home pay on overtime, penalty rates, shift rates and casual loadings. Such people would be forced to negotiate employment contracts in an environment in which they would simply have to take the contract or take the sack.

Postal Charges under Fightback

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I ask the Deputy Premier in his capacity as Minister for Rural Communities: is he aware of statements by Australia Post that the cost of stamps would rise under a GST and not fall, as claimed by the Federal Opposition Leader, Dr Hewson, and can the Minister detail the impact that high postal charges would have on rural communities in Queensland?

Mr BURNS: This morning's *Sydney Morning Herald* reports the Australia Post people as predicting that the cost of stamps would rise by 3c, despite claims by Dr Hewson that the cost of postage would fall. As honourable members know, in western Queensland, northern Queensland or any of those other remote regions, a lot of business is conducted by mail and a lot of business is conducted by fax. Recently, when I was in Cooktown, an agent told me that, these days, the best method by which to buy goods is to shop using the brochure provided by the people from whom they are buying or maybe their agents. People can put an arrow indicating the goods that they want to buy, say on page 8, fax that to the supplier, and back the order comes. That practice will cost an additional 15 per cent.

Let us consider stamps and the ordinary person. A stamp costs 45c. Put 3c, or 15 per cent, on that and it becomes 48c. We have no 1c coins and no 2c coins. If people want to buy one stamp, it will cost 50c, not 48c. That is not a 15 per cent increase; it is substantially higher than 15 per cent. If people want to buy two stamps, that will cost 96c, so people will have to pay a dollar because we no longer have 1c or 2c coins. All the way along the line, people will pay more. Today, Australia Post said that, because of

the abolition of 1c and 2c pieces, it will sell its stamps only in five-stamp lots. People will have to pay \$2.40, even if they want to buy only one stamp. The cost of stamps increases every year. What will happen in the future? People will have three or four stamps worth 35c, 38c or 45c and they will need 1c stamps to make up 50c or whatever is the new price. However, 1c stamps are no longer printed. What will be done then? Some members opposite will be all right when it comes to Valentine's Day cards because they will be able to send five of them, but in the case of sympathy cards, a person does not send more than one. The same applies to birthday cards; only one will be sent. The GST is a slug on the people.

Our friend Mr Hewson tells us lies. We are buying a pig in a poke with Hewson. Yesterday, John Laws proved him wrong forevermore. He could not answer questions on small business. He could not answer how many forms small business would have to fill out. He did not answer correctly the question about stamps. As John Howard said, they cannot explain the GST because they do not know about it. I am saying to the people in the bush: do not buy a pig in a poke. The National Party people have sold themselves out to Sydney and Melbourne. It was like old Joh on TV last night. Did honourable members see that? He had "yes" and "no" bats. When he was asked whether he lived north of Sydney or not, he put up both. It is just the same with John Hewson. What about the six people who now represent John Hewson's think-tank? There is no Queensland representative—no-one at all from Queensland—and no-one from the rural areas. There is not one rural spokesman. The Aboriginal representative is a fellow who lives in Canberra, not someone from north Queensland or the Northern Territory. The GST is a pig in a poke, and Hewson is a fraud.

Resignation of Dr P. Miller

Mr HORAN: Mr Speaker—

A Government member: I wonder who this will be to.

Mr HORAN: I have to direct my question to the Minister for Health. As he is clearing out tomorrow to north Queensland, it is my last chance. I refer the Health Minister to the sudden resignation of the South West Regional Health Authority Director, Dr Peter Miller, and I ask: was this resignation caused by Dr Miller's frustration at the financial mismanagement of the Minister's department, which caused unacceptable cutbacks and restrictions to health services in his area?

Mr HAYWARD: Let me say that Dr Miller's resignation was so sudden that at this stage I have not received a report as to why he has resigned or any information about his resignation.

Campaign by Nurses for 38-hour Week

Mr HORAN: I direct a further question to the Minister for Health. As his Health administration cannot even keep wards or operating theatres open, I refer him to the current campaign for a 38-hour week by the Queensland Nurses Union, and I ask: can the Minister confirm a recent memo from the Director-General of Health that his department cannot fund a 38-hour week for nurses? Why have officers from the Minister's department threatened nurses in rural areas with a massive hike in the cost of board which would take 33 per cent of their wages should the 38-hour week be introduced? Will the Minister admit that that action will drive nurses away from the bush? What is his Government's position on the 38-hour week?

Mr HAYWARD: The issue of nurses is an interesting one, is it not? Opposite us is a former Government which for years and years denigrated nurses in this State, treated them abysmally and underpaid them in comparison with the wages of nurses in every other State in Australia. This Government has an absolute commitment to ensuring—and we delivered on it—that nurses receive real increases in pay. In the argument about the

38-hour week, nurses came to see me and I said to them very clearly that the 38-hour week is on, but it has got to be cost neutral.

Mr Horan: How can it be cost neutral?

Mr HAYWARD: I am telling the honourable member. He asked me, "How can it be cost neutral?" I told those nurses that it is up to them, through their working parties, through their groups, to work on it, to come back to me and to ensure that it is cost neutral. I am determined to ensure that the public health system in Queensland remains an efficient, effective public health system. Unlike members opposite, who are prepared to throw money at anything, I am in the business of ensuring that our public health system remains efficient. So I made it very clear to the representatives of both unions—the Australian Workers Union and the Queensland Nurses Union—that they must ensure that it is a cost neutral exercise. I think that anybody in this State would have to seriously question anybody who argues that it should not in fact be a cost neutral exercise. I am determined to ensure that the nurses will come back to me in accordance with that understanding and that it will be a cost neutral exercise. I have no intention of adding to the burden of Queensland taxpayers.

Racing Industry

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: can he inform the House of initiatives to boost the racing industry in western Queensland?

Mr GIBBS: There have been many initiatives to boost the Queensland racing industry in the term of this Government. I guess that the new TAB distribution formula, which I announced earlier this week, is one of the major financial shots in the arm for the Queensland racing industry, and I will address that matter in a moment.

I am delighted to advise the House that recently some \$20,000 was allocated from the Racing Development Fund to allow the Barcaldine Racing Club, the Barcoo Amateur Racing Club and the Longreach Jockey Club to run a triad series in western Queensland in the next couple of months. The Barcoo Amateur Racing Club will stage a lead-up race at Blackall on 3 April this year. Not only will that involve money from the \$20,000 but also on that day's program there will be two Racing Incentive Scheme bonus races. On 17 April, there will be a further lead-up race staged by the Longreach Jockey Club. I am delighted to advise all honourable members that that will culminate in the Tree of Knowledge Cup to be held at Barcaldine on 1 May, the Saturday of the Labour Day weekend. That will be an open handicap contested by the placegetters of the two previous events and will carry first prize money of \$14,000. The tragedy of all these initiatives by the Government to assist the racing industry is that if we do this at the same time next year, that \$14,000 in prize money in all probability will be won by an amateur owner and a hobby trainer, as will the other events in western Queensland, because that is normally how it happens. On a day such as that, on prize money of \$14,000, the winning connections will lose \$2,100 because of the 15 per cent GST which will apply to prize money in the racing industry.

Mr VEIVERS: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. The GST does not apply until 1994. He is a year or two out.

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

Mr GIBBS: I hope that the punters accrue their savings till that time. If I made one mistake there, I apologise to the House for it. The fact is that all amateur owners and trainers will be subjected to that tax on prize money.

If members opposite have any doubt about that, I advise them to obtain a copy of the interview conducted recently on 4TAB with Senator Peter Baume. He gave the same story that Peter Reith gave to Peter Capelin from the Australian Jockey Club on 4TAB. Mr Capelin has stated that the industry is extremely alarmed about the damaging effect that the GST will have. Despite the excellent efforts of the Queensland Government in relation to the racing industry—the additional prize money as a result of

the new initiatives announced and the TAB distribution formula—the sad thing is that it will probably be a fill-up for the money that the owners, trainers, jockeys, apprentices and anybody who is involved in the industry will have to fork over to the greedy Dr Hewson, if he is successful on Saturday week.

Interstate Migration, Sunshine Coast

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I refer the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations to the Bureau of Statistics figures released yesterday which demonstrate that, because of interstate migration, Queensland is Australia's fastest-growing State, and I ask: is the Minister aware of the proposals of the Federal Liberal member for Fairfax, Mr Alex Somlyay, to ban unemployed people from moving to the Sunshine Coast? Does the Minister plan to take up Mr Somlyay's suggestion as part of the Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan and, if not, what other action is the Government taking to assist job seekers on the Sunshine Coast?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, I am aware of that novel proposal by the Liberal member for Fairfax, Mr Alex Somlyay, to keep the jobless out of the Sunshine Coast. No, the Government does not intend to pursue his policy, set out as it was on 18 February in the *Sunshine Coast Daily*, which stated—

“The Sunshine Coast must close its doors to unemployed people wanting to move to the tourist strip because of the crisis among welfare groups, Member for Fairfax, Alex Somlyay, said yesterday.

Mr Somlyay said he supported banning unemployed people from moving to areas of high unemployment without the approval of government agencies.”

I am afraid that one cannot build a dingo fence around the Sunshine Coast to try to keep people out.

As the honourable member indicated, Queensland is attracting people from interstate who are seeking employment. This outlandish suggestion by the Liberal member for Fairfax went strangely without comment from the honourable the Deputy Leader of the Coalition, another prominent Liberal member from the Sunshine Coast, and went without comment from the shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, the honourable member for Clayfield. What does this proposed policy tell us about the party which hails itself as the party of labour market reform? Is this policy labour market reform? Is this policy labour market flexibility?

To answer the honourable member's question—I want to point out the positive actions that the Goss Government has taken to respond to the very real problems of unemployment in that area. A number of interest-free loans have been given to the unemployed via the Self-Employment Venture Scheme, which was criticised by the shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Mr Santoro. Grants have been given to a number of community groups to run employment and training schemes, including Noosa Skillshare and the Nambour Skillshare group. The youth employment service has been provided at Maroochydore, which has four consultants who will assist 350 unemployed youth this year, including a new consultant under the Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan. Assistance has been provided through the Youth Conservation Corps, which is managed by the department of my colleague the Minister for Environment and Heritage. In addition, jobs have been provided through the schools refurbishment program and the bikeways program. I can assure the honourable member that that is the approach that the Goss Labor Government will take—a positive approach of working with community groups to help tackle the problem. The Government will not pursue Mr Somlyay's novel proposal.

CT Scanner, Redcliffe Hospital

Mr SANTORO: In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer to comments made in the Redcliffe *Herald* on 24 February 1993 by the Redcliffe and

Districts Local Medical Association President, Dr Alan Mahoney, about the lack of a CT scanner. He stated—

“Of seven operations we conducted on head-injured patients last year, five were unnecessary, but we were operating on clinical judgment because of the lack of a CT scanner.”

I ask the Minister: does he feel that the trauma of unnecessary and avoidable head operations is warranted in Redcliffe? Does he condone the continuing lack of a CT scanner at Redcliffe Hospital? When will he deliver the election promise that he and the current member for Redcliffe made to the people of Redcliffe?

Mr HAYWARD: I have only one minute to answer that question. One really cannot win with the members opposite. Two weeks ago on the radio, Joan Sheldon asked me why Queensland Health does not contract out. One of the reasons given to me was that because we contract out the provision of a CT scanner to the Peninsula Private Hospital—

Mr Santoro: They need one in the hospital. You promised one in the hospital.

Mr HAYWARD: I was just explaining that two weeks ago, on the radio, we were told that we needed to contract out our services.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions with or without notice has now expired.

ELECTORAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW AMENDMENT BILL

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 24 February (see p. 1570).

Mr BORBIDGE (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (3.30 p.m.): The Opposition supports the legislation before the House this afternoon and will cooperate with the Government to expedite its passage through all stages. The Electoral and Administrative Review Amendment Bill is a sensible solution to resolve the problem of the commissioners' positions being advertised, and subsequently subject to reappointment prior to the Electoral and Administrative Review Commission being wound up. The Bill extends their appointment until EARC is finalised. It is not the intention of the Opposition to delay the business of the House. I understand that royal assent is required this afternoon, and on this occasion the Opposition is pleased to extend its cooperation with the Government.

Hon. W. K. GOSS (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (3.31 p.m.), in reply: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for his support and the comments that have been made. Indeed, it is important that royal assent be given today so that this amendment can be formalised and so that EARC can continue its work. The support and cooperation of the Opposition is appreciated. I commend the Bill to the House.

Committee

Clauses 1 to 3, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr W. K. Goss, by leave, read a third time.

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Sixth Allotted Day

Debate resumed from 2 March (see p. 1933).

Mr LINGARD (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.34 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I speak in this Address in Reply debate and take my place in this Parliament as the first member for Beaudesert. I pledge the electorate's support to the Queen, and I know that we will not support any move to make Australia a republic. It is a pity that the Governor's Speech was prepared by Government advisers. As two ALP backbenchers said as they walked out of the Legislative Council Chamber, "I think we have heard that before." I say that it is a pity because I know that the Governor has very sincere concerns about what is occurring in rural Queensland. During her recent western tour, the Governor spoke with Year 12 students at Charleville. Those students had completed and passed Year 12 studies and they were trying to get into tertiary education. However, no places were available for them. They did not qualify for Austudy because their parents had assets—even though they are not viable. They were unable to go back to their own family properties and they were unable to go back to any other properties in the Charleville area. Their talk to the Governor was virtually one of desperation.

Anyone who has heard the Governor speak since she returned from that tour knows that she gained that impression from those students. Since then, she has stated that we have to look at what we are doing to our young people in areas such as Charleville, who have passed Year 12 studies, want to go to university, cannot get a place in university, do not qualify for Austudy, cannot go back to their properties and have virtually no future in Charleville. As parliamentarians, we must say that, over the last 10 years, things have become worse. We know that. Yet, this Government gives the Governor a speech to read which is full of ALP propaganda. The main insult in the Governor's Speech was probably the statement that this Government was going to get rid of all ticks south of the Townsville line. Consequently, we witnessed the embarrassment of the Deputy Premier in this Parliament, who is the person in charge of rural areas, not being able to offer any explanation about how to get rid of ticks.

Fortunately, the Queensland media is getting over its initial love affair with "Flossy Gossy"—as he was known at Inala State High School. The media is starting to criticise this centralised control of media which has occurred over the last three years, and which exercised centralised control over the last election. Members of the media are now starting to openly criticise the fact that this Government is controlling the media. This Government has its own special media unit to which it drops reports, and on which it relies. It also has centralised its outlets. Fortunately, other members of the media are starting to say, "This is not fair. This cannot continue." Whatever the criticisms of the previous National Party Government, the media never experienced the blatant manipulation that exists now. It has never experienced before such centralisation, manipulation and damage control that has been exercised by this Government. The staff of the Cabinet Office has expanded from five under the National Party Government to between 103 and 108 under this Government. The Premier's office, which under the National Party had a staff of 14, now has a staff of 29. A total of 183 people are employed on the ministerial staff. They are massive increases in staff. What we see hides an inept, corrupt, "jobs for the boys and girls" and "home for cronies" Government—an excuse for a Government.

In just over three years, this Government has been led by the nose to a financial morass of budget blow-outs, service cutbacks, financial irresponsibility and academic accounting exercises by its mates in academia. The State of Queensland has endured three years in which this Government has vacillated over making any constructive decisions. It has engaged in a vindictive, puerile and irresponsible vendetta against the public service in order to create positions for ALP incompetents. It has spent the accumulated savings of 32 years of conservative Government. I mentioned the word "corrupt" to describe this Labor Government. I did this for the benefit of the member for Cleveland, who talked about honest and accountable Government. At least the former

Governments did not have to get material expunged from *Hansard* to protect the Premier and his little mate whom the Federal Police taped accepting brown paper bags.

Let us not bleat about corruption. This is a Government that very quickly has assumed the mantle of corruption. By 19 February 1990, just two months into its term, this Government started making corrupt decisions. I am quite happy to tell Mr Briskey at a later date, and in full detail, the ramifications of that day for the Labor Party. There has been roting of superannuation funds by Goss-appointed cronies, and subsequent attempts by Government Ministers to cover up. Shredding has been going on continually, which is hiding all of those things that have been done. Hundreds of jobs have been created for Labor cronies under the excuse of merit and equity; where husbands get their wives jobs, usually under their maiden names to try to cover it up; where friends sit on interview panels to make sure that the chosen ones are successful; where the incompetent are led by the academically blinkered; and where a group such as TEPA spends \$333,000 before the last election, supposedly advertising the Student Education Profile. That \$333,000 was expended by a group of Government people, but not once did that advertisement appear after the election was over—not once—even though we had the December furore over TEPA and the Student Education Profile. This rort continued, with \$2.7m being spent on CES advertisements before the Federal election. The Government did that blatantly through TEPA, a group that was set up specifically—supposedly—to sell the Student Education Profile. The Government spent \$333,000 getting that message through.

Since coming to power in December 1989, the Goss Labor Government has indulged in a spending binge unprecedented in Queensland's history. I ask honourable members to consider these figures: Queensland's Labor Government expenditure went from \$7,836,786,000 in 1989-90 to an estimated \$9,585,011,000 in 1992-93, representing a total increase in that period of \$1,748,225,000, yet State revenue increased only from \$4,272,129,000 to \$4,813,680,000, representing a total of \$541,551,000 over the same period.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The member for Clayfield will cease interjecting.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I will warn the member for Clayfield in a moment.

Mr LINGARD: The Goss Labor Government is spending \$1.2 billion more than it will raise. Its expenditure is increasing by 20 per cent every three years, yet State revenue, its income, is going up by only 12.5 per cent. Who is funding the difference? There are two answers to that question. First of all, Queenslanders are having the savings that were built up for them by previous conservative Governments squandered by this big-spending Labor Government. Secondly, on top of those savings being used, the Goss Labor Government has relied heavily on increased annual funding from the Hawke and Keating Governments. Since the Labor Government assumed power at the end of 1989, it has wasted \$1,004,312,000 of Queenslanders' savings. This is the total of unrequited funds transferred from the hollow logs to consolidated revenue. That money has come from the hollow logs. In four short years, the Goss Government in Queensland has raided every fund in Queensland—every contingency account—to try to pay for its extravagant spending. That spending is not going to services or the people of Queensland, but to bloated ALP-stacked bureaucracies; spending on private numberplated cars for hundreds of ALP-picked staff; and for private use of petrol—anything but service delivery.

Let me consider some of the savings that the Goss Government has squandered. In 1991, the Government seized \$86m from the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund. The sum of \$126m was transferred from the motor vehicle insurance nominal defendant's fund to consolidated revenue. When Peter Coaldrake investigated

the Workers Compensation Fund, one of the top people was sacked, and immediately \$80m disappeared from the Workers Compensation Fund.

Mr FitzGerald: Where did it go?

Mr LINGARD: Consolidated revenue. There is no doubt about it. That is what is happening as those hollow logs are robbed. Departmental wages budgets have completely blown out. Staff are working continuously with the threat of being made redundant because the savings account has been run down and Queensland can no longer afford the current level of expenditure without being able to raid our savings to support it. Let us look at how, apart from wasting our savings to prop up the Labor edifice, Keating and Hawke have tried to save their Labor mates in Queensland. Let us look also at the amount of money that has been coming from a Federal level, because that will reveal why we now find this bleating about what is going to happen after 13 March. All members of the Goss Government know how much they have depended on Keating and Hawke. Commonwealth payments into this State's Consolidated Fund went from \$3 billion in 1988-89 to \$4.6 billion in 1992-93—an increase in that short period of over 50 per cent. That is more than 50 per cent in extra funding coming from the Commonwealth Government. Prior to the Goss Labor Government being elected in 1989, gross Commonwealth payments to the State were declining in real terms. In the two years preceding Labor's election, they were declining by 10 per cent; but, since then, they have increased by 15 per cent.

It is no wonder that Wayne Goss is conducting a pathetic scare campaign against the election of a Federal coalition Government. He is worried sick. Queensland is going broke and needs to be artificially propped up by Paul Keating. The reason why Goss is bleating about having to impose a fuel tax on Queenslanders is that he knows that we are going broke, that we are spending more than we are receiving. It is as obvious as that. It has nothing to do with a change of Government in Canberra; we are going broke. The cost of running the State of Queensland has got beyond the capability of the State Government to fund it. Why in three short years has the Labor Government managed to destroy the financial soundness of the Queensland economy? It is very simple. The bureaucracy has grown by thousands.

Mr Fenlon: Are you saying we should give up nurses, police and teachers?

Mr LINGARD: The bureaucracy has grown by thousands—not nurses, not policemen and women, and not teachers. As the member for Crows Nest said, there are thousands of paper shufflers; they are not decision-makers. This Government is incapable of making decisions. We have seen a massive increase in the bureaucracy. That growth has been compounded by the establishment of organisations such as the Public Sector Management Commission and the Office of the Cabinet. I repeat that, under the National Party Government, five people were employed by the Office of the Cabinet; at present, 108 people are employed by that office. Under the National Party Government, 14 people were employed in the Premier's office; at present, 29 people are employed there. Government members cannot deny that those figures are correct. They are absolutely correct.

Mr Cooper: What's going to happen to these cronies from the south when we get back?

Mr LINGARD: We have already indicated what will happen to the cronies and the Mexicans from across the border. They will be gone, and they know it. There is no way in the world that the Premier needs 108 people to prop him up. Senior public servants are receiving salaries in excess of \$150,000, luxury cars and free petrol. All this waste, extravagance and greed has come from a so-called Labor Government. When I consider the actions of the Labor Government, I am reminded of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. Anyone who has read that book would know that Orwell, who embraced communism and socialism as a young person, returned to England, suddenly realised the problems of communism and socialism, and wrote *Animal Farm*. He tried to make all the animals equal. What happened? The pigs started to take over and became the bureaucracy and the owners. The horses worked and the pigs took control. That is exactly what is happening

in Queensland. We find the pigs in bureaucracy receiving massive salaries and not doing anything constructive, yet the old horse major is out plodding in the fields. Everyone is being told to work harder. So the old horse major keeps working, and the pigs get richer and richer.

I will deal with some examples of mismanagement by this so-called Labor Government. Why it does not come clean and call itself the "ALP Self-interest Party" is beyond me, because working Queenslanders are certainly worse off under Goss. Earlier, we discussed the Health Department and were told of wards being closed at Wolston Park, jobs being cut across the State and hospitals boards being completely abolished and replaced by expensive administrators and managers. As well, because of staffing policies forced on it by the PSMC, the Blood Bank has had to sack 27 staff. Over the past four or five days, the Minister has been unable to answer why his staff are not working. As a result of a restructure of the bureaucracy, he has ended up with people in the top echelon of his department whom he cannot control. But we do not see any evidence of improvement in service delivery or improved patient care.

The Labor Government has talked continually about increased police numbers. What hypocrisy! What misinformation as to the true state of policing in Queensland! Because services and staff have been withdrawn under regionalisation, country policing is at its lowest level ever. Bans have been imposed on overtime, police stations have been closed on weekends, and fewer and fewer resources have been devoted to crime prevention and crime solving and more and more resources are being devoted to revenue raising. Recently, in Beaudesert, a person who had already had two tractors stolen was raided on a Thursday night and another tractor and \$40,000 worth of equipment was stolen. The next morning, he found the tractor hidden in bush on the property next door. He rang the police and asked them to stake it out. The police were unable to stake out the property that night because of the lack of finances for overtime. So what did he do? He employed people himself. That night the culprits came back with another person and a truck; however, they were only able to apprehend the fellow with the truck. The two fellows who had been responsible for the offence got away. Why should that resident have had to pay for a stake-out when it was quite obvious that someone would come back to pinch the tractor?

The Juvenile Aid Bureau at Logan needs a mobile phone. An amount of \$1,200 has to be raised by Lions and Rotary to pay for its telephone calls. The police at Logan have to borrow vehicles. Because they borrow vehicles from community groups, when something goes wrong with one of them they have no way of fixing it. The police will have to put a new engine in a vehicle paid for out of their own social fund simply because they have been borrowing these vehicles from private groups. It is absolutely wrong.

One only has to walk around the Queen Street Mall on Friday or Saturday nights to notice the reduction in the police presence since Labor was elected three years ago. The total number of police hours available under this Labor Government is no different from what it was three years ago. What is different now is that we have virtually a 9 to 5 police force. Unfortunately, we do not have a 9 to 5 criminal element. What has happened to overtime? A policeman is supposed to earn \$49 an hour for working overtime, but no policeman ever gets handed \$49.

A Government member interjected.

Mr LINGARD: No, he does not. He is handed about \$23, and the other \$26 disappears—to where he does not know. However, it does not go in the policeman's hand, even though officially he should be paid \$49 an hour for overtime.

