

WEDNESDAY, 14 JULY 1993

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

REGISTER OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS**Report**

Mr SPEAKER: Honourable members, I lay upon the table of the House the fifth report on the Register of Members' Interests pursuant to the resolutions dated 27 November 1990 and 2 March 1993.

Ordered to be printed.

PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

Bardon Professional Development Centre

From Mr Quinn (8 signatories) praying that the proposed sale of the Bardon Professional Development Centre and adjoining Crown land be reconsidered to enable it to be retained for educational purposes in its bushland setting.

Child Molesters

From Mr Bennett (15 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 (108 signatories).

Queensland Nursing Council

From Mr Horan (594 signatories) praying that the appointment procedure and salary of the executive officer, Queensland Nursing Council, be reconsidered in consultation with the Queensland Nursing Council.

Tobacco Levy

From Mr Horan (339 signatories) praying that the tobacco levy be increased and that the proceeds be channelled into an independent foundation for health promotion, research and sponsorship of sport and the arts.

Queensland Law Society Act

From Mr Beanland (11 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will change or repeal the Queensland Law Society Act, section 39 and subsequent rule 117(4), to enable citizens to conduct their own legal matters with the right to use or employ a person to act on their behalf.

Citytrain Services

From Mr J. N. Goss (197 signatories) praying that the decision to cut back city trains services along all major Brisbane lines be reviewed.

TM Burke Estates Pty Ltd

From Mr J. H. Sullivan (389 signatories) praying that a moratorium be imposed on any further development by TM Burke Estates Pty Ltd and that an urgent public inquiry be carried out into the administration of the TM Burke lease.

Redcliffe Hospital

From Mr Hayward (2 429 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will take action to ensure that current bed numbers and facilities at Redcliffe Hospital are maintained.

Kindergarten Funding

From Mr Perrett (13 signatories) praying that sufficient funds be provided in the 1993-94 Budget to enable State Education Department Subsidies (SEDS) to continue to provide adequate funding for community kindergartens and that extra funding be also provided for the Creche and Kindergarten Association.

Similar petitions were received from Mr Littleproud (15 signatories), Mr Horan (22 signatories), Mr Quinn (233 signatories), Mr Foley (65 signatories), Mr FitzGerald (28 signatories), Mr Pitt (38 signatories), Mr Beanland (28 signatories) and from Mrs Edmond (64 signatories) respectively.

Daintree, Electricity Supply

From Mr McGrady (69 signatories) praying for urgent action to be taken to provide mains electrical power at an affordable price to property owners and residents in the Daintree area.

Petitions received.

STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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

Aboriginal Land Act—

Aboriginal Land (Land Not Claimable) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 176

Agricultural Standards Amendment Act—

Proclamation—remaining provisions of the Act not in force commence 30 June 1993, No. 208

Associations Incorporation Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Auctioneers and Agents Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Australian Financial Institutions Commission Act—

Australian Financial Institutions Commission Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 232

Bills of Sale and Other Instruments Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Brisbane Casino Agreement Act—

Brisbane Casino Agreement Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 198

Building Act—

Building Fire Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 200

Building Societies Fund Act—

Proclamation—remaining provisions of the Act not in force commence 1 July 1993, No. 228

Business Names Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Casino Control Act—

Casino Control (Games) Amendment Notice (No. 1) 1993, No. 179

Coal Mining Act—

Coal Mining (General Rules for Open-cut Coal Mines) Amendment Rule (No. 2) 1993, No. 178

Coal Mining (Highwall Mining) Order 1993, No. 177

Collections Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Corporations (Queensland) Act—

Corporations (Queensland) Rules Order 1993, No. 201

Court Funds Act—

Court Funds Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 241

Credit Act—

Credit Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 213

Dairy Industry Act—

Dairy Industry (Scheme for Restructuring Distribution) Order 1993, No. 206

District Courts Act—

District Courts Rules Amendment Order (No. 1) 1993, No. 191

Education (Senior Secondary School Studies) Act—

Education (Senior Secondary School Studies) Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1993, No. 210

Electricity Act—

Electricity (Articles of the Queensland Electricity Supply Industry Employees' Superannuation Scheme) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 216

Electricity (Superannuation Scheme Determination) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 217

Electricity (Superannuation Scheme Determination) Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 218

Electricity (Superannuation Scheme Determination) Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1993, No. 219

Electricity (Superannuation Scheme Determination) Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1993, No. 220

Queensland Electricity Supply Industry Employer-Funded Accumulations Superannuation Fund Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1993, No. 215

Evidence Act—

Evidence Regulation 1993, No. 202

Exotic Diseases in Animals Act—

Exotic Diseases in Animals Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 172

Factories and Shops Act—

Factories and Shops (Sale of Motor Fuel) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 245

Fauna Conservation Act—

Fauna Conservation Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 226

Financial Institutions Legislation Amendment Act—

Proclamation—remaining provisions of the Act not in force commence 1 July 1993, No. 229

Financial Institutions (Queensland) Act—

Financial Institutions Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 231

Financial Institutions (Queensland—Savings and Transitional Provisions) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 230

Fire Service Act—

Building Fire Safety Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 200

Fire Service Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 189

Fire Service Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 190

Fishing Industry Organisation and Marketing Act—

Fishing Industry Organisation and Marketing Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1993, No. 235

Forestry Act—

Forestry Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1993, No. 174

Forestry Amendment Regulation (No. 4) 1993, No. 239

Funeral Benefit Business Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Golden Casket Art Union Act—

Golden Casket (On-line) Amendment Rule (No. 1) 1993, No. 246

Harbours Act—

Harbours (Management of Harbour Works) Amendment Order (No. 1) 1993, No. 233

Harbours (Ports Corporation) By-law 1993, No. 234

Harbours (Port of Brisbane—Houseboats) Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1993, No. 250

Harbours (Suspension of Harbour Dues) Order 1993, No. 199

Hawkers Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Health Act—

Health (Scientific Research and Studies) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 192

Industrial Relations Act—

Industrial Relations Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 223

Industrial Relations Amendment Act—

Proclamation—commencement date of sections 5, 20 to 24, 34 and 36 to be 18 June 1993, No. 221

Invasion of Privacy Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Justice Legislation (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act—

Proclamation—commencement date of sections 50 and 120 to be 18 June 1993, No. 211

Proclamation—commencement date of section 124 to be 2 July 1993, No. 203

Justices Act—

Justices Regulation 1993, No. 212

Land Act—

Land Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 243

Land Sales Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Liquor Act—

Liquor Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 249

Local Government Act—

Local Government (Financial Divisions) Regulation 1993, No. 240

Marine Parks Act—

Marine Parks Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 195

Meat Industry Act—

Meat Industry Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1993, No. 188

Mineral Resources Act—

Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 1993, No. 193

Mineral Resources Amendment Regulation (No. 7) 1993, No. 204

Mortgage Brokers Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

Motor Vehicles Securities Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242

National Parks and Wildlife Act—

National Park 9 Counties of Binburie and Diamantina (Declaration) Order 1993, No. 253

National Park 166 County of Banks (Extension) Order 1993, No. 194

- National Park 227 County of Herbert (Extension) Order 1993, No. 254
- National Park 1024 County of Nares (Extension) Order 1993, No. 225
- Partnership (Limited Liability) Act—
Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242
- Pawnbrokers Act—
Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242
- Petroleum Act—
Petroleum Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 205
- Plant Protection Act—
Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 173
Plant Protection Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1993, No. 209
Plant Protection (Prescription of Pests) Regulation 1993, No. 238
Plant Protection (Thrips Palmi) Notice (No. 1) 1993, No. 196
Plant Protection (Western Flower Thrips) Notice 1993, No. 180
- Port Of Brisbane Authority Act—
Harbours (Port of Brisbane—Houseboats) Amendment By-law (No. 1) 1993, No. 250
- Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act—
Navy Bean Marketing Board (Transfer of Assets and Liabilities) Order 1993, No. 255
Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing (Egg Marketing Boards Extension) Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 236
- Public Trustee Act—
Public Trustee Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 175
- Queensland Cement & Lime Company Limited Agreement Act—
Queensland Cement & Lime Company Limited Agreement Amendment Order (No. 1) 1993, No. 214
- Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act—
Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242
- Regulatory Reform Act—
Regulatory Reform Regulation 1993, No. 224
- Retirement Villages Act—
Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242
- Second-hand Dealers and Collectors Act—
Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242
- Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements Act—
Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements (North Burdekin Water Board) Order (No. 1) 1993, No. 184
Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements (Warrubullen Drainage Board) Order (No. 1) 1993, No. 182
Statutory Bodies Financial Arrangements (Yambocully Water Board) Order (No. 1) 1993, No. 183
- Statutory Instruments Act—
Statutory Instruments Amendment Regulation (No. 5) 1993, No. 197
Statutory Instruments Amendment Regulation (No. 6) 1993, No. 247
- Stock Act—
Stock Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 252
- Sugar Industry Act—
Sugar Industry Amendment Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 187
Sugar Industry Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1993, No. 237
Sugar Industry (Mill Peak Adjustments) Amendment Guideline (No. 1) 1993, No. 181
- Superannuation (Government and Other Employees) Act—
Superannuation (Government and Other Employees) Amendment of Articles Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 185
- Superannuation Legislation Amendment Act—
Proclamation—(a) sections 14, 20 and 33 of the Act commence 18 June 1993; (b) remaining provisions of the Act not in force commence 1 July 1993, No. 207
- Superannuation (State Public Sector) Act—
Superannuation (State Public Sector—Membership) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 248
- Supreme Court Act—
Corporations (Queensland) Rules Order 1993, No. 201
- Trade Measurement Administration Act—
Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges) Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 242
- Traffic Act—
Traffic Amendment Regulation (No. 3) 1993, No. 251
- Travel Agents Act—

Consumer Affairs (Fees and Charges)
Amendment Regulation (No. 1) 1993,
No. 242

Water Resources Act—

Water Resources (Central Queensland
Water Supply Agreement) Regulation
1993, No. 186

Workers' Compensation Act—

Workers' Compensation Amendment
Regulation (No. 1) 1993, No. 222

Workplace Health and Safety Act—

Workplace Health and Safety Amendment
Regulation (No. 2) 1993, No. 244

Workplace Health and Safety (Mixed
Gases Diving) Special Standard 1993,
No. 227.

PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the
table—

- (a) Deputy Premier, Minister for
Administrative Services and Rural
Communities (Mr Burns)—

Response to Recommendation
Three of the Parliamentary
Committee of Public Works Report
of an Inquiry into Queensland Centre
for Advanced Technologies.

- (b) Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing
(Mr Gibbs)—

Lang Park Trust—Report for 1992.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Corporatisation of QIDC

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns—Treasurer)
(2.36 p.m.), by leave: Yesterday, in this
House, the Leader of the Liberal Party was
responsible for an extraordinary and cowardly
attack on the Under Treasurer of Queensland,
a senior and respected public servant. It was
the kind of attack which—

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order.
The comments by the honourable member
were made during the debate on the
Appropriation Bill, to which the Treasurer still
has to respond. The debate is still before the
House.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will seek the
advice of the Clerk. I have received advice
from the Clerk. As long as the Treasurer
restricts his remarks to the comments about
the Under Treasurer and not the debate, then
it is relevant and it is in order.

Mr De LACY: Thank you.

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr SPEAKER: I have just made my
ruling. I ask the honourable member to
resume her seat.

Mrs SHELDON: But it was in the debate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have just made
my ruling. I have consulted with the Clerk. I
am not going to debate it further.

Mr De LACY: I wish to make a ministerial
statement in respect of the QIDC. The
issue—

Mrs Sheldon: Which was in the debate.

Mr De LACY: It is a public issue, and I
wish to make a ministerial statement in
respect of the QIDC. The issue was kicked off
12 days ago when a national business
newspaper based in Sydney wrote
breathlessly of a leaked secret report, the so-
called Kendalls report. A local business
newspaper bought into the act 10 days later
with a predictable conspiracy theory, namely
that Treasury had leaked the report because it
had a hidden agenda to control the QIDC. In
a brilliant piece of original research, the
Leader of the Liberal Party took that
newspaper report, together with a number of
previous articles in the newspaper, and wove
together a convoluted fairytale, totally lacking
in facts. I will now spoil a good story with a few
facts.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr De LACY: Members opposite need
some protection.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I think there is a
problem with a member referring to a matter
that is currently before the House. I suggest to
the Treasurer that it might be more opportune
for him to raise this matter in his reply to the
debate on the Appropriation Bill.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Sugar Industry Package

Hon. E. D. CASEY (Mackay—Minister for
Primary Industries) (2.38 p.m.), by leave: I
have today released the selection criteria for
projects which will be funded under the
proposed sugar industry infrastructure
program. The infrastructure program is part of
a broader package of initiatives known as the
Sugar Industry Package, which was
announced by Mr Crean and me on 2
February and which is designed to ensure the
future of the industry.

The Sugar Industry Package was
developed following consultation with all
sectors of the industry and reflects a

cooperative approach between Governments and industry towards the future of the Queensland sugar industry. It is designed to provide the necessary framework for investment in the industry and ensure its future growth by giving confidence to canegrowers and sugar millers. The infrastructure package is the next step in further ensuring that confidence and growth exist within the industry. By its support of the infrastructure package, the Queensland Government is demonstrating its understanding of the role played by infrastructure in supporting the economic viability and ecologically sustainable development of the Queensland sugar industry. Accordingly, the emphasis in project selection will be on those projects which lead to effective improvements in the economic performance of the industry.

I applaud the willingness of the industry to contribute financially towards the cost of projects which will be funded under this package. This is a positive attitude and an indication of the cooperative approach to development that exists in the sugar industry. It will also ensure that the maximum benefit is obtained from the infrastructure package. A project selection group has been established to advise Mr Crean and me on the merits of particular projects. It comprises representatives of the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments and the sugar industry itself. The group will be chaired by an officer from my department.

On 9 September, project proposals will close with my department. The project selection group will make its recommendations to Mr Crean and me by 8 October. By 31 October, the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments intend to announce their project selections. Over the last few months, I have been very impressed by the high standard of projects suggested as possible candidates for this work. In conclusion, I wish to take the opportunity to publicly encourage representatives of the Queensland sugar industry to take advantage of the infrastructure package.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Overseas Visit by Police Minister

Hon. P. J. BRADY (Rockhampton—Minister for Police and Emergency Services) (2.41 p.m.), by leave: From Wednesday, 26 May 1993, to Saturday, 29 May 1993, I visited New Zealand in conjunction with the meeting of the Australasian Police Ministers Council held in Christchurch. While in New Zealand, I

took the opportunity of discussing police education and training issues with the New Zealand Police Commissioner and his senior officers located at New Zealand police's national headquarters in Wellington. This subject is of particular relevance in view of the recommendations of the Public Sector Management Commission review of the Queensland Police Service.

In the light of the review's recommendations in relation to the Oxley Police Academy and the Queensland Police College at Chelmer, I also felt it prudent to inspect the Royal New Zealand Police College in Wellington. Many features of this state-of-the-art facility could potentially be suitable for adoption in the Queensland context. Whilst in Wellington, I also took the opportunity of visiting New Zealand's Police Minister with whom brief but fruitful discussions were held on a number of policing issues.

The Australasian Police Ministers Council is the principal national policing forum at the ministerial level. The Christchurch conference considered a wide range of agenda topics, leading to a number of important resolutions with implications for Queensland policing. I now seek leave to table the trip itinerary and the conference's final media release.

Leave granted.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Protection of Whistleblowers

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning) (2.42 p.m.), by leave: Yesterday, I met with the Chairman of the Criminal Justice Commission, Mr Rob O'Regan, and informed him of the Government's commitment to protecting whistleblowers in Queensland. I advised Mr O'Regan that I was intending to meet with the Whitsunday Shire Council today to discuss its action on Monday of dismissing its shire clerk. Mr O'Regan supported this course of action.

This morning, I met with the council in Proserpine and outlined both the Government's and the CJC's resolve to ensuring that employees of Government and councils who provide information to the CJC were not seen to be victimised. I requested the council to consider rescinding its decision of Monday and reinstate its shire clerk. I also outlined to council that other options were available to Government if the council were not prepared to take this course of action, the main option being for the Government to use

its power under the Local Government Act to rescind or suspend the resolution.

As a result of today's meeting, which allowed all councillors to discuss the options and have their say, the council was not prepared to reinstate the shire clerk. The council was divided four-all, with the councillors who originally voted to sack the shire clerk not prepared to change their vote. I thanked councillors for attending today's meeting and advised the council that the Government would consider its position and take what action it deemed necessary.

I would like to state quite clearly that the Government is committed to ensuring that individuals who cooperate with the Criminal Justice Commission are not only dealt with fairly by Government and local authorities but are also seen to be dealt with fairly. I believe that the actions of the Whitsunday Shire Council last Monday in sacking a person who quite clearly had cooperated with the CJC in an investigation into the shire council could have major repercussions in the fight against corruption if the Government is not seen to support whistleblowers. I therefore wish to inform the Parliament that I intend to take the necessary action under the Local Government Act to suspend the resolution of the council. This will ensure that the shire clerk is reinstated to her position.

PRIVILEGE

Conduct by Visitors to Parliament House

Mr FITZGERALD (Lockyer) (2.45 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr Cooper interjected.

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

Mr FITZGERALD: Yesterday and last night, a group of students attending a national conference for a particular organisation conducted at Parliament House caused inconvenience to members, guests and visitors to Parliament House. I advise the House that their conduct was most unsatisfactory. Those young people did not appear to be escorted by any member of Parliament or member of staff, although I understand that a ministerial staffer was with them at times.

At times those people did not allow free passage of members and, in particular, were untidy with cigarette butts. Some of them used the cement rails in the corridor connecting the annexe to this building to stub out their cigarettes. Their conduct was a

disgrace to Parliament House. It reflects on all members. Escorted groups of senior citizens and schoolchildren were appalled at their behaviour.

I believe that the responsibility for guests in this place needs to be reviewed to ensure that the privileges of members are not infringed upon. I shall write to you, Mr Speaker, asking you to consider whether you should seek advice from the Privileges Committee on the matter.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (2.46 p.m.), by leave: On 28 May this year, an article appeared in the *Courier-Mail* stating that I had admitted using false information against an Ipswich alderman in a speech to Parliament. As this was quite incorrect, I contacted the chief of staff, Dennis Watt, and also attempted to talk to Des Houghton about the matter. I immediately wrote to the *Courier-Mail* to rectify the incorrect article, and the letter was faxed through that same day. However, this Lord Nelson of the print media did not publish my letter.

Although such conduct from the *Courier-Mail* does not surprise me, I wish to ensure that members of this House know the truth of this matter. I wish to make it quite clear that I did not knowingly use any false information against anyone under parliamentary privilege. The person concerned took more than a week to react to what I had said in Parliament about him. He has at no time contacted me to show proof that my information was false, and he very carefully took up only one small part of what I accused him of and has not seen fit to address the other far more serious matters.

These allegations have all been passed on to the CJC for its investigation, so serious were they in my judgment. If I receive evidence that I was wrong in respect of the particular aspect of my speech complained about, I am quite willing to table any documents in Parliament and to apologise to the person concerned for any error. I repeat: I did not knowingly use false information to malign anyone, nor would I.

Mr SANTORO proceeding to give notice of a motion—

Mr Hamill interjected.

Mr SANTORO: The Minister may laugh, but I will stand up for my electorate.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SANTORO: I am almost finished, Mr Speaker.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It appears as though the honourable member is having the debate now rather than giving notice of it.

Mr SANTORO: I am almost finished, Mr Speaker.

QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

1. Currumbin Minerals, Beach Mining Applications

Mrs GAMIN asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

“With reference to beach mining applications for Gold Coast beaches by Currumbin Minerals—

- (1) Can he advise on the progress of the environmental impact study in respect of these mining applications?
- (2) When does he expect this report to be made public?”