Recently, the courthouse at Boonah disappeared. We then saw a QGAPP office appear at Beaudesert. That QGAPP office is allowed to sell third-party insurance. As a result, a private insurance firm in Beaudesert last week put off staff because QGAPP is allowed to sell insurance. Is that what the Government wants to do? It is not on; no way in the world. In the last two years, the Government has laid off 3 000 people from the Transport Department—the railways. The Government says that not one person was

sacked; they have all been retrenched. Last week, a Cabinet document stated that the Government would put off 476 people in Townsville. The Government hid that intention. That document also talked about another 750 people in Townsville losing their employment. They are all gone, but they do not appear on the unemployment records because they have been paid redundancy. In another Cabinet document, the Government skited that this year it had removed 3 000 people from the railways with not one person sacked and with no industrial disruption. That is the case simply because it spent massive amounts of money on their retrenchment.

Let us consider the State education system. Today, I was told that organisations such as the Maroon outdoor education centre—and other outdoor education centres—are being reviewed. The decision will be made in April as to whether those centres are sold to private operators. That outdoor education centre is extremely popular; however, the Education Department cannot continue to fund outdoor education centres.

Mr Stoneman: What's that going to do to the town?

Mr LINGARD: The honourable member would know as well as I do. Education Department subsidies have been cut. Most schools cannot get their 50/50 subsidy. A school in my electorate was told that its tennis court fence was supposedly a safety concern, and was told to pull it down. The p. and c. said, "Right. It will cost \$8,000 to rebuild it and we have \$4,000. Can we have the subsidy?" This Government does not have another \$4,000 to give them so that they can rebuild their tennis fence. Those types of things are happening as the Government comes to the end of this financial year skiting about how much money it has in the Budget. We are witnessing mainstreaming of schools as the Government puts children back in the classrooms so that it can save money on special needs areas. The Government knows as well I do that it is receiving a stack of complaints from parents about that sort of thing. Funding for first year tertiary places has been cut completely by this State Government. What did it say? It said, "We've got increases in funding for first year places in universities", but it the cut funding completely. The National Party funded 15 000 extra university places from consolidated revenue. The Government continued it in its first year, dropped it to 800 in its second year and has now cut it out completely. There is no funding from this State Government for first year university places, even though we are faced with the desperate position of students who have passed their Year 12 studies not being able to obtain a university place.

We are still waiting for the construction of a high school at Victoria Point, even though it was the National Party that bought the land. Once again, we have seen money being wasted by the Government on hundreds of extra administrators who do not make an efficient education system. The money should go into teachers and resources and not pen-pushers, but this entire Government is run by academic pen-pushers who have never had to deliver in their lives. The current shambles of the tertiary entrance system is another example of this Government's adopting an academic scheme to determine who should fill the limited number of tertiary places. The Government knows what happened to the computer system. The teachers could not forecast what scores the students were going to receive; they could not give them advice about what sort of places they might gain in tertiary institutions; and, at the last moment, the students had to make many changes—changes which the computer system could not accept. We now have a new scheme—an army of additional bureaucrats to administer the system. We have a system in which the computer system, telephones and personnel cannot cope and in which parents and students have no idea of whether the student has gained a tertiary place or not, or where that place would be. If this Labor Government is trying to build a clever State within a clever country, it has failed dismally. I understand that the Education Department is now \$18m in the red.

Mr Bredhauer: If there isn't a story there, you just make it up as you go along.

Mr LINGARD: How would the honourable member feel if he were a young teacher graduate having undergone three or four years' training with no place at all to go? Even

if he had a rating of 1 or 2, he would find it almost impossible to obtain a place simply because the teachers that have been taken out of special needs, to which the honourable member for Cook referred earlier, have been put into most of the primary schools. They have been transferred across to the education system, so there is an oversupply already of teachers who are employed in the Education Department. As recently as today I discovered that the student-to-teacher ratio is increasing. The Minister admits that it is increasing, yet there are so many teachers that could be taken on, if the Government had the finance.

Mr Bredhauer: You just said we were too big on spending as a Government. Now you want us to spend more on education.

Mr LINGARD: I did not say that the Government was too big on teachers.

Mr Bredhauer: You can't have it both ways.

Mr LINGARD: I have said all along that it is the bureaucracy that the Government is building up, not the numbers of teachers, police officers or nurses. I do not count teachers as bureaucrats. This Government spends the savings that are made at the expense of the people of Queensland. It is being propped up by the Hawke and Keating Governments but it still manages to send department after department broke. It has an amazing ability to turn everything it touches to lead weights that are placed round the financial middle of Queensland. One only has to look to the South Bank to see the results of the financial vision of this Government. Labor members know as well as I do that the Government is funding the provision of facilities for Brisbane people. The rural people know this, and they also know that the Government has cut services to the arts in country areas while pouring money into South Bank. They know that funding for sporting organisations in the country has also been cut but that the Government continues to fund the Gabba. This is because the Government accepts that it will never win in rural electorates because of what it has done to those people and that its electoral support comes from the City of Brisbane. That is why funds are being whacked into Brisbane. South Bank is going broke, but this Government is still whacking money into it.

For four years, this Government has been a financial disaster. It is going broke, and it has the smell of financial death about it. In 1995 at the latest, this Government will go the same way as Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia and the Federal Government have gone, that is, it will sink into a financial morass. As the Governor said, it is heartbreaking to see what is happening to young people in Charleville who at present do not seem to have any hope whatsoever.

Mr PYKE (Mount Ommaney) (4.03 p.m.): Again, I am pleased to rise in this House to represent the electorate of Mount Ommaney and to speak in reply to the address given last year by Her Excellency the Governor who opened this the Forty-seventh Parliament of Queensland. And what a fine speech that was! It detailed the Goss Government's vision and plan for our great State and its future. That vision and plan is about economic growth, jobs and a balance between a sustainable environment and a sound economy.

During the last State election, I gave my sincere commitment to the Mount Ommaney electorate and the community in which I live that the Premier, the State Government and I would work together to build a stronger Queensland, and that is what we are doing. This means keeping Queensland a low-tax State and continuing to give business and industry the incentive to create jobs. In working towards that objective and keeping the campaign promise, in December last year I initiated a smart business think-tank in the Mount Ommaney electorate to foster business growth which, in turn, will create jobs and help our State to prosper. I am happy to report that the Mount Ommaney Smart Business Think-tank is now in place and is already beginning to work to enhance business growth and potential in the region. For the information of honourable members, I point out that the purpose of the Mount Ommaney Smart Business Think-tank is three-fold: to enable my business community to speak directly to the State Government via its local member on a regular basis, so that business people can inform

me of their needs and concerns; to enable me, as the local member, to inform my business community about State Government initiatives that can help business to grow and prosper, and to generate employment and growth; and to foster networking between members of my business community with State Government departments, the Queensland Small Business Corporation, key educators and community leaders, and members of the broader community.

I have learned that intertrading within a region makes the region stronger. This is a very important outcome which I intend to generate in my region through the think-tank. I am happy to report that the Mount Ommaney Smart Business Think-tank has a dynamic membership of businessmen and businesswomen who all have an interest in seeing our State and our region grow. Represented on the think-tank are manufacturers, wholesalers, developers, exporters, marketing consultants, entertainers and even human resource managers. This blend of talented business people is now inviting into its membership educators from secondary and tertiary education facilities within the region and has already welcomed speakers of the stature of the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development and member for Capalaba, the Honourable Jim Elder, Mr David Zeng Zhao Jun, who is the representative in Queensland of the southern-most province of mainland China, the Guanxi Province, and Mr Doug Yelland from the Small Business Corporation. This is because, in Mount Ommaney, we recognise, together with the Goss Government and the Federal Labor Government, that Queensland has a key part to play in the Asia-Pacific region.

In that important context, I have discovered that the Mount Ommaney electorate has a higher than usual proportion of migrants and enjoys a rich diversity of ethnic peoples, many of whom come from Asian countries. The Mount Ommaney electorate is considerably enriched by this interesting mix of peoples, cultures and languages. I am eager to see the strength of that mix of culture, language, wisdom, experience and understanding used to generate better trade, economic and social relations between our State, our country and the Asia-Pacific region to the advantage of our economy, employment, and good relations with our near neighbours. This is also the aim of the Goss Government, which is why it has established the China Secretariat—to promote social, trade and economic relations between Queensland and China. That is why I have established additional social and business support through the Mount Ommaney electorate office specifically for the Chinese, Vietnamese, Sri Lankan, Lebanese, Egyptian and European migrant communities within the Mount Ommaney electorate using volunteer members from those ethnic groups who can speak, write, negotiate and mediate in the languages of the countries from which they have come with a full understanding of the cultural and language difficulties that often hamper ethnic peoples in our country. I wish to sincerely thank those volunteers who so ably enable me to provide that much-needed support for ethnic people in the Mount Ommaney electorate. They are Sauwan Cheah, Mark and Chandra Perera, Daisy Chow, Sharon Tan and King and Dominique Chiam.

I have not established that social and business support for the ethnic communities in my electorate to set apart those groups from the mainstream Queensland community but to facilitate the inclusion of those groups as full partners in my own community, to heighten the peace and safety of the Mount Ommaney electorate, and to harness those additional human and financial resources to generate economic growth in our electorate, our State and our country. The very same social and business support is available through my office for all other members of my community, and I wish to record the substantial support provided to the broad Mount Ommaney community by Diana Leemon, Glenys Powell and, at times, her young son Andrew, Liz Hutchison, Pauline Wilkins and Sylvia Robertson, who also assist in a voluntary capacity within my office. Their works are sincerely appreciated.

I must digress from those most positive matters for a moment. Now, it is not my personal style to indulge in the politics of doom and gloom and negativity, nor am I particularly interested in giving the Opposition a belt—figuratively speaking, of course, for I am against violence—merely for the sake of scoring political points. I would prefer

instead to simply practise the service of working with and for my community, putting people first, addressing community needs and concerns in direct ways understood by ordinary people, and putting forward positive proposals for the advancement of our great State and our great country. I prefer to get on with serving my community, working shoulder to shoulder with ordinary people such as the Jamboree Community Kindergarten and Preschool Association, with wonderful people such as Dr Anna Williamson, Eric and Sue Kozij, Judy Allen, James and Debbie Jakovides, and Howard Leemon, working towards the provision of important community services.

But, honourable members, in responding to Her Excellency's address, I have no choice other than to bring to the notice of the House and the community a substantial disservice done to the business sector in Queensland last week by the honourable member for Caloundra and Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Joan Sheldon—a substantial disservice, which had the very real potential to considerably disadvantage a very courageous small business in the Mount Ommaney electorate, to impair profitability of that small business, to damage Australia's opportunity to reduce our balance of payments and to potentially hinder development of an important and environmentally sound technology capable of treating hazardous and intractable waste, which has significant implications for the future of our State and our country and for our environment. I bring this matter to the attention of the House, because it is particularly relevant at this time during the run-up to a Federal election. This case demonstrates quite clearly that the Queensland leader of the political party which espouses support for business—Dr Hewson's party—has absolutely no idea what she is talking about when she speaks to the issue of small business support and the environment.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Or on any other issue.

Mr PYKE: Or on any other issue. In the case to which I refer, BCD Technologies of Seventeen Mile Rocks in the Mount Ommaney electorate has very courageously developed to the stage of a pilot plant an American technology for the neutralisation of hazardous and intractable waste, that is, the base-catalysed dechlorination process known as BCD. What BCD Technologies has done, using in excess of \$1m of its own capital, is to produce a shipping container sized pilot plant capable of being trucked, railed or shipped to any location in this State, in this country or, indeed, in the world which can safely and effectively transform PCBs, insecticides and other hazardous chemicals into harmless substances and by-products.

Honourable members might think that the leader of Dr Hewson's party in Queensland might be supportive of that initiative, that development, and adaptation of a new and very important technology, which is truly at the cutting edge of hazardous and intractable waste treatment in the world today. One might think so, but that is not the case. What is the case is this: late last year, a shipload of PCBs and other hazardous waste from this country was shipped to France under the very last export licence issued by the Federal Government. That waste was shipped to France for disposal via high-temperature incinerator on a ship owned by the French firm, PEC, which also owns the waste disposal facility in France. However, because of protests by environmentalists, another shipload of PCBs originally intended to be shipped by PEC to its French facility was prevented from leaving Australia and was unloaded late last year and I believe now sits in safe storage at Rocklea awaiting a decision about its disposal. It is my understanding that BCD Technologies may well be in a position to treat that waste safely here in Brisbane using its base-catalysed dechlorination process. In fact, it is my understanding that this is a very real possibility.

Recently, the Federal Government resiled from a decision to build a high-temperature waste incinerator facility in our country, amongst other reasons, because of the potential of that new technology to provide a safer and more efficient disposal of hazardous and intractable waste than does high-temperature incineration. The new technology would provide a safe process here, which will save our country from having to pay another country to destroy our waste, substantially improving our country's balance of payments and minimising that ever-present risk of transportation of

hazardous wastes. I might add that, to my knowledge, the French firm, PEC, continues to lobby our Federal Government to provide it with a temporary permit to ship the waste that is now held at Rocklea to its facility in France. Naturally, that makes good business sense for PEC and for France, but not for Australia and not for BCD Technologies—an innovative Queensland firm leading the world in the development of an alternative waste disposal process.

One might think that the leader of Dr Hewson's party in Queensland—the party which talks often about its support for business and which pretends to understand trade and economic development—might act in a responsible manner at this crucial time when delicate negotiations are currently under way to determine how that waste might be disposed of. But, no. Instead, in the *Courier-Mail* dated 23 February 1993, I read an article written by Peter Morley, which was an attack by the Deputy Leader of the Coalition on the State Department of Environment and Heritage for—

“allowing a toxic time bomb”—

to be left in an—

“unsafe storage”.

What absolute rubbish! What an unfortunate misrepresentation of the true situation!

Unfortunately, the honourable member for Caloundra acted in a manner detrimental to the best resolution possible of what is a very difficult and important matter. By her unwise statements to the media, looking only for cheap political points, Mrs Sheldon, the leader of Dr Hewson's party in Queensland, could instead have placed in jeopardy an opportunity for Queensland to take a lead in the treatment of hazardous and intractable waste in the world by initiating the treatment of this first 130 tonnes of PCBs that are sitting safely in lined and double-sealed containers in storage in Rocklea.

Instead of demonstrating an understanding of the complexity and sensitivity of the issue of the treatment of hazardous and intractable waste in our State and in our country, what Mrs Sheldon has done has been to unnecessarily alarm our community into thinking that their lives are at stake. She said—

“This is very nasty stuff. It can kill and cause cancer, liver disease, and birth defects. It can no longer be kept here in Brisbane where its very existence threatens lives.”

That is exactly what she should never have said and done, for while it is true that the 130 tonnes of PCBs currently held in safe storage in Brisbane is hazardous waste, it is waste which is held in a safe and secure facility. Hers is the very last act that any responsible member of this House should be doing at this time because it might precipitate, by the unnecessary application of leverage on the Federal Government, a hasty action by the Federal Government to issue a temporary export licence to let that waste go to France where it would be destroyed by the not-so-fine high-temperature incineration process. That would be a great shame, because BCD Technologies, as a world first, are looking forward to the opportunity of processing that waste. I am greatly concerned that this example of ignorance and ineptitude by a member of Dr Hewson's party in our own State shows how Australia would be led after a coalition win in the Federal election.

Moving on to other matters raised in this House during this Address in Reply debate—I listened with great interest to the pretty speech given by former Premier and Police Minister, Russell Cooper, the member for Crows Nest. I was particularly interested to hear him regale the Government about crime and punishment, with the tone of his speech one of blaming the Goss Government for a lack of police resources, a rise in crime and a lack of truth in sentencing. It is not my desire to have to constantly belt the Opposition regularly about police issues, just because I was a member of the Police Service for a decade and a half before my election to this Forty-seventh Parliament of Queensland, representing Mount Ommaney. In fact, after the last time that I spoke in this House about police issues, giving an inside account of the gross incompetence,

grave politicisation, serious maladministration and ingrained corruption of the Queensland police force—I used to call it the “police farce”—under the State coalition and National Party Governments, I thought that would be the last time I would have to do that, and I felt relieved about that. I feel that I have much more to contribute to my community, our State and to debate in this House than to have to continually refer to the really dark days prior to 2 December 1989, the date of the election of the Goss Government.

It gives me no satisfaction to have to continually address the issue of the culpability of current Opposition members, such as the member for Crows Nest, for the very serious difficulties that had to be faced by the first Goss Government in reforming a shambles of a Police Service, perhaps the most disgraced Police Service in the history of policing in Australia. However, that is just what the Goss Government has done, with the very capable assistance of former Police Minister Terry Mackenroth and now the hard-hitting Police Minister, Paul Braddy, and the much-loved Queensland Commissioner, Jim O’Sullivan, who is already proving to be the wisest choice as leader of a Police Service which until recently was crippled by a legacy of incompetence in leadership foisted on the Goss Government. That was the result of the installation by Vince Lester of a bumbling and incompetent Police Commissioner from another State, at a time when only a Queenslander could possibly have had an understanding of the pathways between the key players in the interlinked political/criminal/police networks in this State. They are pathways that became entrenched in this State under decades of coalition rule and the deplorable Bjelke-Petersen junta.

In the hundreds of pages of evidence I gave to the Fitzgerald inquiry, I did not hesitate to make the connection between the National Party State Government, police corruption and organised crime in Queensland. I said—and I will say it again—that I believed it was no accident that we had a lame-duck police force and an apologist Government which tolerated any excess by bad or incompetent police fostering the advancement of politically comprised senior officers with primary school education, at a time when other police forces in the world were implementing career paths emphasising tertiary qualifications, crime-fighting ability and social understanding. I have never believed that it was a mere accident that under Ministers such as Russell Cooper we had a police force scarcely able to contain street crime let alone mount any real offensive against a net of significant criminals consisting of former and serving police, perhaps a politician or two, and some enthusiastic amateurs.

I have always believed that it was no accident that a State which was then the drug-growing capital of Australia under the Nationals had the smallest, most politicised and poorly resourced police force in Australia. Just the very acknowledgment that he was a National Party Police Minister, one might think, should be enough to stop the member for Crows Nest from ever again speaking to the issue of law and order. Law and order did not exist when the Goss Government came to power. I will not forget that; nor, I am sure, will many other Queenslanders. So when I hear the former National Party Police Minister speak about crime and propose that the Goss Government should do this and do that, and say that the Goss Government is to blame for crime being out of control in this State, I know that he is mouthing the rhetoric of assumed forgetfulness, the rhetoric of Rip Van Winkle, and that he must have been asleep while he served in the National Party pretence of a Government and that he awoke with a start only when the bell tolled on 2 December 1989 and a new, honest and decent Government was elected in Queensland.

We now have in Queensland—and I speak from a thorough and profound understanding of the subject—the most advanced Police Service in Australia, which is developing models to be emulated by Police Services the world over. I find it ironic to hear Opposition members running down our great State, our great country and our great advancement in policing in this State, because I know that the morale of police has shot through the roof since the appointment of Mr Jim O’Sullivan as Police Commissioner. I know that we pay our police a fair wage, we equip them properly and we support them with the most advanced computer-aided dispatch and crime-reporting systems available.

So when I hear one or two former National Party Police Ministers speak of these issues, I regard their selective memory processes with scorn.

Let me speak now about the manufacturing sector in this State. What else has Russell Cooper been doing apart from hanging around the police club with the dying remnants of the Old Guard? One thing is for sure: he has not been out in the electorate of Mount Ommaney, in which manufacturers such as MITEC—the company that manufactures the Stumpcam, incidentally—sell communications technology of the highest standard in the world today and compete on their own terms in Hong Kong with firms such as NEC. In my electorate, businesspeople undertake the sale of foodstuffs to the lucrative Singapore market and look with enthusiasm and excitement to the huge markets that are represented by mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia and other Asian/Pacific nations. Obviously, when he refers to Queensland being an economic wasteland, the honourable member has never bothered to find out what is really happening right under his nose in the manufacturing sector in this State. Economic wasteland my foot! He refers to our great country as an economic wasteland, even though the balance of payments figures for last month demonstrate an increase in merchandise exports and a decrease in merchandise imports. In my opinion, such figures give optimism and hope for a much brighter future.

The *Courier-Mail* of 27 February contained an article by Bill Ferris headlined "Serving up Aussie lifestyle as excellent export idea", which referred to the range of products that Australia exports to countries such as Japan, Asia and America. I have bothered to find out what is happening in the business sector in our State, as has Jim Elder, the Government's very effective and down-to-earth Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development. I am sick and tired of members of the National and Liberal Parties continually belting and knocking this country. Last week, Russell Cooper claimed that Queensland is an economic wasteland. The reality is that Queensland is the leading State for small business in Australia. In Queensland, more people are working in their own small businesses per capita than in any other State in Australia. In the Queensland private sector, 96 per cent of all businesses are small businesses. I support those businesses and those gutsy Queenslanders who have the courage to compete in the toughest arena of them all—the private business sector. I acknowledge that, excluding workers, small business in Queensland employs 37.5 per cent of the private work force, which means that approximately 260 000 people are employed in small business in Queensland.

Small business is important business in Queensland. As the member for Mount Ommaney, which is a thriving small business sector, and as a member of the most progressive State Government in this country, I am proud to be able to say that the Queensland Government, through the Department of Business, Industry and Regional Development and the Small Business Corporation—which, from what I have seen, should be called the "Smart Business Corporation"—is committed to providing an extensive range of advisory, information and training services to small and large businesses and businesspeople thinking about buying or establishing a business of their own. The Goss Government knows and understands that by enhancing the long-term viability and growth of those businesses, our community will prosper from the economic benefits which flow from a flourishing business sector. This State is fortunate to have a Government that has applied and maintained the principle that a sound economic base is the platform upon which a fair, just and equal society is founded.

I express my dismay at the un-Australian behaviour of the Leader of the Federal Opposition and his party during the Federal election campaign. They have tried to score cheap political points by degrading this country's high standing, its financial reputation, the strength of its dollar and the potential of its manufacturing sector. As an ordinary Queenslanders, I call on all parties to raise the standard of the debate in this Federal election campaign above the level of the cheap political point scoring adopted by the Federal Opposition, which has perpetually talked up negative statistics and has espoused nothing but doom and gloom. All honourable members would be aware, I am sure, that there are signs of growth in this country's economy; that we need positivity,

not negativity; and that we live in a time of worldwide economic downturn and a changing world in which technology has almost overnight robbed many thousands of workers worldwide of employment. Another issue about which so many of my constituents talk to me is that they do not believe that any one man or woman is responsible directly for Australia's economic downturn, no matter what Dr Hewson says, particularly when workers have been laid off in Japan this year.

I record my dismay at the un-Australian behaviour in a recent debate of several members of the Opposition, who referred to the history of our great country in terms of "200 years". It is a disappointment that, in 1993, members of Queensland's Opposition still do not comprehend that the history of our great country spans over 40 000 years' duration, perhaps even 60 000 years. They do not recognise that Australian history pre-colonialisation is Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, and it is a very rich and credible history indeed. It is such a shame that, in 1993, members of the Opposition can be so un-Australian as to ignore our Aboriginal history and heritage.

I turn now to one issue that has been all but ignored by the coalition during the election campaign. The issue to which I refer is the tremendous standing of our country in the global community and the leadership role taken proudly by Australia under the flag of the Whitlam, Hawke and Keating Labor Governments, which have given our great country an honoured status of mediator, negotiator and peacemaker in the world community. Happily, Australia is possibly the safest and most peaceful country in the modern world today. That is not by accident, but by careful statespersonship, careful leadership, careful moderation, and courageous intervention and peacemaking when opportunities have been presented. Having been active in the service of my community for the past two decades—as I am sure have many other honourable members and as have many members of the great Mount Ommaney electorate community—I sought election to this privileged place not only to represent my community but also to capture and wring dry the substantial opportunities presented to members of the Queensland Parliament to do good work, to act with energy and imagination, to innovate and to lead as well as to respond with empathy and care to issues of concern. That is why I so enjoy every opportunity to visit and to speak with young people in the school community of the Mount Ommaney electorate. Every time that I visit a school—primary or high school, Government or non-Government—I see a wonderful mix of trusting, safe and happy Australian children, and young people representing every ethnic group.

This country, certainly my own electorate, has a model community that sets the standard for all other countries in terms of sharing and getting on with other peoples regardless of ethnicity, religion or political persuasion. That is indeed beyond price. That is the legacy presented to our children and to our future by the Whitlam, Hawke and Keating Federal Labor Governments. That is to be treasured. It is something of which we can be proud and which must be kept alive. However, what price that treasure, that significant model community under a coalition Government, which really has no idea of what it has in this wonderful multicultural community that we have in Australia? I am very proud to be a member of the Goss Government and to represent the vital electorate of Mount Ommaney, which has a great reputation for community involvement and business initiative.

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (4.31 p.m.): In common with many other speakers, I pledge my loyalty to the Governor as representative of the Queen in this State. I also congratulate the Governor on her appointment to that position. I am looking forward to seeing her in Gayndah, which is my home town. On the Queen's Birthday weekend in June, Gayndah is celebrating 150 years of racing, which began in 1843. It will be a proud moment for the citizens of Gayndah. The first Queensland derby was held in Gayndah, as was the first women's race in Queensland.

Mr Pearce: Who won it?

Mr SLACK: I should know, and I do know, but I cannot bring the name to mind at the moment. As all members know—and as the debate in this House indicates—since the Government's proposed legislative program was outlined, a Federal election was

announced. Consequently, very little attention has been paid to the proposed legislative process. Instead, during the Address in Reply debate, members have concentrated on Federal issues. During this debate, Labor members have engaged in much rhetoric, misleading statements and deliberate scaremongering. However, what more could people expect? If they look at the Federal Labor Government's record—on which it should be judged—Labor members have little with which to defend themselves. Australia has record unemployment, a massive overseas debt of \$160 billion net and a major Budget deficit of \$16 billion which, no doubt, will probably blow out to \$18 billion or \$20 billion this year. Obviously, Government members believe that if Australians support a continuation of this mode, they have a cargo-cult mentality. All we are hearing is "Spend, spend, spend", but we never hear how it will be paid for. The present mode of the Federal Government is to buy votes and tell the electors anything, as long as it retains power. Prime Minister Keating, who was never elected Prime Minister but obtained that office by the blood of Hawke, is the master con man of this country. He supported GST and talked of J-curves. Remember the recession that we had to have? Government members have stated that the recession that we are experiencing is similar to recessions that are being experienced by the rest of the world. Australia was in recession before the rest of the world ever entered into one. This greatest recession since the depression was engineered by the present Prime Minister, who is asking people to vote for him. He is Australia's best con man.

Lately, I have spoken to business people throughout the State, and quite a few have indicated to me that they are waiting to see what happens on 13 March. If the Labor Government is returned to power, quite a few business people will not invest. Consequently, a double-dip recession will occur. Because of the Prime Minister's record, there will be no confidence in the Labor Government's ability to manage. People will see a repeat of the same, which I am sure they do not want. Instead they want jobs and they want hope. The people of Victoria voted out the Labor Government in that State, and the people of Australia will vote out the Federal Labor Government. It is obvious that people have had enough.

The member for Mount Ommaney mentioned that the Opposition did not have an environment policy. The fact is that the Opposition announced its environment policy last Friday. On that day, I was in Melbourne when it was announced by the Opposition spokesperson, Jim Carlton. It is quite a lengthy document, and it spells out in detail the Opposition's plans in regard to environmental matters. Of course, no great publicity has been given to it and no great opposition has been waged against it by the Labor Party, because they cannot find anything wrong with it. Do honourable members believe that the Labor Government would have been so silent if it had found anything wrong with the Opposition's policy? No, of course not. The Labor Government has not been able to find anything wrong with it.

I missed the GST debate last Thursday because I was in Victoria. It is interesting to note that when I got into a taxi to take me from the airport into Melbourne, I asked the taxi driver, "How is Kennett going down here?" He looked at me and said, "You know, he is on the verge of becoming popular." Kennett is becoming popular because he has taken the measures in Victoria that were necessary to address its economic problems, which were caused by years of maladministration by a Labor Government. Despite what Halfpenny may say on TV, the public opinion polls, which are published for all to read, indicate that the Liberal Government in Victoria is as popular, or even more popular, than it was when it ousted the Labor Party with a massive majority. Victorians have experienced Labor.

Mr Hollis: Table the document.

Mr SLACK: For the benefit of the member for Redcliffe, I point out that despite everything that has been said around this country, not one worker has been sacked in Victoria.

Mr Hollis: Hey?

Mr SLACK: I defy the member to rise and indicate that a worker has been sacked in Victoria. Plenty of people have taken redundancy, but they have not been sacked.

Mr Hollis: He has asked for extra money for 4 500. He wants extra money to sack them.

Mr SLACK: No. The honourable member has not looked into this matter. He should not believe his Government's rhetoric. His problem is that he is starting to believe the rhetoric of the people who feed him speeches. The people of Victoria have indicated in the public opinion polls that they think Kennett and his Government are doing a job that they had to do.

Unfortunately, I was not present for the GST debate, but I understand that much was made of the Mulroney affair in Canada. Straightaway, and with a glint in his eye, Australia's Labor Prime Minister went on television. He thought that it was tremendous that it was the GST in Canada that threw Mulroney out. But it was not the GST in Canada that forced Mulroney to resign, although it was an object lesson in how not to apply a GST. There were many other factors applying in Canada. There was a GST and State taxes in Canada. There were also exemptions in Canada. For example, a packet of unsalted peanuts was exempt, but those that were salted were not. Some products were going across the border into Canada. The Canadian GST was not the major factor in Mulroney's exit from Canada.

I turn now to New Zealand, which I visited with the member for Burdekin, Mark Stoneman, and other members of this Parliament. I experienced at first-hand the situation in New Zealand and how the GST was introduced there. We had extensive consultation with representatives from practically all sectors of society in New Zealand, including farmers, lawyers, social security people, members of Government, and the body that oversaw the introduction of the GST. Contrary to what Labor members would have us believe, the New Zealand experience was that the GST was supported in that country. The New Zealand economy has turned around through the introduction of the GST and the other measures that have been associated with its introduction. The Labour Government in New Zealand introduced a GST after an election campaign in which it was not an issue and during which that Government said nothing about it. After that election, which was held in the mid eighties in about June or July, Roger Douglas, the Labour Government's Treasurer, announced in October of that year, that New Zealand was to have a GST. Marvellous! He did not have the approval of the voters. But there was no outcry from the Nationals, because they supported it. The people of New Zealand and both political parties realised that their economy needed it.

A careful exercise was undertaken in introducing the GST in New Zealand. Sure, there were detractors. Some people did not agree with it. But the overall result was there for all to see at the next election, because Labour went back. Having introduced the GST, it went back. It was at the following election that Labour went out after a big dust-up between Douglas and Lange. That was partly because of the GST, because in the original New Zealand model there was a proposal to increase it. But there were no other benefits to offset the problems that would be encountered by welfare groups or pensioners whereby there would be increases to their pensions. So Labour went out. Lange did not indicate that there would be any tax cuts with the GST. He did not indicate that there would be any reins on expenditure. The New Zealand people made their decision at the next election. But when the GST was introduced at the following election, the New Zealand people supported it. They believed that it was a very fair and efficient tax. It cost only 1 per cent of the total revenue collected to collect it. They had every reason to believe that it did benefit their economy. Subsequent events have proved that it has benefited their economy. It is no longer an election issue in New Zealand. The GST is accepted there. It is no longer an issue so far as the political process or the public are concerned. It is accepted, and the New Zealand economy has benefited.

Whether we like it or not, we are going to have to compete with New Zealand, which is killing us in the costs of putting goods through the wharves in New Zealand. It

is also killing us in inspection fees. It is a fact that New Zealand is now competitive in our markets. If Government members do not believe me, I suggest that they read the relevant economic reports that point that out quite conclusively. For argument's sake, as to inspection fees within the fruit industry in New Zealand—the cost is \$40 per hour. In Australia, the equivalent cost is \$172. I will have more to say about that later. There are no ifs, buts or maybes; Australia must have tax reform. It must lower the cost to industry—we do not have a choice about that—otherwise there will be increased pain for the unemployed. There will be a greater number of unemployed people if we do not embrace the methods involved in the Fightback package as proposed by the Federal Opposition.

The productive sector must have incentive and confidence. I defy any member opposite to say that it is not the case that the National Farmers Federation is supporting the Fightback package. Much has been said about small business and what a great job the Minister for Small Business is doing. Members have heard about isolated cases in which the GST may affect some sectors, or may disadvantage somebody else. But the reality of it all is that the Small Business Association, which represents all small businesses in Queensland and other parts of Australia, supports Fightback and the GST component of Fightback. The Confederation of Industry supports it, as well. There is no argument about small business or business generally supporting it. There is no argument about the support of the National Farmers Federation. The farmers who make up that organisation support it.

For the information of members opposite, I point out that there is no desire to rip off the workers. The aim is jobs. The Labor Government's record in jobs is very enviable, is it not! We have the highest unemployment rate since the Depression. Job security and increased living standards are what this election will be all about. To achieve that, investors, farmers, manufacturers, exporters and miners must have incentive and confidence. Wage earners must have job security, incentive and confidence. They must receive reward for effort. Industry knows that. But if we cannot compete, we are dead in the water. We all know that, except members opposite who doggedly wish to live in the past and are not prepared to face up to their Federal Government's failures. They have the choice. We can all become poorer or accept the opportunity to be better off. The member for Bulimba mentioned a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. He fails to acknowledge that there are many people out there who want more and more for less and less work. Many people have priced themselves out of the market. The country cannot afford unproductive work practices. The Victorian instance is a classic example of that.

I agree with the member for Bulimba that this election is about power. It is about Labor Party power and union power—their power to manipulate and control, not to do what is best for Australia. It is about Keating's hunger for power. Honourable members should remember, as I mentioned earlier, that he pushed out an elected Prime Minister. We have heard all the claptrap from the Treasurer of how Queensland will be ruined and that we will be worse off by \$300m or whatever.

Mr Ardill: \$370m.

Mr SLACK: Or whatever. We have heard that Queensland will miss out on so much because of the payroll tax formula. That formula has been altered; but, as to the figures quoted on the old formula, it was money that we were not getting from payroll tax, anyway. It was a fictitious figure that we may have got if we had the same rate of payroll tax in this State as that applying in other States. But there is a new formula which Government members refuse to acknowledge. In reality, if Labor is elected federally, there must be major cutbacks. Otherwise, when he has a \$16 billion deficit this year, which is escalating, how will the Prime Minister deliver his promises and maintain his funding to the States? He spoke of a balanced Budget in a couple of years. Currently, his Budget deficit is estimated to exceed \$16 billion, and we can add a couple of billion for the promises. Clearly, promises will be broken. I ask members opposite to give a

clear outline of how they can fund their excessive promises without massive cutbacks or increases in taxes and charges to an already overburdened productive sector.

Members opposite even object to the sale of Telecom. Their Federal colleagues have overspent and would have to take unpopular steps such as selling Telecom, among other measures that I mentioned, to satisfy the debt collectors and the money markets. No doubt, there would be appropriate excuses at the time, which some people would be silly enough to believe. Fortunately, it will not happen, because their colleagues will not be elected. Many people may be confused over GST, but they are beginning to understand that it is a tax reform. It will mean less taxes, as many other taxes will go, and it will not mean a 15 per cent increase in prices. To the contrary, many pensioners will be financially better off. They will receive an 8 per cent offsetting increase in their pension and their costs of living, on the latest figures, will not increase—or, if they do increase, they will increase by a maximum of 2 per cent. However, I do not believe those costs will increase.

One of the Federal members who should go is the member for Hinkler, Brian Courtice, who has demonstrated by his inconsistency that he will do anything to retain power—anything for a headline. Yesterday in this Chamber, the member for Barambah highlighted some of Mr Courtice's inconsistencies. The member for Mount Coot-tha, who followed in the debate, began by expressing her disappointment that the Address in Reply debate was being used for an unsubstantiated attack on a Federal member. Let me assure the House that the member for Barambah's attack on the member for Hinkler, Brian Courtice, was not unsubstantiated. They were all quotes from Federal *Hansard*. Her disappointment should be directed towards her colleague the member for Hinkler, whose credibility has been destroyed by his own words, as quoted from the Federal *Hansard* by the member for Barambah.

Earlier, we heard an unsubstantiated attack on the Federal member for Dawson, Ray Braithwaite, by the member for Whitsunday, who was not able to offer any evidence to support her claims about that member, whereas Mr Courtice's statements are in black and white. Politics aside, I am sure that the member for Whitsunday would rather have Mr Braithwaite running her business than Mr Courtice; I am sure I would. Mr Courtice represents an electorate that has little to show for his representation. In that electorate, rural industries such as sugar and small crops are on their knees, State and Federal charges are increasing, unemployment is above the State and national average, lawlessness has increased dramatically—I have figures to prove it—and health services are not being provided. The list goes on.

Many promises have been made—they always have been and they always will be made. Yesterday, the member for Hinkler stated how important the Walla weir was to the farmers in the area. He promised that weir, should Federal Labor be returned. I remind honourable members that his State parliamentary colleague the member for Bundaberg is on record as saying that the farmers should pay for part of it. Now Mr Courtice claims he will pay for it. Perhaps the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Casey, could outline to the Parliament why he has consistently required farmers to make a promise of a substantial contribution to the capital costs and has not informed the people of that commitment by the Commonwealth. Mr Casey should either confirm or deny that the Labor Government has agreed to provide funding, if re-elected, and, if so, how much and when we can expect to see the project started.

I turn now to what is happening in my electorate under this Government and, incidentally, under Mr Courtice's Federal Labor Government. Recently, I attended a large meeting of fruit and vegetable growers who are in a desperate position. Many have left the industry, and many more will. They are being devastated by poor weather, imports and increasing costs through increasing taxes and charges. Only last weekend, a grower who had been selling rockmelons for export outlined to me that, as he had paid \$80 some time ago to have his premises inspected for export purposes, he thought his shed was licensed. But he has been requested to provide \$346 for a fee to use the shed. He agonised about the value of sending the cheque, as he is not a big grower and

\$346 represents a substantial amount of his profits. He rang the inspection service and was told that, if he did not send the money, his rockmelons would not be eligible for export. They are the sorts of barriers that are in place under Labor's administration—Mr Courtice's administration. The member for Hinkler's answer is a task force for the horticultural industry—no doubt with him as chairman. We do not need a task force to investigate the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service—AQIS—which is a Commonwealth agency under a Commonwealth Minister and which the member has defended in the past. Incidentally, the charges that I mentioned earlier work out to \$172 an hour in Australia and \$40 an hour in New Zealand.

I just happen to have been supplied with a report which fell off the back of a truck, but I have been assured that it is genuine. It is a report following an internal investigation into AQIS. It makes very interesting reading, and I will table it for the benefit of honourable members. In summary, it states—

“Australian Quarantine Inspection Service

AQIS use of travel expenses, telephones, cabcharge cards and rental cars

A secret report on AQIS travel and other expenses reveals

extravagant use of facilities

extraordinary waste of public money

bad accounting

improper use of privileges, paid for by the taxpayer.

AQIS is just one part of a Federal Government Department—the Department of Primary Industries and energy. If only part of the pattern of abuse shown in this study is repeated throughout the public service, it shows that there is enormous scope for saving money.

The study shows

travel was approved after the travel was undertaken

straightout waste and inefficiency

officials received benefits they were not entitled to

what the report itself calls ‘deliberate misuse of government resources.’

unauthorised travel

travel authorised by officers who were not in Canberra on the date when they allegedly approved the travel

officers approved their own travel

lost records

cars rented when the officers already had government cars

‘caravans’ of officers all attending the one conference

unnecessary travel the night before, to claim extra travel allowance

officers using mobile phones while on leave and for personal calls

use of cabcharge vouchers for private use and on weekends

purchase of petrol with government fuel cards while on leave

claiming airport longstay parking in advance and then using a cabcharge voucher for travel from home to the airport.”

It is all in the report. It continues—

“Attached are:

1. Executive Summary of the major findings

2. Details of breaches of regulations on:

credit cards

overseas travel

private use of cars
petty cash
official travel

3. Some sample pages of the report referring to actual cases; such as"—
and I nominate them—

"a 2 day trip and a \$258.50 travelling allowance to attend a free dinner
8 taxi trips to and from the Burswood Hotel, in Perth, on the one day—a Saturday,
at the same time as a rental car had been hired.
a Shell-card being used interstate, when the officer was overseas.
a 5 day private trip to Ireland—on full pay and travel allowance—for an officer
attending conferences in North and South America, which the report says were
'hard to justify'.
lots of unauthorised purchase of petrol and use of mobile phones."

It continues—

"The cost
The report shows that 8 officers in AQIS spent between \$40,000 and \$60,000
EACH, on travel in 1991/92.
This is in only one part of one department—the overall Federal Government
wastage on travel must be astronomical."

If one applies those figures—

"There should be questions asked, such as:
what has happened to the report, has it been acted on?
has any action been taken against those implicated?
will the money be recovered?
was the Minister briefed on the report? if so, when? What has he done about
it?
Is the pattern of abuse and expenditure shown here typical of the whole
public service?
How much money could be saved in the whole Federal Government with real
savings and proper controls?"

I table the report for all honourable members to read if they so wish.

That is the type of thing that the member for Hinkler supported when he supported
the AQIS costs per grower of \$172 per hour. Honourable members should remember
that I quoted a figure of \$40 per hour in New Zealand—the country that was questioned
about its introduction of similar measures. Our growers are going broke. The other day, I
attended a meeting at which it was stated that many growers have left the industry and
that more will leave it. Another major problem facing growers is imports. All that has
happened under this Federal Government. I was at a meeting at which the Federal
member for Hinkler supported the AQIS situation, and supported the charge that was to
be levied. Small growers cannot pay the sort of charge that is being levied. They either
go out of business or they have to join a new shed, and many of them go out of
business.

No doubt the Minister for Health would take considerable interest in a number of
events in my electorate. It cannot be denied—irrespective of what the Minister for
Health may say in this House—that there is genuine, ongoing public outrage, public
concern—call it what you like—about the non-delivery of hospital services. There is
sufficient evidence in the newspapers from people—they do not wish to be named—to
prove that hospital services are a shambles. I note from a Bundaberg newspaper that
doctors in Bundaberg have told a similar story. Nurses and doctors have told me that

because they might be victimised they will not speak out. The article, dated 3 March 1993, states—

“Patients are suffering because morale among nursing staff at Bundaberg Base Hospital has plummeted . . .”

The article continues—

“The sister, whose name cannot be published”——

Mr Hayward: Can I ask you a question?

Mr SLACK: I have only four minutes left. The Minister has had question time every day this session in which to answer the questions. The article continues—

“The sister, whose name cannot be published for fear of recrimination, blamed the problems on management.

The sister, who has worked at the hospital between five and 10 years, contacted *The Midweek Drum* in response to an article on page 1 of the February 17 edition.

The article contained allegations by a former Queensland Ambulance Service superintendent of low morale, service cuts and ambulance vehicles in desperate need of repair.

‘The situation here is exactly the same as with the ambulance,’ she said.

‘The money’s going in the wrong direction and it’s the patients who are suffering.

The number of nursing staff is way under what is required and many patients are not getting the care and attention they need.

There is also a gross waste of dollars and resources and nurses in the wards are run off their feet

It was nothing like this when I started’ ——

Mr Hayward: Where?

Mr SLACK: Bundaberg. I have an article from another newspaper in Bundaberg. The problem is ongoing. I have not heard too many patients coming forward to defend the system. There is no doubt that there is an ongoing question about the delivery of health services in this State. The Minister has a major problem. I do not know whether he is to blame or not, but there is no question that the problems do exist. The same problem applies to ambulances. A former ambulance officer believes that the service is crumbling from within. As far as this Government’s administration is concerned, the problems go on and on. I will mention another example. Last night, a swimming pool builder rang me with a problem about another department.

A Government member: Shonky!

Mr SLACK: No, he is not shonky. The Minister should listen to this, because it is another problem for the administration. Last August, he applied for a licence as a swimming pool builder. The licence, as is the case with every other swimming pool builder, has not been forthcoming. An advertising campaign has been run to inform potential swimming pool buyers that all builders of swimming pools who are qualified must have a licence, and will be issued with a licence by 1 March. However, by 1 March, not one licence had been issued because they are not available. The person to whom I refer has informed me that he has received a letter stating that at some time in the future he will receive a licence. But what about his position as a small businessman who is struggling to make money and who may be in the situation of dealing with a prospective purchaser of a swimming pool? He will not be able to produce his licence in spite of the fact that the Government has been advertising throughout this State that those licences will be issued from 1 March. That is just one example of the many bungs that have occurred in many of the departments in this State, including Health and Primary

Industries, and in the Ambulance Service. All this is set out in the Government's own papers.

Mr Hayward: Why didn't you tell him why you weren't at the Childers Hospital? You say you are so interested in health, so why weren't you there?

Mr SLACK: I will tell the Minister why I was not there. He did not tell me about it and I had a prior engagement.

Time expired.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN (Caboolture) (5.01 p.m.): I am pleased to join in the debate on the Address in Reply to the speech made by Her Excellency. I begin by congratulating Her Excellency Leneen Forde on her appointment. Madam Deputy Speaker, Governor Forde is the first female Governor that this State has had, and I am sure you will agree that it is about time, too. Queensland's first Governor, Sir George Bowen, was appointed on 10 December 1859. It has taken 130 years and a Goss Labor Government to have a woman appointed to that post.

At the outset, I thank the electors of Caboolture for expressing their confidence in me and in the Goss Labor Government which was reflected in the results they produced so lovingly in the election held in September 1992. I also thank my willing band of supporters. They are nearly 150 strong now, so I am sure they will not mind if I do not mention their names individually. I am not about to make a "Vince Lester" speech.

Mr Springborg: Will you table the tie?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Yes, I will. I thank the supporters who helped Labor to retain the seat of Caboolture. In particular, I thank my campaign director, Eileen Wood, who has been a strong adviser of mine for about five years now. I am sure it will be of no comfort to my political opponents to know that she has agreed to take on the role for the next election also. I also thank my family for the love and support they have given me. Despite the hectic schedule of my wife, Carryn, as a Caboolture Shire Councillor, she has always made time to help me with my duties. I thank our daughters, Casey and Tai, who, having two parents in public office, suffer disruptions to their lives but seldom complain. I also thank my mother, Pat, and my sister, Jan, who live nearby and who are generous with their assistance and support.

For the benefit of members opposite, I also mention Bill Newton, who will be remembered by those who served with him in this Parliament. In the 1992 election, he sought to reverse the result of the previous election in 1989. Bill conducted himself in a gentlemanly and fair manner during the last election and afterwards, and showed proper respect for the processes and institutions of Parliament and government. Bill was the candidate who polled in second place in that election. I have noticed that whenever the 1993 triennial local government elections are mentioned, Bill's eyes take on a particularly mischievous gleam. Perhaps we have not seen the last of him politically, and I wish him well—although I am sure that people will understand when I say that I doubt I will be supporting him if he takes on a local government role.

In Governor Forde's address, she spoke of the efforts made by the Goss Government during its first term. One of those efforts related to the overhaul of the electoral system to provide for fair and honest elections. In my maiden speech in this Parliament on 22 March 1990, I spoke of the electoral corruption which had resulted in the electorate of Glass House that I represented having 28 000 electors whereas Roma, the electorate represented by the then Leader of the Opposition, had 8 000 electors. Of course, the redistribution shrunk the boundaries of Glass House and returned the town of Caboolture to the electorate of Caboolture. Plenty of confusion has arisen from the fact that the Minister for Health formerly held the seat of Caboolture and that I now represent the electorate of Caboolture. For the information of honourable members, I point out that the electorate of Caboolture which I represent contains not one square centimetre of the electorate of Caboolture that was formerly represented by the Minister for Health, and that the township of Caboolture has been returned to the electorate named Caboolture.

My electorate takes in not only Caboolture but also Bribie Island, Ningi, Beachmere, Beerburum, Elimbah, Wamuran, Toorbul, Donnybrook, Meldale, Godwin Beach, Pebble Beach and Bribie Pines. There have also been some losses of some areas from my electorate. I noticed in the speech made by the present member for Nicklin, Mr Turner, some of those areas were referred to as areas he gained from the former electorate of Glass House. His gains include most of the Glasshouse Mountains, the Maleny Plateau area, the Mary Valley and the Conondale Range areas. It causes me some sadness to think that relationships I had established with people in those areas over the years have now been severed because of the fact that I do not now represent them, but from time to time, I try to keep in touch.

Mr Robertson: And they speak very highly of you, too.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: They do indeed. There have also been some successes in the areas that have now been lost to me as a representative, and I will mention just a few. Firstly, I mention the Conondale Range Consultative Committee, which was responsible for the process leading to a national park agreement for the Conondale Range area. That was the first time that the environment lobby had in fact sat down and achieved an equitable result with other interested parties. There were no people who were chaining themselves to bulldozers or trees, or digging holes in the road to prevent vehicles from going through the area. Instead, the National Parks and Wildlife Service, the Conondale Range Committee, the forestry section of the DPI and forestry industry representatives reached a compromise. To help them to do that, they had the assistance of the Attorney-General's dispute resolution system.