Mr McGRADY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Currumbin minerals received the final guidelines for preparation of the environmental impact study last October.

The company has been preparing the draft EIS as required under the Mineral Resources Act.

The company expects to submit a draft EIS for assessment by late August 1993.

2. Currumbin Minerals, Beach Mining Applications

Mrs GAMIN asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

“With reference to beach mining applications for Gold Coast beaches—

As almost a year and a half has gone by since these applications were first advertised, will he ensure that adequate time is made available to the general public to study the environmental impact report and to make further submissions prior to the formal hearing of the applications?”

Mr McGRADY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The general public will have ample opportunity to study the draft environmental impact study and lodge objections.

Currumbin minerals expects to provide a draft EIS for public display in late August. The public will have three months to study the report and lodge objections.

The Government attitude to the proposal has been and remains to proceed with fairness to all parties, to abide by due processes, with maximum public consultation and input.

3. Local Authority Boundaries

Mr SLACK asked the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning—

“With reference to the investigation of external boundaries of local authorities—

- (1) What is the total cost to the Queensland Government and local authorities (direct and indirect) of the investigation since March 1990 when the resolution of the Parliament was passed?
- (2) Can he estimate how long it will take to recover this amount from any perceived benefits resulting from the investigation?”

Mr MACKENROTH: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

(1) The Local Government Commissioner has an annual budget of approximately \$1.4 million for 1992/93. The cost for EARC was \$428,754 as at 30 June 1992 as reported in its annual report.

To estimate the time and resources applied to the process of improving the local government system for every person involved at the State or local government level in Queensland would be virtually impossible.

(2) No.

However, Section 4k of the Local Government Act 1936-1993 provides that when considering a proposed change to the external boundaries of local authorities, the Local Government Commissioner must ensure the provision of efficient and effective local government in the relevant areas.

The commissioner has only completed one preliminary report of a major external boundary change—the possible merger of Gympie City and Widee Shire. I understand he estimates if the merger goes ahead it would save in the vicinity of \$600,000 per annum dropping to \$300,000 per annum for 1996/97.

4. Public Officials

Mr CONNOR asked the Treasurer—

"With reference to WA Inc Royal Commission recommendation 6(c)—

What guarantees, indemnities and "sureties" are presently not vested in public officials in Queensland?"

Mr De LACY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The authority for the giving of Government guarantees, indemnities and sureties derives from legislation or the position of public officials. As far as I am aware, all Government guarantees, indemnities and sureties have been given pursuant to the above authority.

5. Gas Turbine Power Stations

Mr GILMORE asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

"With reference to his recent claim in a parliamentary debate that liquid fuel fired gas turbines were an economical option for electric power generation and in view of his commitment to site drilling in Townsville, which suggests that a decision has been taken to proceed with such an installation—

- (1) What capacity will the proposed gas turbine power station provide?
- (2) What will the cost be?
- (3) How much will it cost to generate power (expressed in cents/kilowatt hour) at the facility?
- (4) How many such facilities are being planned for Queensland?
- (5) What will be the total cost and how much power will be generated?
- (6) Have private or corporate bodies been approached regarding investment, private ownership or management of these facilities?
- (7) If not, for what reason?"

Mr McGRADY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The member for Tablelands has got it wrong again. He obviously neither understands the economics of power supply nor the process of investigation and consultation which this Government is committed to. I contrast this with the previous Government's insistence on deciding power station sites based on politics.

With the current rates of growth in electricity demand, new capacity may be required in 1998. The QEC is investigating various options to

provide the best means of meeting the demands of its customers in that period, and for well into the future.

These options include—

- (A) Coal fired plant: coal fired options being examined involve extensions to either Tarong or Callide 'B' power stations, or the construction of new power stations at three new sites on the Darling Downs.
- (B) Gas fired gas turbine plant: gas turbine power stations fuelled by natural gas are also an option and sites would be investigated in the vicinity of the Roma - Brisbane gas pipeline.
- (C) Liquid fuelled gas turbines: sites for gas turbines powered by liquid fuels are being examined at Cairns, Townsville and Brisbane.
- (D) Interconnection with New South Wales: the possibility of interconnecting the electricity grids of New South Wales and Queensland is also being actively pursued.
- (E) Utilisation of existing assets: investigations are also in hand to determine the costs of using existing assets such as Callide 'A' and Collinsville Power Stations.
- (F) Other option: the QEC is also investigating demand side options, co-generation and renewable energy sources to provide at least some of the additional capacity needed.

In direct response to the member's question, there has been no decision to install gas turbine plants. Until the best options to meet future customer demands have been investigated and identified, there can be no commitment to proceed with a liquid fuelled gas turbine power station. Hence, its capacity has not been determined.

The costs associated with a gas turbine facility will not be known until the evaluation of fuel tenders is complete, and the results of the feasibility studies at the possible liquid fuelled gas turbine sites in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns are known.

Depending on the results of the QEC investigations of the best means of meeting the demands of Queensland's consumers, the best solution may be one or a mixture of the proposed options.

The member for the Tablelands would also be aware that the National Grid Management Council (NGMC) protocol, which was endorsed by the Queensland Government, contains provisions relating to the sourcing of new generating capacity.

These provisions are intended to ensure that new capacity is sourced competitively on a multi-State basis, and that both private and

public organisations can compete for new generation on equal terms.

The recent decision by the Queensland Government to corporatise the Queensland electricity supply industry will encourage this competition for generation.

Consideration is being given to the implementation of a competitive bidding process for new capacity so as to meet the requirements of the NGMC protocol within the new industry structure. However, a major concern in this regard is to ensure the timely availability of new capacity to meet the growth in Queensland's consumer demand.

At the present time, it is too early for tenders to be sought for the construction, ownership and operation of new generating plant.

6. Callide A Power Station

Mr GILMORE asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

“With reference to his statement in the Parliament that “a company” was investigating the Callide “A” power station with a view to running it as a private provider of power to the grid and given that this State faces serious power shortages in 1998—

- (1) What is the name of the company?
- (2) If it is a consultant firm, for whom are they undertaking the consultancy?
- (3) Is a similar study, or has similar interest been shown in the Collinsville power station?
- (4) If so, by whom?
- (5) What time constraints have been placed on one or both of these studies?
- (6) How soon can it be expected that power will be generated at one or both stations?
- (7) What studies have been done by the QEC in respect of these options?
- (8) If private companies are able to operate such stations profitably, why doesn't the QEC refurbish them to meet future power needs?”

Mr McGRADY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The State does not face any shortages of power other than in the member's mind. In fact, due to the energy audit called for by this Government, the State has more possible options for power supply than ever before in its history.

The name of the company cannot be disclosed for reasons of commercial confidentiality. However, the company is investigating the possible purchase and recommissioning of Callide ‘A’ as an alternative to purchasing electricity from the Queensland electricity grid as part of a feasibility study into a major new industry development.

QEC has reviewed the possibility of recommissioning Callide ‘A’ and Collinsville at regular intervals. The commissioning programme at Stanwell and the growth rate of electricity demand indicates the earliest date for recommissioning both power stations, if proved viable, would be 1998.

QEC is currently assessing the viability of refurbishing and recommissioning Collinsville and Callide ‘A’ Power Stations.

The viability of each station will depend on the assessment of the following issues which at this stage have not been completed —

- * the remaining life of the generating plant,
- * the cost of refurbishment,
- * the availability and cost of fuel and water,
- * the cost of alternative options for electricity supply.

Refurbishment and recommissioning of the power stations' plant would take approximately 3 years.

7. D'Oliveira Methane Technology

Mr ELLIOTT asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

“With reference to his indication in the Parliament on 20 May that if the University of Queensland evaluation of the d'Oliveira methane technology were to cost only some \$28,000, he would be prepared, in the interests of Queensland, to have it evaluated by Dr Paul Greenfields of the Chemical Engineering Department of that University—

Will he now confirm that the Queensland Government, through his department, will have this methane technology evaluated?”

Mr McGRADY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Let me first say that I did not either state or imply that I would be prepared to have the D'Oliveira proposal evaluated by the university of Queensland. A careful preliminary evaluation of the proposal by D'Oliveira methane technology has already been made by officers of my department. After reading the report, I agree with their conclusion that no useful purpose would be achieved in using public

funds to evaluate in detail a proposal which is fundamentally flawed. The plan put forward by Mr D'Oliveira was unsound both technically and financially. The CSIRO have not given this project their backing, and were themselves unwilling to commit funds to investigate it further. They simply acknowledged that Biogas technology works. We all know that. It is working today at luggage point, so we don't need to spend \$28,000.00 to prove it. What we also know is that Mr D'Oliveira's methane refinery, even if it could work as he describes, would be prohibitively expensive to construct and could never recover its own running costs. I have no intention of spending further public money on this proposal.

8. North West County Council, Electricity Connections

Mr ELLIOTT asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

“With reference to my deputation, together with the Wagamba Shire Council and others, to him regarding anomalies relating to security deposits for electricity connections in the North West County Council supply area, as opposed to those users who are in the South West Queensland Electricity Authority area, who have only been required to give minimum guarantees of electricity use and having regard to the above anomalies in both areas represented by myself, the Member for Warwick and the Member for Warrego—

Will he give an assurance that his Government will act in the spirit that previous Governments demonstrated when they previously amended supply tariffs, to ensure equalisation of the consumers regardless of where they live?”

Mr McGRADY: Mr Speaker, I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The North West County Council is a New South Wales Electricity Authority franchised to supply electricity in Queensland in the town of Goondiwindi and the shires of Wagamba and Inglewood in Queensland. All electricity consumed in this area is generated in New South Wales.

New rural and commercial/industrial consumers throughout the county council's area of supply are required to meet the full cost of electricity extensions to the point where electricity is required. This has been a longstanding policy of the county council.

The county council's policy has always been to treat the New South Wales area and Queensland franchise area as a single entity. This has resulted in economies, and a better system to the benefit of Queensland consumers in the franchise area.

In late 1983 an investigation was carried out by the then State Electricity Commission of Queensland (SECQ) into various matters relating to the franchise area, including the issues of tariffs and conditions of supply.

One of the causes for this investigation was the reversal of the traditional favourable price advantage enjoyed in the main by New South Wales tariffs compared to similar Queensland tariffs.

As a result of this investigation a Queensland Government rebate was introduced for the purpose of bringing electricity charges in the franchise area to a level where the Queensland consumers were not disadvantaged. The Queensland Government rebate still applies. However, the supply conditions applying to the franchise area remained unchanged; the previous Government obviously saw no need to change the system. However, this Government is prepared to look at the scheme and I have required QEC to take up this issue of different conditions of supply applying in the franchise area compared to those applying in adjoining areas in Queensland supplied by SWQEB, with the North West County Council.

The county council has pointed out that there are important financial considerations which must be taken into account when examining conditions of supply. These issues are not straightforward and must have regard to the operational arrangements in the area.

The QEC has assured me that it is investigating this issue as expeditiously as possible.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Local Authority Borrowings

Mr BORBIDGE: I ask the Treasurer: how does he justify his Gestapo tactic of ordering Queensland councils to borrow from the Queensland Treasury Corporation, which will benefit the Consolidated Fund by \$12m to \$13m a year, after both face-to-face oral and written undertakings that he would not tax local authority borrowings?

Mr De LACY: The Leader of the Opposition might remember that, in last year's Budget Speech, I announced a credit enhancement fee. After some discussions with local authorities, we decided not to proceed with a credit enhancement fee. That fee was effectively a 0.5 per cent fee attached to all borrowings through the Queensland Treasury Corporation. It carried on from the guarantee fee which had been imposed on

the Queensland Electricity Commission in the 1990-91 Budget. We probably would not have proceeded in any way, shape or form except for the outcome of last week's Premiers Conference.

Mr Borbidge: You said you wouldn't.

Mr De LACY: But we did not proceed, and do not intend to proceed, with a credit enhancement fee. We intend to impose on the Queensland Treasury Corporation a performance dividend. For those honourable members who have a genuine interest in this subject, I will explain what that is.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

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

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have just warned the member for Western Downs. I now warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A.

Mr De LACY: Fancy the Leader of the Opposition talking about getting done over! Mr Twelve Per Cent is done over weekly by the people of Queensland. The Queensland Treasury Corporation, as everybody appreciates, is the most effective central borrowing authority in Australia. It borrows at a rate that is substantially cheaper than the rate at which all other central borrowing authorities borrow. It does that because it is a very effective organisation; but it also does that because of the AAA rating which attaches to the Queensland Government. As a consequence, there is a substantial benefit to all people who live in Queensland, but most of that benefit now flows to local authorities and other statutory authorities.

We are proposing to impose a performance dividend on the QTC, and what that means is the difference between the borrowing rate of the QTC and the borrowing rate of the average of the other central borrowing authorities of Australia. What we propose to do is share the benefit between the taxpayers of Queensland and the clients of the QTC. What could be fairer than that? The point is that if the QTC does not outperform the other central borrowing authorities, there will be no dividend. There will only be a dividend if there is a benefit to the borrowers of the QTC, and that benefit will be shared.

The other question raised by the Leader of the Opposition is: how can I impose a Gestapo tactic on local authorities that presumably do not borrow through the QTC? I

am getting a little bit sick and tired of local authorities that are crying poor but borrowing at a much higher rate than the rate at which they can borrow through the QTC. I am saying that they need to start accessing the cheaper rates which are available through the QTC.

Rail Service Cutbacks

Mr BORBIDGE: I ask the Deputy Premier, Minister for Administrative Services and Minister for Rural Communities: was he consulted on the decision to cut services to the bush via main line rail closures beyond Mareeba, Charleville and Longreach? When did the Government lift its moratorium on service cuts to country Queensland? In other words, where was the Deputy Premier when he was needed?

Mr BURNS: I was not out having a discussion with Mrs Sheldon about coalition arrangements. The honourable member asked me where I was when I was needed. I refer him to the front page of this morning's *Courier-Mail*. All that members opposite are worried about is some forced arrangement—a forced marriage—between Mr Borbidge and Mrs Sheldon.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BURNS: I will answer the question. I have been asked where I was. I was not watching the forced marriage. I would think that that would be like putting Frankenstein in bed with the ugly sister!

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Premier has been asked a question. It is not a laughing matter. I want to hear the answer.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I advise the House that the member for Gregory wants to hear the answer, as I do. I suggest that we all listen.

Mr BURNS: I want to give the answer. I most certainly was consulted, and I most certainly listened to all of the arguments that were put by the Treasurer and the Premier when they came back from the conference. I say this to honourable members opposite: our policy is to try to help people in the rural areas. It is not the policy of Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the Nationals. They are bringing old Joh back to the National Party. "Get rid of Casey, and Mackay will be better off", said old Joh, and now the members of the National Party are taking him back and will be using the same old line.

Let us consider the Nationals' policy for the bush. Let us start to think a little bit about Mount Isa. Joh went to Mount Isa when those opposite were all on his side. I refer honourable members to an article which states—

"Yesterday the Premier said State aid for the Lake Julius Dam would not necessarily continue if Mount Isa electors threw out their MLA, Mr Angelo Bertoni.

He said the government had played its part and would again give it top priority while Mr Bertoni was in."

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. We are talking about 1993. The honourable member's Government closed down the railway lines.

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

Mr BURNS: I will answer the question now. The honourable member asked me what I was doing. If he wants to hear what I have been doing, I will tell him. During the drought I have been spending all of my time talking to country people, and I have been saying, "Why don't you use the railway line? You have to use it if you want to keep it."

Mr Borbidge: You were consulted and you agreed with it.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr BURNS: There are train services out west that have 15 customers. Those services just do not pay. Time after time, I have visited country towns and talked to the people about it. I have been doing that for two years, not for two months or two days.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members are complaining about not being able to hear answers. I cannot hear the answer. I warn the member for Gregory and the member for Toowoomba South under Standing Order 123A.

Mr BURNS: I have never had a representation from the member for Gregory or any of the members opposite about these issues. They usually run around the countryside telling everybody what they would do if they were in Government. Members opposite should refer to the cutbacks that were implemented in their day. There are pages and pages of them.

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I called for a point of order while the Deputy Premier was on his feet. I do not think that it is a laughing matter at all, and I am sure that the Deputy Premier does not.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. What is the honourable member's point of order?

Mr JOHNSON: My point of order is that this matter made it into the headlines only in the past 48 or 72 hours.

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

Mr JOHNSON: Members of the Opposition have not had time to make representations.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. There is no point of order.

Premiers Conference

Mr PITT: In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to press statements by the Leader of the Opposition that the Queensland Government received a 5.3 per cent increase in Federal grants at the recent Premiers Conference, and I ask: what was the real outcome of the Premiers Conference?

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. It simply is that I made those comments in the debate on the Appropriation Bill, which is before the House. Mr Speaker, the point of order is exactly the same as the one that I made before that you upheld.

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

Mr De LACY: It seems incredible to me that the members on the other side of the House must seek the protection of the House all the time. They are not in a position to justify their own position.

Mr Borbidge interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! It is not a point of order. I warn members about interjecting and about taking spurious points of order.

Mr De LACY: The Leader of the Opposition is using a figure of a 5.3 per cent increase in Federal funds to this State. It is a phoney figure. He knows that it is a phoney figure. Why he would adopt the position as chief apologist for the Federal Government and chief apologist for New South Wales and Victoria only he would know. However, for the information of honourable members, let me tell them what did happen at the Premiers Conference. There are two ways in which grants come from the Federal Government to the State. There are general revenue grants, which are the important grants—

Mr Elliott interjected.

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

Mr De LACY: The general revenue grants are the important grants.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, my patience is wearing very thin. I have made a ruling that for the Treasurer to respond to a question as to what happened at the Premiers Conference is not out of order and he is entitled to do that. I will not take any further points of order on that subject. I ask members to sit in silence and we will all hear the answer.

Mr De LACY: In those general revenue grants, Queensland did get an increase of 0.8 per cent, or \$21m. That should be seen in the context that Queensland has had a population increase of 2.4 per cent and, on Commonwealth figures, an inflation rate of 2.85 per cent. So anything less than 5.3 per cent is a real cut in funds to the States. That is the effective \$115m cut that Queensland suffered at the Premiers Conference.

Another amount of money comes from the Commonwealth to the State, and it is generally called "other payments". It records all transactions between the Commonwealth and the State. Some of those are special purpose payments. Effectively, they are transfers from the Commonwealth through the State to other bodies such as universities or local authorities. The State Government is nothing more than a postbox. They do not show in our Budget in any way, shape or form.

Another part of that alleged 5.3 per cent increase comprises a reduction in payments of old Queensland debt to the Commonwealth Government—old Queensland debt that was run up by the National Party Government. The fact is that the Queensland Government must pay it off to the Commonwealth. We are paying it off, and it was a much larger number last year than it is this year. Therefore, in those transactions, this year it is less of a negative. When one adds it all up, it shows as a 5.3 per cent increase. However, one would have to be an economic illiterate or, as I say, running an anti-Queensland agenda, if one were to say that the increase in funding from the Commonwealth to the State this year was 5.3 per cent. The real figure is 0.8 per cent.

Mr Borbidge: You shouldn't talk about Gary Johns like that.

Mr De LACY: I do not care whether members of the Opposition align themselves with Gary Johns, John Fahey, Jeff Kennett or

whoever. They would do themselves a lot better if they were to start looking after Queensland and to stand up on behalf of Queensland.

Education

Mr PITT: In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer the Honourable Minister to the Treasurer's statements last week about the impact of the Premiers Conference on the Education budget, and I ask: can he assure the House that the standard of education in Queensland will not be affected by the Budget cuts?