Over the past four years, separate flooding incidents which occurred in the Kenilworth area have washed away two bridges which had both been built by a former bush engineer, Bill Waldron. One was across the Little Yabba Creek which was lost on Anzac Day 1989 and the other more recent one was a bridge over the Mary River at Kenilworth which had been washed away. On 19 February, the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development, Mr Hamill, opened the new bridge at Kenilworth. Both bridges were replaced by this Government at a cost exceeding \$2m. Those new bridges have ensured that access to the township of Kenilworth is now secure. Thanks to the accelerated Capital Works Program, a high school was built at Beerwah in 1991. That was a decade and a half after local people had begun to lobby the former National Party Government for such a school. Another significant development in that region was the establishment of an enterprise centre at Maleny. Maleny is a town with a resourceful community, and those people are trying desperately to provide for themselves. That enterprise centre is helping them to do that.

It would be remiss of me if I were not to mention disappointments. There were some of those, too. A major disappointment in the area that was ceded to the seat of Nicklin was the closure of the Woodford Correctional Centre. Plenty of people have come forward with alternative uses for the area. To them, I say that the Woodford Correctional Centre will once again be used as a correctional centre. The closure had an effect on the town of Woodford, but honourable members should recognise that very few of the people employed at the correctional centre sought to continue employment with the commission. Most sought to take the redundancy package offered to them, although I acknowledge that there were several reasons why they may have done so.

In her Speech, Her Excellency spoke of the upgrading of long-neglected Government services in the essential areas of education, health, and law and order. The provision of health services is important to Caboolture, and I am pleased that the Minister is in the House for this part of my address. The Caboolture Hospital was an election commitment of the Goss Labor Party in 1989. That hospital is now nearing completion, and it is quite visible on the eastern outskirts of Caboolture. Of course, it should never be forgotten that it was members of the former National Party Government—not just National Party candidates—who promised such a hospital in the elections of 1977, 1980, 1983 and 1986, and that Government never delivered. It never delivered. The former Government did, of course, build in Caboolture something that

was a welcome and now an essential part of the community, that is, a community health centre. We can give the former Government credit for that, but certainly that could not be regarded as meeting the commitment to build a hospital in Caboolture. About a week and a half ago, I was pleased to go with the Minister to inspect progress on the building. I can assure my constituents that, when that hospital is opened, they will have a very fine facility.

In relation to police—it has been somewhat galling to read comments in the newspapers, particularly the Sunday newspapers, by the member for Crows Nest in which he is critical of the police staffing levels at Caboolture. The member for Crows Nest is a former Police Minister and, when he was Premier, it was his Minister, Mr Lester, who said that Caboolture did not need a 24-hour police station.

Mr Pearce: He said the same thing in Yeppoon.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Mr Lester says that in a lot of places; I will admit that.

Mr Hayward: We didn't need a hospital, either.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Mr Lester said that we did not need a hospital, either. Now Mr Cooper says that not enough people work on a particular weekend shift—a shift that he did not implement and that his successor did not believe was warranted. That is outright hypocrisy on the part of the member for Crows Nest. As a result of the proper processes being put in place, Inspector Neil Behm of the Redcliffe district had responded appropriately to the memo that Mr Cooper leaked with his first story. Inspector Behm had approved the extra staffing and the shift was working on the very weekend that Mr Cooper's article appeared in the Sunday press.

On the issue of police—what has the Goss Labor Government done? When Commissioner Jim O'Sullivan was commanding the north coast region, he assisted in having the number of staff at the Caboolture station doubled and it became a 24-hour station. Honourable members should remember that that is a 24-hour station which Mr Cooper's Minister said was not warranted. The Government has built the Deception Bay Police Station, which is no longer in the electorate of the Minister for Health.

Mr Hayward: Close.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: It is very close. That reduces the area required to be covered by the Caboolture station but the Caboolture staff was not reduced at the same time. Let me say this about the Deception Bay station: when the Minister for Health, Mr Hayward, was elected in 1986, the National Party went to that election with a promise to build the Deception Bay Police Station. However, when the Minister was elected for his first term, the twisted and tortured logic of the National Party Government was, "You did not vote for us. You did not want a police station. You cannot have it." I acknowledge the efforts that the Minister put in as a backbench member for that electorate to obtain that very necessary service for his constituents, as they were then. Extra police have been stationed on Bribie Island, which has adjusted the area of coverage between the Bribie and Caboolture stations, although the extra staff on Bribie Island have come from the Caboolture station.

In relation to education—it is somewhat shameful for me to have to relate that a former Minister for Administrative Services, Mr McLean, visited Caboolture State High School and told me and the local population via the press that it was the school that was in the worst condition of any in this State. Thankfully, he later found one in worse nick, because we really did not want to carry that record. It is not a record that one would want to have—a school that is the most neglected in the State. In the past three years, new primary schools were built at Banksia Beach on Bribie Island. This year, as well as the high school that I mentioned earlier that is being built at Beerwah, in western Caboolture a new school named Tullawong has opened. Shortly to begin construction is a new high school for Caboolture west. I am sure that my constituents would want to ensure that the Keating Government is returned in Canberra so that no cuts are made to Government funding and so that that school is not jeopardised as one of the necessary cuts that the State Government would have to make. That leaves only two of the five

school projects that I would have considered three years ago to have been somewhere between pressing and urgent. I will continue to push for the relocation of primary schools at Wamuran and Elimbah, both of which are now becoming very urgent.

In her Speech, Her Excellency spoke of the efforts in creating better management and protection of the State's environment. My electorate has benefited from the gazettal of an area on Bribie Island known as Buckley's Hole as an environmental park. That is a consequence of its importance as a bird habitat, particularly migratory species that are of importance under international treaties. As well, an area known as Turnbull's lease—a signing of a lease that received a deal of infamy during the 1986 State election campaign—and another area known as the vestibule were included in the Pumicestone Passage National Park. Two national park rangers have been appointed to Bribie Island and, last weekend, the Minister, Ms Robson, released the Moreton Bay Strategic Plan, on which many of us worked.

Other developments in the electorate of which we are proud are an electricity project, which cost \$500,000, to ensure continuity of supply of regular voltage to the people of Beachmere; the commencement of the construction of four lanes on the Caboolture to Bribie road, at a cost of \$800,000; and the establishment of a Q-Build Sunshine Coast headquarters at Caboolture. Locally, people have become aware, through some inquiries in relation to land, that the courthouse project will shortly go ahead in Caboolture. Land for that is being sought now. The TAFE college that was agreed to be built between the former Government and the current Federal Labor Government is now in its second year of operation and is serving the people very well. The people of the electorate of Caboolture have benefited in unprecedented ways from the election of the Goss Labor Government in 1989. I am committed to ensuring that, for the next three years, they get some more of the same.

It may have escaped the attention of honourable members that there is a Federal election in the offing. A moment ago, I sat here and listened to the member for Burnett talk about unemployment statistics and I said, "Come in sucker." I am getting sick to death of hearing that Paul Keating has caused all the unemployment in Australia. I will be the first to admit, as would all my colleagues, that a total of 1 017 600 people unemployed is far too many. I think we would all accept that that is not a nice figure. However, let us have a little look at unemployment statistics over the last 20 years. The Whitlam Government was elected in December 1972. I have here the November figures, not the December figures, so I will refer to them. The November 1972 figures showed that there were 154 900 people unemployed. That represented an unemployment rate of 2.7 per cent. I think everybody would agree that that is pretty good.

In November 1975, when the Whitlam Government was sacked—a shameful episode in this nation's history—there were 310 100 people unemployed, an increase of 155 200, or just over double the number in November 1972. That represented a rate of 5 per cent. I understand that most economists say that 5 per cent unemployment is just about full employment. In recent days, we have heard Dr Hewson say that he has committed himself to full employment. So we could say that he has committed himself to about 5 per cent unemployment, although he does not seem to know what he has committed himself to. Seven and a half years later, when the Fraser Government received its just reward and was booted out of office, there were 733 900 people unemployed. That was an increase of 423 800, and it meant that 10.4 per cent of the people were unemployed. Since then, we have had 10 years of Labor Government and we have gone into, as members opposite will tell us time after time, the worst recession that this country has known in 60 years.

Let us have a look at the result. After 10 years of Labor, there are now a million unemployed. That is a bad number; we do not like it. But what does it boil down to? That means that an additional 283 700 people have gone on to the unemployment queues in 10 years of Labor Government—less than what occurred under Fraser, who managed to increase the figure by 423 000 in seven and a half years. The present

unemployment rate is 11.8 per cent, and that is not a good rate, either. But what does it mean? Let us have a look at the per Government per year addition to the figure.

Mr FitzGerald: It means Keating has got to go. That is what it means.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I inform the member for Lockyer that the per Government per year addition to the figure comes to this: during the three years of the Whitlam Government, unemployment rose by 51 700 people per year. Under the seven and a half years of the Fraser Government, unemployment rose by 65 200 people per year. What is the record of Paul Keating, this charlatan whom members opposite would have us believe is the destroyer of Australian employment? The myth is proven by the fact that for the 10 years of Labor Government from 1983 to 1993, unemployment has risen by 28 400 per year. That occurred in the teeth of what members opposite would quite rightly tell us is the worst recession this country has known for 60 years. I think that rather than denigrating Paul Keating, they should be praising him. He has done better than their bloke did per year. He has done better in 10 years than their bloke did in seven and a half years, yet they want to destroy him for it. The unemployment statistics for this country do not support what they are saying. We recognise that the figure of one million is too big.

Mr Budd: The figures are there.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: As the member for Redlands says, the facts and figures are here on paper. The increase in unemployment under Keating has been lower than the increase in unemployment under either Whitlam or Fraser.

Mr Briskey: What was the inflation rate under Malcolm Fraser?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: What did Malcolm Fraser have? Double-digit unemployment and double-digit inflation. Members opposite should hang their heads. I will round off now because I do not wish to take up too much of the time of the House, and I am sure honourable members will appreciate that. This morning's *Australian Financial Review* was instructive, as were most of the other newspapers, because for the first time in this election campaign people are starting to have a close look at Dr "H". Professor John Head of Melbourne's Monash University is quoted on the front page of the *Australian Financial Review* as saying about the GST—

"There may be benefits, but only true believers can be convinced. There may be gains, but we can't find them."

Monash University cannot find them. I think the quote of the day goes to Jack the Ripper, John Hewson himself. He said—

"Under a GST you might find people shifting from wine to whiskey. People who don't drink at all may take up drinking."

Let me tell you, Madam Deputy Speaker, that it is a time-honoured tradition in Australian society that when someone suffers a personal crisis he hits the bottle. John Hewson is saying that under the GST Australians may as well hit the bottle because it will be just another personal crisis for each and every one of them.

Mr RANDELL (Mirani) (5.22 p.m.): I am very pleased that the member for Brisbane Central is in the House because I might talk a little bit of sense to him and get him going. On behalf of the electors of Mirani, I acknowledge loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, to her representative, the Governor, and above all to the democratic institutions of the State of Queensland and of Australia. I offer loyalty to the same institutions that Government members are attempting to drag down. I make no apology for supporting the monarchy, our flag and our system of government. Those things made Australia one of the best nations in the world—until the Labor Party was elected. My expression of loyalty is in bleak contrast to those people—if one would call them that—in Canberra, those intellectuals, academics and half-witted Bolsheviks who are doing whatever they can to drag Australia's flag and its system of government into the mud.

At the outset, I thank and commend those who worked for me during the State election campaign. In particular, I thank Mr Edgar Cliffe, my campaign manager, who did

a marvellous job. I was re-elected with a record majority. Despite the efforts of Government members, my campaign team and I achieved a record majority. There are too many people to thank individually, but I just express my gratitude to all who assisted in any way.

Mr Keating would be better off if he did not use the Australian flag and the monarchy to divert attention from the dreadful, shameful job that the Australian Labor Party has done for this nation and its people. Mr Keating's is a dreadful record of almost one and a half million people unemployed. Worse than that, 40 per cent of young people cannot get a job, yet State Government members skite about the Federal Labor Government's record!

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr RANDELL: They love unemployment. Australia has an overseas debt of more than \$160 billion. I have been informed that, in effect, every man, woman and child in this great country has a debt of \$10,000. Just think of that: every baby born in this country has a debt of \$10,000 to bear. What a great inheritance! That shocking state of affairs is supported by Government members. Speaker after speaker on the other side of the House has defended and applauded the actions of Keating and the ACTU over the last 10 years. Those Government members have promised only more of the same. They must not be thinking right, or they must be so scared of the union leaders that they dare not make one move out of line. That situation is scandalous. This is a great nation. People have come here from all over the world and are prepared to work darn hard to achieve a decent standard of living for themselves and for their families. A country which has such great resources should be leading the world in its standard of living and its capacity to supply goods to the nations which are not as fortunate. The Keating Government, the ACTU and its network of union lackeys have certainly brought this great nation to its knees. They do not care—as long as they receive their pay every week, retain their power and the lurks and perks that they have built up under Hawke, Kelty and Keating. On 13 March, a rude shock awaits those people. They can see the writing on the wall, and many of them are running for cover. Senator Cook, one of the Federal Government's bright sparks, sees the writing on the wall. He is feverishly trying find someone to sponsor him for the job of Director-General of the International Labour Organisation. Overseas people have never heard of Senator Cook, yet he is trying to secure a job now so that he will be all right after the Federal Government is defeated on 13 March.

Mr Beattie: That is not true.

Mr RANDELL: Of course it is true. The member for Brisbane Central knows that it is true. There is no doubt that, federally, the Labor Party is being governed indirectly by the ACTU; and, in Queensland, it is being governed indirectly by the Trades and Labor Council, whose only interest is to drag more and more employers down by achieving ludicrous wage demands and to maintain its power. Just look at the composition of the Queensland Labor Government! At least eight union leaders are in there to keep it in line.

Mrs Edmond: Sixty-seven per cent of females will be worse off.

Mr RANDELL: Last night, I heard the honourable member deliver a speech, and it is evident that she does not have the least inkling about what goes on in Australia. She has put her hand out every fortnight for her pay. Does she have the intestinal fortitude to start a business of her own?

Mrs Edmond: Why would I?

Mr RANDELL: Why would you indeed? You receive your pay every week.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! The honourable member will direct his remarks to the Chair.

Mr RANDELL: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I was diverted for a moment. I remind the honourable member that unless some encouragement and

incentive is given to productive areas and unless businesses are profitable enough to pay a decent wage and still make a profit for themselves, this will no longer be the land of milk and honey. To the ALP, "profit" is a dirty word. Government members are so short-sighted. They do not realise that a profitable business means jobs, but a bankrupt business—and more than 800 000 businesses have gone down under Keating—means a tragedy.

Mr Davidson interjected.

Mr RANDELL: Yes; 800 000 jobs have been lost with those businesses. One can bet that the union heavies will fight like cornered rats to retain their power base. If a Hewson/Fischer Government is elected—as it will be on 13 March—their powers will be dramatically reduced.

Mr Beattie: You believe in fairies at the bottom of the garden.

Mr RANDELL: I will address the honourable member for Brisbane Central shortly. A reduction in the power base of unions is the only way in which this country can crawl out of the hole that Keating, Hawke, Kelty and company have dug for it.

Mr Livingstone: Pay them nothing. Is \$3 too much?

Mr RANDELL: I can tell the old union lackey opposite that he will get a hiding when he returns to the real world. People will ask him what he did in Parliament. His only response will be that he yelled at the member for Mirani for having a go at the Government. I know from where that honourable member is coming. He is directed by the unions; he is appointed by the unions; and he will stay in this House for as long as they say he can. When the unions do not want him any more, he will be gone—down the drain. It was hypocritical for the member for Brisbane Central to moan about the Housing Industry Association coming out in favour of the Federal coalition. Let me examine what the HIA has copped in the past.

Mr Livingstone: A lot of lies.

Mr RANDELL: Not lies. The honourable member should return to the eighties, when the Builders Labourers Federation held power and when the Labor Government did not have the guts to do anything about it. A spokesman for the Housing Industry Association has stated—

“At first, unions used their new bargaining power sensibly, pushing for fair wages and better safety standards.”

That is what unions should be doing.

Mr Barton: That is what they do.

Mr RANDELL: That is why the honourable member is here. He sits on the backbench to keep an eye on the members of Cabinet, and he has got them shaking. I guarantee that, of all the hopefuls, inside 18 months the member for Waterford will be a Minister. He will bypass the likes of the member for Brisbane Central, who has the capabilities to be a good Minister because he understands what goes on. I return to the comment by a representative of the HIA, who further stated—

“But given carte blanche to wring what they wanted out of employers, they ultimately gave in to greed. And their demands became more and more ridiculous.”

By the mid-1980s the biggest building union—the 35 000-member Builders Labourers Federation—had become so arrogant that work bans, walk-offs and demands for payment for strike time occurred on a weekly basis, causing extraordinary delays and crippling increases in costs.

Ralph Willis, the Federal Minister for Industrial Relations, told Parliament that the BLF used tactics such as breaking concrete pours and the reckless application of work bans and was known to resort to industrial blackmail, thuggery and intimidation to get its own way. The Federal Labor Minister said that. Even other unions condemned the conduct of the BLF and its alleged threats against their members. However, BLF members ignored all calls to end their actions, large numbers of projects were closed

down, and thousands of workers were stood down. Government members are encouraging that type of conduct, which has brought Australia down from a proud and independent nation to the banana republic status to which Keating referred. Thank heavens thousands of decent, honest Australians only want to earn a decent, honest living. They are rejecting the Keating/Kelty policies. They will put Australia first on 13 March.

I will refer now to some of the exorbitant and extravagant actions of union leaders. Have honourable members heard of the "bump bump" award? Workers on a wharf operated a conveyor that ran on small rail lines. During the winter, the rails contracted and the gaps between the sections widened. Consequently, the union demanded—and gained—extra pay because the workers operated under stress caused by the "bump bump" noise when the conveyor passed over the gaps. That is the type of industrial blackmail used by unions. In 1991, at the Metro Cinema building site in Perth, an electrical fault cut power to a tea urn. The project manager failed to obtain a generator in time for the 9.30 tea break. Consequently, all 60 workers walked off the site. The fault was repaired by 11 o'clock, but the men did not work for the rest of the day.

A Government member interjected.

Mr RANDELL: I have heard about the conduct of the honourable member on mine sites. He walked off the site with all the men because the company did not supply them with a ham for Christmas. When an electrician at a Melbourne building site inadvertently damaged fresh paintwork while installing a switch, the painter who was called in to rectify the damage lifted the switch plate to avoid painting over it. In doing so, he broke the law of demarcation, which in union parlance is job specialisation. The result was a two-day protest strike costing thousands of dollars. Have honourable members heard about the dim sim award? Workers at the Darling Harbour site in Sydney went on strike. Demands reached insane proportions when a dim sim allowance was claimed to compensate workers for the smell of Chinese food wafting from nearby restaurants. Such actions are the main reasons why ordinary Australians do not trust unions, why unions are unpopular and why unions are losing membership in their thousands.

A Government member: Talk about Coppabella.

Mr RANDELL: I will talk about Coppabella. When the honourable member was there as a union representative, the workers lived under atrocious conditions. I was a backbencher at that time, and when the unions chased the honourable member out of town, I obtained the conditions that exist in that place today.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Government members will cease interjecting. I remind the member for Mirani to direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr RANDELL: I was provoked. The Nurses Union and the Teachers Union do not campaign outwardly for the ALP. However, in the electorate of Dawson, a nurse has taken unpaid leave to campaign for the ALP. Surprise, surprise—her wages are being paid by the Nurses Union. No doubt, the same practice is being repeated in many marginal electorates throughout Australia. My Opposition colleagues will elaborate further on that point.

As to the miners union—it is widely known that the miners union gave \$100,000 to the ALP candidate for Capricornia. The union told him that more money was available if required. I understand that the miners union has placed a levy of \$10 on its members to finance the ALP election campaign. Notwithstanding the political beliefs of those members, whether they are Labor, National Party, Liberal or Democrats, the union is ripping that money off them. The unions just take it away from them. Is that democracy? Government members do not know the meaning of democracy. It has been reported that apart from the labour and resources the unions supply to the ALP candidate's campaign offices, there will be a direct contribution of \$1.5m to the ALP Federal campaign.

Mr Budd: From where?

Mr RANDELL: Kelty has acknowledged that. He is making that contribution to fight for the ALP. Those mates' payments are merely a tiny part of a total of at least \$54m that since 1983 has been doled out by the Hawke and Keating Governments to the unions. No wonder unions will do and say anything to keep that source of funding. At the last count, Australia had 3 135 100 union members. However, workers are leaving the unions in droves. Compulsory unionism is the only way for unions to keep their membership. If that figure is multiplied by \$300—and that is a conservative estimate of the union fees that members pay—it totals an amount in excess of \$94m that Kelty and his mates receive to travel in luxury cars and to pay for top accommodation. That is big money. Last week, the Australian Bureau of Statistics reported a further decline in union membership around Australia. The figures indicate that in the last financial year union membership fell by 24 000 to 3 135 100.

Mr Beattie: What does that prove?

Mr RANDELL: That takes unionisation down to 40 per cent of the work force now compared with 46 per cent in 1986. I point out to the member for Brisbane Central that that figure means that 247 500 disenchanted workers have given away the unions, and thousands more would leave if they could find a way to get out of their clutches.

Mr Davidson: Ask the member for Brisbane Central if he is still a member.

Mr RANDELL: I would not know. He is irrelevant. Union heavies are absolutely terrified that compulsory unionism will be abolished. They will fight to the death to prevent workers in this nation having their democratic right to say, "I will join a union" or "I will not join a union."

Mr T. B. Sullivan: There's my union card.

Mr RANDELL: The member knows what he can do with it. Let me have a look at the "world's greatest Treasurer", the man who gave us the J-curve and the banana republic, and the politician who puts everyone in an extremely bad light. Members should go out into the streets and find out what people think of politicians. They see Keating on television—and the member for Brisbane Central would acknowledge this—

Mr Santoro: Don't forget there are children on the other side. They are young and impressionable. Don't scare them, now.

Mr RANDELL: A lot of this would not register with those members. In his 1983 Budget Speech, Mr Keating said—

"Obviously, the economic policies of the previous (Fraser) Government have failed to come to terms with Australia's deep-seated problems. 1983-84 holds promise of a considerable improvement in economic performance."

The foreign debt rose from \$13 billion to \$23 billion in that year. In his Budget Speech in 1984, Mr Keating said—

"I am proud to be able to tell Australian people that we now have a strong economic growth, many more jobs, a substantial fall in inflation and declining interest rates. The Government's policies are on track."

That year, the foreign debt went up to \$27.9 billion. In his 1985 Budget Speech, Mr Keating said—

"I've outlined the Government's strategy for the new financial year. It's a strategy that builds upon our very significant successes and puts further behind us the despair and economic failure of the former Government."

In that year, the foreign debt increased another \$24 billion to \$51.2 billion. In his 1986 Budget Speech, Mr Keating said—

"The 1986-87 budget which I have presented tonight rings the changes on a more robust, aggressive Australian economy."

But Mr Keating forgot to say that the foreign debt went up to \$75 billion during that year. In his 1987 Budget Speech, Mr Keating said—

“Notwithstanding the enormity of the trade difficulties we have faced, our economic strategy is now bearing fruit.”

The foreign debt in that year went up to \$82.9 billion. I ask all members to listen to this one. It is a real lulu. In his 1988 Budget Speech, Mr Keating said—

“The nation is successfully emerging from its most severe economic crisis in a generation . . . this is the one that will bring home the bacon.”

I wonder whether that was when he bought his piggery! But during that year, the foreign debt rose to a shameful \$92.8 billion. And Mr Keating said that he would bring home the bacon! In his 1989 Budget Speech, Mr Keating said—

“As a result of the Government’s economic policies, Australia will emerge from the recent high level of spending without a recession and with its economic and social structure improving.”

But the foreign debt that year passed the \$100 billion mark. In his 1990 Budget Speech, Mr Keating said—

“This year inflation will fall further, the current account deficit will markedly improve and employment will pick up . . . all delivered without the misery and despair of high unemployment and a savage recession.”

But the foreign debt at that time was \$124 billion, and there were about 900 000 people out of work. As Prime Minister in 1992, Mr Keating said—

“The Keating Government’s economic strategy is to accelerate recovery from recession, and at the same time build a stronger Australia. It is a four year plan. It begins now with an immediate boost to spending and employment. It ends in 1995-96 with the budget back in surplus and a dramatically reduced marginal income tax rate for most Australians.”

But the foreign debt at that time was \$145 billion, and the number of unemployed people exceeded one million. Today, we have a net foreign debt of \$163 billion. It is estimated that by the year 2000, the figure will reach \$314 billion. So we can all pray that Keating does not get back into power.

I shall now discuss some of the promises that the Federal Labor Government has made. Do members remember Bob Hawke—the great Australian, the silver budgerigar, the man Keating stabbed in the back? The members of the ALP are a great mob. They know all about stabbing people in the back. Do members recall what Hawke did to Bill Hayden? Was it not poetic justice? Do they remember Bob Hawke’s famous remark? On 23 June 1987, Bob Hawke said—

“By 1990, no Australian child will be living in poverty.”

Do members remember that? As Treasurer, Mr Keating backed up Mr Hawke’s statement, saying—

“. . . as a result (of new tax scales) we will achieve this year the child poverty benchmarks promised by the Prime Minister—well ahead of the 1990 target.”

But what did ACOSS say in 1992? Two years after Hawke made that statement, ACOSS said—

“. . . more than 600 000 children are living below the poverty line, in families where neither parent has employment.”

According to ACOSS, in 1989-90 an estimated 775 000 households lived in poverty. But Labor members in this place are not worried about that. They are sitting back in luxury. They want Keating back to give us a dose of the same. If members want to hear statements from even more reputable people, I point out that the Human Rights Commission estimates that up to 70 000 children could be homeless, and a further 440 000 in families that are living below the poverty line. The Labor Government cannot

blame anyone else. After 10 years of Labor, one million people are out of work, and another 500 000 work part time. Every day since the last election, 479 people have lost their jobs. A total of 40 per cent of our kids cannot get a job. Australia's foreign debt has gone from \$23 billion in 1983 to \$163 billion in 1993. Since Labor was elected in 1983, 80 843 bankruptcies have occurred.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr RANDELL: With the honourable member's help, Labor has destroyed thousands of businesses and created despair for thousands of Australian citizens. Last year, 62 000 students who qualified could not get into universities or colleges. Since 1990, farm incomes have dropped 127 per cent. Since 1983, home and business bankruptcies have increased by 960 per cent—2.4 million in 10 years. Medicare tax collection has risen by 579 per cent. Labor's tax grab has increased by 106 per cent. They are just a few of the tragedies that have been inflicted on Australia by Keating, Hawke and the ACTU. I table a list of a further 152 increases in taxation and charges under Federal Labor since 1983.

Mr Santoro: They are killing business.

Mr RANDELL: Yes, and they are killing people. I will outline some of the extravagant and outlandish funding by the Keating Government. While businesses bled to death, it spent \$415,000 on a study to find out who does the housework. It spent \$129,000 to allow the Social Biology Resources Centre to develop an education strategy for sexually active women. It also spent \$188,000 to conduct a needs assessment of female partners of bisexual men and implement the recommendations. As well, \$500,000 in research grants was wasted because it was allocated to groups investigating subjects such as class order among eastern Tibetans and caste in Nepal's manufacturing industry. What has that got to do with Australia? What has it done for our children? That money was wasted. People who work the land would remember that the Federal Government spent \$187,000 on the production and distribution of a schools' environment kit which was endorsed by Ros Kelly and had to be subsequently withdrawn because of its inaccurate and offensive portrayal of Australian farmers. At least Keating had the sense to withdraw that kit. The Federal Government spent \$12,856 of taxpayers' money in relocating Bob Hawke's residence and \$140,000 on a new carport for Mr Keating. I wonder whether he wanted to put a few of his pigs in there.

The next item is a great one—\$65,000 to Leo McLeay for falling off a bicycle. As well, it spent \$4m on providing Jobsearch and Newstart allowances to recipients while they were overseas. For God's sake! Our children are bleeding to death and wanting a job, yet the Federal Government spent \$4m on those allowances while people were overseas. It expended \$4m on a campaign to advertise Medicare, but was forced to take the advertisement off the television. The Attorney-General's Department, Canberra, spent \$24,000 of taxpayers' money on celebration key rings and coffee mugs. It also spent \$161,000 for a barbecue picnic area and \$50,000 for a bar—and our children cannot obtain a job! How many children would \$200,000 help get a job? The Federal Government spends \$1,075,000 a year to provide pot plants for public servants. For heaven's sake! As well, it spent \$10,000 for an in-house musician for the Building Workers Industrial Union. What do honourable members think of that? Between June 1983 and June 1991, the Federal Government spent \$54m on unions and \$30,000 to study the politics and social order amongst eastern Tibetans.

Mr Santoro: That's really going to help the unemployed, isn't it?

Mr RANDELL: That will really help our kids! Members opposite have been screaming about the effect of Hewson's GST on the citizens of Australia, which I am happy to hear. However, it is pleasing to see that the canegrowers organisation—Government members must admit that it is straight down the line—stated that, following an analysis of the effect of GST, it believes that sugarcane growers will be better off.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr RANDELL: It would be nice to send him and a few of his colleagues over there. I ask honourable members whether they want more of what we have copped in the past 10 years. Keating has no plan for the one million unemployed—no plan for the 40 per cent of our children who are unemployed.

Mr Livingstone interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member is interjecting from other than his usual place.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Power): Order! The member for Ipswich West!

Mr RANDELL: This country has been nearly destroyed under the Hawke/Keating ALP and the ACTU. I fear for the future of our children. Members on the other side of the House should be ashamed to wish more of Keating onto this country when one and a half million people are unemployed and underemployed. Honourable members have their warm, cosy jobs given to them by the union movement—and they are only here at the beck and call of the union movement. They have their minder at the back of the Chamber. When the union movement says “jump”, the member for Ipswich West will say, “How high?” Even his simple brain must understand that, if 20 per cent or 30 per cent sales tax is taken off an article and replaced with a 15 per cent GST, he must be better off. Everyone must be better off with reduced taxes and reduced petrol prices.

Mrs Edmond interjected.

Mr RANDELL: The honourable member should be quiet and listen. Under GST, people will save \$10 on a tank of petrol. Perhaps Government members would like to argue with an analysis by the Federal Treasury? I have before me a confidential analysis provided to John Dawkins—he has received a few of those confidential reports recently. As I am running out of time, I will wind up by saying that, when my parents grew up, Australia was a land of opportunity; it had one of the highest standards of living in the world. Now we owe the rest of the world more than any other country apart from the United State of America, which has 17 times our population and only 8 times the debt. When our parents left school, jobs were easy to come by. Now one in three of our young people are looking for full-time work and cannot find it. Many who only want to work are shuffled from one job training scheme to another. We will end up with the highest trained and educated unemployed people in the world. To pay for the living standards of future generations of Australians, our country needs to earn money from overseas exports. Without that money, our standard of living will continue to decline compared with that of the rest of the world.

Time expired.

Mr BREDHAUER (Cook) (5.52 p.m.): It has been very instructive to sit here for the last 30 minutes and listen to the member for Mirani. His speech could best be described as anachronistic. The most interesting point for me and my colleagues on this side of the House was that in 30 minutes the member, who is actually a canegrower and purports to represent a sugar seat in this House, did not once refer to the sugar industry. He was given ample opportunities to take an interjection and to put forward his view about the State coalition's policies as opposed to what the State Government is doing for the sugar industry. He had an opportunity to canvass the issue about tariffs.

Mr Livingstone: They are embarrassed about their policies.

Mr BREDHAUER: Opposition members are embarrassed about their policies; there is no doubt about that. The honourable member could have taken the opportunity to canvass the pros and cons of the Government's proposed sugar package, which was put together by Brian Courtice, the Federal member for Hinkler, who worked very hard on the package. He could have spoken about his own Federal coalition's policy. He could have spoken about the charlatan from Dawson, Ray Braithwaite, who was embarrassed into standing down from his Opposition frontbench position by the intransigence of the Liberal Party, as the National Party once again kowtowed to the Liberals in Canberra. The honourable member could have spoken about all of those

issues, but he decided not to address any them. It will be something very interesting for his constituents from Mirani to talk about.

Mr Cooper: What's your contribution?

Mr BREDHAUER: The member for Crows Nest may not quite understand the rules of debate in this House. One of the rules of debate is that honourable members listen to the members on the other side of the Chamber. That is something which he is not doing at the moment. He is just trying to shout me down.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Crows Nest will cease interjecting until he returns to his own seat—and Government members also.

Mr BREDHAUER: The other interesting point is that the member for Mirani knows that sugar growers throughout Queensland and Australia have not been conned by the Federal Opposition's package. They were looking for a guarantee on tariffs. I know from the media in my electorate, particularly in the Port Douglas and Mossman newspapers—the Douglas Shire is a big sugar growing area—that they are still looking for guarantees on tariffs. They are most unhappy that the National Party in Canberra has failed its constituents in sugar seats in Queensland. They are unhappy because they have been unable to secure any guarantees from Dr Hewson to get away from his zero tariffs and zero jobs policy in the sugar industry.

My address this evening will focus on two main themes. However, before I move into my speech proper, I want to comment on the issue that has captured the attention of more speakers in the Address in Reply than any other issue. Surprisingly, the issue that has attracted the attention of most people in this House is not the issue of the GST, Fightback or One Nation, it is the issue of the Australian flag. The debate about that has been engendered by the Prime Minister's calls for Australia to move towards a more independent nationhood. I say it is surprising because, although the coalition parties at a national and State level—and it is the members on the other side of the Chamber as well—have berated Mr Keating for frankly advancing his views on the flag and our nationhood, claiming that it is nothing more than a distraction from the real issues, each of them has stood in turn and pledged his allegiance to the Queen, the Governor and the flag. Many have devoted—

Mr Vaughan: Except Mr Lester.

Mr BREDHAUER: Yes, except Mr Lester. I accept the interjection.

Mr Gibbs: Which part of the royal family are they pledging their allegiance to—the sinners or the goodies?

Mr BREDHAUER: I am not sure. It may be the part with which Mr Cooper has some fascination. Many members opposite have also devoted considerable time to proffering their views on the flag. Clearly, the coalition members in the House do not regard the issue as insignificant, and no-one should treat it lightly. I recognise that the people on the opposite side of the Chamber hold the issues of the flag and our nationhood sincerely, and I do as well. There is no question about that. I want to state quite publicly that I support a change to the flag to remove from it reference to another sovereign country. I support a stronger statement of our nationhood, and I am in favour of Australia becoming a republic. I know that there are many people—

Mr Cooper: Hands up who wants a republic.

Mr BREDHAUER: The honourable member asked me to put my opinion forward, so I am trying to do that. I know that there are many people in my electorate—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The members for Mount Coot-tha, Chermside and Maroochydore will cease their conversation.

Mr BREDHAUER: I know that many people in my electorate do not share my view about the flag and nationhood, and many would argue quite strongly for the retention of the current flag. But I also know that many people in my electorate would support my view. Probably the majority of people in my electorate would have no fixed opinion and

would be prepared to listen to the debate. I state publicly that I support a democratic process and a democratic principle in that, after due debate, the majority of Australians should decide the issue by vote to either retain or change our flag. If they did make that decision, I would be prepared to accept it. I wonder why members in the coalition at a national level seem to dread the concept of an open and frank debate with the opportunity for all Australians to express their view. I cannot understand why people have a problem with that. I do not have a problem with their expressing their view. I do not have a problem with their holding firmly to the current flag and the current state of our membership of the Commonwealth. I happen to have a different point of view.

The process has been outlined by the Prime Minister whereby we would develop a debate about those issues within the community over the years between now and the centenary of our Federation. We would then give the Australian people an opportunity to vote on that question. It is not something about which I am frightened. Democracy does not frighten me. I am here because of a democratic process. This House exists because of a democratic process, and I do not think that we should run away from it. I do not think that we should be frightened of the debate and I do not think that we should say that the debate is a diversion or insignificant. It is not a diversion and it is not insignificant. It is probably not the primary issue of the moment, but it is an important issue. Members opposite should not denigrate our Prime Minister by saying that he is a traitor and that he is treacherous because of the acts of deference by him at various times, such as those in Papua New Guinea recently. We should not be frightened of that debate.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr BREDHAUER: In common with many other speakers who have preceded me in this debate, I have reflected on the progress that has been made in my electorate since I first entered this Chamber a little over three years ago. I must say that it is with considerable pride that I note the great inroads that this Government has made into delivering a better standard of living to many of my constituents who live in some of Queensland's remotest towns and communities. This Labor Government is constantly berated in this House and elsewhere by members opposite for its supposed lack of concern in providing infrastructure and services to people who live outside the Brisbane metropolitan area. The problem I have with the view that is expressed by many members opposite is that it seems to be a blinkered or myopic view of the world. They are not prepared to recognise that we, as a Labor Government, have taken numerous initiatives to provide services and infrastructure in remote areas. I know that some issues have caused concern, such as the closure of courthouses. The Government intervened in that process and stopped the closure of courthouses and eventually turned that around by approving the Government agents project, which has been a very successful one. It is a real shame that people such as the member for Beaudesert come into this Chamber and, in the first place, criticise us for closing down courthouses and, in the second place, again criticise us for putting Government agents into some of these smaller country towns and remote rural areas to provide services. He is actually critical of this Government for putting Government agents in towns and for providing services to his constituents in Beaudesert and to the constituents of members opposite and Government members, which is quite hypocritical.

Last night, the member for Cunningham, Tony Elliott, was sagely regaling us with the pithy tenets of the former member for Windsor, Bob Moore, who apparently gave a deep and meaningful message to him. The message was something along the lines of, "If you carry a grudge, you carry a weapon against yourself." It is hypocritical of people such as the member for Cunningham to come into this House and talk about people carrying grudges, because he was a member of Cabinet in former Governments of this State that exercised Executive power and made decisions on the allocations of resources in various members' electorates and parts of the State, including decisions on who would get a school, who would get a hospital, who would get extra teachers, and who would get a new police station. The basis of those decisions often came down to the way in which the people who lived in the electorate had voted in the previous State

election and whether or not they had a National Party representative in this Chamber or were represented by a Labor member. Who will ever forget the old days when a former Health Minister, Mr Bertoni, basically threatened the people of Mount Isa in at least two consecutive elections that unless they voted for the National Party member, they would not receive State Government support for the Julius Dam. I am sure the current member for Mount Isa, Tony McGrady, will well remember that and the blatant pork-barrelling that went on. It is sheer hypocrisy for the member for Cunningham to come into this Chamber and caution people about people carrying grudges. It is really quite amazing.

Mr Davies: When Max Hooper got thrown out as the member for Townsville, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen said that Townsville would never get another Minister.

Mr BREDHAUER: I also remember that incident because at that time I was living in Ingham, north Queensland. I remember the vengeful statements made by the then Premier against the people of Townsville. It is to the credit of those people that they took absolutely no notice and that, for the next two elections, they returned three Labor members. It is also to the credit of people who live in other strong Labor towns such as Ipswich that they have elected members such as the member for Ipswich West and others, and that they have persevered and voted Labor while refusing to be browbeaten or kowtow.

Mr STONEMAN: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I inform you that the people of Townsville have now wisely returned a member of the National Party also.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): Order! There is no point of order.

Mr BREDHAUER: Obviously, I must be touching a raw nerve in the member for Burdekin. In the early days after my election as a member of this Parliament, people came into my office and reported to me on the efforts of the member for Burdekin when he was the Minister for Primary Industries. I can remember people telling me that when they went to see him, he told them that if they did not have a green and gold card, they need not bother coming to see him to get information or a loan from the QIDC.

Mr STONEMAN: I rise to a further point of order. Those remarks are a personal reflection on me. I ask the honourable member to withdraw those statements.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BREDHAUER: If the member for Burdekin takes it as a personal reflection on him, then I will withdraw. I want to comment on the progress that has been made in my electorate because, for many years under the National Party Government, the people of the Cook electorate were neglected. They paid the price for returning a Labor member in much the same way as have other people who live in various parts of this State. These days, I sit in this Chamber and listen to members opposite talking about pork-barrelling of Labor electorates. In debate in the Chamber, in the lifts, as members cross in corridors, etc., I have been accused of pork-barrelling. However, I would not describe as a pork-barrelling exercise providing people who live in the most remote parts of Queensland with basic services such as water, power, and a reasonable hospital that does not have holes in the walls, roof and floor and leaks every time it rains. I do not take it kindly when members such as the member for Burdekin, Mr Stoneman, interject on the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations when he announces a long-awaited and much-needed TAFE facility that has been approved for the town of Normanton and say that it is a waste of money.

Mr Littleproud: He did not say that.

Mr BREDHAUER: It is there in *Hansard*. The interjection was taken by the Minister. It is there in *Hansard*. The only alternative is that the member for Western Downs said it. Does the honourable member say that he said it?

Mr Littleproud: I made the comment that, what about the people of Dalby—10 000 people in the town, 16 000 people in the shire?

Mr BREDHAUER: As the member for Mount Isa and Minister for Minerals and Energy knows, we worked very hard to sort out that problem in Normanton. For those

people on the Opposition side of the House to suggest that the Government is wasting money by providing much-needed training and education facilities in a remote town such as Normanton, which will service Croydon, Normanton, Burketown, Mornington Island and Doomadgee, is an absolute disgrace. The member for Western Downs should be ashamed of himself on behalf of his colleague the member for Burdekin, who said that it was a waste of money.

Mr Littleproud: It was on the program and the Minister took it off.

Mr BREDHAUER: That would have been one of the programs that the National Party Government promised before the 1989 election—the 200 projects, one in a Labor Party electorate. New schools have been built in my electorate on Murray Island and Horn Island. Replacement schools have been built at Lakeland and new school buildings have been built at Badu, Yam, Cooktown and Weipa. New health facilities have been constructed at Laura. A major upgrade has been undertaken at Lockhart River. Upgradings have been done at Weipa. The Government has a \$3m program building Islander health facilities in the outer islands of the Torres Strait. A major upgrading program is under way at the Mossman Hospital, and I recognise the efforts of my predecessor in representing that region, the member for Barron River. The Government has constructed water supplies such as the Horn Island Dam, which provides facilities for water for Horn Island and Thursday Island.

Through the COWSIS program, the Government has continued the upgrading of the water supply at Cooktown which was started under the previous Government and which, because of the COWSIS program, is supported by the Federal Government. New police stations have been built in my electorate at Mossman, Aurukun, Weipa, Normanton and Cooktown; a new watch-house has been built at Lockhart and a new police vessel has been located on Thursday Island. The airstrip at Kowanyama has been sealed so that those people who are flooded by road for up to six months of the year can at least have a reliable supply of goods and emergency services coming in by air. The Government is looking at airstrips at other centres. Works have been undertaken on roads, such as the Gulf Development Road, the Peninsula Development Road and Leggatt's Crossing. Power supplies have been provided to the outer islands. Extra police, teachers and nurses have been appointed throughout the electorate. Police computer facilities have been upgraded, from which police stations in my electorate have benefited. Wharf facilities at Horn Island, Thursday Island and Seisia have been upgraded. I could mention a whole host of other things.

Not one of those projects amounts to anything more than providing the basic infrastructure to those communities which people in any other community throughout Queensland would take for granted. It has been a source of great pride to me to have been a part of this Government, which has taken to heart the needs of people in the remotest parts of Queensland. It puts paid to the myth that the people on the other side of the House have talked about, that is, that the Government does not provide services in rural and country areas. Often, when members opposite were in Government, they did not look after people who lived in the most remote parts of the State. They looked after their own electorates well; I admit that. However, people who live in other parts of the State were not so well looked after. It has taken our Government to bring a sense of fairness to the funding allocations so that the people in my electorate of Cook have had the opportunity to aspire to a reasonable standard of living—not a high standard of living, but a reasonable standard of living.

I make the point that the work needs to continue. There is still a long way to go. Many other issues need to be addressed. It is not only the benefits of infrastructure and capital works of which we have felt the benefit—although we possibly have had our share of those—but also the programs, such as the Aboriginal and Islander health programs, the education programs, and the programs that have provided extra teachers, extra nurses, other medical staff, extra police and those sorts of things to stations, schools and hospitals throughout my electorate that have meant a lot. The Government is criticised for its big spending and for increasing the size of our public sector.

Mr Campbell: They want more.

Mr BREDHAUER: The member for Bundaberg is correct. After members opposite criticise the Government for spending too much, they then stick their hands out for more and say that the Government should spend more. I make no apologies for the emphasis that the Government has placed on those important social infrastructure issues. I turn briefly to the second stream of my talk tonight, that is, some of the implications for my electorate of Cook of the Fightback and GST policy proposed by Dr Hewson. Probably two issues concern me more than any other. The first is the proposal to sell Telecom—to privatise Telecom. That concerns me because those honourable members who live in country areas should appreciate that in recent years we have benefited from the monopoly that Telecom has had in telecommunications in Australia because of the cross-subsidisation policies that have allowed for capital infrastructure in communications to be developed throughout Queensland—a very decentralised State—at expense to Telecom. It has been cross-subsidised, obviously, by the busier routes.

I know that Telecom has spent millions and millions of dollars throughout the remote parts of the Torres Strait, Cape York Peninsula, the Gulf of Carpentaria and also the western parts of Queensland, the rural towns. That sort of money, Telecom will never recoup through connection fees. The sort of money that it costs to operate the service, Telecom will never recoup through call charges. If the coalition proceeds with its plan to sell Telecom, it will not only have the problem of realising the price tag that it has put on Telecom and put at risk the whole funding basis of its package but also very seriously jeopardise the future of telecommunications services to rural and country areas. It is a shame that members opposite have not taken a different view on the sale of Telecom. I know philosophically what their views on privatisation are, and I can appreciate that. However, I would have thought that Telecom would have been one of those institutions with respect to which those members would recognise the benefits that have flowed to people who live in country and remote parts of Queensland through the monopoly set-up. I thought that members opposite would have been a bit more loyal to the organisation that has done so much in recent times to provide telecommunications, telephones, faxes and those sorts of things to people who live on the most remote properties in Queensland.

I am also concerned that part of the coalition's shake-up is its proposal to slash funds from the ABC. Members who represent a remote or country electorate will know how important ABC services are in country towns. Many people in my electorate receive only ABC radio, whether it be on the FM band or Radio National. Many people in my electorate also only receive ABC TV and some people receive one commercial channel through the RCTS—the Remote Commercial Television Service. Any proposal to cut funds substantially from the ABC, such as Dr Hewson is touting around the country at the moment, will have a great negative effect on regional services. We have already lost our regional television services in Cairns and I am very concerned that there will be further cutbacks in our local news services in Cairns and in other places. That is not to mention the fact that when Bob Collins, the Federal Minister for Communications, was in Cairns about three weeks ago, he advised that the schedule for providing SBS to north Queensland would be brought forward. Of course, that would also be under threat because of the cutbacks to SBS. They are two quite important issues that I am concerned about.

Dr Clark: What about the road user charges? That's an important one in the coalition's package.

Mr BREDHAUER: Yes, the road user charges are another important aspect. At different times, members opposite have discussed this. It is all very well for the coalition to say that it will knock off the fuel excise. That will stand or fall on its merits. It remains to be seen whether that happens. Also, part of the platform on which that is predicated is the move to full road user charges such as those recommended by the Inter-State Commission on road user charges about two years ago. I fought very hard against that,

as I know the member for Mount Isa did. Members opposite were very vocal about that as well. I find it surprising that they seem to be meekly acquiescent of a policy which proposes that progressively we move to that. If we are not going to move to that, I want to know from where we will get the money to build roads. We have heard complaints from members opposite about the lack of funds for roads. If the fuel excise is cut and the Commonwealth's capacity to fund roads is cut, how will it be done?

The other things that are ironic, I think, are the \$10 billion cuts that the coalition is proposing to the Budget and the implications of that. We have seen the effect of such cuts in Victoria. The coalition talks about creating jobs through Fightback. But in Victoria the coalition Government has cut about \$1 billion from the public sector, and through that cut it has managed to make redundant about 12 000 people. Most of them are teachers and nurses. There was an interesting little story that did not receive much attention in the press last week concerning the Victorian Government making another approach to the Federal Government for an additional \$400m assistance package so that it could put in place a further round of redundancies. The Victorian Opposition leader, Joan Kirner, was on the radio tonight talking about further cuts. The prediction that was made in the media last week was that further redundancies of up to another 10 000 people in the public sector could be seen. I do not know how members opposite can see the slashing of the public sector as contributing to employment growth in Australia. Members opposite say that this Government will not have to cut teachers or nurses; they say that such suggestions are just Government scaremongering. Let me tell them that if there are cuts in the financial assistance grants to the States, the Better Cities Program and our urban transport programs, those cuts will have to be met from the Budget somewhere. It is all very well for the Opposition Leader to stand up in this place and talk about a \$370m hole in our Budget as a little pothole in the road that has to be negotiated. The reality is that when money is taken away from the States in the way in which the coalition proposes, we as a State Government have to look at our priorities. Ultimately, the priorities have to come from the big budgets, and the big budgets in the State Government departments are Education and Health. It is not scaremongering on our part; it is an attempt to put the truth before the people of Queensland about what the practical implications of the Fightback policies will be.