Mr COMBEN: It is with pleasure that I can assure the House that the educational standards of students in Queensland will not be affected by the necessary cuts that the Government must make. For too long, we have watched southern States in a fire sale mentality sack 4 000 teachers in Victoria and close 150 schools. South Australia will have to do something similar. Tasmania is in the middle of doing it. We in Queensland will not do that.

Mr Stoneman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Burdekin!

Mr COMBEN: The Government has moved against the wholesale closure of schools. The Government has moved against any interference with travel allowances paid to students. However, what the Government will demand is increased efficiencies across-the-board in education. In some areas, the Government will talk about clustering schools so that one principal will look after several one-teacher schools, resulting in efficiencies of some hundreds of thousands of dollars. Where an infants school and a primary school are on the same piece of land, with two administrations on the same piece of land, parking side by side, the Government will talk about merging them.

Mr Stoneman interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Burdekin!

Mr COMBEN: Half a million dollars worth of savings can be made by doing that. We will maintain the high quality education for which the Government is known. We will continue our pre-election commitments, that is, \$52m for computers in schools, \$40m for helping p. and c. associations with the basics, and \$60m on the School Refurbishment Project. Again in the Budget this year, there is an anticipated

record Education budget. Our Education budget is going up. Every year, we have more students to deal with. The Government will spend more money on education. The educational standard for Queensland students will be second to none. I anticipate that Queensland's spending on education will be at the Australian average.

Prostitution Legislation

Mrs SHELDON: In view of the Premier's dominant role in the drafting of the Government's flawed prostitution legislation, the fact that contested cases of prostitution are now routinely thrown out of court and that most major pre-Fitzgerald brothel operators are back in business in Brisbane, I ask: will the Premier now have the courage to admit that his legislation has led to a return to the days of pre-Fitzgerald inquiry in Brisbane's sex industry? Will he now scrap that ridiculous piece of legislation and go back to the drawing board?

Mr W. K. GOSS: No. But I might supplement that answer because I know if I leave it at that, the member will be frustrated and will have to ask another question.

Mr FitzGerald: Didn't you know that "no" sometimes means "yes"?

Mr W. K. GOSS: That is not the correct line. I need to make the point, firstly, that the Government was quite open and clear about the fact that it did not have the complete solution to the problems in our community that were caused by prostitution. It was quite open and clear about that. In fact, no State in Australia and no society have been able to come up with the simple, straightforward or complete solution to the problems caused by prostitution that are implied in the member's question.

I think that what underlines that admission and clear statement to the public by the Government, and what underlines the intellectual and political bankruptcy of the Opposition, is the fact that the Opposition has consistently been unable to say what it would do in Government. This morning on the radio, we heard the vacuous spluttering from the member for Western Downs who, when asked by the talk show host, Mr Henshaw, "What would you do", said, "Oh, we are not going to let the Government off the hook now." He was asked, "But what would you do, Mr Cooper?" He said, "We would have sat down with them in a bipartisan way and worked something out." If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition

has any information or evidence to suggest that organised crime figures are back and operating in the way that they were in the pre-Fitzgerald era, then I expect her to table it today or at least give an undertaking that she will take her evidence to the Criminal Justice Commission.

The Government has said that this is the best attempt that we can come up with at the present time to try to moderate the problems associated with prostitution, in particular, those problems of organised crime, corruption and the health and social consequences. Under the previous Government, there was never an attempt to deal with the health and social consequences. That is now occurring as a result of activities in the departments of my colleagues the Minister for Health—

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr Santoro interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Nerang and the member for Clayfield under Standing Order 123A.

Mr W. K. GOSS:—and the Minister for Family Services in relation to corruption of public officials and police officers. That is a matter which I think is being adequately handled by the Criminal Justice Commission, a body to which the Government gives a completely independent role.

We are doing the best that we can. There have been one or two cases thrown out. Every day of the week, cases are dismissed in court. Murder charges are dismissed. Are members opposite saying that the law relating to murder and break and enter has broken down? Of course it has not! Members opposite have nothing to offer. If they have a positive suggestion, they should put it forward. We give an undertaking that we will look at the matter immediately or in the course of the review that we promised. But while they continue to be represented by people such as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and the member for Western Downs—

Mr Cooper: Crows Nest.

Mr W. K. GOSS: Crows Nest. It does not matter, Mr Speaker. And no matter how they dress up the old package, Opposition members are just the same old irrelevant mob stuck in the past with no solutions. I conclude on this note: when they talk about this issue and have nothing to offer, and when one looks at their performance in this place, one thing springs to mind—*Jurassic Park*.

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I direct a question to the Treasurer. The Leader of the Opposition has made comments outside the House that the State Government's Budget is running on empty. I ask: can the Treasurer inform the House whether there is any substance to the claim.

Mr De LACY: I thank the honourable member for the question. Yes, I heard the Leader of the Opposition say, in total contradiction of the facts, that our Budget is running on empty. Somebody said that he is the slowest learner in the game. He can be told a hundred times and he still does not recognise what is going on.

The fact is that at the end of the last financial year, we finished up with an accumulated surplus of \$5m. Not only that, we finished the year again with an underlying surplus substantially greater than last year's underlying surplus. It does not matter how our Budget is measured, it is the healthiest by far of any Budget of any State in Australia. The Leader of the Opposition makes a great big thing about the increases in outlays by the Queensland Government in the last few years. But what he tends to do is lump in the recurrent expenditure with the capital expenditure and then make that great leap of faith and say, "It is all going into a bloated public service."

Let me give him the figures. The ABS Catalogue 5501.0—Government Finance Statistics—prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows the general Government current outlays per capita for the last four years. There has indeed been an increase in Queensland of 20.96 per cent—nearly 21 per cent. The average for Australia was 17.19 per cent. Yes, on a per capita basis, Queensland did increase at a slightly faster rate than did the rest of Australia. But we make no apologies for that. This Government inherited the worst education system and the worst health system in the whole of Australia. On taking Government, our priority was to rectify the neglect of the past. We did that, and we did it in a modest way.

The figures that the Leader of the Opposition is running around with include capital expenditure. When one considers recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure, yes, Queensland certainly outspent the rest of the States. That is because we are the only State that has a Budget sufficiently sound enough to put some money into capital works. The rest of the States, responding to their impossible Budget situations, merely wound back their capital program. Of course, we are

all paying the penalty because of the need to create jobs. Queensland is the only State in Australia that is creating jobs. Is the Leader of the Opposition opposed to this Government's capital expenditure program? He must be, because he is running around everywhere criticising the Government because of its increase in spending.

Finally, when the Leader of the Opposition states that the Government has increased expenditure by 20 per cent or 21 per cent over the past three years, he conveniently fails to give the full picture. The rest of the picture is that the Government has achieved that result without increasing taxes, without increasing debt and without selling off its assets, as the mates of the Leader of the Opposition in New South Wales have done.

Rail Branch Line Closures

Mr LIVINGSTONE: In directing my second question to the Minister for Transport, I refer him to the article in this morning's *Courier-Mail* praising the Goss Government's decision to close uneconomical rail branch lines around the State, and I ask: what other steps is the Government taking to turn Queensland Rail into a viable and self-sufficient organisation?

Mr HAMILL: I welcome the question from the member for Ipswich West. This morning, I read with considerable interest the article in the *Courier-Mail* which praised this Government's decision to close uneconomical rail branch lines—a tough decision which was made in the interests of all of Queenslanders.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Gregory has been warned. I warn him for the last time.

Mr HAMILL: I know that courage and responsibility are not abundant commodities on the Opposition benches; however, this Government does not shirk its responsibilities to present and future residents of Queensland.

Sometimes, challenges arise but are not taken up. Over the past 10 years, nothing has changed. Over that period, those who now sit opposite and who once sat on the Treasury benches have not been able to face up to changes. The Liberal Party has not been prepared to adopt anything other than a subservient position to the National Party, and that is still the case today. As a result, the Liberal Party is still irrelevant. Over the past 10 years, the National Party Government failed to confront the serious corruption which was

gnawing away within government in this State. Where do the members of that party sit today because they did not face up to those issues? They sit opposite.

The article to which the member for Ipswich West referred made the point—why maintain services that are not used? I was very interested to hear an interview on the Rod Henshaw program yesterday morning—

Mr Johnson: You never had consultation with the shires.

Mr HAMILL: I urge the honourable member to listen to what I am about to say. That interview involved one of his constituents.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Gregory under Standing Order 123A. This is absolutely my last warning to him under Standing Order 123A.

Mr HAMILL: The member for Gregory is making a lot of noise, but he was the one who was complaining because Queensland Rail was trying to move more livestock. A lady rang—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have warned the member for Gregory under Standing Order 123A. I now ask him to leave the Chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Gregory withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr BORBIDGE: I rise to a point of order. The member for Gregory was being provoked outrageously by the Minister for Transport. Mr Speaker, with respect, you took no action to bring the Minister into line. It is only natural that, if members on this side of the House are being attacked, they will defend themselves.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, let us just take a deep breath and perhaps start question-time again. I call the Minister for Transport.

Mr HAMILL: I was referring to an interview yesterday on the Rod Henshaw program in which a lady who I believe was a constituent from the electorate of the member for Gregory rang and complained bitterly about how she would be put to some inconvenience to use road transport to move livestock. Rod Henshaw actually asked the lady to what extra inconvenience she would be subjected. What did the lady say? Her response was, "Well, we do not use the rail." That lies at the heart of this issue. The services about which the Opposition is causing so much heat comprise 0.4 per cent of the total tonnages hauled by Queensland Rail;

they contribute 1.7 per cent of the income of Queensland Rail; and they represent 8 per cent of the cost.

If we are really serious about services, we should commend Queensland Rail's efforts to put in place alternative means which will attract the business which currently clearly is not going to those areas. Furthermore, in the past four years, this Government has done more to rebuild rail operations in this State than did any Government since the days of Jack Duggan. The substantial half billion dollar investment on the North Coast Line upgrade; the upgrading of the line out to Charleville; and the new passenger rolling stock—dare I say it—replacing a Gold Coast rail link to service constituents such as those of the Leader of the Opposition, are all the work of a Government that is seriously concerned about providing real services—the services that people need and the services that people will use. We make no apology for doing that.

Mr P. Coyne

Mr LINGARD: I ask the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs: why was Peter Coyne entitled to an ex gratia payment of \$27,000 comprising overtime, accrued time in lieu and travelling expenses, and under what authority were each of those payments made?

Ms WARNER: I refer the honourable member to the answer to the question that he asked in the last session of Parliament. For the honourable member's information, I point out that most of what he is saying is garbled; it is misrepresentation; and it is beside the point. I will repeat the answer that I gave in the last session, which was correct. Certain assistance was given to Mr Coyne to cover his legal costs. The payment to which reference has been made related to compensation for unpaid overtime and reimbursement of costs and loss of allowances incurred by Mr Coyne as a result of his being seconded from his position at Wacol to undertake duties in Brisbane.

Queensland Racing Incentive Scheme and Q Promotions Pty Ltd

Mr LINGARD: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: who is meeting the administrative, promotional and legal expenses associated with the Queensland racing incentive scheme and Q Promotions Pty Ltd activities?

Mr GIBBS: In relation to Q Promotions, that has all been met by the company itself

and by the Queensland Bloodstock Breeders Association. The Government is in no way associated with any of those costs whatsoever.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I advise members that I wish to extend a welcome to Mr Leopold Joredie, who is president of the Northern Province of New Caledonia, Mr Graham Fletcher and Mr Joseph Tran, who are present in the Speaker's gallery.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Housing Cooperatives and Collectives in Inner Suburbs

Mr BEATTIE: The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning would be aware that housing cooperatives and collectives have been invaluable in providing housing to low income earners in the inner suburbs of Brisbane, particularly the suburbs of Spring Hill and New Farm. I ask: what financial assistance and support is the State Government giving to housing cooperatives and collectives in the inner suburbs?

Mr MACKENROTH: In an endeavour to reduce the use of cars for commuting, the Government is funding housing cooperatives in the inner city. In the last financial year, \$1,030,000 was provided to three housing cooperatives in the inner city. The Inner Western Suburbs Housing Collective received a grant of \$505,000 to purchase one four-bedroom home, two three-bedroom homes and also to assist in the upgrading of an existing duplex. The New Farm Housing Cooperative Ltd received a grant of \$360,000 to purchase one four-bedroom home and three two-bedroom units. The Spring Hill Cooperative Ltd received a grant of \$365,000 to enable it to purchase land and to design a project that will accommodate seven one-bedroom, four two-bedroom and two three-bedroom units.

Housing cooperatives form an important part of the housing assistance that the Government provides. They enable people to obtain Government assistance to purchase homes and to self-manage them.

Police Foot and Horse Patrols in Fortitude Valley

Mr BEATTIE: I direct my second question to the Minister for Police and Emergency

Services. In 1992, police foot and horse patrols were introduced to the Fortitude Valley area and, in particular, to the Chinatown and Brunswick Street malls. I ask: how successful have those two measures been in reducing crime in the Valley area?

Mr BRADY: The success of policing is, of course, related substantially to the amount of public support that can be obtained. In relation to that point, it has become clear that increasing police numbers alone will not have a direct effect on reducing crime. They play their part, but unless members of the public have the assurance that they are included in discussions, then difficulties arise in terms of confidence about people reporting crime and keeping their eyes open.

On the subject of mounted police—they are not only a great public relations exercise but also present to the public a very visible police presence. We have found that their presence has been of great benefit in the inner city and in other areas where they have been trialled. Similarly, it is also intended to take what we have learned from Brisbane to the Gold Coast. This proposal has strong public support. The lesson that we have learned in relation to mounted police and police clustering has been to make a visible presence not only where the police themselves know where the problems are but also where the public can see them. The results in the Valley area have been very spectacular. The whole nature of the area has changed significantly.

Mr Cooper interjected.

Mr BRADY: I point out to the member for Crows Nest that I believe that changes in the prostitution laws have made a significant and acknowledged benefit, and in terms of the way in which people behave in the Valley, and the outdoor cafes—the whole atmosphere has changed. The visible police presence has been one of the most significant factors in that change. That has been acknowledged by the business community in that area.

Q Promotions Pty Ltd

Mr SANTORO: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: when will he make available to Q Promotions Pty Ltd the \$1,500,000 from public funds for the purpose of boosting prize money for Queensland-bred horses under the Queensland racing incentive scheme? Will Q Promotions be able to invest that money until payments are made from the scheme in the 1994-95 and 1995-96 racing

seasons and, if so, what will happen to the interest and other income to be derived from those investments?

Mr GIBBS: It is blatantly obvious from the member's question that he has simply no idea of how this scheme operates. There will be no moneys in any shape or form given to Q Promotions by the Queensland Government. The honourable member must understand that the Queensland racing incentive scheme is a further, more sophisticated development on the current racing incentive scheme. Q Promotions is a totally different and separate entity from the Queensland racing incentive scheme. It will complement it in that Q Promotions, acting as the promotional arm of the Queensland Bloodstock Breeders Association, has come up with a concept whereby for the first time, in January next year, it will conduct a sale at the Boondall complex of Queensland thoroughbred horses only. In other words, it will try to help an industry which, as a result of drought and for other reasons, is on its knees.

The whole idea of Queensland Millions sales is to ensure that the bonus prize money which is going to be available will go back to the people who buy a Queensland-bred horse. In other words, rather than spreading the money among people from the south or people from studs in the south who are putting expensive horses into sales in Queensland and taking our incentive moneys back to southern States and, in many cases, to New Zealand, the money stays here in Queensland. It is a bit like the old Norm Lee advertisement on television. Do honourable members remember it? "Buy Queensland Made!" Surely members would support a scheme such as that.

The other point to remember is that it does not matter whether the horse is one sold at Queensland Millions sales. It can be a Queensland-bred horse that is sold, for example, at Ian Baxter's QBBS sales; a Queensland-bred horse that is sold at the Magic Millions at the Gold Coast; a Queensland-bred horse that is sold at the Sunstate sales in Townsville; or a Queensland-bred horse that is sold at the Inglis Easter sales in Sydney. As long as it is a Queensland horse, even one sold privately, and as long as those people pay up to join the scheme, they all qualify.

This scheme is not designed to promote or to assist any one company. However, I can understand some of the trauma and concern that this proposal causes in the industry. As the honourable member would be well aware,

horse sales operate on a pretty fine margin. It is a very jealous and very competitive industry. Those people have come in with a new product and a new promotion, which is causing some concern to others in the industry. That is why some of those ill-informed comments have been made.

I was going to mention this matter during the debate which will take place in this Parliament shortly. I have received letters from turf clubs throughout Queensland, private breeders, and other people who, because they did not understand it, were initially critical of the scheme when it was announced. They have now written to me saying that they applaud what the Government has done as a result of that initiative. I do not say this nastily, but it is obvious that the honourable member was given the question to ask without having full knowledge of this matter. I suggest that he makes himself fully au fait with the scheme. I will then be very surprised if he does not stand in this House, as the fair and impartial person that he is, and applaud this Government for a job well done.

Former Mr Justice Vasta

Mr SANTORO: I thank the Minister for that very comprehensive and interesting answer. In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to statements credited to his Federal parliamentary Labor colleague Mr Con Sciacca in the *Australian* on 18 June 1993, in which Mr Sciacca questioned whether former Queensland Supreme Court Justice Angelo Vasta would have been removed from the Bench "if his name had been John Smith and he hadn't been of Sicilian origin and hadn't had a Sicilian brother-in-law who owns a toilet paper manufacturing company".

A Government member: Why don't you go and use it then?

Mr SANTORO: I am talking about the removal of a judge. I ask: what credence does the Premier give to these extraordinary statements and allegations by Mr Sciacca? If he does give any credence to them, will he institute a high-level inquiry to investigate these extraordinary allegations of Mr Sciacca in order to determine their veracity and whether any wrongdoing did occur?

Mr W. K. GOSS: No, I do not propose to establish a high-level inquiry or a low-level inquiry. Queensland has had enough inquiries. That particular episode relating to—

Mr SANTORO: No, this is Sciacca's statement.

Mr W. K. GOSS: I do not care who said it. The particular episode relating to Mr Justice Vasta was not only very distressing and very damaging for the Vasta family but was indeed very distressing and stressful for the judiciary as an institution in our State generally. There is nothing to be gained, in my view, by having yet another inquiry to canvass those matters again.

Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board

Mr NUTTALL: I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: why was it considered necessary to issue a direction to the Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board in regard to the introduction of a permit scheme?

Mr CASEY: It is true that, in accordance with my powers under the Primary Producers' Organisation and Marketing Act, on 17 June I did issue a directive to the Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board to provide to me within a period a satisfactory scheme for a permit system for the sale of grain within its area.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Barambah!

Mr CASEY: This was done because, for almost three years of procrastination and inaction by the board, I had been trying to get it to introduce a scheme, which is the normal prerogative of every other grain organisation in Australia. Every other grain organisation in Australia has a permit scheme to give some advantage to growers and end-price buyers of grain within their particular areas.

The Atherton Tableland is an area of great potential. At the moment, the Goss Government is putting a great deal of resources into that project so that we can get full advantage of the productivity of the area to enable greater economic input to the total area of the Atherton Tableland region and those areas associated with it. But we had that one great snag. The Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board was not prepared to recognise that marketing methods had changed over the 70 years since the board was set up. All we want it to do is instigate a simple permit system that will allow producers in their board area to be able to deliver direct to people on their properties. I refer to pig producers, dairy farmers, poultry producers and egg producers. That is why a permit system is necessary. We also had a petition which was signed by almost half the growers in the area saying that they wanted to have a permit system instituted.