It is not just Queensland that will be affected. Problems have been unearthed in New South Wales, which expects that its finances will be cut by \$314m. John Fahey has tried to hide that from the people of New South Wales. It was only through Bob Carr's insistence last week that eventually Fahey was forced to come out of the woodwork and admit that the Liberal Party Treasury analysis in New South Wales was that that State could lose up to \$314m in Commonwealth grants to the States. Kennett is running away from the same sort of Budget analysis in Victoria at the moment. The reality is that the States are going to suffer, and if the States suffer, the State Budgets will suffer and people such as teachers, nurses, health workers and police officers will suffer as well. I do not think the people of Queensland will be fooled by the ruse. I think people do realise that there are serious implications for the people of Queensland under a prospective Hewson Government and I am confident that on 13 March they will resoundingly reject Dr Hewson.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (7.51 p.m.): This is the third Address in Reply debate to a Governor's Speech in which I have participated since I have been a member of Parliament. I wish to again reiterate my allegiance and that of the people of Callide to Her Majesty the Queen and her representative in Queensland, the Governor. The Callide electorate underwent considerable change in the redistribution in 1991, with only about 30 per cent of the original electorate of Callide remaining. The rest of the new area came from the Auburn electorate, which disappeared completely, and from parts of the Burnett and Roma electorates. The battle to remain the member for Callide was fought within party circles rather than without, but that story will remain untold until I retire. Suffice to say I found depths of my being that I never would otherwise have plumbed, and I have no doubt that the whole plebiscite process made me a stronger person and a

more effective member. If the process also made me as tough as old boots, then I cannot apologise for that—it was not of my doing.

The Callide electorate is now the sixth largest in the State, being some 71 000 square kilometres in area, stretching from Biggenden and Gayndah in the south-east, to Biloela, Wowan and Baralaba in the north, Rolleston in the west and Wandoan in the south west. I often arrive home from a day out in the electorate and find that the speedo counter has notched up 500 kilometres. I might add that I do not always stick to the highways in my travels, either. I like to take the back roads, to find out where people live and what the country is like. I often go across the never-never area from Eidsvold to Taroom or Wandoan to Cracow. That is a very lonely stretch. Sometimes I can travel for three hours and not see another vehicle. I have also taken shortcuts through State Forest country, and I can tell honourable members that that is quite an experience after dark.

Primary industry in Callide, including grazing, farming and mining, earns this State many millions of dollars each year. The farming component includes irrigation of cotton, wheat, lucerne and sorghum in the Dawson and Callide Valleys as well as dryland farming of those and other crops such as millet and sunflower; dairying in the Monto, Mundubbera and Callide areas; citrus, grape and stonefruit growing in the Mundubbera/Gayndah region; and peanut growing in the Coulston Lakes area. Grazing is carried out from Rolleston through to Wandoan; from Baralaba to Biggenden. Many important stud properties are located in the Callide electorate. Pork producing is also an important primary industry, although it is presently under threat from the imported Canadian pig meat. The newly formed group Monto Pork Enterprises is looking at ways and means of promoting the industry in the area. I welcome this move by a group of locals to improve their industry by positive action.

However, I am concerned about the future of the DPI piggery research facility at Biloela and the apparent threats to cut funding for its research. As I understand that this is the only pig research station in a tropical area and one which has provided some vital research into the cause of infant cot deaths, I want to be assured that it will not face the axe. Unfortunately, Minister Ed Casey refuses to provide that assurance. I await the results of a review some time before June. We will then be able to see more clearly what the future holds.

In the dairying industry, Ken Loakes and his family at Riverleigh, Mundubbera, are leading the way, with the installation last year of a modern rotary dairy equipped with the latest milking machines and milk cooling equipment. That operation milks 432 head split into two herds in an amazing hour and a half with three operators. That is certainly a long way from the old style of dairying. It is achieved by the use of a 50-stand rotary hydraulic-driven cement platform onto which the cows file for milking. New milk cooling and storage equipment handles a milk flow rate of some 5 000 litres an hour, and the warm milk from the cow is quickly cooled by means of an ice bank and a cooling tower.

Mining is carried out at the Callide and Moura Coal Mines and also in the Biggenden and Ban Ban Springs area, where mining of gold and magnetite is being undertaken. Power generation is also an important industry in the Callide Valley, with the Callide B Power Station seeking the tender for additional power generation capacity in the round which closed late last year with the Government. Strangely enough, another area of my electorate, the Wandoan area in the Taroom Shire, is seeking the same tender. I do not mind which tender is successful, as long as it stays in Callide. However, I know that the impact of a successful tender would be of immense economic value to the Wandoan/Taroom people, and it is for this reason that I value the Dawson Valley Development Association's work in seeking to promote and guide developments such as the coal deposit and associated facilities. Since I have been travelling to that area, it has been in the grip of a most dreadful drought. It has been some three years now since any useful rain has fallen in parts, and I scarcely dare to inquire any more whether it has rained or not. One family recorded 64 points of rain last year. No-one can run a property for long with that sort of meagre rainfall.

I will now canvass some problems that I have encountered in my electorate, many of which are of this present Labor Government's making. In the Biggenden area, the need for a secure water supply is of great importance. I fully support the Biggenden Shire Council's application for funding for this under the Rural Communities Water Supply and Sewerage Scheme. I could name several towns within the Callide electorate for which water supply is a constant headache, and I am firmly of the opinion that water and its supply and usage is the biggest problem facing local authorities as they go into the twenty-first century. People must realise that water is our most precious commodity and that if we do not want it to become our most expensive one, we must conserve it. I am firmly of the opinion that shire councils should encourage all householders to have at least one rainwater tank. An incentive for that could be given by way of rate rebates.

A few weeks ago, I was travelling in the north and I spoke to representatives of various councils about that idea. I was quite surprised at the rather negative attitude that some of them had. They said that tanks mean frogs and mosquitoes. I believe that is not necessarily so, and I believe that is something that we should be encouraging most strongly. I believe also that water meters are a necessity, as are water restrictions. People will not value what they get for nothing, and they will not voluntarily restrict usage, either.

Another concern which has been raised with me is the need for family day care in the Biggenden area. A family day care program has just been funded to operate from Monto through Eidsvold, Mundubbera and perhaps Gayndah. However, Biggenden is not included in that area and is seeking to be included in the Hervey Bay/Maryborough family day care program. Our Federal politicians need to be reminded that child care is not the prerogative of city parents only; country parents have the same needs, and they are simply not being met.

Sometimes, bureaucracy makes life more difficult. I am aware of a case in which a child is not allowed to travel on the school bus to the carer's house after school even though it is more than 4.5 kilometres from the school. The child is not eligible for bus travel, because the parents' house is closer than 3.2 kilometres from the school. The child is not going to the parents' house, but that does not matter. Some silly little bureaucrat sitting in some little office somewhere has decided that this whole network of child care is to be scrapped because it does not fit the rules and because he is not flexible enough to bend them. His suggestion was to send the child to another carer, even though another carer is not available and the child has been going to the same carer for the past three years. Why is bureaucracy so stupid and so insensitive?

Still on the subject of child care—I was not impressed to learn that the regulations being imposed on child care centres by the Goss Government are becoming so onerous that no family home, let alone child care centres, will ever be able to meet them. The ubiquitous bureaucrat comes out to check the equipment. For instance, with tea sets for the under-two age group, there must be six settings of four pieces each. Somebody counts that, and if there are three little cups and two little saucers missing, the centre is considered not to have the required equipment. The centre is in big trouble if it does not have the required pieces of equipment, and it will not be eligible for registration unless it does. To me, it is a nonsense. Kindergartens and pre-schools do not have the same rigorous standards, where all activities must be available to the child at the same time, so why should child care centres? The Government demands that child care workers have academic qualifications, which many mothers do not have. It is no longer good enough to have had six children and to have raised them successfully without those children getting tattoos and going to gaol. Now, one has to have a diploma in child psychology or something else.

Mr Littleproud: The Minister's own office has admitted to me that the legislation they put through on child-care was overzealous in relation to small towns.

Mrs McCAULEY: It is extremely overzealous, and this industry is in dire need of a good dose of common sense. The education of children with special needs becomes a great challenge when parents live outside metropolitan areas. In many cases, the only

solution is to move to the city so that the child can receive the proper educational assistance that he or she needs. This often leads to the father being unable to find work. Consequently, families live apart and are not able to support each other as they need to be able to do. Recently, I received a letter from the Minister for Education in which he stated virtuously—

“The Department of Education has a social justice strategy which recognises that society expects the education system to maximise educational access, participation and outcomes for all students. This should not be limited by such factors as a student’s location, sex, socio-economic situation, ethnic or cultural background, or by any disability.”

It should not be. However, unfortunately, it is. I could cite many cases in which children are not receiving the extra aide hours that are required to help them to be educated to the level of their peers. The need for extra therapist hours in rural areas is at crisis point.

The Callide and Dawson Valleys need another speech therapist, and 30 children are on the occupational therapist’s waiting list in Biloela. The school dental service has not visited the Gayndah school since the end of 1991, and there is little likelihood of a visit in the near future. Nine schools in the Callide electorate are without permanent principals because of the unbelievably cumbersome and stupid transfer process that was devised by Mr Coaldrake and the PSMC. I am pleased to hear that the Abercorn school, about which I was concerned, has this year increased enrolments and now has the prospect of a permanent principal before too much longer. I only wish that some of the other small schools were as well off as Abercorn. Biloela State High School not only has an acting principal—and, fortunately, a very capable one as well—but also an acting deputy principal position which will probably not be filled for the whole of the year. What a disgrace! What a hopeless way to run the country!

Another service that has been totally disrupted and messed up is the Ambulance Service. I have had complaints from all regions of my electorate since the changeover occurred. Recently, I received a copy of a letter written by the Mundubbera Neighbourhood Rural Watch Committee which outlines clearly some of the problems that the new system cannot overcome. The letter states—

“Mundubbera is situated approximately 270 km south west of Bundaberg. The Mundubbera Shire covers an area of 4 185 square kilometres with a rural population of 1 300. There are about 900 km of maintained shire roads, as well as main access roads to some 300 private properties.

Local knowledge of this area is imperative when giving or receiving directions as there are numerous local district names many of which do not appear on published maps—eg Mundowran, Glenrae, Hawkwood, Monogorilby, Cattle Creek, Dunolly, Toondarah, Malmoe, Riverleigh, Derra, Stanmore, Philpott, Nantglyn and Gurgeena to name a few.

At our meeting three known incidents were discussed where our local ambulance was delayed in getting to calls promptly due to confusion in instructions relayed from the Bundaberg Station back to Mundubbera Station. It is known that the least variation in a message can misconstrue the whole meaning of a direction.

The ambulance is understood to be an emergency service and in an emergency, time should not be wasted on giving the Bundaberg officer a geography lesson as well as the directions and then trusting that he understood well enough to pass those directions to a local officer who may or may not be a local resident. Surely a direct call to a local office where extra directions may be given if needed is far more reliable and comforting to the distressed caller.

Another problem occurred on a Sunday night, when it is virtually impossible to make an STD call owing to the congestion on the lines. Ambulance attention was required but the patient could only raise a continuous engaged signal.”

Those are some of the concerns that those people have about the Ambulance Service. Those concerns could have come from the Monto area, the Biggenden area, or the Wandoan/Taroom area, because people in those areas are saying the same thing. When is this Government going to wake up and understand that it has done the wrong thing with the Ambulance Service?

Rural fire brigades are another service which the present Government has thrown into disarray. Recently, I attended a meeting in the Mungungo area, which was attended by members of several rural fire brigades, and which was called to discuss the implications of the Workplace Health and Safety Act as it pertains to the volunteers in such organisations. There is uncertainty about the rural fire brigades and how they are supposed to operate under the Workplace Health and Safety Act. Currently, it is uncertain who is liable in cases of accident, because not all the brigades possess the correct equipment. This same problem pertains to the State Emergency Service. The Emergency Services Act states that those who are "acting in good faith" are not liable. That section of the Act seems to cover farmers, who turn out as part of the RFB, to fight fires. However, if people who do not possess the correct personal protection equipment because the Government has not provided it are permitted to assist in fighting fires, is the officer in charge liable, or does the liability rest with the Government? The Workplace Health and Safety Act seems to imply that the officer in charge has a duty of care to see that an incorrectly attired worker does not fight fires. Of course, it must be taken into account that the people concerned are farming people who would arrive at a fire in their work clothes and simply pitch in and help get the job done without worrying too much about their personal protective equipment.

Apparently, the Government has stated that the RFB has an obligation to obtain the correct safety equipment, and has provided a one-off grant for this purpose. However, that grant is not sufficient, and the RFB has been forced to buy the necessary equipment—overalls, hats and gloves—over a three-year period. That means that it will take three full years before all rural fire brigades have the equipment that has been deemed necessary by the Government. At the end of that three-year period, some of the original equipment will be obsolete and will need replacing. Unless it is given a large injection of funds, the RFB will never catch up. The general consensus at the meeting was that RFB members are very concerned about their own personal liability. It would seem that many of them could refuse to be RFB members because of that concern. The Workplace Health and Safety officer could not allay their concerns. Another problem is the training of people who belong to the rural fire brigades. Obviously, it is desirable for members to receive elementary training. However, Queensland has only three training officers, which is obviously not enough. This Government, which forces private employers to train staff or pay a hefty levy, is not concerned about the training of citizens who offer themselves in a voluntary capacity to rural fire brigades.

Roads are a most important component of the infrastructure of the Callide electorate and a topic of conversation among country people that is second only to the weather. Roads such as the Bauhinia to Taroom road and the Rolleston to Bauhinia road are in poor condition and in need of a great deal of money to be spent to upgrade them. The Rolleston to Bauhinia road is a road train route. Last year, a cattle truck overturned on that road because a city slicker driving a car towards it would not get off the bitumen, so the truck had to, and the road edges were so steep that over it went. That accident could have spilled children onto the road, not cattle, because that road is a school bus route. And what if some inexperienced driver had forced the school bus into a similar situation? There is an urgent need to widen the road to a safe standard to accommodate the large number of big trucks and road trains that travel on it continually. The Bauhinia to Taroom road is mostly gravel; only a small section of it is bitumen. There is a need for a program of yearly funding for that road until it reaches an acceptable standard, such as is being done with the Banana to Rannes road. It is an important link with the southern Toowoomba area from the Central Highlands area, and the cattle traffic down to the feedlots and meatworks is substantial.

I wish to talk now about an example of what I consider to be the worst possible planning and design work that I have ever come across. In Gayndah, the State Government has just recently completed some aged people's units. They are self-contained and ideal for elderly people who can still look after themselves but need smaller living quarters and perhaps some supervision from time to time. What a shame that those units have such design faults as to render them extremely unsafe for the elderly to live in, and which negate the good work of providing them in the first place. For example, there are different floor levels across four doorways. There is a 4-centimetre drop into the lounge room from the foyer, a 4-centimetre rise into the kitchen, up into the hallway, and then a 4-centimetre drop down again into the bedroom. This is simply unsafe for elderly people, particularly those who walk with a walking frame or a walking stick or who have had knee-replacement surgery or hip surgery. For them to have to walk on a floor like that is asking for trouble. I believe that there has already been one bad fall. Residents could fall and break a hip, a leg, or worse, and end up in hospital for the rest of their days. The shower curtain rail is at least 30 centimetres above the longest possible shower curtain. Although this is not a life-threatening matter, it is certainly a great inconvenience, because it means that the water pours out from underneath. The safety rail on the wall is next to the shower instead of on the wall in the shower. There is no ramp at the back of those units, only steep steps, which are not suitable for elderly people. The veranda clothes line is too high for the elderly residents to reach. We do shrink as we get older. I believe that the people who design these units should remember that. I have written correspondence on this matter and faxed it through urgently to the Minister, but so far the silence is deafening. That is unfortunate, because it is important that design faults such as those are rectified before the units are occupied, and not afterwards.

I would like now to spend some time discussing the merits and demerits of the member for Hinkler, Mr Brian Courtice. Mr Courtice has had a chequered career in politics, and is a strong supporter and mate of Prime Minister Keating. It is interesting to catalogue some of the high points—or is that low points—in his political life. For example, in April 1988, he blamed National Party members for publicising the five-year drought in the Burnett region, and was critical of efforts to obtain assistance. In May 1988, he criticised the Queensland Government, Boswell and the NFF for opposing the removal of the import embargo on raw and refined sugar. In May 1989, he supported the deregulation of the transport system, and criticised railways and the Government's handling of the royal commission into grain storage, handling and transport. In October 1990, Mr Courtice called on Gladstone residents to be patriotic and stop complaining about the rocketing fuel prices. That was helpful! Also in October, he was quoted as saying—

“I certainly do not believe or agree rural Australia is in crisis or about to collapse.”

He also accused the NFF of overstating the situation to get maximum effect for problems facing the bush. It was no surprise then that he refused to attend and address a crisis rally at Dalby. The following month, he refused to debate Senator Bill O'Chee over Australia's economic problems at a rural crisis meeting in Bundaberg. Instead, he sent a letter to the business community of Bundaberg, saying that people should not be whipping up hysteria at rural rallies and potentially damaging Bundaberg's image. Mr Courtice's refusal to debate O'Chee was not surprising when one considers his record of speeches in the Federal House. He has little or no understanding of financial matters. When debating on such topics, he makes so many errors that several points of order are usually taken against him. In fact, his better speeches are obviously the ones taken from briefing notes prepared by the relevant department. He is not reliable with facts and figures, and has a tendency to misconstrue data. He is the master of the personal attack under parliamentary privilege, and has savaged several people in this way. His personal invective is nasty, and he is often wrong in those personal attacks. The way that he uses Parliament is an absolute disgrace.

In December 1990, Mr Courtice turned his attention to local government, when he supported amalgamations of councils. He said that local government in Queensland was a training ground for the National Party. He was most vitriolic—as only he could be—about local government stalwarts such as Alex McIntosh. In January 1991, obviously aware that there was an overseas trip in the offing, he waved the olive branch by saying that Australia's rural industries are perhaps the most efficient and competitive of those found anywhere in the world. Then, in March 1991, he took off for the United States as part of an Australian bipartisan trade delegation. He said that the delegation had protested forcefully and effectively against the wheat subsidies paid to United States farmers. Well, we can see how successful he was with that, can we not! They pulled up their socks immediately and stopped all that subsidy rot. In April 1991, in a speech to Parliament, he said—

“I have always led the charge to reduce tariffs in the sugar industry.”

Born-again Brian sure has done a backflip on that opinion, has he not? Now he claims credit for being instrumental in Keating's decision to retain tariffs at their present level for the next few years. I wonder if it has anything to do with votes. Mr Courtice has also been most outspoken in his allegations about graziers rorting the drought-relief system—National Party graziers, of course—but no charges have ever been laid. His unfounded allegations ensured that the quality of drought assistance was considerably downgraded, which caused undue hardship to many farming families.

In 1992, Mr Courtice attacked the UGA, calling it “a laughing stock outside of a few squatters and National Party snobs” and, later, “a joke”. In reply to a vote of no confidence in him as the Prime Minister's country task force chairman, Mr Courtice called the QGGA Burnett zone the “Ku Klux Klan without bed sheets” and its leaders “hillbillies and clowns”. While ever Mr Courtice goes about the country wooing voters with sweet compliments such as those, we can be sure that he will not be in office after 13 March. However, the final word on Mr Courtice and his discredited Labor mates should come from Paul Keating.

Mr Stoneman: They're all nodding their heads over there. They know in their hearts you're right.

Mrs McCAULEY: They know what Mr Courtice is like and they know that they are all on the skids. In a brochure put out by Mr Courtice a year ago showing his smiling face and that of Paul Keating, Mr Keating stated—

“The initiatives in our plan are big enough to kick start the economy and get things going, big enough to get people back to work—and big enough to stir the imagination.”

He said that 12 months ago, and now one million people are proof that the initiatives are not working. I wonder what Paul's mate has to say about that. My office has received letters from State members—I presume they have gone out from all the State Labor members—on parliamentary letterhead, using their titles, in this case, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, the member for Rockhampton. Those letters have swamped the countryside. I feel it is quite improper that members of State Parliament should be using their taxpayer-funded paper and, obviously, their taxpayer-funded equipment to be sending out letters in support of their Federal colleagues. Those members who did that should be ashamed of themselves.

Ms SPENCE (Mount Gravatt) (8.17 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure for the second time in this House to speak in the Address in Reply debate. I pledge my commitment to represent the opinions of the people of the Mount Gravatt electorate in this House for another term. I will come straight to the point, because the point is important—easily one of the most important points in our public life today, that is, that of all the already disadvantaged people who stand to lose from the coalition's GST package, women are at the head of the queue. That is true of women at work, where they are already behind when it comes to pay, health, careers and work-related matters. And it is true of women at home, where they are still the major providers of care and

family organisers. This evening, I will talk about the effect of the GST on women at work and at home. But, before I do so, I will make a couple of general observations.

The Labor Party is the first and only political party that has actually listened to women, which is why perhaps, of the 13 women who sit in this Legislative Assembly, nine of them happen to be Labor women. We have been the first to recognise that the most fundamental need that women have is the need for economic independence—not to have to rely on others. We have been the first to put that recognition into concrete form. That is the basis on which women have the right to choose between economic options. Fightback, in fact, limits the options for women, reducing that independence.

People in my electorate say to me that Fightback is not just a matter of putting a new tax on goods and services. The whole Fightback package says to Australians, "The Liberal Government is going to walk away from its role in health care, social services, retirement policy, education and training, pay and fair play at work. Basically you're on your own. We'll put a 15 per cent tax on food, clothes, and so on. We'll abolish other taxes as compensation. Because this won't cover all the effects of the new tax, we'll cut income tax. But, to find the money to pay for cuts in income tax, we'll take \$10 billion from such Government programs as public hospitals, housing, schools, consumer protection, sole parents and occupational health and safety." No wonder that the more various groups in the community learn about the implications of Fightback, the more they hate it. It does not surprise me that the coalition federally is losing support in this community day by day.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): Order! If honourable members wish to have a conversation, they should do so outside the Chamber. I am trying to hear the honourable member for Mount Gravatt.

Ms SPENCE: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I suspect that many members of the Opposition do not care about what women think of their policies or of the coalition's policies. What is the broad thrust of all this? It is not hard to work out: opportunity for the haves; hardship for the have-nots. What else can one say about Fightback? How can one excuse a plan to put the price of a salad roll up and the price of caviar down? How can one defend a plan that raises bus fares but cuts the price of a Mercedes? How can one defend a plan that puts 15 per cent on the price of everything that is sold in tuck shops but not from a gourmet deli? Is it mad? Is it crazy? That is what the coalition wishes to do.

We hear a torrent of words from the coalition about the sales tax that would come off consumer goods to compensate people for the GST. But it cannot, or will not, give a guarantee that traders will not hang on to the sales tax savings, as they did in New Zealand and Britain. Not only will it not give that guarantee, it is also proposing to cut a \$13m swathe through Federal business and consumer protection programs. Dr Hewson says he would compensate those people with a package that would include cuts in income tax and petrol excise. But, as a priest wrote in the *Herald* the other day, that is a smug notion. When a person is in the bottom 10 per cent, that person does not pay income tax. That person certainly cannot afford to drive a car, and would probably depend on those services that Dr Hewson wants to cut or even abolish. What is the point of this vindictiveness?

Despite hours and hours and hours of debate in this Chamber and the abundant opportunity that has been given to the Opposition to explain its policies, I have not heard a coherent explanation for it yet, nor for the hardship and injustice that will threaten ordinary people. By substituting a tax on what people spend for a tax on what they earn, Dr Hewson is proposing a huge shift in the tax balance from the haves to the have-nots. That is easy for him to do because obviously he is one of the haves. That brings me to a particular group of GST victims that I will focus on tonight. Women would be badly hit by the GST, as it would affect not only the cost of essentials such as clothing but also other aspects of their daily life. It is the reality of their daily life, of course, that led to the unprecedented amount of reform for women in Australia over the last 10 years. This reform had one fundamental reason: women at home and at work,

women from all backgrounds, must have real choices and equal opportunity in a fair society.