This Government is determined to make sure that the Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board puts into effect the same type of arrangement as the successful Grainco organisation has in operation in Queensland. Members opposite who supply produce to Grainco would realise that such is the case. We are already negotiating to secure a major new industry for the tablelands region that is dependent upon the successful supply of grain direct to the premises of the buyer of the grain—not delivered to the Atherton Tableland Maize Marketing Board premises, tipped off the truck, put into a silo and then put back into another truck and taken to the property of the buyer at a direct increase in cost to the purchaser—and a lesser return to the producer.

The Government is determined to go ahead with that scheme. In the last couple of days, I have received a proposal from the board adhering to the direction that I gave it. That proposal is under consideration at the moment. In the near future, I will advise the House further on the matter.

Alternative Energy Advisory Group

Mr NUTTALL: In directing a question to the Minister for Minerals and Energy, I point out that on 2 June he announced the formation of an advisory group on renewable energy. I ask: would he advise the House what the group has been doing since its formation?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the honourable member for Sandgate for the question. As he would know, the Alternative Energy Advisory Group Chairman, the member for Stafford, Rod Welford, has been busy since his appointment to that role. Members would be aware that one of the group's first tasks was to investigate the possibility of an alternative to grid electricity for the Daintree region and for the remote properties outside the small township of Boulia. In that regard, the chair of the group has had discussions with officers of the Cape York Land Use Study, with the Cairns and Far-north Queensland Environment Centre, with renewable energy officers of the Queensland Electricity Commission and with officers of SEQEB.

Mr Welford went to Melbourne for a United States foreign commercial service seminar on renewable technologies and had talks with the Victorian Government demand management experts. He has also had talks with the Queensland Department of Housing and Local Government with a view to improving public housing design on solar and

energy efficiency principles. Three weeks ago in Sydney, he officially launched the Sustainable Energy Industries Council of Australia and had discussions with the Australian Conservation Foundation global change program director. Mr Welford has made contact with numerous business representatives of firms engaged in energy management and efficiency and has had preliminary discussions with other advisory group members. He informs me that community reaction to the setting up of this advisory group has been extremely positive; that people believe that Queensland has set a good example and at long last has got serious about renewable energy.

I conclude by saying that all the costs to date have been met by Mr Welford through his normal allowances, and any costs incurred by this group will be approved and authorised by the Electricity Commissioner.

Q Promotions Pty Ltd

Mr BEANLAND: I ask the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing: when he appointed Q Promotions Pty Ltd to control and distribute \$1.5m in public funds for races involving Queensland-bred horses, was he aware that the directors and shareholders of Q Promotions were also establishing a company to conduct yearling sales in Brisbane next January? If so, did he inform Cabinet of that fact when he secured approval for Q Promotions to be the management and marketing arm for the \$1.5m to be allocated from public funds for the QRIS scheme?

Mr GIBBS: I have never been involved in any appointment of Q Promotions to be the marketing arm of the Queensland Millions sales next year. The honourable member has missed the point. When the racing incentive scheme was introduced into Queensland, my ultimate aim was to ensure that the moneys which were going out of the Racing Development Fund into the racing incentive scheme would benefit Queensland breeders. That was the initial reason for introducing the scheme. It took 12 months of discussion with various people in the industry to come up with a more sophisticated model.

When the proposition came to me about how we could further enhance the scheme, I gave an instruction that I was not prepared to consider the scheme at that stage unless it came to me as a recommendation from the Queensland Bloodstock Breeders Association, which is the State body of the Australasian Bloodstock Breeders Association. The QBBA endorsed the scheme wholeheartedly as a

great scheme, and it was the Queensland Bloodstock Breeders Association which agreed that Q Promotions, or the group which called itself Q Promotions, would be the promotional arm of the QBBA product, that is, Queensland-bred bloodstock. It had nothing to do with the Government in any shape or form.

I was aware that there was to be a sale of Queensland-bred horses. Why would I not be aware of it? I was excited about the project. I believed it was a great initiative by a group of people, namely, the breeders, who were being split asunder and had never worked cooperatively in their lives. For the first time, it is beginning to happen and the initiative will be of great benefit to the industry.

In this instance, I detect that Opposition members are so unsure of the ground that they will be on in the Matter of Special Public Importance debate, which starts in approximately six minutes, that they are testing the water to make sure that they do not put their feet in their mouths when we get into the serious business. That is what it is all about.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Under Standing Orders, the Minister is not allowed to pre-empt the forthcoming debate.

Q Promotions Pty Ltd

Mr BEANLAND: In directing a question to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, I ask: has Q Promotions Pty Ltd, the management and marketing arm of the Government's Queensland racing incentive scheme, been given approval or an exemption by the Australian Securities Commission for its scheme?

Mr GIBBS: I have absolutely no idea whether it has. As I have said, the simple fact is that it is not a part—I emphasise that point—it is not a part of the Queensland racing incentive scheme, which will be funded by the Government. It is a private group that will be responsible for the sale and for the promotion of the sale. That is what it is all about. The honourable member has asked me the question today; however, if he wants to put that on notice, I would be happy to check that information and provide him with the answer tomorrow.

Mr BEANLAND: I do so accordingly.

Drought Relief

Ms POWER: I ask the Minister for Lands: with reference to the new land rental system

for leaseholders to apply from 1 July this year, can the Minister please outline further assistance measures to be provided for drought-affected pastoral leaseholders?

Mr SMITH: I thank the honourable member for the question. Cabinet has in fact authorised the implementation of a simple, easy scheme that will be the mechanism to link the rent deferral proposals to the RAS scheme—a scheme that has been accepted as the national approach and, indeed, been requested by the industry.

Mr Hobbs interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SMITH: It will mean that viable producers who are looking for deferral of rent will have only to produce evidence of their eligibility, which will come from the QIDC. No additional documentation will be required.

Mr HOBBS interjected.

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

Mr SMITH: It is also important that I announce at this time that the hardship-free provisions, which were already in place, have not been withdrawn so not only is there a new enhanced system that will assist several thousand viable producers, but also the safety net will remain in place for those people who are suffering hardship and whose properties are not necessarily proved to be viable. These measures need to be seen in the context that concessional rents are applicable, anyway. We did not accept the proposal of the Wolfe inquiry to take those rents to 3 per cent. We settled on a maximum of 2 per cent.

In respect of industry conditions and drought commodity prices, the rentals have been set at 1.1 per cent. Rather than this being a massive increase, as some members of the Opposition have suggested, it is in fact a modest increase. The latest assessment, which has just come into my hands in the last day, indicates that the average rent across all leasehold rentals in Queensland is of the order of \$900. The amount of \$900 equates roughly to the price of a set of tyres for the farm truck. Opposition members have been running around talking about an increase of thousands of dollars. They refuse to acknowledge the inequities of the old scheme. What they want to do is go back to the situation where properties worth \$1m were available to their mates for—

Mr HOBBS: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. I ask him to withdraw those lies.

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

Mr SMITH: As I was saying, there are numerous cases of rentals in the range of \$1m to almost \$2m with UCV equivalent rates of 0.1 per cent.

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

MATTER OF SPECIAL PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Racing Industry

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, I advise the House that I have received a proposal for a Special Public Importance debate pursuant to the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 5 November 1992. The proposal submitted by the honourable the Leader of the Opposition is for a debate on the following matter—

“The turmoil in Queensland’s racing industry.”

Mr VEIVERS (Southport) (3.50 p.m.): There is only one word to describe the Queensland racing industry after three years of the stewardship—if one could call it that—by the current Minister. That word is “turmoil”. Each code is reeling from the constant interference of this Minister who seems to regard racing as his own personal fiefdom. People with a lifetime involvement can no longer understand what is going on in the racing industry. All they see is a constant series of changes without rhyme or reason. They reckon that they are seeing changes at times for the sake of change. The Minister came to office eager to pursue a vendetta against the Queensland Turf Club.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr VEIVERS: Yes, he most certainly did. He started early, and he has kept at it. He up-ended the whole of the racing industry in his campaign to knock off Sir Edward Williams and others of the QTC committee. For the galloping industry, the results of his work include a Queensland industry isolated from the mainstream of Australian racing. The supreme rule-making body in the turf industry, the Australian Conference of Principal Clubs, will not have a bar of the Minister’s controlling body, that is, the Queensland Principal Club. How good is that! He has been telling us how good he has been going and how terrific he is. He has been saying, “Aren’t I a good bloke?”, and sipping champagne and really having a great life.

Mrs Sheldon: Not sipping champagne?

Mr VEIVERS: Yes—the Bollinger Bolshevik, we would have to call him. It recognises the fact that that body has been bricked into a corner where it must reflect ministerial views rather than industry views. The other codes have not come through the Minister's attentions unscathed, either. Control bodies in the harness racing and greyhound industries have been stacked at ministerial whim, as has the real ruling body for the whole industry, the Racing Industry Advisory Committee. The Minister has used the racing industry as a big pool of jobs for ministerial mates.

There is one outstanding example of the turmoil that the Minister imposes on the racing industry. It involves sackings and ministerial appointments, and it involves unwanted change in order to settle old scores—those old scores that I have talked about. He was always going to get Ned, he reckoned. This prime example of the Minister's reprehensible methods can be found in the current dispute between the Queensland Turf Club and the people appointed by this Minister to the Eagle Farm racecourse trust. Many honourable members will recall the debate on the Eagle Farm Racecourse Amendment Bill that was introduced into this House on 26 November 1991. That Bill confirmed the power of the Minister to nominate trustees to be appointed by the Governor in Council for an indefinite term. I repeat "an indefinite term"; in other words, the term was to be at the Minister's pleasure.

It is history that the Minister grabbed this opportunity with both hands. When members of this Parliament debated that legislation on 3 December 1991, both the member for Indooroopilly and I sought assurances from the Minister—and well might we have asked for those assurances! We had good reason to fear what the Minister would do, because we were both very much aware of the long-running vendetta that the Minister had been waging against the Queensland Turf Club and its then Chairman, Sir Edward Williams.

Among other things, I pointed out that it would be easier for the Minister to appoint lackeys to the trustees' job. I even warned that if he did appoint lackeys, the whole of the racing industry would see it. My honourable colleague the member for Indooroopilly, Mr Beanland, pointed out that the Minister probably already had the power to remove trustees, and he was not wrong. He was alluding to the fears of many in the racing industry that this was the real intent of the legislation. Of course, my honourable and learned friend who is seated next to me was

quite correct; he was totally right. The honourable member for Indooroopilly, Mr Beanland, also went on to point out that the then current trustees were Sir Edward Williams, who was the object of so much ministerial spite; Mr Peter Gallagher, the club's chairman-elect; and Mr Jim Clark. The member for Indooroopilly is a prophetic man as well as a great supporter of the racing industry. He said that he hoped the Minister would not rush out and suddenly decide to sack the current three trustees.

Mr Budd: Did you say "pathetic" or "prophetic"?

Mr VEIVERS: The honourable member had better listen to this. He talks about it, but I do not think he knows very much about it. The only thing that associates the member with the racing industry is the R. M. Williams shoes that he wears, and he wears them only to try to impress the poor country members of this Parliament. And he doesn't!

Mr Budd: What's "country" about Southport?

Mr VEIVERS: It is very "country". What was alluded to by the member for Indooroopilly is exactly what happened. The Minister went out and sacked the current three trustees. He sacked three men who had carried on a long and proper tradition of holding the racecourse in trust for the beneficiaries of that trust, the members of the Queensland Turf Club. In the place of those men, he appointed three others, namely, Mr Wally Tutt, a vociferous supporter of the Minister in his vendetta against the QTC; Mr Brian Sweeney, a former club committeeman who, I might add, failed in a re-election attempt; and Dr John Power, who was a club committeeman at the time he was appointed a trustee. He subsequently resigned as a trustee and was replaced by Dr B. J. Duncan.

At the time Mr Gibbs carried out his coup, he protested that he just wanted to avoid conflicts of interest for people who were trustees at the same time as they were club committeemen. As I have already said, Dr John Power was in that position, so that excuse did not really stand up at all. The Minister was simply carrying forward his vendetta, and he had a plan for his trustees to implement. That plan was to highjack the club and its principal asset, namely, racing at Eagle Farm.

Give his trustees their due: they have attempted in no uncertain terms to do what the Minister wanted. Queensland's premier race club and its 2 000-odd members are in turmoil because the Minister's trustees are

attempting to take over every aspect of the running of the Queensland Turf Club. These unelected trustees are standing firm on a log of claims. Among other things, the log of claims includes control of admission to the racecourse and entry to members' stand. It includes setting dress standards for the members' area and—get this—it includes taking over catering revenues and a prime private viewing box.

Let me sum up all that. These Government appointees want to say who comes and goes on race day at Eagle Farm, they want to take over the club's finances, and they want the best and the most lavish private box on the course. They even asked the Minister for funds from the Racecourse Development Fund to set up an office in that private box, after they had knocked back other true office accommodation which was downstairs. They did not want that; they wanted to get the office upstairs into this private box, and the Minister obliged. What a surprise!

Mr Santoro: That's not true, is it?

Mr VEIVERS: It is true. The Minister tossed them a lazy 50 grand to make themselves comfortable in the best box on the course. Isn't that something! Everyone else in Queensland is crying out for money, but this Minister just tossed the trustees a lazy 50 grand and said, "Make yourselves comfortable and be ready when I arrive with my mates." That \$50,000 could be better spent on improvements to racing facilities at any number of locations throughout the State. Instead, it is going towards helping the Minister's men. As I said, perhaps the Minister will get set up to look after his mates on race days. Mr Speaker, I have to tell you that they will need their own private facilities because very few other people on the course will want to have anything to do with them.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr VEIVERS: I will take that interjection because when the subject of rail service cutbacks was being discussed, the member was conspicuous by his absence. He did not want to have anything to do with it. He and Peter Beattie failed this morning, and now he is interjecting on me when I am speaking on something I know everything about. The member for Archerfield dinged this morning and ran out just when we needed him.

Most people at the racecourse will not want to have anything to do with the Minister and his trustees, and why should they? The trustees and their boss, the Minister who sits

opposite me, want to take the club away from the members who built it and they want to run it "democratically". They want to turn it into an arm of the Government. The members are angry, and so they should be.

Former Supreme Court judge, Bill Carter, QC, has written to the trustees expressing his views and the views, I am quite sure, of most members of the QTC. He defends the Queensland Turf Club as, in his words, "the most democratic of race clubs". He goes on to say that the by-laws proposed to the Government by the trustees would—

" . . . transfer effective control in all major matters to a non-elected few, appointed by the Government."

Mr WELFORD (Everton) (4.01 p.m.): It is my pleasure to speak in the Matter of Special Public Importance debate. It is amazing that the Opposition should put the proposal on the agenda. The member for Southport has had months to prepare himself and his speech has turned out to be an absolute flop. All members in this House must be laughing themselves to death that the member for Southport put up that proposal to debate.

Mr Veivers: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: (Mr Palaszczuk) Order!

Mr VEIVERS: If the honourable member will give me an extension of time—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am on my feet. I warn the member for Southport under Standing Order 123A to resume his seat. I am on my feet. What is the point of order?

Mr VEIVERS: My point of order is that I would be only too happy to amplify on the points I raised if he would allow me an extension of time.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat.

Mr WELFORD: The member for Southport was pathetic in the contribution that he made in the debate. We turned up here ready to debate what he regarded as a serious issue, and he did not get serious for one minute. Not once in the whole debate did he address the structural reforms that have occurred in the racing industry. He ran the personal agenda of a few of his mates down at the Queensland Turf Club. That is all he did. He did not talk about the restructuring of the industry. He did not have any regard to the financial mess that the industry was in when his mob were in control of it. All he did

was turn up here and run the agenda of a few of his mates. Talk about lackeys! He accuses the Government of appointing lackeys. If there is one lackey in this place, it is the member for Southport. He is a lackey of that cocktail set running the show at the Queensland Turf Club.

On 6 July, a member of the Queensland Turf Club and a member of the Principal Club, Mr Peter Dove, wrote to the trustees of the Eagle Farm Racecourse in these terms—

"I have been a member of the QTC for approximately 9 years and never before, in the 130 year history of this Club, has there been a more urgent need for a thorough review of the Racing Industry and the Clubs of Queensland, in particular the QTC.

We have seen a Club whose Chairman was replaced as the Chairman of the QPC and the continual lobbying and negative antagonistic approach of sections of the industry and the media to an accountable process and one of reform.

The divine right of administering racing in Queensland, and indeed of Eagle Farm, surely does not rest with a select minority or with a believed majority pressured and brow-beaten by those with an axe to grind and reluctant to accept change."

That is what it is all about. Mr Veivers and the members of the National Party and Liberal Party who will support him in this debate today are nothing more than apologists for a minority ginger group who do not represent the majority of participants in the racing industry and who have only their personal and selfish interests to pursue. Amongst them is the fellow who was sacked, given the axe, as Chairman of the Queensland Principal Club, Mr Peter Gallagher. It is obvious that the member for Southport is good mates with Mr Gallagher. He has said as much in this House previously.

The member for Southport ought to be very careful about the company that he keeps, because Mr Gallagher does not have the best of histories in terms of his association with people in this State. Members might recall that Mr Gallagher was appointed to the TAB under the chairmanship of Sir Edward Lyons—"Top Level" Ted. We all know the shenanigans that "Top Level" Ted and his National Party flunkies got up to when Bjelke-Petersen and a number of members who are currently members of the Opposition were in Government.

"Top Level" Ted was Chair of the TAB and, of course, he was involved in credit betting—a grossly improper activity on his part, having regard to his position. Who was on the board of the TAB at the time with "Top Level" Ted's blessing? Mr Gallagher. He is the person who is feeding all that nonsense to the member for Southport and other members of the Opposition. Mr Gallagher was a willing accomplice when the TAB resolved at one of its board meetings to transfer its investments out of the National Bank into Rothwells. Why? "Top Level" Ted, National Party trustee, was on the Rothwells board, was he not? Yes, he was. Mr Gallagher was all part of that show.

He was running very nicely, might I say, up until the time when, by a vote of 10 to 1, he was dismissed as Chair of the Queensland Principal Club. In a *Sunday Mail* article in February 1993, he spoke quite favourably about the reforms that had occurred in the racing industry. This is how he was reported—

"QPC chairman Peter Gallagher, who was in charge of the state's most powerful Principal Club, Queensland Turf Club, and still is the chairman of that club which now has only domestic responsibilities, sees the first 12 months positively."

Mr Gallagher said—

" 'My overview of the first year is that the new body has worked its way successfully through some very trying times.' "

He was all right up until the time when it was discovered that irregularities in the funding and operation of the Queensland Principal Club and its chief executive were reported on by the Auditor-General. What happened? The Principal Club did the right thing and axed the person who was responsible. It is not the first time that the credibility of Mr Gallagher has been in question in terms of his management of businesses or organisations when he has been on the board of those bodies. He was ushered not only into the TAB board by "Top Level" Ted, National Party trustee and director of Rothwells, but was also ushered into the Rothwells board.

As a result of his association with the Rothwells board, as a result of the fallout of WA Inc, he was subsequently charged on 28 May 1991 with the charge that he failed to exercise a reasonable degree of care and diligence in the exercise of his powers and the discharge of his duties as a director of Rothwells between 25 October 1987 and 3 November 1988 contrary to section 229 of the Western Australian Companies Code. The

charges in that particular case were subsequently dismissed, but in very interesting circumstances, might I say, because there was another member of the board in almost the identical position to that of Mr Gallagher. That person was a Mr Vrisakis, who was in fact charged with a similar offence and was convicted and fined \$4,000 for his role on the board of Rothwells.