The GST, as we know, would have its cost effects for everybody. In practice, women would bear the brunt of it. I will tell honourable members why. Women are the major carers in our society. They are the ones who usually have most of the responsibility for managing the family finances, getting and cooking the family food, seeing that the children are clothed and well. Women would be the group in the community most confronted by the daily reality of higher prices for goods and all the other family needs. Last year, a huge Women's Electoral Lobby consumer survey in Brisbane revealed that the prices of 454 household items out of 499 surveyed would increase if a GST was introduced. After Dr Hewson promised that he would take the GST off food, the Women's Electoral Lobby still found that running a household would be more expensive under the coalition despite the changes to Fightback. This was reported in the *Courier-Mail* last December. Ms Sherril Molloy of the Women's Electoral Lobby said—

“ . . . most household necessities would cost more under Dr Hewson's new policy document although it scraps the goods and services tax on basic foods and childcare.”

Ms Molloy said—

“ . . . that under the revised Fightback only 56 of the items would be exempt from the GST.

Of the remaining 443 household goods and services, more than 80 per cent would rise in price with some services showing 'massive price rises'.”

Ms Molloy stated further that—

“ . . . many snack foods which were subject to wholesale sales tax, and therefore would not be exempt from a GST, would rise in price significantly.”

I have read the women's electoral survey that was produced last year, and I believe that it is certainly a very learned document. It is a long document. The women from the Women's Electoral Lobby have gone to a lot of trouble because they believed that there needed to be more debate over the GST package instead of stimulating debate amongst the coalition. I report from the *Sun Herald* of July last year, in which the women of the Women's Electoral Lobby ended up being branded as “airheads” and “idiots” by Liberal politicians. The attack was led by Queensland Liberal leader, Joan Sheldon, who described the women as “airheads” with an “intellectual shortfall” who had compiled a “rather silly shopping survey”. Who were the women whom Mrs Sheldon called airheads? One is a distinguished retired public servant, another is an investment adviser and another is a barrister—and Mrs Sheldon has the audacity to brand these particular women as airheads for their intellectual exercise. The women no doubt were upset by Mrs Sheldon's comments, because they naively believed that the Liberals wanted to debate their GST package.

Mr Bennett: That comes from calling their own National Party colleagues morons.

Ms SPENCE: Precisely. Mrs Sheldon really should not call anyone names. Little did the women from the electoral lobby know that it is not Joan Sheldon's style to indulge in sensible debate. As we have seen today, she is better at venom and at vitriol. The coalition tries to trivialise debate about the GST with talk about sales tax on perfume, eyelashes, engagement rings, beauty spots and other goodies which it obviously thinks are vital for family needs. The fact is that women will be the ones who will have to deal with the consequences on the family budget of the new tax. They will be the ones who will have to manage the extra 11 per cent on the power bill, the extra eight per cent on the phone bill, and the extra 5 per cent to 6 per cent on the supermarket bill. It is the women who will have to do the worrying about the higher bus fares and the higher child-care fees.

The same strategy applies to Fightback's proposals for health care. The basic idea seems to be that health care consumers should pay more so that general practitioners, private insurance companies and private hospitals can receive more. In other words, health care would be just another consumer product, its availability depending on spending power. Dismantling Medicare, abolishing bulk-billing, cutting down the public hospital system, forcing people into private health insurance—all those represent a huge threat to mothers and carers dealing with sick children or having a baby. Do the Liberals really believe that this is social progress? I believe that in the next week-and-a-half when the women of Australia realise that they are going to have to have over \$30 in their pocket before they can go to their local doctor, they will reject this Fightback package which will force them to do so. Whatever the reasons may be, the consequences of the Hewson vision for a lean and mean social security system will be tougher on women than on almost any other group in the community.

Mr Bennett: Hewson would not know what women want. He would not know what is wrong.

Ms SPENCE: Hewson would not know about the plight of women in this country, certainly. The next point I wish to make is the effect on women of Fightback and what it proposes for women workers. I suspect that Dr Hewson and other conservatives have a real problem with women working at all. One gets a sense of that from his extraordinary statement to the Liberal Women's Conference which was held a few months ago, when he said—

“Treating women as women implies that women are different. Treating women as people means that women and men, by definition, start on an equal footing.”

The next statement is another of Dr Hewson's quotes on women—

“I reckon I can understand women because I have worked out that most of them are just like us.”

I know that Dr Hewson has an ally in his Liberal leader in Queensland. In this House a couple of years ago, Mrs Sheldon said on the record, while participating in a debate on the Anti-Discrimination Bill, that women in Queensland are not discriminated against. In common with Dr Hewson, Mrs Sheldon has no empathy with the ordinary woman in the community. Whatever foothold women workers have, they are still a long way from being equal to men workers. I have no sense of jealousy.

Mr Stoneman: What have you got against Mrs Sheldon?

Ms SPENCE: Unlike Mrs Sheldon, I was not born with a silver spoon in my mouth. I go out into the community and speak to women, and I know that women are discriminated against in all walks of life every day. To think the opposite is to be very wrong.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order!

Ms SPENCE: Somebody should tell Dr Hewson and Mrs Sheldon that women work in the most segregated, diverse, weakest-organised and lowest-valued areas of industry and that every day they are discriminated against in their ordinary lives. Under Fightback, all of the remedies for those disadvantages would disappear. For example, the Affirmative Action Agency would go; Worksafe would go; Government support for reform programs would go, and Fightback's \$10m cut in Government spending would mean that equal pay and work-in-family-units advantages would go. National wage cases are the only way in which women and other industrially weak workers can get pay rises, and under Fightback they, too, would go. The power of the Industrial Relations Commission to make sure that workers are not cheated in enterprise bargaining would also go. The umpire who ensures a fair go in workplace disputes would go, too.

Mr Johnson: You have got a problem there. That is not true.

Ms SPENCE: The coalition in Queensland does not like to hear the facts about its Federal colleagues' policies. The coalition sees all these safeguards as mere sentimentality, yet they are vital for disadvantaged workers—especially women, who are less industrially organised and therefore more vulnerable to pressure.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Opposition members will cease interjecting.

Mr Stoneman: Don't put Bob off getting married on Saturday.

Ms SPENCE: Who is getting married next Saturday?

Mr Stoneman: Bob Quinn. Don't put him off.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Burdekin!

Ms SPENCE: I think it would do the honourable member for Merrimac much good to be married and learn about women. Well done! I am sure that having a wife would help him very much. Clearly, the basic aim of Fightback's industrial relations policy is to take away the capacity of workers to gain pay and conditions in any meaningful sense. On the basis that the devil takes the hindmost, women and other disadvantaged workers will feel the heat first and longest. If examples are needed, they can be found across the Tasman where unions are going out of business and workers are being told to take a 30 per cent pay-cut, or go.

Mr Johnson interjected.

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

Mr Littleproud: Where is this?

Ms SPENCE: New Zealand. Fightback proposes that Governments should abdicate and leave justice to the ebb and flow of the untrammelled market. It proposes that the balance of wealth and opportunity should be moved sharply to one end of the social and economic spectrum. The coalition's absolutely ludicrous notion that workers, on an individual basis, can front up to a boss and conduct meaningful and equal negotiations on wages and conditions is fairyland thinking. One of Labor's greatest achievements has been the way it has encouraged women in education. Secondary school retention rates have gone up from below 40 per cent in 1983 to approximately 80 per cent in Queensland at present.

Mr Randell interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the member for Mirani wishes to interject, he should do so from his correct seat.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Western Downs! If he wishes to interject, he should do so from his correct seat.

Ms SPENCE: The number of women at university rose by 82 per cent between 1982 and 1991, compared to an increase of approximately 35 per cent for men. Of all the reforms that Labor has accomplished in the last 10 years, none has had greater importance for women than this, and none has greater significance for the objective of widening economic options for women. What ideas do people get about higher education from Fightback? Not many! It is obsessed with calls for fees and vouchers in a market oriented system. In other words, it proposes a system that is tailor-made to discourage people on lower incomes.

The Fightback proposal favours the wealthy and would destroy equal access for all students to university. It is blatantly discriminatory and elitist. It is very clear to me who would suffer most from the Fightback package. It is people who depend on social security. It is young people, people with learning and other disabilities, migrant people, farmers in rural communities, the elderly, the sick and, most importantly, women. For women, especially in Queensland, whether at home or at work, Fightback is a

throwback. It is a perverse, reactionary, unjust, anti-feminist document which deservedly will keep the coalition out of office for another three years.

I am pleased to have had the opportunity to use this Address in Reply debate to talk about this Fightback package, which I believe is one of the most Right Wing, frightening policies ever given any credence in this country. When I am out there talking to my constituents in the electorate of Mount Gravatt, I find they are genuinely fearful of these proposals to make monumental changes to their way of life. While they are concerned about unemployment and the Federal Government's inability to solve it, they do believe that this Federal Government, this Labor Government, has created a fair society where all Australians, regardless of their economic position, have equal access to basic services. It is my belief that part of the Australian character is that we all believe that we should give everyone a fair go. Unfortunately, this Liberal package—this coalition Fightback package—does not recognise that, and this is why I truly believe that the coalition will not win the Federal election on 13 March.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (8.39 p.m.): I have much pleasure in following that humorous interlude. We are all interested to note that Paul Keating has one supporter in this House and in Queensland. The rest of the Government members will be praying that Dr Hewson wins, which he will do, because the coalition's winning Government will be the reason that the State Government will use to justify the increase in taxes and all sorts of other things across the State. Who else will the Government blame for what is happening in the State?

I take this opportunity of joining in the debate to pledge the loyalty of my constituents, myself and, I am sure, the residents of the vast majority of Queensland to Her Majesty the Queen. I congratulate Her Excellency not only on her assuming the high and honourable office of Governor but also on the manner in which she is carrying out that job. We would all acknowledge that she is doing an excellent job and becoming very much a Governor of the people. Probably, under Labor administrations, Governors such as those to whom we pledge loyalty have a limited tenure. We are seeing the fall of that process throughout Australia. However, I believe in all sincerity that people genuinely wish to maintain the office of Governor, loyalty to the Crown and all that that stands for.

Mr Johnson: After March 13 that will be preserved.

Mr STONEMAN: I acknowledge that. In answer to the honourable member for Gregory, I note that, every now and then, the Premier, the Prime Minister and all of those who are associated with that extreme attitude in the Labor Party fly the kite of republicanism as a diversion. However, I will not go into that during the Address in Reply debate. As I say, I wish Her Excellency the very best for her term. I am sure that she and Mr McDonald will not only continue to do the job that they are doing now but also will build on that.

I turn to the new regions that are encompassed by the boundaries of the electorate of Burdekin. Earlier in the day, a member—I think that it was the honourable member for Cook—made somewhat derogatory remarks about the representation of Townsville. However, I will not go into that. I am proud that, once again, the National Party is able to give the people of Townsville and its environs a voice in the Parliament which they certainly deserve. The section of Townsville that is in my electorate, which is all of the area south of Ross River, I am proud to represent. It is a great part not only of north Queensland but also of the Townsville and Thuringowa regions.

The region encompassed now by my electorate includes a diversity of facilities, including a gaol, which makes Burdekin one of the most diverse electorates in the State. The electorate has the full range—with the exception of an independent boarding school—of educational facilities, from one-teacher schools through to James Cook University. In mentioning James Cook University, I pay tribute to and honour the passing very recently of a former Chancellor of the James Cook University, former Justice Sir George Kneipp. I pay tribute to him not only for the work that he did but also for the support that he gave to the whole range of public institutions, which were not

restricted to the law but included a range of activities that are too numerous to mention on this occasion. I was among those who gathered to pay tribute to Sir George at his funeral. Probably the greatest tribute that could be paid to anyone on an occasion of sadness such as a funeral was the fact that it was attended by the two bishops of north Queensland, Bishop Raymond Benjamin, the Catholic Bishop in whose church the requiem mass was held, and Bishop John Lewis, the Anglican Bishop. Bishop Lewis was given the opportunity to speak and to pay due honour to Sir George Kneipp. That was wonderful.

As I said, the range of educational facilities encompassed within the Burdekin electorate—I guess by coincidence of the drawing of the boundaries—is something which is probably unique in this nation. The Townsville area of the electorate of Burdekin encompasses a range of occupations, a range of vocations and a range of socioeconomic structures. It is a sad fact of life at the moment that some of those suburban areas, namely, Wulguru, Stuart and Cluden, are being faced with a particularly diabolical process that has just recently been put in place by State Cabinet for the betterment of Townsville generally. I acknowledge that the shift of the railway marshalling yards, maintenance facility and so on is of major importance to the city. I do not believe that any constituent of mine would disagree with that. However, it is a sad fact that, without consultation in any way, shape or form, in the meaningful sense, State Cabinet, during its recent visit to Townsville, declared that the railway marshalling yards and the maintenance facility would be shifted from the inner city—which everyone agrees with—into the centre of a couple of suburbs that are now within the Burdekin electorate. The people in those suburbs are justifiably outraged.

I pay tribute to the Labor alderman for that division, Noel Wilson, and to the Mayor of Townsville for the manner in which they are now taking on board the concerns of citizens and adopting the approach that this shift is something that is not in the best interests of those people. Regardless of the fact that railway land has been owned within that area for almost the last 50 years, times have changed and I do not believe that those people should have to wear a decision such as that made by a Cabinet which obviously is totally out of touch with the feelings of the people. I will make the detail of those decisions the subject of a particular speech in due course. However, may I say that the one thing that the people of my electorate—and, I am sure, quietly, the people of the Labor Party in Townsville—are all in total agreement with is that the processes adopted—not so much by the Cabinet because it was probably acting on the advice of the Minister for Transport, Mr Hamill—by Mr Hamill are nothing short of outrageous. That is being universally accepted across the community. When people with a political view opposite to mine stand up and say that they are outraged and support the comments that I have made, I think that speaks for itself.

Although the electorate contains the southern Townsville suburbs of Oonoonba, Idalia, Cluden, Wulguru, Murray, Annandale and Douglas, the electorate also extends to the Elliot River and embraces the small towns of Guthalungra and Gumlu and their surrounding rural communities. Although unofficially over the years I have represented the interests of the people in those areas, I certainly welcome their inclusion in the electorate. I make the further point that encompassed within that area are a number of local authority areas. I have already mentioned Townsville City. Just yesterday afternoon, I had what I believe was a most constructive meeting with various residents of the Townsville City area, Alderman Wilson and the mayor in respect of the problem of the railway relocation. I look forward to working positively with the Townsville City Council for the benefit of our mutual constituency.

I share with the member for Whitsunday a considerable area of the Bowen Shire to the south. In fact, I think I now represent approximately 25 per cent of the Bowen Shire, although it is nowhere near that portion of constituents. Similarly, the Dalrymple Shire is a large area of the Burdekin electorate. It, too, is a very sparsely populated area, but it contains the historic towns of Ravenswood and Mingela. I am delighted to see the increasing involvement of gold mining through Carpentaria Gold and the operations that are sustaining the increasing emphasis of Ravenswood on its historical structures. I look

forward to working with the Dalrymple Shire and the people of the Ravenswood community in building on the wonderful base of history and continuing viability of gold mining generally, which of course is the very reason why that town exists.

A major part of the Burdekin electorate also encompasses, as it has for a number of years now, Thuringowa City. Alderman Les Tyrell and the other aldermen have always been great to work with. It is one of the fastest growing local authorities in the State. The manner in which they are embracing and encompassing the problems of a fast growing area without a major city centre is to be commended. I for one am foursquare behind their determination to maintain an entity in their own right, to maintain Thuringowa City as a city in its own right, and to maintain the representative processes that I believe are necessary. I must say that if Townsville City and Thuringowa City were joined together, it would halve the representative impact that people have, and it would halve access to them.

While I am talking about Thuringowa City, I would like to pay a particular tribute to a former Mayor of Thuringowa. As many people are aware, the former mayor, Alderman Dan Gleeson, has recently fallen on very difficult times in terms of his health and at the moment—or I think at the moment—is in the Kirwan Hospital. When I say that I think he is at the Kirwan Hospital, I point out that I have become aware of the fact that the Health Department proposed to close down that section of the Kirwan Hospital that allows people such as Dan Gleeson to stay there to be in the heart of their local community, to allow their family to have ready access to them and to allow their friends to be around them. There is a shortage of facilities to look after people with Dan's particular illness—people who at this stage have no other place to go—but it is proposed to close down that section and shift them. I believe that is another tragedy. I do not want to let the tragedy of the changed Health Department structures interfere with my tribute to Dan Gleeson's work over the years. He put Thuringowa City on the map. I think my colleagues in this House from the Townsville/Thuringowa area would agree with that. He has been a fierce and loyal supporter and continues to be a fierce and loyal supporter for the people of the area. He has what I think is a justifiable leaning towards a parochialism that has set the course of Thuringowa City as a major city in this State. I wish Dan and his wife, Daisy, the very best for the difficult time that they are both experiencing. However, I know that they are facing their predicament with the calmness that is a part and parcel of the way in which they have approached their representative lives generally. They are wonderful people.

A number of problems are being experienced in my electorate. I could canvass all of them, but I do not believe that the Address in Reply debate is the appropriate forum in which to do that. One of the major problems, to which I have already referred, is the State Cabinet's proposed relocation of rail facilities into the Wulguru area.

Mr McElligott: Where do you reckon they should go?

Mr STONEMAN: I will take the interjection. The member for Thuringowa raised a valid point. He asked, "Where do you think the rail facilities should go?" No-one in the Townsville or Thuringowa area believes that those facilities should not be moved from the city area. The rail facilities in question have outgrown a major industrial facility, and the Townsville City heart needs upgrading. Forty years ago, the purchase of land commenced to facilitate the relocation of those facilities to the Wulguru area. I understand that that purchase finished only a few years ago. However, times have changed. I have studied, with a reasonable degree of care, the report of the consultants. They paid only passing or peripheral attention to alternative sites. I am not an engineer or town planner, but in my view there is every possibility that those facilities could be located in the vicinity of the new Townsville rubbish dump, which is adjacent to the meatworks and the copper refinery. That is an acknowledged industrial area. I do not agree with those who suggest that the facilities should be located to the north of the city in the Bohle area. Because of the traffic volumes that would be created, the relocation to that area would impose just as much inconvenience on the people there and in the surrounding areas.

A Government member interjected.

Mr STONEMAN: Exactly. With the Mount Isa line, the main traffic flow is to the south and to the west, and particularly to the south. I acknowledge the difficulty that Queensland Rail faces. Forty-odd years ago, a decision was taken to commence the purchase of land in the Wulguru/Cluden/Stuart area. However, that decision may not be appropriate now. The members of the Cabinet should be ashamed that they did not properly scrutinise alternative arrangements. I know that some people suggest that the facilities should be relocated to Woodstock or similar areas. However, the commercial considerations must be taken into account. I have no hesitation in placing my views on the record in response to the interjection by the honourable member of Thuringowa.

A Government member interjected.

Mr STONEMAN: It is much better than David Hamill and the Cabinet gave them, that is for sure. The honourable member should consult the 4 000 to 5 000 people in that area. I can assure him that they are foursquare behind the proposition that a genuine appraisal be conducted of alternative sites. If, at the end of the day, there is no valid alternative, a decision may have to be taken. However, there has been no scrutiny of any alternative arrangements in a real sense. The Townsville City Council and Queensland Rail study directed that the facilities should be shifted from the central city area to Stuart. It did not direct that other alternatives should be considered. I make the point that alternative sites should be considered.

I want to touch on a couple of other points. I would have finished by now, but for the interjections. These are the issues that are of concern to my constituents, and I intend to place them on record. In the lower Burdekin area, there is a major concern about the viability of the new farm subdivisions. This proposal has been around for many years. I have stated in this House and outside it on a number of occasions that I am not pointing the finger only at this Government. I believe that it has been necessary for a long time to study the structure and the financing arrangement of pioneering farms in the Burdekin River Irrigation Scheme. I believe that individuals should not have to bear the all-encompassing financial constraints that are being imposed on new and existing farmers. They are expected to develop that scheme into what it should properly be—one of the great schemes in this nation. Increasingly, outrage is being expressed by members of the farming community. They believe that one generation of farmers should not be expected to bear the total costs. Those farmers should not be the fertiliser of future successful farming operations; nor should they be asked to pay the capital costs involved in a huge development that has a 100-year or 200-year minimum lifespan. That is one of the priority issues in my electorate, along with the rail relocation.

A perhaps smaller problem is the outrageous situation in respect of the approval of the location of a preschool at Alligator Creek. It was named, the land was bought, and the building was prefabricated. Thanks to the Goss Government, that preschool was plucked away from that community, which is one of the fastest-growing communities in north Queensland. The people of the Alligator Creek/Nome/Bentley area do not deserve that sort of vindictive treatment. I have raised this matter in this House before and I will continue to raise it. It is to the shame of the Department of Education officers who advised the Minister, or the Minister himself who took that advice, that the needs of that very rapidly growing area have not been acknowledged.

Everybody is concerned about the need to create job opportunities. During this debate, I have heard much rhetoric about that need. I must say that I am most intrigued, because I have heard Dorothy Dix questions asked, and I have heard statements made by Ministers and the Premier about the outrageous reduction in payments to Commonwealth, State and local government instrumentalities and the dire consequences that it will have for the community. Let me say that those people are really saying that they believe it is outrageous for people to be allowed to keep money in their pockets and not to be taxed more. The Premier, Government spokesmen and some local government leaders across this State are saying that they should be allowed to continue to spend willy-nilly and to tax people at a rate they can no longer afford.

That is just not on. I believe that taxes should be transparent; they should be acknowledged and notified. Although I do not agree totally with the Fightback package, it is clearly the only way in which this nation can balance its books again and engender community confidence. We cannot continue to rob our children's and our grandchildren's piggy banks. We are surely doing that now.

When Labor members place political advertisements in newspapers, they are saying to the community that they support another term of the ratbaggery that has been going on for the last 10 years and the unbelievable impositions that have been placed not only upon our generation but also upon our children and their children. I do not believe that it is realistic to continue in that way. However, that is a matter for another debate at another time.

A former political opponent of mine who stood against me when I first became a member of this House, Peter Rehbein, has written to people throughout the Dawson electorate. I pay tribute to him, because he left the public service, built up a business and has continued to build it up. I think that is great. Obviously, he has been requested by ALP campaigners to write to the people of the Dawson electorate. He has every right to do so, and what he has done is politically reasonable. However, part of the rhetoric of that letter refers to small business being the losers and the dreadful things that the GST will do to business. Fightback is not only the GST; it is a package of processes. Last week, in the Burdekin, I was requested by a chemist to go into his shop to point out in detail the impact that the GST will have on his merchandise. One of the things that I was able to identify immediately was that until he made sales, he had approximately \$20,000-worth of unrecoverable sales tax sitting on his shelves. Under the process of a goods and services tax, he would not have that unrecoverable sales tax on his shelves. The soap, the tooth paste, the washing powder and the toilet paper all have a 20 per cent sales tax on them. Peter Rehbein has goods subject to 20 per cent sales tax sitting on his shelves.

Although we have debated the GST, I make the point that, unfortunately, many people who have—and commendably so—entered into the free-enterprise spirit and have made contributions to the community do not understand that the GST offers them the opportunity to break free of the chains that have bound them since Gough Whitlam started to spiral this country downwards in 1972.

At 9.04 p.m.,

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The time for this debate has elapsed. However, under the provisions of Standing Order 17 and the Sessional Order, I will allow the honourable member for Burdekin to complete his speech.

Mr STONEMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence. I will try to be as brief as possible. I also make the point that much well-meaning rhetoric is floating around, but the fact of the matter is that the runs are on the board. This country has been made bankrupt by the policies of the Federal Government over the last 10 years, just as this State will be made bankrupt by this Government. However, it will take a little while longer for the people of Brisbane to realise that. People in the regional and country areas of this State now know what is happening to their services and their money.

Services in my electorate have been reduced, which has resulted in a shortage of teachers, and, wherever it can, the Health Department is reducing hospital services to a part-time operation. If I had the time available to me, I would show Government members an advertisement in my local newspaper which states that hospital services in my electorate would be reduced to operating on a part-time basis. That is not a furphy; it is there for everyone to see. This practice is unprecedented. However, unfortunately, it is becoming the norm.

The problem of law and order is well known. On weekends, there is effectively no policing. An unfortunate amount of focus has been placed on some activities in my electorate which, I must say, has not helped to maintain law and order, or solve the

problems. I say without fear or favour that such focus only makes the solution to the problem more difficult. The fact of the matter is that police officers have, and will continue to have, their hands tied. The Department of Family Services may as well not exist when it comes to those underage offenders. I believe that the frustration within the community and the Police Service, and also within many genuine families who are being caught up in this problem, is manifesting itself in such a manner that it will only create a sadder situation.

The departments across this State are being politicised. There is fear of retribution, a diminution of services, and frustration by many very professional people who can no longer do their jobs without fear or favour. That is impacting in my electorate probably more than it is in other electorates. My electorate is not only a very old and large primary industry area but also a growing primary industry area that has many social problems, not the least of which is the continuing pig-headed approach of the Department of Primary Industries in respect of drought aid, and its attitude to giving out information that might help people to understand the problems that departments, Governments and the community face.

A few days ago in this House, I tabled a petition of despair from farmers who for almost four months have been seeking information under the much-touted Freedom of Information Act. They have been trying to get information that is simply raw data from the Primary Industries Department, with a water resources component, but those people are being frustrated by obvious commands at the political level that the information not be provided. In common with a number of honourable members in this House, I have travelled around Australia and New Zealand looking at freedom of information. I must say that what we are seeing is atypical of all the other areas where the bureaucracy and the Government of the day fought tooth and nail against the actual intent and principle of freedom of information. To its everlasting shame, this Government is no different. In fact, it is probably scaling the heights of precedence unknown in many other areas. All these factors impact on my electorate. They impact tremendously on commercial operations and social welfare sectors. My electorate is a rich area, which must make it one of the better areas in this State. Yet those people are approaching a situation in which their community is being torn apart simply because of an absolute determination on the part of this Government not to acknowledge those problems.

Time expired.

Debate, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, adjourned.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (9.10 p.m.): I move—

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Ambulance Services

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (9.10 p.m.): I join in the Adjournment debate tonight to highlight some of the anomalies that are becoming very obvious with the activities of this Government. I refer to essential services, particularly ambulance services. We have been led to expect that the Ambulance Service has been providing a service to the community whenever and wherever necessary, and for many reasons and circumstances. But at present, because of obvious cutbacks in services to hospitals in country areas, some people from Nambour and Gympie who have gone to their local hospitals expecting to be treated have been told, “We cannot treat you here. You must go to Brisbane.” Under those circumstances, the families of those patients are not allowed to take them to the hospital in Brisbane. Those patients are required to be transported by ambulance. I suppose that that is all very well, provided that they belong to the Queensland Ambulance Service, but not everybody does. Patients who are not

members of the Ambulance Service are handed very substantial accounts for the so-called services that are rendered.

Mr Pitt: That has always been the case.

Mr STEPHAN: It has always been the case, but the amount of money that people are handing over for those services has not always been the case. People who are transported to Brisbane are expected to pay \$1,060 from Gympie and \$800 from Nambour. That has not always been the case. Those people have not always been expected to pay such large amounts for those services. It has not always been the case that the Government says, "You shall pay. And if you do not pay, too bad. We will take it out of your hide whenever we can."

One of the cases to which I refer involved a patient who was not a constituent of mine, but a visitor to that area. That visitor's companion was quite willing to take that patient to Brisbane, but was told, "No, you cannot." That person was later handed a bill for \$1,145. This is not the type of thing that we want to encourage. The other case involved a similar set of circumstances. In that case, a patient was transported from Gympie to Brisbane and was charged \$1,060. In many instances, people do not subscribe to the Ambulance Service because, in these tough times, they cannot afford the subscriptions. Of course, they run the risk of having to pay for ambulance transport. But I have never expected that risk to be to the extent of \$1,060 for a journey in an ambulance from Gympie to Brisbane. On one occasion, more than one patient was transported in the ambulance, but each patient was expected to pay the same amount, that is, \$1,060. It supposedly could not be split down the centre. Is it any wonder that there is concern about this in the community? Is it any wonder that, when people are being handed that sort of bill, the community is becoming very disillusioned with the present arrangements?

People also face problems with the return journeys by ambulance. In one case, a fellow rang me at 7.30 in the evening and said, "I have been expecting my wife back. They got in the ambulance at 10.30 this morning, and my wife has not arrived yet." It turned out that the ambulance had stopped at two, three or four places along the way, including the Princess Alexandra Hospital, Royal Brisbane Hospital, the Nambour Hospital, and then called in to Caloundra. As a result, there was a considerable delay in getting that patient back to Gympie. I am talking about patients. It is not as though they are tourists going on a trip. It is not right to treat patients in that way.

International Women's Day

Ms POWER (Mansfield) (9.15 p.m.): Mr Deputy Speaker, this evening I wish to make the House aware of the significance of International Women's Day to be celebrated on Monday, 8 March—an event of importance, I am sure, in your home as well as in mine. This weekend will see the beginning of the celebrations to commemorate International Women's Day. The highlights of those activities include a fun run and assorted stalls in the Alice Street gardens on Sunday. The Minister for Tourism Sport and Racing, the Honourable Bob Gibbs, and his department, through its Equity Unit, are to be congratulated on their promotion of the fun run. The run had its inaugural meet last year and is continuing bigger and better this year. Last year, women members participated and will do so again this year to show their support for the run and International Women's Day.

Monday, 8 March is International Women's Day and will begin with a breakfast at the Sheraton Hotel. That function will be hosted by UNIFEM, a women's organisation dedicated to improving the situation of women in Third World countries. Other functions will continue throughout the day, culminating in a cocktail party at Government House. This will be a first at Government House, the initiative of our first woman Governor, Her Excellency Leneen Forde, who has been recognised for her contribution to the women's movement. I take this opportunity to congratulate Her Excellency on her appointment and on her initiative.

The significance of International Women's Day cannot be underestimated. Of late, I have heard people say "Feminists have gone too far!", "I'm not a feminist but—" and "I've no time for those breast-beating feminists!" The feminist movement has brought many issues onto the public agenda that would have otherwise been taboo. Women questioned those practices and fought for their rights, and the quality of life for everyone has improved. As in most organisations to which one belongs, one does not always agree with everything that is done by those in the group, but it does not mean that the group has no relevance or no worthwhile pursuits. The women's movement is no different from other organisations such as p. and c. associations, churches and sports groups. I will now turn to some of the issues that have been placed on the public agenda through the actions of women. These are the reasons why women celebrate International Women's Day. Responses to those issues show the obstacles women have faced over the years when they have persisted with their fight.

When, on 24 April 1902, women gained the right under the Commonwealth Franchise Act to vote federally, that ended a long battle for the women of Australia. A reading of the House of Representatives *Hansard* of 9 April 1902 and of the Senate *Hansard* of 11 April 1902 shows the reluctance of some members to give the franchise to women—a reflection of the views of society at that time. The debate on the Electoral Amendment Act, introduced into the Queensland Parliament on 5 January 1905 again makes interesting reading in *Hansard*. It is important to note that only white women were given the vote at that time. Indigenous women did not receive the vote until about 1950, and for ethnic women it is a right not often given in their country of origin.

I turn now to equal pay. Receiving the vote did not ensure that women's rights and interests were considered—that occurs in this Chamber on occasions—any more than they had been previously. Even to this day, women still receive less pay than men for the same work. That is compounded because women do not usually reach the same management levels as the men who receive the higher wages. Work in Australia is still very much sex-segmented, and usually jobs done by women are lower paid than those done by men. Failure by most employers to recognise women's unique role in the work force and in the reproduction process have been highlighted by the arguments regarding child care and paid parenting leave over many years. Women's child-rearing role is a major obstacle to seniority and promotion in the work place.

Sexual harassment refers to sexual advances which are unsolicited, unwelcome and persistent, and can include verbal innuendo, whistling, requests for dates, and displays of erotic pictures—not often considered offensive, but which may move to more offensive behaviour such as questions on one's private life, requests for sexual favours, indecent phone calls and, finally, rape. All those behaviours are a reflection of the power relationships between men and women where male dominance, whether between teachers and students or employers and employees, is perceived by society as normal behaviour.

The issue of violence against women has made media headlines time and time again. In Palm Springs, it was big news when the Kennedys were accused of date rape, or Mike Tyson was gaoled on charges of date rape. It was also big news when a South Australian judge said that it was okay for husbands to rough up their wives a little to satisfy their needs. Whether the violence is child abuse, incest, domestic violence or rape, it should not be tolerated by our society.

Time expired.

Logan City Workers Rugby and Sporting Club; Mr M. Forrester

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (9.20 p.m.): I rise tonight to detail a misuse of taxpayers' money by the Keating Government. I refer specifically to a grant of \$95,000 to something which is known, rather quaintly, as the Logan City Workers Rugby and Sporting Club. The club's management committee is chaired by a fellow named Mark Forrester, who happens to work as an electorate

assistant to the Federal Member for Forde, the ALP's Mary Crawford. What Mr Forrester will do after 13 March when his job disappears, I do not know, but he is also currently the chairman of the Skillshare committees in Logan City and Springwood, which are also funded by the Federal Government. The club of which he is chairman has now received a \$95,000 grant under the Community Cultural, Recreation and Sporting Facilities Program. That grant was achieved after a meeting between Mr Forrester; Mrs Crawford, who also happens to be the chairman of the Federal Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Employment and Training; and Mr Chris Carberry, who heads a Queensland committee reporting to the Federal Higher Education Minister, Peter Baldwin. All those people have intimate links with the Federal Government, and it appears that the grant was provided because of some vague commitment made by the club to work with the Logan City Skillshare program, of which Mr Forrester is the chairman. Exactly what role Skillshare has in this remains unknown, but the whole deal has been described by Logan City alderman as pork-barrelling. Clearly, all those involved in the application are closely connected to the ALP, and they applied to the ALP Government for the money and got it. It is amazing what a bit of backroom influence can do.

All of that would look a bit sleazy, but not be too much of a concern, if the Logan City Workers Rugby and Sporting Club actually did something—but that is the problem. That club does not have a playing field to its name, and it does not have a rugby team at all. In fact, it appears that the club has made approaches to the Logan City Council and to a local high school to use their existing facilities if they ever decided to actually field a team. So what on earth is the \$95,000 going to be spent on? Contrast the generosity of the Federal Labor Government in this case with the miserly attitude it has shown towards other clubs—and established clubs at that. The Logan City Australian Rules Club sought funds to expand its facilities at Alexander Clark field. It received absolutely nothing. Three sporting clubs in Logan City banded together to lodge an application for funding to enable them to erect some lights to cover a section of Underwood Park. They also were left without one red cent of Government funding.

Sporting clubs throughout Logan City are furious that this new club, with no grounds and no teams, has been given \$95,000 in one fell swoop. Those clubs have worked very long and hard to form themselves into viable entities; they have held raffles and functions to raise money; their members have volunteered their time to put things together from scratch; and they have been given—honourable members can guess—absolutely nothing. Their application has been rejected out of hand. It cannot do much for the morale of all those dedicated and hardworking people to slave away and get no Government assistance and then turn around and see this new club, comprised of Labor Party members and cronies, get a massive injection of funds on its first application.

As I mentioned earlier, just how Skillshare comes into this whole deal is intriguing. Has the good name of Skillshare been brought into disrepute simply to allow this ALP front to get its hands on public money? Is it typical of the cronyism practiced by Labor Party Governments, both State and Federal, that the Logan City Workers Rugby and Sporting Club gets all of the money it asks for because it is run by the local ALP? It is flush with funds, despite not fielding any sporting teams at all, while genuine clubs in the same area comprised of real people, playing real sports get nothing.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr SANTORO: Those inane interjections by the honourable member for Gladstone will not get him anywhere because this is all true. I wonder how many members the Logan City Workers Rugby and Sporting Club has on its books? Or should I say how many "phantom" members—of course, I am not referring to the honourable member for Woodridge. Indeed, I expect many sporting clubs in the Woodridge electorate have been denied funding because all of the money has been siphoned off to the Logan City club. The Opposition joins with many Logan City councillors in expressing disgust at this crony inspired pork-barrelling, and we look

forward to a return to the proper allocation of sports funding under a Hewson Government after 13 March.

Goods and Services Tax

Mr DOLLIN (Maryborough) (9.26 p.m.): As I stated last week in this House, the Nationals have been snowed by the Liberals and sold a pup by the name of GST. If Hewson and Co. win the forthcoming election, we will find out the hard way just what a mongrel of a pup they were sold.

The GST will chew up our free hospital system—the best in the world; it will chew up our working conditions, our tourism industry, our family farmers, our sports and racing industry and, even worse, our manufacturing industry. This pup that the Leader of the Opposition has been conned with will bring about misery and hardship to honest, hardworking, ordinary Queenslanders, as it has in Canada and New Zealand. The GST has been a complete and utter failure in those two countries. The latest polls show that 80 per cent of Canadians have had enough of the GST, and the Prime Minister of Canada has had to resign over it. It is been the ruination of that country. The cost of living went through the roof, inflation and interest rates went up and production fell. It strangled small business in red tape, and what is so frightening about all this is that Hewson's model has been blueprinted from the Canadian GST.

I ask the Nationals to note that this pup will turn on them and tear them to pieces; it will push them back into the political wilderness for a decade. They will know or should know that, once elected, the Liberals will doublecross them, they will be powerless to do anything about it, and with the few members they will have in Government if elected, the Nationals will have about as much voice as Minnie Mouse. I know that there are a lot of Nationals sitting on the other side of the Chamber who would prefer to have no part of the GST. They are starting to feel the wind of change. They can see Keating clawing it back. He is in the right position. A racehorse that is in the lead half way through a race is very often not the winner. The Nationals are being led by a weak leader who has been conned by Hewson. I would be prepared to offer odds on that if Russell Cooper was still the leader he would not have bought the pup. He is too bush smart for that and would have recognised a mongrel pup when he saw one. I will bet that Joh is rolling over in his bed in Tasmania whenever he hears of it.

What concerns me is the damage that the GST would cause in my electorate. This year, the timber industry in my region will turn over in excess of \$200m. The GST would drain \$30m of that out of Maryborough straight into the coffers of Canberra. Walkers will probably turn over something similar—another \$30m off to Canberra. The sugar industry and its allied industries with turnover of, say, \$100m means the draining off from Maryborough of \$15m into the Canberra coffers. There will be about \$200m turnover in the rapidly growing tourist industry in the region—another \$30m from our district to Canberra. What about the citrus industry and the cattle industry? They will all have to donate millions extra to Canberra. All of Maryborough's small businesses will become Dr Hewson's little tax collectors and will also have to pay heavily into the Canberra coffers. They will be able to forget about fishing, families and other forms of relaxation on weekends because they will be flat out working out their GST for Dr Hewson and Canberra.

I can understand the Liberals supporting all of this because, after all, they represent the white shoe brigade—the millionaires, the multinationals and the big importers, the private insurance companies and the greedy medical specialists. The Nationals on the other side heard Dr Hewson and Co. say that the lifting of tariffs would make locally produced and imported goods cheaper. That is what they should keep remembering—cheaper. Surely they are not that thick that they cannot see that this spells ruin for the farmers of this country. Do they believe that farmers can afford to sell their produce any cheaper? Hewson does, as he has promised to lift the 20 per cent customs duty on imports. In other words, he is wiping out tariffs. I think that the Nationals should rethink this whole GST pup that they have been sold. They should

give it the flick. If their leader does not agree, they should give him the flick, too. I think that they would be better off with Russell Cooper.

I will quote from an article in the *Sun-Herald*. It is fresh from New Zealand. It states—

“Major Campbell Roberts, head of the Salvation Army’s social services in New Zealand:

‘The situation has worsened dramatically for low-income families.

A few years ago food banks (soup kitchens) were virtually unknown in New Zealand.

The Government’s privatisation policies have had a dramatic effect on unemployment levels.

Social welfare cuts have had a dramatic effect on low-income families. They have never recovered from the GST and it’s just getting worse.

The whole philosophy of a market-driven economy has had disastrous effects on low income earners.

Many of the people coming to the food banks are from the middle classes. And there is now a sharper social division in New Zealand than has ever existed before.

We are now seeing people living in conditions which have never been seen in New Zealand.’”

Mr D. Jordan

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Nicklin) (9.30 p.m.): This evening, I wish to raise an issue that has been brought to my attention by an elderly war service pensioner, Mr Dave Jordan, of 4 Kefford Street, Wellington Point. For approximately 10 years, Mr Jordan has been endeavouring to highlight an injustice that has been committed against his daughter and son-in-law, Mr and Mrs Aquilina. Mr Jordan has taken this matter up with a number of Ministers in the present Government and in the previous Government also, but to this point has been unsuccessful in getting any satisfaction in relation to what he considers to be straightout fraud committed against his daughter and son-in-law.

Mr Jordan’s story is that, during August 1976, he sold a residence situated at 11 Moorak Street, Taringa, to his daughter, Margaret Ruth Aquilina, and son-in-law, William Joseph Aquilina. On 31 July 1983, his daughter, Margaret Ruth Aquilina, spoke to him about this matter. At that time, he was informed that on 5 July 1982, a Mr K. C. Stacey, a director of Homex Pty Ltd of 197 Moggill Road, Taringa, approached Margaret for the purpose of having her residence at 11 Moorak Street, Taringa, renovated with exterior vinyl cladding. Mrs Aquilina advised Mr Jordan that Stacey had indicated that her residence had been selected as part of a cladding village and that her house would be renovated at no cost to her. He stated she would also receive the sum of \$100 as commission for every order received from clients that Homex had sent to their house. Further negotiations took place later with Stacey on 5 July 1982 in the presence of Mr Jordan’s son-in-law and his daughter. On that occasion, Stacey outlined the facts as they took place during the interview with his daughter earlier that day. During the conversation, Stacey was informed by Mr Jordan’s son-in-law that he was not interested unless a formal legal document was completed regarding this arrangement, and at no cost to him.

Stacey then left the residence and returned some time later with a white form. Mr Jordan’s son-in-law then spoke with a solicitor, Mr Spencer, of Hollingsworth and Spencer, 210 Moggill Road, Taringa, who advised him that that particular work sheet was a legal document and who indicated that there was no charge to the Aquilinas for the supply and installation of cladding. The work sheet was then signed over what was believed to be a blank carbon copy by both Mr Jordan’s daughter and his son-in-law.

After signing this document, Stacey advised his daughter and son-in-law that the signed document would be returned after the renovations had been completed. The document was never returned. The Aquilinas then received a quotation form from Homex Pty Ltd along with a Custom Credit Corporation repayment book. The contract number was 1-354-15-791239 and it showed that 84 monthly repayments of \$135 would commence from 18 September 1982. This documentation was received on or about 18 September 1982 by mail.

Contact was again made with the solicitor, Mr Spencer, who advised Mr Jordan's son-in-law that there was a good chance of winning the court proceedings envisaged against Homex; however, the costs involved would be prohibitive. The Aquilinas then sought advice from Jordan's son, David John Jordan, of Roma, who advised the Aquilinas to pay out Custom Credit Corporation, and that was subsequently done. Mr Jordan then wrote to the Commissioner of Police on 1 August 1983 concerning this matter. There was further consultation and confrontation with Homex and Custom Credit. Mr Jordan has made complaints to the Police Department and to the Federal Attorney-General, among others, over a long period, as I said earlier. I believe that an injustice has been perpetrated against these people. What concerns me and has prompted me to deliver this adjournment debate speech is that in response to Mr Jordan's request, Custom Credit has forwarded to Mr Jordan a copy of a so-called promissory note allegedly signed by the Aquilinas which shows that they promised to pay 84 consecutive payments of \$135 in relation to the work carried out by Homex Pty Ltd. I have a copy of the document in front of me. The matter that concerns me and which should concern everyone else is that the signature of Mrs Aquilina on the promissory note is not, in my opinion, the signature that she signs on other documents. I have many other documents to verify that fact.

There appears to have been a deliberate fraud perpetrated by someone to gain money from the Aquilinas by fraudulent practices. The people concerned are members of a semi-illiterate family and have suffered immensely as a result of these actions. Because of all these problems, they have lost their home and the Aquilinas' marriage has broken up. For a considerable period, Mr Jordan has been trying to get some justice in relation to this matter. It is a sad case, and I ask the Minister for Justice to take another look at the matter to see if something can be done about bringing justice to these people. I believe they have been got at by people who have fraudulently attempted to take them down. I believe there is enough evidence to have this case reopened and looked at.

Federal Coalition's Immigration and Ethnic Affairs Policy

Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (9.35 p.m.): Tonight, I wish to talk about the coalition's policy on immigration and ethnic affairs. Dr Hewson has jumped on the bandwagon of criticism of migration levels and multiculturalism. In the middle of a recession, arguments about immigration are inevitable. Labor is handling immigration with responsibility, sensitivity and balance. The Government has increased Australia's ability to identify and deal with illegal immigrants, cut immigration to a level that is appropriate for our current economic circumstances, and at the same time has ensured that immigrants have access to necessary support, such as English language teaching. Dr Hewson has little other than populist rhetoric to flesh out his policies. On immigration and services for migrants, Labor and the coalition are as alike as chalk and cheese.

There will be cuts to migration programs under a coalition Government. Dr Hewson wants a substantial reduction in the immigration intake to 50 000 in the short term, while John Howard wants to go even further. On 24 August 1992 on *Lateline*, John Howard stated—

“I would for one, argue very strongly that it ought to be dramatically less.”

Even Jeff Kennett thinks that this is going too far. On 25 August 1992 on radio 3AW, he stated—

“Can I say he is predictable. I think it was about this time before the 1988 State election that he made some comments about immigration, and I think he’s much better suited at addressing himself to industrial relations.”

That is a damning comment indeed. Even the great Victorian fascist, Kennett, is uncomfortable with the coalition’s policy.

The Opposition says that the migration program needs to be changed in favour of skills, but Labor has already achieved a record proportion of skilled migrants—28 per cent—in the current migrant intake. Dr Hewson could not cut migrant levels to 50 000 or less and maintain the high proportion of skilled migrants. This is because a very low migrant intake would be made up of people who are refugees or who are on family reunion—people who Australia is already committed to allowing to migrate. There would be few places left for highly skilled people. This poorly thought-out policy means that the Opposition is left with a program that may actually cut the level of skilled migrants rather than increase it. Whilst the Opposition says that it would massively cut immigration and at the same time increase skills, it does not say how. It is more interested in appealing to the lowest common denominator and, by so doing, exacerbating pockets of insidious bigotry so evident in groups such as the League of Rights and the neo-Nazi Confederate Action Party.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! There are too many conversations in the Chamber.

Mr PITT: What does Dr Hewson have to say about multiculturalism? He has offended many of Australia’s ethnic communities and showed his lack of understanding of the importance multiculturalism has to Australia’s cultural development when he told the Western Australian Liberal Party on 25 July 1992—

“Multiculturalism—another classic example—the politics of division not the politics of one nation. Absolutely a fundamental mistake in this country. We are a multicultural society—yes. But we should never have multiculturalism. All we do is elevate a few professional ethnics if I might use that emotive term, and differentiate those from the interests of all the migrants that have come to this country.”

It seems that Dr Hewson would deny migrants a voice to put their needs and interests to Government, leaving them to fend for themselves as individuals without even support from their own leaders.

Let us look more closely at the coalition’s policy. The independent and concessional categories, for example, contain the most highly skilled migrants but they would be cut, and severely restricting family reunions may reduce Australia’s capacity to attract skilled migrants, who often anticipate some family reunion. Far from shifting the balance in favour of skills, the Opposition’s cuts would actually reduce skills levels. Consider these points. Firstly, the Opposition’s policy would have little effect on the preferential family category, which accounts for 37 000 places in the 1991-92 migration program. Secondly, reductions would therefore have to come from the more highly skilled independent and concessional categories. Thirdly, a program of 50 000 on current trends would allow only for the entry of preferential family and limited humanitarian and/or economic entry. The current record skill level of about 28 per cent would, on most analyses, drop to about 18 per cent for a 50 000 program. Skill levels are likely to be around 25 per cent for a 70 000 program, assuming a lower humanitarian program of 8 000 places and very limited concessional entry.

Dr Hewson says that he would cut funding to the Overseas Property Group, which would affect work from many overseas missions. This would make it more expensive and therefore more difficult for immigration officials to assess the skills of potential migrants. This would also make it hard for many Australian families to find out about events in their homeland, such as floods, earthquakes and accidents—information that is usually channelled through our overseas missions. Travellers heading overseas would also be affected, as our missions handle emergencies, passport loss and consular and repatriation matters on a regular basis. The Opposition would deny welfare benefits to

new arrivals for a two-year qualifying period. In addition, it would apply more widely the mandatory assurance of support provisions to include concessional family applicants and ensure that elderly pension-age migrants do not receive special benefit.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 9.40 p.m.