It is interesting to note the magistrate's comments about the role played by Mr Gallagher on the board. Remember that Mr Gallagher was ushered onto the board of Rothwells—the company which was formed in Queensland and which got the Western Australian Government into so much difficulty—by “Top Level” Ted, but, according to the magistrate, Mr Gallagher's only real duty was “flag waving”. In other words, he did not have a clue what was going on. He was on the board but he did not have a clue what was going on.

It is the same with his role in the Queensland Principal Club. That is the problem. That is why he was dismissed. And when he was dismissed, what did he do? He spat the dummy and ran off to his mate the member for Southport, and here we are debating this pathetic matter which addresses none of the important issues about structural change and improvement in the racing industry in Queensland. He became friends with Laurie Connell, who of course took Rothwells down with him in the whole WA Inc fiasco. These were the people with whom Mr Gallagher associated. He does not have a shred of credibility in any of the management decisions with which he has been associated.

Not only that, I suggest that Mr Veivers be careful in taking further advice from Mr Gallagher because Mr Gallagher has had a string of associations with the most unlikely people, including bottom of the harbour tax avoiders such as Brian Maher down on the Gold Coast. Mr Gallagher looked after Maher while Mr Maher was concealing his assets and trying to dodge the tax man. All of these things show that the sort of people on whose advice the member for Southport is relying simply are not credible. They have been removed from their role in the industry because of their incompetence and their failure to address serious irregularities in the use of public funds and industry funds, and the member for Southport ought to realise this.

Time expired.

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly)
(4.11 p.m.): We have just heard from the

member for Everton a continuation of the attempted vilification of Mr Peter Gallagher that the Minister has been carrying on now for some time. His performance this evening was one of the worst performances of vilification that I have seen for some time. We ought to be discussing the turmoil within the Queensland racing industry. Mr Peter Gallagher is one of the outstanding administrators of racing in this State. But I am not here to protect Mr Gallagher or the activities down at the Queensland Principal Club. I can assure you, Mr Deputy Speaker, that there is legal action in relation to many of the matters which were raised by the member for Everton, and they are probably sub judice. Therefore, I will not discuss them today, but when the action is finished, I will be very happy to come into this place and debate the whole issue.

What I want to deal with today is the turmoil within the industry. The record of the Goss Labor Government and the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing in their dealings with the great Queensland racing industry is a sad and divisive one. Today, there is more bitterness, hate, division and confusion than ever in all three codes—galloping, harness racing and greyhounds. Every incident, every example, leads right to the door of the Minister or his appointees to the boards administering the industry and the three codes. I think that is most unfortunate.

The Minister claims that it is all just a battle between the Queensland Turf Club and everyone else. That is nonsense, and everyone involved in the racing industry knows it—everyone, that is, with the exception of the Minister, obviously, and now the member for Everton. The dispute between the Minister, his appointees and the Queensland Turf Club, referred to by the shadow Minister for Racing, is just one example of bitterness and division, the ultimate responsibility for which must rest with the Minister. It is tragic that the industry remains in total turmoil at a time when the racing industry is doing it tough because of Labor's recession we had to have.

The utter stupidity of the situation is surely well demonstrated by the one example of cooperation between all sides—the highly successful promotion of the winter racing carnival. Today, the climate of suspicion, hate and division has entered the arena—the breeding of horses and their sale through the auction system—and it is to this new crisis that I want to direct my remarks today. I want to say at the very outset that Government encouragement of the industry is more than welcome. It is, after all, only returning to the

industry a fraction of the tens of millions of dollars that the State Treasury extracts from it in good times and bad, because the industry is taxed on turnover, not on profit.

On 14 May, at a function where the top of the range liquor flowed freely, the Minister for Racing announced an injection of \$1.5m in public money to encourage the breeding sector in Queensland. On the face of it, the announcement seemed to be a welcome and positive step, because the thoroughbred breeding industry is an important part of rural Queensland. However, the more one delves into the way the money is to be administered, the more suspicious—indeed, unacceptable—the process becomes. Under any standards of accountability, let alone the high standards supposedly in place in this State, the whole process must be rejected, and the Premier and Treasurer must intervene to ensure that it is.

When the Minister announced the Government allocation, he said that a non-profit organisation, Q Promotions, would administer the \$1.5m in public money and be overseen—whatever that means—by a committee, the membership of which I shall refer to later. The Minister described Q Promotions as the marketing arm of the Queensland Bloodstock Breeders Association. The chart which I will table tells a somewhat different story. In fact, it opens up the type of conflict of interest which the Minister claimed the whole restructuring of the racing industry—painful and drawn out as it was—was designed to prevent. I now table this document.

The directors of Q Promotions are a Mr John Needham and a Mr Bob Bentley, who is the Chairman of the Queensland Principal Club—the statutory body controlling, at great expense, the whole racing industry. Mr Needham is well known in racing and breeding circles, but one could not say that he is generally favourably known. In 1989, he was the Executive Director of Magic Millions, a yearling sales organisation. In order to encourage the sale of horses through Magic Millions, he promoted and promised a \$4m Magic Millions championship classic, which was due to be held in January 1992. Within two weeks of the sales concluding, the \$4m race was cancelled. It never took place. That left a bitter taste with breeders and certainly with buyers. I table the documentation in relation to that.

In addition, Mr Needham is currently engaged in legal action with New Zealand Insurance, which is seeking around \$13m

from him. The matter is not concluded, but it is well known in racing circles. On either account, the question must be asked whether Mr Needham is a suitable person to administer Government funds for the racing industry.

Mr Bentley, even though he is a breeder, has a clear and serious conflict of interest because of his role as the Chairman of the Queensland Principal Club—the statutory authority administering racing in Queensland. Both Mr Bentley and Mr Needham are directors and, as I shall outline, they are effectively shareholders and owners of Q Promotions. The Minister says that it will be a non-profit organisation—a convenient situation which may enable Q Promotions to escape the tough accountability provisions imposed on public companies by the Australian Securities Commission. It might be non-profit, but it most certainly will not be non-revenue.

One of the provisions of the scheme which the Minister announced is that, in order to be eligible to compete for the \$1.5m in prizemoney, breeders must pay a nomination fee of \$400 per horse by the end of this month. This registration fee does no more than enable a weanling to compete for the \$1.5m in added stakes as a two and three year old. At the present time, under the existing \$1.5m Racing Incentive Scheme—which the Minister introduced and which I commend—horses race for no registration fee at all.

Why has the breeding sector been lumped with a registration fee of \$400 per weanling? The answer is that the \$400,000 to be collected by 1 August—and that is a generally accepted figure—will fund Mr Needham and Mr Bentley because all of it goes to Q Promotions, which they effectively own. At least one sales company has, I understand, offered to run the scheme for much less—in the vicinity of \$100 a weanling—and I am told that that is a far more reasonable figure.

The Minister's contribution from the public or punters' purse looks much less generous when it is realised that the industry will have to contribute around \$400,000 to compete for \$1.5m in added stakes, whereas today it contributes nothing to compete for the same added stakes money, \$1.5m, under the Racing Incentive Scheme. In his press statement, which I will table, the Minister said that the scheme would be overseen by a committee comprising the chairperson of the QBBA, the chairperson of the QPC, a non-executive member and three departmental

representatives. Again, a conflict of interest exists, with Mr Bentley, as the Chairman of the Queensland Principal Club, overseeing a scheme of which he is a director and shareholder. Just to keep it all consistent, Mr Needham is the non-executive member of the committee as well!

Mr Deputy Speaker, it gets much worse, I can assure you. At the same time as the Minister appointed Q Promotions to administer the QRIS public-funded scheme and effectively gave it another \$400,000 to administer it, two new companies were established—Queensland Millions Pty Ltd and Queensland Yearling Sales Pty Ltd. A search of company records reveals that Mr Bentley and Mr Needham and/or their wives are directors and shareholders of both of those companies.

Next January, Queensland Yearling Sales will hold a yearling sales auction at the Brisbane Entertainment Centre—conveniently, the same location at which the Minister launched Q Promotions! Queensland Millions is the company set up to administer bonus races for horses sold through the Queensland Yearling Sales auction.

In summary, the company appointed by the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing to administer the Government's \$1.5m in added stakes has the same directors and shareholders or their spouses as do Queensland Yearling Sales and Queensland Millions, which are going to compete against the existing sales companies such as Magic Millions and QBBS in the yearling sales business. This is despite the fact that, in an interview in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* last week, Mr Needham conceded that there are already too many sales companies in Queensland! The question which has been answered today is that when the Minister appointed Q Promotions, owned by Mr Needham and Mr Bentley, to market and run the QRIS scheme, he was aware that both gentlemen were, at the same time, entering the yearling sales business themselves.

I have been a representative either at local government level or at State level for some 17 years, and I cannot recall a situation in which there was a more blatant and unacceptable conflict of interest involving public money than this. What the Minister has done—knowingly or not—is to give Mr Bentley and Mr Needham the very best rails run into the yearling sales industry. At the same time as they are administering public money for added stakes, they are entering the yearling auction business themselves. To suggest that

the two are separate is complete and utter nonsense, and the whole breeding and racing industry knows it. The conflict of interest has already developed, even before the first sale or the first race. Mr Bentley has lobbied at least one club to end its very useful association with one sales company in bonus races—QBBS—and instead to enter into an arrangement with Queensland Millions and Queensland Yearling Sales. This is just one example of someone wearing not two different hats but three or four, misusing his statutory and corporate offices and doing so in a way in which no accountable Government or Minister can tolerate.

At the launching of Q Promotions, and in correspondence since, the Minister stated that the prizemoney was available for horses sold by any auction company. He stated also that sales companies could help in the marketing of QRIS. What happened as soon as one company did so? Mr Needham took out a court action against it. There was no dialogue, no discussions; he took it straight to court. Because the matter is before the court, I can say no more. I merely ask the Minister: is that the way to encourage our breeding and racing industries?

I find it unacceptable also that Q Promotions, the Government's agent to encourage Queensland breeding and racing, is not even run from Queensland. It is in fact run out of swanky offices in Double Bay in Sydney. The manner in which Q Promotions has been given the right to administer public money at the same time as its directors and shareholders themselves are entering the yearling sales and bonus racing business is totally unacceptable.

Time expired.

Mr BUDD (Redlands) (4.21 p.m.): I thought it was very ironic that the subject chosen by the Opposition for this Matter of Special Public Importance debate is the turmoil in the racing industry. The "Mouth from the South", Mr Veivers, has dumped the ball to his mates. He is no longer in the Chamber. The member for Indooroopilly had a go at the member for Everton about tipping buckets on people, but that was the very thing that the member for Indooroopilly did during his speech. Poor Mr Grice, the member for Broadwater, looked at the subject of this debate and said, "Beauty, it is on the racing industry." But now he is quivering in his seat because he has realised that this debate is not about motor cars; it is about the horse racing industry.

As I said, I think it is very ironic that this topic has been chosen. I have glanced at some of the results for the recent Winter Racing Carnival. If there is turmoil in the racing industry, someone has forgotten to tell the punters and members of the industry who participated in the most successful Winter Racing Carnival in decades. It was this Government and this Minister who granted \$225,000 from the Racing Development Fund to fund the unprecedented promotion of that great spectacle. The Minister could see the ongoing tourism potential of the Winter Racing Carnival, particularly in years when it coincides with the excellent Brisbane Biennial. The Minister co-opted the perfect person for the job, Mr Jim Kennedy, to chair the first coordinating committee for the Winter Racing Carnival. The Minister was the driving force behind the success of the carnival—not only this year but also as an ongoing concept.

The Melbourne spring carnival started marketing itself as an event only five years ago, and the results have been spectacular. There is no reason why Brisbane cannot emulate that success. In fact, the winter carnival kicked off at the turn of the century with southerners escaping the cold, and that is a market that is growing continually today. TAB turnover during the winter carnival increased a staggering 23 per cent. The Doomben Ten Thousand attracted the biggest crowd in a decade—20 per cent up on the crowd the year before. The TAB hold of \$3.7m on that day was an increase of \$600,000 on the hold for the previous year.

In the Opposition spokesman's own backyard, things are equally as good. I refer to an article on page 106 of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of 22 May of this year, headlined "Coast betting bonanza for bookies". Turf editor, Mark Armsden, wrote—

"The two-day winter racing carnival was a betting bonanza for bookmakers with a huge increase in their holds. The carnival was a great success for the Gold Coast Turf Club and attracted top class fields for both days of racing. On Hollindale Cup day, on-course bookies held \$1.76 million (same day last season was \$1.34 million). But the biggest improvement was for Winfield Gold Coast Cup day. Last season the hold was a disappointing \$1.29 million, this year it jumped to a mammoth \$2.08 million."

Indeed, the on-course tote at the Gold Coast this year, with a figure of \$24.218m, was again up on the figure for the previous year. In Brisbane, with the exception of one Monday,

off-course tote figures were up on all days of the carnival compared to the figures for last year. Peter Cameron's column in the *Sunday Mail* on 23 May stated—

"Suggestions that Doomben figures were way down last week are way off beam. The Brisbane Amateur Turf Club called for champagne when the track tote churned out \$900,000 in bets. This was an increase of \$125,000 on 1992 and the best tote hold at Doomben since Sky Channel coverage was introduced six years ago."

The *Sun Herald* labelled it "The best winter carnival in years". The *Sunday Telegraph* was even more effusive. It stated of one particular weekend—

"Friday night by the way was a business blockbuster. The hotels were booked out and the nightspots were jumping. Brisbane's cabbies, happier than they've been in weeks, revved into the dawn. The winter racing carnival can take another bow."

Even David Jones reported that it had not sold so many winter hats and social occasion outfits in probably 15 years.

I could go on with all of these great press clippings, but unlike the member for Indooroopilly, who tabled only three documents which thought poorly of the carnival, I will table this document which, for the member's information, is a very weighty and very thick—about as thick as the space between Mr Veivers' ears—document holding all the good press clippings.

If this is turmoil, then the racing industry wants to know where it can get more. In fact, the Chairman of the Brisbane Amateur Turf Club was so impressed by the Government's support for the carnival that he took time to write to the Minister. The letter, which I table, states—

"The commitment by the State Government to the industry in providing the catalyst to generate a substantial promotional budget. . .has been well rewarded."

It states further—

"We at the BATC have been rewarded by a significant increase in racecourse attendances and a subsequent increase in on-course turnover. I feel it is important to acknowledge your commitment to this great benefit to our local industry."

That letter is from Mr Kevin King, who is the Chairman of the BATC. Mr King, in common

with so many others, was impressed by the effort that was made to get new people to the track.

In contrast, the Queensland Turf Club also decided recently to spend a bit more money on public relations. However, did it hire a PR consultant with the aim of getting more people down to the track? Did it want to promote the great sport of thoroughbred racing? Did it want to target corporate sponsorship? No, the Queensland Turf Club has engaged a PR consultant for the sole purpose of bagging the Minister, Mr Bob Gibbs. It wants to hype up an in-house ruckus with more of the same "reds under the bed" nonsense, which has bored the racing industry rigid. If it was not such a waste of members' money, it would be laughable.

The Queensland Turf Club is saying that the Government can appoint trustees to Lang Park and to the Gabba, but not to Eagle Farm. It is a joke! I do not intend wasting any more time talking about the trustees and the committee. Quite frankly, it is only a small group of people, who live off Racecourse Road, who think that it is an issue.

I will remind Opposition members of some of the Goss Government's initiatives that have been of tremendous benefit to the three codes of racing. This Government was the first Government to treat horse breeders as primary producers so that they could access drought relief funds. The Nationals had resisted repeated requests for this sensible and equitable move. They were prepared to watch breeders eat the paint off the walls rather than give them the recognition that was due to them. In fact, the Minister has continued his innovative and, above all, accountable use of the Racing Development Fund and has kept money in reserve in case further drought assistance is needed. The fund now has approximately \$6.6m in uncommitted funds. This Government introduced PubTAB.

Mr Stephan: They might be able to use it in the drought areas, do you think?

Mr BUDD: Yes. This Government introduced PubTAB, which has seen the TAB turnover continue to reach record levels. It introduced Sunday racing, and I think that this newspaper clipping from the *Cairns Post* of 16 March 1992 headlined "Sunday winner" pretty well says it all. I will table that document also.

The Minister used the Racing Development Fund to fund a western triad series, which culminated in Barcaldine hosting its richest-ever race. Maybe the Opposition spokesman should be going out to the people

in the west—the people whom he, as a member of the National Party, supposedly represents—instead of getting sand between his toes down on the Gold Coast.

I will not steal the Minister's thunder, but I understand that this scheme is to be spread further around Queensland. We were the first Government to get serious about attacking SP bookmaking which, each year, rips millions of dollars out of the pockets of owners, breeders, trainers, jockeys and race clubs—in fact, everyone in the industry. We saved the racing industry millions of dollars a year with our purchase of former radio station 4IP, now Radio 4TAB. Soon, that service will spread around Queensland. Already, people in remote places can hear the races live for the first time in their lives. All in all, Queensland racing is in the best shape of that of any State in Australia, with the potential for tremendous expansion, particularly in the Asian markets. I suggest that members opposite broaden their outlook. They should get out and talk to the many thousands of ordinary people who make up this State's fourth-largest industry. They will tell those members just what nonsense their claims of turmoil are.

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (4.31 p.m.): Firstly, in response to some of the fatuous and, perhaps, flatulent remarks made by the member for Everton, I table a letter from Mr Bill Carter in support of the Queensland Turf Club. When the member for Southport spoke a little earlier, he used a word to describe the Queensland racing industry since the present Minister took over. "Turmoil" was the word. I must say that it is very apt. I would add the word "shambles" to "turmoil" when it comes to another important racing code, the dogs. The pity is that we cannot use stronger words in this place to describe the situation. If the galloping industry is in turmoil, it is nothing compared with the greyhound racing industry. In that industry, we have the classic example of what a totally incompetent Minister can achieve in a very short time.

I want to talk about the case of the trainer Peter Rayner and his treatment at the hands of a bunch of direct ministerial appointees—mates put in charge of an industry which contributes of the order of \$50m a year to the Government's coffers. Rayner, who is President of the Lawnton Greyhound Racing Club, has been dealt with harshly by a secret tribunal on a charge that may well have been trumped up. He has not received the most basic justice from people with a capacity to destroy not only his own fortunes as a trainer but also those of his club. Indeed, that may

well have been the intention of those who have judged and punished him.

Lawnton has been a thorn in the side of the Greyhound Racing Control Board since that board set down race dates which would have discriminated against that club. Rayner did his job as a club president and went in to bat for the Lawnton club. What followed was an absolute disgrace. It was a farce that should haunt the Minister and his personal appointees to the Greyhound Racing Control Board for all time.

On 13 May, Rayner attended a greyhound race meeting at Albion Park, as did members of the control board, including the chairman, Ross Lawson. During that meeting, there was a confrontation between Rayner and Lawson, and Lawson later complained that Rayner called him "gutless". Rayner has confirmed that he did so. Lawson hauled Rayner before the Greyhound Racing Control Board for that, and for supposedly calling the board's deputy chairman, Larry Pratt, an "imbecile", with that word being preceded by a strong expletive. "Gutless"—that is an awful thing to say about someone, isn't it! It is a real worry; deeply wounding! But what about "imbecile"? If someone said that about most of us, we could not care less. But not Lawson—obviously a sensitive soul who is not used to that sort of roughness. That is a bit of a surprise, considering Lawson's background.

Newspaper writer Gary Keep describes Lawson as a knockabout former radio commentator and footballer. Pratt, of course, has mixed in racing circles all his life. I must admit to some surprise that people with backgrounds such as that could not cope with language such as that I have described. Could it be that those ministerial lackeys were simply looking for an excuse to get Rayner into a hearing to do him over—a secret hearing, because that is where the dirty work is best done? I am inclined to that belief because of the way that the hearing was set up.

Rayner was not charged under a rule which meant an appearance before stewards. That could have been done under Rule 9. An open hearing could have been held, and an appeal would have been possible. The stewards, who have charge of race meetings, would normally handle such things, but they were locked out. Presumably, Lawson and Pratt—they of the delicate sensibilities—knew full well that the stewards would probably have died laughing at it. They might have even fined the complainants for filing frivolous complaints. But, no, Rayner was charged

under board Rule 21, which states in part that "decision of the board would be final"—an appearance before the very same people whose sensitivities were wounded, and against whose decision there can be no appeal. That sounds a bit like bad, rough justice to me. The supposed victim becomes prosecutor, judge, jury and executioner. At the end of it all, there is no appeal. That sounds a little bit like factional justice to me. It might suit the Labor Party and its lackeys, but it has no place in modern-day Australia.

The kangaroo court comprised three board members, including Pratt. The chairman was junior board member Ken Mead. The main witness was their boss, Lawson. The only supporting witness for Lawson was Kim Sharpe, a newly appointed promotions officer employed by the Albion Park Trust. Lawson is one of the four trustees. Rayner had no chance, and he was not meant to. That secret court of ministerial lackeys belted him with a \$2,000 fine and warned him off all tracks for six months.

Greyhound racing is not the sport of kings, with millions of dollars sloshing around, it is the sport of the little bloke; and \$2,000 is a great deal of money for a greyhound trainer to find. I do not know Rayner's personal circumstances, but \$2,000 would hurt anybody. Even worse is his ban from the tracks. That means that he cannot take his dogs to the races. That is a huge disadvantage for any trainer, and could well cost him a lot more than the fine. All of this came about because he called someone "gutless".

To make it even worse, as Gary Keep reported, a previous case involved a trainer who punched a race official after being called "a silly old bastard". That trainer faced a stewards inquiry, and walked away with a \$500 fine and a two-year sentence—but a suspended sentence. The industry reckons that was the way to go, given all the circumstances and plenty of evidence given before an open inquiry. Contrast that with the treatment handed out to Rayner—the club president who complained about the board's race date proposals for his own club.

The Greyhound Racing Control Board is a disgrace to this Government and this Minister. We should all remember that every member of the board is there as a personal appointee of the Minister. We should be in no doubt of the Minister's support for them, because he has already sacked two boards to get to this crowd. He put them in the job, and he has to

wear the responsibility for their outrageous conduct in this case.

The Minister should make no mistake—the members of the greyhound industry know exactly what is going on, and they are heavily behind Rayner. The Minister should remember the unanimous support given to Rayner at a meeting of 156 industry members on Sunday, 6 June. I have been told that that is only the tip of the iceberg, and that is no surprise, considering the history of the Minister's dealings with the greyhound code. The whole industry is still on the boil after the outrageous bucket job that the Minister did on it some time ago.

Remember that little hunt for a headline—or was it a put-up to clear the way for the appointment of the present bunch of mates? The Minister stood in this House and accused the industry of being a haven for every kind of vermin short of child molesters. He did not name names. He could not name names, because he had not one shred of evidence. A greyhound could have been whelped, raced, and died since those allegations that tainted everyone associated with this industry, but the Minister has still not produced charges. He was just doing a bucket job on the way to appointing a few of his mates to do his bidding on the greyhound fraternity. It is up to the Minister now to put things right.

There is overwhelming evidence that his appointees to the Greyhound Racing Control Board have done the wrong thing, that they have conducted a vicious campaign against a club president who has stood in their way. They have abused their positions of trust and, along the way, they have denied natural justice—indeed, any sort of justice—to that person. Along the way, they have put just about everyone in greyhound racing offside. They risk the total collapse of the industry, as breeders and trainers give up in disgust.

As the member for Southport said—the racing industry is in turmoil, and the responsibility is with the Minister. He has appointed people to every board that he can get his hands on. In cases that we have looked at today, those people have done the wrong thing by racing, which should be in the hands of its participants. Instead, it is in the hands of ministerial mates, working for the ministerial will. The Minister should set things right. If he will not, the Premier should do it for him; but I would not bet on that, because I do not believe that Wayne Goss would be game to risk a faction fight with the Minister.

Hon. R. J. GIBBS (Bundamba— Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (4.40 p.m.): This afternoon we have been treated to one of the poorest attempts I have seen in this Parliament in terms of a debate by members of the Opposition who came in here on the basis of debating the turmoil in the racing industry. I will address that subject in a moment. Firstly, let me deal with the issue that was raised in relation to the trustees at Eagle Farm racecourse. When we came into office in 1989, the simple fact was that there was advice which had been given to previous National Party Ministers by both Crown law and the Auditor-General's Department that legislation in relation to the Eagle Farm trustees needed to be changed. The reason was that the three previous trustees—Sir Edward Williams, Peter Gallagher and Mr Jim Clark—had refused to provide this Parliament with a report on the activities of the trustees.

That matter went to court and the trustees won the case because the legislation at that time, under the previous Government, was inadequate. The advice given to me was that, because of the large amounts of money which go through the hands of those people each year, they should be accountable to the Parliament, as occurs with every trust in Queensland.

Acting on that advice, I changed the legislation and I changed the trustees. Nobody was sacked; I simply changed the trustees. The reason why I changed the trustees was that I deemed it to be a conflict of interest when three people who were the trustees had refused to supply this Parliament with an audited account of how they were spending money each year. I did not believe that they were the correct and proper people to be reappointed as the trustees of Eagle Farm racecourse. However, in order to reach a sensible compromise, I did offer one of the trusteeships to Mr John Power, who is still a member of the committee at Eagle Farm. He accepted my offer. However, following a meeting of the turf club to which he was summoned, he advised me some days later that he was no longer available to serve as a trustee. I then appointed the three trustees.

The Act, which was current when members opposite were in Government, provides—

“The trustees or a majority of them may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, make from time to time all such by-laws as they shall deem necessary or expedient for prescribing, providing for, regulating, and controlling all matters

concerning or connected with the said lands or any part thereof . . . ”

It puts the total responsibility for the administration of Eagle Farm racecourse in the hands of the trustees.

When the trustees came to me and said that they were going to revise the by-laws and regulations, I agreed, because it was their responsibility. I received the proposed by-laws on Thursday, 6 June. Because of a busy schedule, I had time only to browse through them. However, it became apparent to me that there would be conflict. I place on record that I do not believe it should be the job of the trustees to decide on dress standards on the course, on admission prices or on a number of other issues.

On Friday, 7 June, what happened? The committee of the Queensland Turf Club called a press conference for the sole reason of bucketing the Government and me. In the debate on the ABC that night—one part of the debate, unfortunately, was not shown—I said to Mr Gallagher, “Why didn’t you pick the phone up today and arrange a meeting with me so that we could sit down and try to resolve the problems?”

Mr Santoro: Would you have listened to him?

Mr GIBBS: Of course I would have listened to him. In the past 12 months, he has requested two meetings with me: one as the chairman of the QTC and one in his capacity when he was chairman of the QPC. On both occasions, I gladly met with him, sat around the table and cordially discussed matters with him. However, he chose not to do that.

Immediately following that debate, I directed my director-general to get together the trustees and representatives of the Queensland Turf Club committee. As well, I asked my director-general to chair the meeting. I did that because of a perception that people such as the honourable member and some people at the Queensland Turf Club want to continually beat up that I have an agenda against the Queensland Turf Club, but I do not have one.

I did not attend the meeting. It was a cordial meeting and, from the report given to me by my director-general, both parties—although there was a stand-off—agreed generally that there would be a revision—that the department would do a review of the trustees. We have almost completed that review, and I believe that we will work our way through it in a sensible manner. However, it was also decided at that meeting that in the

best interests of everybody, and to keep things cool, there would not be any further outside comment—leave us alone to try to sort it out. But, lo and behold, what happened again? The chairman went back to his club and issued the scumbag newsletter to all his members bagging the Government, making unfounded accusations and heating up the entire situation again. We are trying to work sensibly through this review, and that will be done.

The honourable member made a comment about QRIS. I do not have time to debate QRIS today; but I can assure the honourable member that I am satisfied that it is above board. We have put in place mechanisms to ensure—

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr GIBBS: I do not see it as any more of a conflict of interest, for example, than people on a turf club committee racing their own horse at the track and having access to prize money if their horse wins. I see it as no more of a conflict of interest, for example, than of Reg Inglis being a member of the AJC and running the Sydney Easter sales.

The honourable member is way off the beam about QRIS. I have a letter from Mr Richard Tan of Chuan Huat Farm, one of the prominent breeders in Queensland, welcoming the scheme and saying how fantastic it is; I have a letter from the Townsville Turf Club congratulating the Minister and the Government for introducing the scheme; and I also have a letter from a Mr Ron Maund, who is relocating his entire stud from New South Wales to Queensland so that he can have access to this prize money. So people welcome it!

I turn now to the last couple of comments by Mr Grice. I will read out sections of the National Party policy. Under the heading “Harness Racing”, it states—

“Harness racing has not developed to the same extent as thoroughbred racing and still needs some guidance from the Government.

Until harness racing is better able to stand alone, the current system of control involving some Government guidance should continue.”

In other words, the board should be appointed. Under the heading, “Greyhound Racing”, it states—

“Greyhound racing is in the same general position as harness racing and would benefit from a continuation of the current control arrangements.”

In other words, an appointed board. A Mrs Kerry Watson, who is the spokesperson for the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association, telephoned my office early this week to say that in spite of some of the difficulties in the industry at the moment and the problem involving Mr Rayner, GBOTA still has confidence and wants us to reappoint the same board when it comes up for appointment. If that is not a ringing endorsement from the greyhound industry, I do not know what it is!

I will conclude on the following note. Let us talk about some of the turmoil in the industry; let us talk about the record TAB profit this year—a profit which has increased dramatically since this Government came to office in 1989. Let us talk about the fact that, in 1988, \$28m in prize money was distributed to race clubs in the three codes throughout Queensland. Last financial year, under a Labor Government, \$43m was distributed to race clubs for prize money. There was a record profit for the TAB of \$44m, and in that period of five years, off-course betting increased from \$700m to \$1.2 billion, up 71 per cent. Honourable members should contrast that, for example, with what is happening in New South Wales and Victoria. I have all the information; they should have a look at it. The Victorians want to privatise their TAB; they want to sell it off; they want to corporatise it. We have the best performing TAB in Australia, and the industry has never had so much money injected into it for prize money. Members opposite should look at what they are getting under the new incentive scheme this year—it is all here if they want to see the figures.

Time expired.

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1)

Second Reading

Debate resumed from 13 July (see p. 3473).

Mr BARTON (Waterford) (4.50 p.m.): I rise to support the Appropriation Bill. The Bill represents a key financial link between the beginning of the financial year and the passing of the Budget. Consideration of the content of the Budget is, of course, well under way. The subject has received some attention in this House in the past couple of days. Clearly, its preparation is not going to be an easy task, but it is one to which the Government is looking forward, no doubt with relish. In September, it will bring down not just

a balanced Budget but also a very good Budget for the people of Queensland.

We have to recognise that there has been the cut in funding from the Federal Government that has caused and will continue to cause some difficulties in ensuring that we provide the necessary services to all Queenslanders, and that, where there have to be changes, they are carried out in a very humane way. Jobs are the most important issue to this Labor Government. It is something about which we feel very passionate. If we were not prepared to hold such feelings about the creation of jobs, then I think that it would not be appropriate for us to claim to represent ordinary Labor Party voting people.

Mr Littleproud: We represent all Queenslanders.

Mr BARTON: I take that interjection—we do represent all Queenslanders, of course. Those of us who are members of the Labor Party feel very compassionate about the working class people of this State, to whom, regrettably, the people on the other side of the House pay only lip service. The cuts in funding do make it more difficult for this Government—

Mr SANTORO: Mr Deputy Speaker, I take—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! Is this a point of order?

Mr SANTORO: No.

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

Mr BARTON: The cuts in funding do make it more difficult for this Government—

Mr SANTORO: Mr Deputy Speaker, I find the comments by the member—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Is this a point of order?

Mr SANTORO: No, it is not.

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

Mr BARTON: At the third attempt—the cuts in funding do make it more difficult for this Government to address this most important of issues, that is, creating jobs and maintaining the jobs that we do have in this State. Regrettably, some jobs in some areas will be lost; but, of course, they will be lost by attrition; they will be lost where there have been agreed redundancy packages put together. The people who are going to lose their jobs

will lose them by agreement or will lose them through a move to another location.

Unemployment is a very debilitating and frustrating problem. I know it is a very frustrating problem for all the members on the Government side of the House and for many members on the other side of the House with whom I have had discussions in the parliamentary precincts. It is a problem for the young people and for older members of society who are unemployed. Young people need to obtain work experience to back up the skills and education they have, and they need to enter the work force to develop and understand the work ethic and what it is all about. If young people do not get jobs for a number of years, it is very difficult for them to ultimately move into jobs and become productive members of society.

I am also concerned about unemployed people who could be described as the over 40s because they have other problems such as family responsibilities and mortgages. If they are out of the work force for some time, their skills become run-down and it is much more difficult for those people to ultimately enter the work force. I am pleased that in my electorate, a group is attempting to address the problems of those who are described as the more mature people who are currently unemployed. Regrettably, unemployed people frequently have no job and they have no hope. This sense of hopelessness often leads to crimes relating to property and violence, and it leads to further social problems including domestic violence, as people have nothing better to do except sit at home and become frustrated. Sometimes they drink, and they take out their frustrations on the people around them who are closest to them.

It is also regrettable that in some areas unemployment is now reaching the point at which it is being passed on to the next generation. I know of instances in my electorate in which not only are the parents unemployed but also the teenage children are unemployed, and this is a massive social problem. Many people visit my electorate office, just as they visit the electorate offices of other members. They come to me and indicate most clearly that they have the will to work; that in many cases they have the educational qualifications to do productive work; that they have skills; and that they have undertaken training programs. As well, many of them come to me with great ideas of what they would like to do in the work force or what they believe could be done, if the Government had the funds to put certain programs into

place. But, regrettably, many of them cannot find jobs.

As recently as last week, I had one instance of a mother of a young man in his early twenties who had just completed a university qualification. Unfortunately, despite his best endeavours, he had not been able to find any employment at all. My constituent was very concerned that the Government was putting a lot of money into training programs for young people who would not be able to utilise their skills. I put to her, as I am putting to the members of this Parliament, that I believe it is essential for the Government to continue with the skills development programs, the training programs and the work expenditure programs that are being implemented by the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations because, sadly, our history is littered with many examples of a failure to keep up the levels of skills and a failure to keep up training levels during past recessions, only to find that, as the economy improves and as people have the opportunity to move into the work force, there are insufficient numbers of people who have the skills that are needed. I believe it is very important to continue those training programs because they put people into not only a training mode and a studying mode but also an education mode which will provide them with appropriate skills so that when jobs are available, they will be able to move into those jobs. We need the jobs now.

It is also a sad and unfortunate reality that in many locations, in order to save any jobs at all, some jobs have to be lost. One of the difficult decisions that this Government has had to make is the restructuring of railway workshops. I feel sad about some of those issues because for many years I was a Metal Workers Union organiser in north Queensland and I was responsible for looking after the Townsville railway workshops. The workers there who are facing redundancy include the delegates who have been leading the current discussions and struggle, and they are people with whom I worked very closely for a great number of years. But technology has caught up with them. The new rail systems and rolling stock mean that they are now no longer required to carry out the level of maintenance that has been necessary in the past.

Much of the new technological railway equipment needs new capital investment for maintenance to be carried out at all. Clearly, similar to the private sector when it needs to replace major capital equipment, the public sector has to rationalise workshop locations and the number of pieces of equipment that

can be purchased. The option of building two centres of excellence at Rockhampton and at Redbank is the most logical way to go. That will mean major capital investment in this State, and it will mean many new jobs will be created in those two locations. However, the people who are employed in other locations will receive redundancy packages because, as they retire, their jobs will disappear.

This is not something that I and my Labor colleagues with whom I have discussed this matter are happy about, but it is the reality and it is one of the difficult decisions that needed to be made. I also make the point that all this has happened after very extensive consultation with the railway unions and the work force. This stands in marked contrast to the way the Court Government in Western Australia behaved in similar circumstances. At its one and only major railway workshop that is still in existence, officials walked in one day and said that on a certain date in 1995, the workers would not have jobs. It was cold and hard because one day those people were productive members of society and the next day they were heading for the scrap heap.

The railway workshop restructuring will mean that Queensland will have the best railway workshops in this State and in this country, and that those workshops will go into the next century with the appropriate technology. Regrettably, however, some rail lines will have to be closed, but that will occur only in areas where there is very low usage and low tonnage. I am concerned about what happens to people in parts of this State who will no longer have access to rail transport. Importantly, as those lines will close, at least in this State new capital investment in railroad lines is going on. I am very proud of the fact that the new railroad line from Beenleigh to Robina starts in my electorate and, of course, part of that railroad line traverses my electorate. Once the line is completed, it will be to the benefit of people in my electorate. Major capital investment will create more new jobs for railway employees from my electorate through to the Gold Coast.

Mr FitzGerald: Tell that to the farmers in the west.

Mr BARTON: I take that interjection. I used to look after a lot of railwaymen in little workshops in Hughenden and Cloncurry and the odd one in Charters Towers and Bowen. In the early 1980s when I first became the assistant secretary of the Trades and Labor Council of Queensland, I was involved in a campaign when the National Party Government was shutting workshops in places

such as Gympie and shutting down running sheds in Bowen. It is not something new. It may have been necessary at that point and, regrettably, that action must be taken now because the people are not there to be provided with the necessary services. If there is no need for those services, non-existent services cannot be maintained at a high cost.

Importantly in this State, this Government also has a number of other major job creation programs, for example, the \$150m Jobs Plan which is generating many thousands of jobs in Queensland. I refer also to the Schools Refurbishment Program. Members of p. and c. associations in the various schools in my electorate of Waterford think that the Schools Refurbishment Program is one of the best things that have happened. Their arguments with past Governments, and even the Goss Government, regarding the refurbishment of schools have now been acted on. Because of that program, the schools are in a much better position to provide a facility not only for the students but also for the community. Many unemployed people did get jobs while that Schools Refurbishment Program was under way. As a result of that, members of the p. and c. associations are happy people today.

Some efficiency gains will also need to be made. I would like to make some comparisons. Yes, the Government is consulting with the union movement about what happens with cleaning services—or what are called the hotel services of laundry, cooking and cleaning—in hospitals. Regrettably, Queensland is unlike other States. Recently, I was part of a delegation to Victoria. I talked to a number of business leaders and union leaders in that State, where people were simply sacked. Cleaners in large numbers were sacked. It does disturb me that we must now make comparisons between what are seen as the efficiencies or potential lack of efficiencies of cleaning services in this State and those in places such as Victoria and New South Wales. In those States, cleaning services are all out on contract.

Contracts in Victoria mean that Victoria has adopted the New Zealand model in which, if low-skilled, low-paid people want a job, they work on the boss's terms if they want to have a job at all. I find it very hard to see how proper comparisons can be made between the costs for people working under those conditions and the costs for people working under proper award conditions that have been set by the appropriate tribunals or negotiated with employers over a long period. The people in those other States are working for

sweatshop wages and under sweatshop conditions. That is the reality.

Members of the Liberal Party in this State wish to distance themselves from that. In the debates over the past couple of days, they have tried to pretend that they are not economic rationalists. They want to pretend that they are the friends of the wage and salary earners, the ordinary workers. I am sorry that the member for Clayfield is not in the House because, after his contribution yesterday, I am thinking about giving him a new, for want of a better term, nickname. I am going to call him "Saint Toro".

I know that what the member for Clayfield said yesterday is not really the correct position of his party. Members of the Liberal Party do not care about what happens to ordinary wage and salary earners, because they are members of the same party that in the Federal election campaign wanted to bring in \$3 an hour wages for young people. Liberal Party members are the same people who sacked the thousands of teachers, cleaners, hospital workers, rail workers and public servants in States such as Victoria and Western Australia. They are the ones who sacked the Industrial Commission of Victoria—the independent umpire. They are the ones who dismantled awards, the ones who simply forced workers onto contracts, abolished penalty rates and abolished over-award payments. I would suggest that, if the people who did that are friends of ordinary wage and salary earners, those people would not want to have enemies.

I will come back to the most important issue that is related to the Appropriation Bill and to the Budget. When the Budget is handed down, I have no doubt that it will be a balanced Budget. There will be some necessary cuts. There will be some efficiency gains that have been negotiated with the work force. There will be change, but it will be change that has taken place with a human face and with a Government that has compassion for wage and salary earners.

Members in this House represent all of Queensland, not just their own electorates, and there are differences across the State. We must achieve a balance, and a balance that is best for all. That will mean some hardships for some people. However, in some cases it will mean that resources can be transferred to the areas where the major growth is taking place, where people are already enduring massive hardships and are bereft of real services. We must get that

balance correct. Services must be provided where they are needed.

South-east Queensland is the fastest growth area in Australia and it is one of the fastest growth areas in the Western World. I am proud that my electorate is in the middle of that growth corridor. This massive change is taking place with increased numbers not only in my electorate but also in all of my neighbouring electorates. Regrettably, the services have been lagging behind those large population increases. Services such as roads, hospitals, schools, police and many of the other services that people take for granted in a modern society were allowed to lag behind during the time when coalition Governments were in office and when the National Party was in Government for six years.

That is now changing. The Beenleigh-Robina railway line is under construction. There has been duplication of that line from Brisbane to Beenleigh in many areas. We are seeing road expansions and widening of the South East Freeway and other major declared roads. Only last week, Stage II of the Logan Hospital was opened. Had the National Party remained in Government, Stage II would not have eventuated. Importantly, the Logan Hospital now has a maternity wing. Other services that are important to women and families are being provided in the Logan region, including my electorate of Waterford.

Considerable numbers of additional police have already been allocated to that area, and several weeks ago an announcement was made that even more police will be allocated to the region. That is very important. However, that does bring some conflict. It is not all nice and easy where there is a major growth area underneath one's feet. Some of the conflict involves people who bought acreages that were nice, quiet, rural retreats on what were then narrow country roads that are now being turned into major four-lane feeder roads. Some parts of those properties will have to be resumed to allow that to take place. Those people, of course, are quite concerned about that. Ten years ago, those people thought they had moved to the bush. Now the city has come to their front door—and come to their front door at a very fast rate.

Some ecological issues are of concern. There has been a great deal of concern about the potential for more sandmining in the Logan River right under major residential areas and people's noses. That is a real concern. There are concerns about new roads

being built in bush areas that are koala habitats. There is concern about noise pollution from the increasing traffic, even on the freeway itself. Of course, we have seen some sound barriers being put on some parts of the freeway to date, and no doubt there will be others. There are not easy solutions, but they are solutions that are being worked through.

I had intended to talk about another major industry sector, but I might leave that for another speech on another day. In wrapping up—Queensland is a good place in which to invest. Investors are voting with their feet and coming to Queensland. Queensland is the State in which jobs are being created. In the past year, of 91 000 new jobs that were created in Australia, 47 000 were created in Queensland. Queensland is in good hands. The Budget is well under way. It will be a good Budget. This Appropriation Bill is a key part of funding the actions and needs of the Government until that date. I have no doubt that it is an appropriate and necessary amount. I support the Appropriation Bill.

Mr SLACK (Burnett) (5.10 p.m.): Opposition members take exception to the words of the member for Waterford relative to their giving lip-service to the problems of the unemployed and our lack of concern for the unemployed. There is no question that there is concern on both sides of the House—including the Opposition side—about the unemployment figures in this State and in the Commonwealth. It is disgraceful to see unemployment in this State at 10.5 per cent, and at well over 11 per cent, and climbing, nationally.

Mrs Sheldon: Thirty per cent of young people are unemployed.

Mr SLACK: That is right. Many of them are sons and daughters of ourselves and, of course, the constituents whom we represent. It does not give us any pleasure whatsoever to see that unemployment rate. Naturally, we will condemn the Government in relation to that, because it has the power and the authority to do something about the unemployment rate, but it has not done so. The member for Waterford has attempted to defend the effect of the Government's policies on unemployment. We say quite clearly that the policies of the Government have contributed to unemployment in this State and in the Commonwealth and that, if it were not for those policies, the unemployment rate would not necessarily be so high.

In my electorate, farmers and business people say to me that, through extra charges,

costs and paperwork, it is not worth their while trying to employ people, because they are struggling within their own businesses. They would like to employ people, but they are not in a position to do so because of the various constraints that are being placed upon them. There is a general feeling of despondency in the community. The member for Waterford and other Government members would know that. It is not a very pretty sight to see that despondency.

As I said, people have come to me and said that, because of charges and uncertainty in the Government's policies, they are not confident to invest. Confidence in investment is one of the major factors in creating employment. It does not matter what the Government does in some respects, but in order for employment to be created, the Government has to give a feeling of confidence to the people who will employ young people and others who are being made redundant.

That confidence can only come through policies of the Government that give encouragement. People need incentive. That has not been provided by this Government. Everywhere along the line the Government has tried to introduce a new tax—a tax here, a tax somewhere else. The Premier came back from the Premiers Conference whingeing and whining about what a difficult and unfortunate position he was in and how he had been duded. All the snarling that went on across the table between him and the Prime Minister was interesting to watch. Irrespective of what the Treasurer said earlier this afternoon, the fact remains that Queensland received an increase of 5.35 per cent.

Mr De Lacy: You're a slow learner, too.

Mr SLACK: No, I am not a slow learner. I will come to that. Queensland received an increase of 5.35 per cent in circumstances in which the Commonwealth has a Budget deficit estimated to be \$18 billion. Over the last three years, this Government has received an increase in add-on allocations from the Commonwealth of in excess of \$800m. Only last year, this Government was conditioning the people of Queensland to the fact that, if the Federal Opposition won the election, funds to Queensland would be cut by \$370m. Therefore, there would have to be major cuts in the Budget. It was terrible. The Treasurer went out and told all of his Ministers to prepare for this. He actually believed that the Federal Opposition would get in.

Mr De Lacy: I did. I was terrified.

Mr SLACK: Yes, he did; but I remember saying in this House that it did not matter what party won the election, there would be cutbacks to the States. There had to be cutbacks to the States when the Commonwealth's own Budget was estimated to blow out to \$16 billion, and presently it is estimated that it will blow out to about \$18.7 billion. So how in that climate could this Government expect to receive its wish list when it went down to Canberra? This Government was cut back a mere \$115m on what it expected to get. I accept that the Treasurer is explaining that that 5.35 per cent was needed to cater for all the extra people who would be coming to Queensland. The speech by the Leader of the Opposition reveals the areas in which Government revenues have increased. They include taxes, charges and stamp duties. Queensland is not in a desperate situation simply because—

Mr De Lacy: You've been lecturing us to cut back expenditure. You've been doing it for weeks.

Mr SLACK: The Treasurer will have his turn at the end of the debate. Queensland is not in a desperate situation because of Commonwealth cutbacks; if the Queensland economy is in a desperate situation, it is because of this Government's mismanagement. For too long, this Government has been skiting about how well it has managed the economy of this State. However, that so-called great performance was only because of the inheritance that this Government received from the previous Government. Now this Government may have to apply some management practices of its own. It should stop whingeing and whining. It should get down to managing the economy. Rather than saying, "We are going to tax this and we are going to tax that", the Government should start to instil confidence in the people of this State so that they will invest and create employment. If that were to occur, the Government would receive more revenue with which it could run the affairs of this State.

The last Budget revealed a blow-out in the amount of gross State product. The Treasurer and the Premier must take that and other factors into account. They must adopt sound management practices. The Government can no longer blame the previous Government and the Commonwealth Government. It must rectify any problems on its own behalf. Recently, every paper in this State has carried stories about the Premier crying foul about the treatment that Queensland received from the Commonwealth. However, for the information

of Government members, I wish to cite comments by their own Federal member for Petrie, Gary Johns. A newspaper article stated—

"Brisbane, July 13 AAP—The Goss Government had resorted to Canberra bashing instead of taking responsibility for its own budget, Queensland Federal Labor MP and parliamentary secretary to the Treasurer, Gary Johns, said today.

Mr Johns was responding to Queensland Government claims that \$109 million in cuts in the areas of transport, education, health and general administration were caused by a \$115 million Federal funding 'shortfall'.

However, Mr Johns said his home State was getting a good deal in the distribution of Commonwealth funds and should stop blaming Canberra for the cuts.

'The Commonwealth Government this year will give the Queensland Government more than \$5.7 billion . . . on a per person basis this is more than \$320 more than NSW and \$318 more than Victoria', he said in a statement.

'Queensland does have a low level of State taxation, a level that the Queensland Government has decided to continue.

'But it cannot continue to shift the responsibility for revenue raising to the Commonwealth Government, depending on it to make up Queensland's revenue shortfall.' "

It is interesting that those comments were made by one of the Government's own mates.

It was not unexpected that the Premier would adopt the attitude that he did on his return from Canberra. This is the first year of this Government's second term in office. Naturally, a captain of industry or the leader of a Government expects to have a fairly tough time in his or her initial term, but expects to have a few cookies in the jar subsequent to that. Considered in that light, the Premier's attitude came as no surprise to me.

However, I am starting to wonder whether that was the real reason for the Premier's attitude. Yesterday in this House, the member for Brisbane Central and the member for Salisbury raised the issue of a petrol tax. I will be interested to hear the Treasurer's response to them. Those honourable members have now put a petrol tax on the agenda, in conflict with the stated position of their Government,

and the matter should be clarified. I am just wondering whether the comments of those honourable members points to some dissension within Labor's own ranks coming to the fore.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr SLACK: That is right. I believe that not only those Labor members but also members of the public are starting to ask questions about this Government's economic management. On the one hand, the Treasurer tells everyone how well off this State is and the extent of its surplus; yet, on the other hand, unemployment is rising; cleaners are being advised that they will not be replaced if they are sick; and the ambulance budget has blown out to the extent of \$40m-odd. A conflicting story is emerging. The Government is imposing charges for this and charges for that. One charge by itself does not cause a major problem, and such charges represent extra revenue for the Government, but they also represent extra imposts on business and extra costs for every individual.

Mr Littleproud interjected.

Mr SLACK: That is right. The Government's receipts have increased through the imposition of all of those sneaky little charges. However, dissension is now starting to emanate from Caucus as to whether this State really has a surplus or whether this Government is in trouble financially. If a surplus does exist, people are starting to wonder why unemployment levels are still high and why so many extra charges are necessary. That is an interesting question for which I seek an answer from the Treasurer. I am sure that many of his constituents would also like him to answer that question.

This Government has spent quite a deal of money on funding its own public relations machine. I want to outline the extent of that funding. EARC's review of Government news and information calculated the Government's total expenditure on public relations and other promotional and information programs for the 1991-92 period at \$36.6m. That figure is based on incomplete information provided by the Government. Members should note that the Goss Labor Government did not cooperate in supplying EARC with that information. That \$36.6m is a very conservative estimate of what this Government spends on public relations, media liaison and departmental activities. The Media and Information Service was established in 1990 and has a staff of 95 people—a good area for cutbacks, one would think—66 of whom are in the three main areas

of operations, the marketing and communication groups.

On top of this, 273 staff are employed in a full-time capacity in information units in 17 Government departments. The question must be asked: what are those 360 people doing? The answer is that they are turning out myriad glossy bulletins, internal memorandums, papers and journals. That, too, is a very conservative estimate. As EARC found, this is a very secretive Government. In the past, it has been the practice to table a return to order, itemising all funds spent on public relations and consultants, but the Premier advised EARC that that was not available in the format of a return to order. Seven months after EARC's request, the Premier's principal private secretary responded in terms that the department had encountered considerable difficulty in collating the information. The excuse was that many departments had not maintained separate accounting for public relations and advertising expenditure.

It was EARC's view that neither the Premier, his department nor individual departments were able or willing to present the costs associated with their media and information services. The question must be asked: what are they hiding? Are they fudging the figures? The mass of glossy bulletins, journals and papers promoting policies, the Ministers by name—sometimes with photographs—and the postage of the same is an extremely expensive and wasteful exercise. On top of that, this Government has spent \$18m on consultants. Another Government growth area is boards and committees. EARC said that there were so many boards and committees that each did not know what the other was doing. Recently, the Premier said that he wanted a cut in the number of committees. How ridiculous! He is responsible for setting them up. Out of the last State Budget, at least 16 more inquiries and committees have been instituted.

Although at the time of the State election this Goss Labor Government did not rule out new taxes, it has increased taxes, fees and fines enormously—well above the inflation rate. One of the newest charges proposed is a fee for vehicles to enter national parks. It is interesting to note that when the Premier came back from the Premiers Conference, he said that there were going to be many new taxes—that there had to be—and that there may be a cut in schools. As it has turned out, there has been an announcement that small schools are not under threat. However, I will be interested to see whether that announcement is honoured.

Mr Littleproud: They share the one principal.

Mr SLACK: A short while ago, the Minister talked about sharing the one principal. Why was the Minister not on air last night answering questions, in accordance with his ministerial responsibility, instead of leaving it to the Director-General of Education, Roger Scott? I am wondering what has happened to ministerial responsibility in accordance with the Westminster system of government in this State when the Government allows that to happen—when a public servant is left to field questions. I would like the Minister for Education to clarify what is meant by “sharing principals”, particularly in one-teacher schools. I would like him to clarify more precisely whether there will be cutbacks and closures of small schools in country areas, because although the Cabinet decision was that there would not be, many people are apprehensive about the matter. They believe that this Government has on its agenda the closure of one-teacher schools. That has been the experience in other States.

I turn to national parks, and the fact that there will be a charge of \$5 per vehicle to enter some national parks within this State. The Premier announced that this was as a result of the Commonwealth's decision to cut back Queensland's entitlement—as he claimed—by \$115m. It is interesting to note that, a couple of days ago on air, the Minister for Environment and Heritage, the Honourable Molly Robson, said that for some time she had been considering a fee of \$1 per person to enter national parks but that she had settled on a fee of \$5 per car to be charged in seven national parks in Queensland. It is interesting because when the interviewer asked her whether that fee was imposed as a result of the Commonwealth cutbacks, or whether it had been in the pipeline for some time, she answered that it had been in the pipeline for some time. In other words, it gives credence to what I have been claiming, that is, that much of what has been said about this cutback is purely a political smokescreen and that many of the cutbacks that have been instigated have been in the pipeline for some time and were going to be implemented.

The cutbacks in small schools created such an outcry that the Government backed away from it. However, people who live in communities that have small schools are not convinced that those closures will not eventuate. Having regard to my own shadow portfolio responsibility, I say that a \$5 entrance fee per car into national parks is only the beginning. It must be, because the Premier

talked about a 20 per cent recovery of the cost of managing national parks by charging visitors to enter national parks. There is a cost in collecting that fee, and it is quite a large cost. Consequently, I do not believe that \$5 per car will go anywhere near towards paying that 20 per cent of the management cost of national parks, nor do I believe that the Government is going to limit it to seven national parks. It will not be long before all the national parks in Queensland will have an entrance fee, and it will be an escalating fee. It will be another tax on the families of Queensland.

It must be noted that during the time that the National Party was in Government, at no stage did it charge a fee for people to enter national parks. The National Party believed quite firmly that national parks were part of Queensland's natural heritage, and that people should be encouraged to visit them, to appreciate the flora and fauna within them and to appreciate the environment. In only four years since this Government was first elected to office, it has instigated what it claims to be a modest charge of \$5 per vehicle to enter national parks. However, I state quite categorically in this House that it is only the beginning. That entrance fee will be extended to more national parks. It will also be increased, because there is no way in the world that \$5 per car is going to meet the cost of administering that fee and meeting the 20 per cent recovery rate that is required to manage those national parks.

All members can look forward to an escalating fee for entrance into national parks in their electorates, and they can look forward to other fees that will be imposed in the system. The member for Waterford can rest assured that his Government's policies are the ones that are contributing to the unemployment rate in his electorate, because his Government's policies are not going to give the productive sector the incentive to get out and invest in a manner that will lead to a lessening in the unemployment figures.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes) (5.30 p.m.): I rise to support the Appropriation Bill 1993 and its provisions, which authorise the Treasurer to issue from public accounts and apply towards the Supply granted for services in the financial year that started on 1 July 1993 the sum of \$5.77 billion—a substantial sum indeed. I congratulate the Treasurer on the very fine work that he and his officers have done to date on this. The Treasurer has done this work during very adverse times that are very much akin to those experienced in Australia between 50 and 100 years ago. In those

days, Australians and Parliaments in this country had to address similar conditions of economic stringency. There was also a need to realign economies and re-achieve productive bases in economies throughout the world. When such circumstances arose in the past, other rationalisations brought about those reforms. As we now know from history, this took the guise of international wars and other social tensions.

This is a time of tension. In the context of our State Budget and the work that is being done throughout Australia to conduct Government, a very fundamental tension exists. It involves dealing with the implementation of Budgets and the specific adjustments that are needed, as opposed to what people sometimes refer to—in cynical and disrespectful terms—as “the big picture”.

The specific adjustments are indeed tensions. The Treasurer listed those factors in the Interim Budget Statement of July 1993, which related to the 1993-94 State Budget. The sectors that come within a specific adjustment plan are listed under various headings, including Education, Health, Transport, Treasury, other portfolio measures and general matters that are intended to provide various savings within the Budget. It would come as no surprise or news to members that many of these matters arise directly from the Premiers Conference allocations for this year.

Those specific tensions and adjustments really must be compared to what I referred to previously as the big picture, because they derive directly from the broad economic picture. For obvious reasons, it is very difficult to communicate the broad economic picture to the general population. It is extremely complex and derives on several levels. First of all, in terms of the international economy, enormous stringencies are being imposed. We are also experiencing dislocations in terms of trade imbalances and difficulties in obtaining international competition in a world that is constantly shifting the respective trade blocks and trade barriers and continuously adjusting incentives. This affects directly the way in which Australia conducts its business, the way in which it produces and, ultimately, the way in which it consumes. We must take part in the international climate, which affects our domestic life. Ultimately, we have to decide what to produce, and that affects the employment level in this country.

In the context of the international scene, much is happening in terms of a drive towards what is generally referred to as economic

rationalist principles. I believe that economic rationalist principles were not just dreamt up by Right Wing theorists; they were essentially an effect that grew out of our specific economic circumstances. The proponents of the neoclassical school of economics and the way that it has emerged arise in a spectrum of views. I believe that we could label the pure economic rationalists as those people on the very extreme end of it. In the international context, in a sense we are being impelled by the same sort of forces and effects as those impelling the extreme economic rationalists. We face the same sorts of decisions and dilemmas as they have essentially addressed and, in a sense, driven.

I turn now to the national level, where the Australian economy has had to respond very directly to international forces. I shall come back to specific measures that have been put in place. However, they come under a range of headings which fall into a broad-ranging program of micro-economic reform that Labor Governments in this country have been embarking upon since Australia went into recession in the early 1970s. The principle micro-economic reform programs were not essentially conducted in a forceful manner until then, despite what can be described as the banal cuts of the Fraser years. At an Australian level, the micro-economic reform agenda has clearly and energetically been driven, and we have to catch up with that in the context of the international scene. At the State level, as a result of the latest Premiers Conference and the principles that have been applied in terms of the dissection of funds, we now have a system whereby the criteria are being applied such that the division of the fiscal cake is dependent upon the progress in micro-economic reform measures.

We can very clearly put ourselves into an historical context at the State level. Essentially, we have been penalised at the latest Premiers Conference because we are not today as far advanced in terms of micro-economic reform as some of the other States. I refer to Victoria and New South Wales, which received better treatment. The reason that they did better is that, throughout the 1980s when Labor Governments were in power in New South Wales and Victoria, they were getting on with much of the micro-economic reform agenda. However, in Queensland where the Nationals were in power—propped up still by the Liberals—we had a moribund State Government for many years throughout the early to late 1980s which essentially was running for cover from the Fitzgerald inquiry, corruption and sheer fatigue after such a long

innings in Government, and the micro-economic reform agenda did not occur.

Today, we find that we are being penalised to a large extent as a result of the failure of those previous conservative Governments to get on with the micro-economic reform agenda that their State counterparts were getting on with. We have to live with that, but we are being penalised and are having to undertake those adjustments as a result of that.

Today, the various economic theories that are propounded are fairly wide-ranging and generally come from a completely wrong direction. I will cite a couple of eminent writers in political economics in this country who are typical of the backward thinking that has been unhelpful in progressing Australian political life in recent years. I refer to people such as Ted Wheelwright, the political economist, and Professor Russell Mathews, who wrote articles in the *Australian Business Monthly* on 3 December 1992 and on 1 February 1993. I believe that those writers have not addressed the fundamental problem. I know that Professor Mathews takes a very superficial approach. He tries to describe the problem on the level of unemployment and a current account deficit. The fundamental approach that we have to start from in terms of our economic difficulties is essentially the need to restructure our economy and put us on to a productive base which allows us to compete internationally.

It is no surprise that writers such as Professor Mathews end up offering very superficial responses which try to address the effect of the sort of dislocation in economies that we now see, without going to the heart of the economic problem. The heart of the economic problem can only be addressed by the physical rearrangement of the economy and a physical rearrangement of the productive processes. That includes all factors within the economy ranging throughout Government and the private sector.

I should refer to some of Wheelwright's solutions which are typical of that school of thought. He refers to restoring full employment as a policy goal, significant reregulation of the financial system, adequate industrial policies designed for particular industries and free trade with countries which have free trade unions. They are fairly restrictive and narrow concerns. Although they are noble concerns on the face of it, and concerns with which anyone with fundamental humanitarian principles would have to agree, in terms of an analysis of what has gone on and where we

have to go, they are superficial ones and typical of the sort of backward thinking that we have experienced in Australia. A very well thought out treatment of the economic context and the theoretical context in which we now find ourselves is provided in an article by Brian Head, who is Associated Professor of Australian Studies and Public Policy at Griffith University, which is a very fine institution. The article appears in the *Australian Quarterly* and is headed "The Labor government and economic rationalism". It places the history of recent Labor Governments in the context of those forces of economic rationalism that have essentially been sweeping the world. He traces the derivation of that economic rationalist school from the neoclassical economic theoretical base.

The sort of structural reforms that Head very accurately describes include various headings such as: the regulation of the financial sector, which has been reduced; foreign investment policy has been liberalised; substantial tax reform has been undertaken; industrial policy has been pursued to effect a more efficient allocation of resources; the crude oil market has been deregulated; export controls over defence related goods have been relaxed; the two airline arrangement; education training and retraining have been emphasised; and the efficiency of Government programs have been improved by means ranging from greater use and means of eligibility tests for welfare programs through to administrative reforms, cost recovery, etc.

The background to that sort of momentum that has been created in Australia derives from a number of sources, including the recession which commenced in 1974. The selection of a range of policy options were heavily constrained by discrediting the original Keynesian pump priming type principles. There emerged various professional economists throughout the public and private sectors who advocated twin strands of monetarism and micro-economic reforms and the rise of Federal Government economic inquiries such as the Jackson report and the Crawford report, and advisory bodies such as the Industries Assistance Commission. Also, it can be put in the context of the history of the latter years of the Whitlam Government and the stereotype that was developed then and the move by the later Hawke Government to react against that toward a greater sense of, as it might be described, economic respectability.

There are a range of other measures that can be placed in that context but, most

importantly, it has to be placed in the context of international economic competitiveness. In connection with that, the role of the trade unions in Australia is a very essential one because the participation of Australian trade unions throughout this era in being cognisant and supportive of the move toward bringing Australia into a greater sense of economic competitiveness played a very important role. Essentially, if we are to be economically competitive in the future as a nation, we must ensure that our Government infrastructure is competitive and that we place all of our enterprises on a very strictly competitive basis in an international sphere. That does not mean that we have to reduce the cost of labour to compete with Third World countries. It does mean that we have to combine our best technology and our best capital—

Time expired.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Western Downs) (5.50 p.m.): It is my intention to speak about the problems within Queensland Corrective Services and then go on to talk about matters relating to the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. The problems within Corrective Services are not related to funding. In fact, for the last five or six years there has been generous funding for the prison system. One could say that most of the facilities throughout Queensland are in excellent condition.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: There are still exceptions, and I would give a lot of the credit for that to the Kennedy report and its implementation by my colleague the member for Crows Nest. When there was a change of Government, the planning was already there; in fact, most of the funding was there, and there has been an ongoing commitment by the present Government to keep improving facilities.

In the early 1980s, I was able to travel throughout most of Australia inspecting the prison systems of all the other States with the exception of Western Australia. Even at that stage—before the Kennedy report—the Queensland prison system compared well with all the other prison systems of Australia, and there has been a progression and a change of attitude to one more of rehabilitation rather than incarceration. But even in those days, Queensland was coping well. What has happened since then has been a move in the right direction.

What concerns me and what, I am sure, must concern the members of the Government, is that we are not getting the

best possible performance out of those good facilities. I am most concerned that that is due to a lack of ministerial management. The Minister seems to be very comfortable in the fact that there is a Corrective Services Commission to take control. But if he is watching in the newspapers what is happening, he should be picking up the vibes that, in fact, the people of Queensland are not happy. The papers constantly make reference to all the things that are wrong with the management of the system, and there is a need for the Minister to come forward and not be "Mr Invisible".

Early in his term as Minister, he was very willing to stand before the cameras and talk about rehabilitation and the system's excellent facilities. He has travelled the world a couple of times looking at other systems, but of late, as the system has found itself in all sorts of problems, he has passed off the responsibility of explaining the bad things to the director-general who, having become a bit sensitive, has passed it onto the deputy director-general. In more recent weeks, his press secretary, Mr Roger Plaistow, has had to carry the can. The Minister is more interested in talking about consumer affairs and in protecting ladies from shonky deals than looking after and protecting the people of Queensland by making sure that the Queensland Corrective Services prisons system runs properly.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Are you saying that he should neglect consumer affairs?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No, I am not saying that. I am saying that the Minister should face up to his responsibilities under Corrective Services or give it away because he is doing the member for Chermside's Government a great disservice. I turn now to highlight some aspects of the corrective services administration in Queensland which show the Minister's lack of action and his tendency to allow matters to go downhill. The first matter I wish to mention is deaths in custody. Prisons are violent places, but Mr Milliner's record in this matter is dismal. Statistics provided by the Corrective Services Commission show that attempted murders and murders have occurred in almost every prison in Queensland and that the number of suicides has increased.

I instance the example of the Arthur Gorrie Centre which is the most modern prison centre in Queensland for reception and remand. It has all the necessary facilities to ensure that prisoners are securely held and are safe. The complex has closed circuit

television to monitor people who are regarded as being in danger of taking their own lives. The centre has been open only for a brief period—approximately 18 months—but already there have been two suicides. In both cases, the people concerned were in cells that were under 24 hours a day surveillance by closed circuit television.

The Minister explains away these events by saying, "From time to time, these things happen." They should not happen. They may have happened in prisons that were badly planned or that had insufficient facilities, but these things are happening in modern prisons. In one particular case, the person involved was a self-confessed homosexual who had been raped in prison. He went to the prison authorities and told them that he wanted to commit suicide because it had been indicated to him that he would be put in a cell block with the prisoner who actually raped him. His pleas were ignored and that prisoner took his own life.

There is another instance of a murder that took place in a gymnasium at the Sir David Longland Centre—the one that has been in the news just recently. The murder was put down to having occurred because of insufficient supervision, but the information that has come to me indicates that the deceased was due to go to the gymnasium for an allocated period. When he arrived at the gymnasium and looked inside, he realised that the other inmates in there were people who were antagonistic towards him. He said to the warder who was on duty, "I can't go in there. I want to go back to my cell." The reply was something along the lines, "You came. This is your allocated time. Go for it." Of course, what occurred later was brutal. The man was bludgeoned to death with weights. He was murdered while he was in custody, which leads me to the next topic I wish to discuss in relation to the operation of prisons.

In any prison system, there is always a section for protective custody. The inmates of those sections go there because they have to be protected from other inmates. For example, they may have been police informants and may have had dealings with other inmates prior to being sent to gaol and there may have been old scores to settle. It is now the case that within Queensland's Corrective Services prisons system, the number of people being placed in protective custody has reached record levels. Prisons are not safe, and who is supposed to be doing something about it? Mr Milliner is supposed to be doing something about it, but he is doing

nothing. Bashings, rapes, murders and dealings in drugs are all occurring in prisons.

After having visited some of the prisons, I have been told that even within the protective custody blocks there exists a pecking order whereby some people are being stood over. This is a very poor state of affairs. If people do not go into protective custody, the end result is reflected in the statistics and cases to which I referred earlier, namely, people being bludgeoned to death in a prison gymnasium.

I know of another instance of a person who badly needed protective custody. A young man at Rockhampton was sent to prison as a very young adult because of a misdemeanour he had committed. He certainly deserved to go to prison and I do not cavil with that; but while he was in prison, he was attacked and badly beaten by a long-term prisoner. He was scarred permanently, physically and emotionally, because of a lack of supervision. He appealed for some help, but what happened was not that the long-term offender was moved; rather, the victim was moved to Brisbane. He and his family pleaded with the authorities to allow him to stay in Rockhampton because he needed the support of his immediate family. But, no, he was sent down to Brisbane.

At a later stage, he was sent back to Rockhampton and, lo and behold, the long-term offender who had been sent to Townsville in the interim had also been sent back to Rockhampton, and they were thrown together again. Later, I received a letter from that young person's mother who was absolutely distraught with fear. She complained that her son who had already been attacked and permanently disfigured had then been punished by having been sent to Brisbane, and later was sent back to Rockhampton—because the commission finally recognised the merit in keeping him imprisoned in Rockhampton so that he could enjoy the protection of his family—only to once again find himself threatened by the offender who had attacked him in the first place.

The next matter I wish to mention is the concern felt by the public over the way in which the Corrective Services Commission seems to be ignoring and overriding the rules of the court. There is public anger in the community over offenders being released too early. Evidence exists to show that quite often, when offenders obtain an early release, they reoffend. During the last State election, there was a catchcry about truth in justicing, which is certainly needed.

Mr FitzGerald: Truth in sentencing.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: My apologies; I meant to say truth in sentencing. Recently, the Attorney-General reacted to some of the public outcry which occurred over child molestation and sex crimes against children. In one case, I believe the Attorney-General applied for a reconsideration of the leniency handed out by the courts. However, it is often the case that the Corrective Services Commission takes action that makes a mockery of the decision handed down by the court.

I cite the recent example of a male in Bowen who murdered his wife. He was found guilty and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. When prisoners arrive at a goal, they are firstly sent to a reception area where they are classified according to their sentence. A person who receives a six-years' sentence is regarded as a high-risk, high-security prisoner. Would honourable members believe that a person who was sentenced to six years' imprisonment and who started his sentence as a high-security prisoner, had progressed, within 14 weeks of arrival at the gaol, through the stages of reclassification to the extent that he was then taken to Clermont, which is not far from Bowen, to a Western Outreach camp? The whole idea of those Western Outreach camps is to prepare trusted prisoners for release back into society.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Before the dinner adjournment, I was talking about the poor management of the Corrective Services Commission and laying the blame on the inactivity of the Minister himself, saying that there was a desperate need for him to take some sort of ministerial action to put right all of those things that are going wrong. That service is well funded and has beautiful facilities, but the level of management certainly needs some sort of correction, and the blame must lay at the Minister's door.

I turn to examples of another aspect of corrective services within Queensland that is in poor shape, and that is the classification of prisoners and the way in which they are placed within the system. Prison farms are places for trusted prisoners. Queensland has a number of them. There are prison farms at Numinbah Valley and Palen Creek, and one is associated with the Rockhampton Correctional Centre. They are also for those people who are being prepared for rehabilitation back into the community so that they have some sort of realisation of the work ethic, trust and all those

sorts of things. Most of all, prison farms are for trusted personnel.

I want to give an example of what is going wrong now because the Minister is not exercising enough control over the classification of prisoners. The Numinbah Correctional Centre is in the hinterland of the Gold Coast. It is a very fine facility. We imagine that the people there are trusted. I am told by the member for Nerang, who takes a special interest in these sorts of matters because he was the Corrective Services spokesman for the Liberal Party previously, that the Numinbah Correctional Centre has a bus and that it is not uncommon for prisoners in civilian clothes to have access to that bus. They are supposed to be on leave of absence on trust when they go to the Gold Coast area and drop people off for various sorts of activities as part of the rehabilitation process.

I accept that as being a good part of the process, but that is not the whole story. Allegations have been made that regularly when those fellows are driving that bus around the Gold Coast, they are really casing the joint and sorting things out. It all came to a head not too long ago when two prisoners, inmates of the Numinbah prison farm, were charged with armed robbery of a TAB on the Isle of Capri. It all happened between the morning and afternoon rollcalls. The question must be asked: how is it that from a correctional centre that is for trusted people—people who are ready to be rehabilitated—those two blokes should be able to abscond after rollcall in the morning, go out, take part in an armed hold-up and then be back for rollcall in the afternoon?

That has all happened under the maladministration of the commission, which has riding at the top a Minister who is prepared to travel overseas, come back, poke out his chest and say how good the prison system is; yet it is malfunctioning.

Mr McElligott: That is not unusual in the present system.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It certainly is not unusual in the past four years. It is not unusual at all. One of the examples of poor classification also relates to the Western Outreach camps. The Western Outreach camps are a good idea. They started from the Charleville floods and have grown from there. People who have almost finished their sentence and are ready for rehabilitation can work within the communities. There are about six or seven of those camps around the State and they are doing a pretty good job.

I must relate again the story that has been told here before. Those trusted prisoners at Charleville spend four weeks in camp and then spend a fifth week, which is for relaxation, either back in custody or, if they have families who meet the approval of the authorities, with the families. It just so happened that one inmate of the Charleville camp was inclined to return to his usual ways. He came to Brisbane and thought that he would purport to be a person with a fair bit of money. He sought the services of an accountant and a solicitor and made some detailed negotiations about buying a business involving some millions of dollars in the southern suburbs.

The solicitor rang me and said that he had spent hours on the weekend helping that bloke out. He said that the fellow had an open sports car and a mobile phone and that he could carry it off; he looked very good. Come Monday morning when they thought that the deals would be signed, the bloke was gone. They finally traced him back to the Western Outreach camp. We can joke about it and it is a bit embarrassing, but it comes down to a problem with the classification of prisoners.

I have heard since then, not from the Minister but from people who run the prison system, that a staging post is associated with the Wacol prison, where the corrective services officers put the blokes for a month and, hopefully, within the month they can read the prisoners' brands and the prisoners' mouths and get a better understanding of what they are all about. It is a fair indication of the maladministration in respect of which the Minister refuses to take any interest.

I turn to family services. I can recall my comments in the Budget debate last year that the Minister for Family Services in a Labor Government has a thankless task. My prophecy then has proved to be right. Because of the economic mismanagement of her Cabinet colleagues, she finds that the sorts of services that she has to provide are in increasing demand. The Honourable Anne Warner now has a widening gap between the sorts of services that she is providing and the demand in the community for those services. She will defend herself by saying that there has been an increase in funding. There has been, but the increase in funding is not good enough to catch up with the demand, and the gap has widened.

Recently, I challenged her after the Auditor-General came down with a special report that showed that she had not followed the Act with regard to community councils in

the Torres Strait islands and in the Aboriginal population of Queensland. The Auditor-General was scathing in saying that the Minister should put in place a system of management whereby all of the councils operating in those areas are fully accountable for the money that they expend. It was pointed out in that special report—the first ever in the Queensland Parliament—that there was a lack of documentation for all sorts of money expended.

I would like the Minister somewhere publicly pretty soon to report to this House whether she has taken up my suggestion that, on a monthly basis—because the councils hold monthly meetings, at least—she insists that those councils report to her fully and accurately on all the funds that they operate, including trust funds and general operating funds. Since then, the Minister has said nothing about it. It needs to be done.

I turn to something that is outside the jurisdiction of the Honourable Anne Warner but that still relates to Aboriginal and Islander affairs. I am receiving an increasing number of telephone calls from people in those communities, especially the Aboriginal community. I refer to the lack of accountability of organisations that are funded by ATSIC. I am talking about organisations such as housing cooperatives, which provide housing in various parts of Queensland. Those people are providing documentation and ringing up to say that all sorts of rorts are going on and that there is a lack of documentation on the spending of public money. Approximately \$800m a year goes into ATSIC.

ATSIC was set up to promote the Aboriginal and Islander people and to preserve their culture, and I support that. We have a concern on our hands when those people find that they are being poorly represented by organisations that were set up to benefit them.

In their interests and in the interests of the unity of Australia, I have called on the ATSIC Chairman, Lois Donohue, to investigate the allegations, and I have also written to Tom Nugent and spoken with some Federal members of Parliament. I have told them that there is a desperate need either to get the accountability right so that their own people who are being serviced by ATSIC are satisfied that they are not being misrepresented and they are getting a fair deal—there are accusations of lack of democracy in the way in which things are organised, poor documentation and even fraudulent use of money—or to scrap ATSIC

and make all the people, regardless of their race or origin, take the benefits of our welfare services under the existing system.

It is interesting to note that this Queensland Labor Government has done that. All of the housing is now delivered through the Housing Department, and I applaud that. It was always done through Education. I notice that the Minister for Health is also proposing an Aboriginal health policy, and I applaud that. I have heard within the ranks of the Aboriginal and Islander people of Australia that as soon as we are all treated by the same sources, they will be much happier and we will achieve more unification in Australia.

I repeat: my appeal is that we scrap ATSIC to create more unity in Australia and that we have an investigation to make sure that these allegations of misappropriation of money, favouritism and nepotism are squashed. ATSIC is doing nothing for those people whom it was set up to help.

Time expired.

Ms POWER (Mansfield) (7.39 p.m.): In rising to speak in the debate on the Appropriation Bill, I congratulate the Treasurer and his officers on their willingness to explain the way in which money is being spent in this State and why. I for one, as the Treasurer knows, am not always happy with the decisions he makes, but at least the information and the explanations are always available.

Today, I would like to highlight a number of issues that impact on the lives of people in my electorate and throughout the State. In particular, I would like to address the funding implications of the Budget for women, for rural communities and for my electorate. However, before doing so, I would like to remind the House that this Government was elected to provide a better, fairer deal for all Queenslanders through a reform program. Despite serious economic restraints in the State's finances, this Government has delivered, and will continue to deliver, real benefits to Queensland families through substantial financial commitments to improvements in education, health, police and the environment.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! I ask honourable members to give the member for Mansfield an opportunity to make her speech.

Ms POWER: These reforms are based on our commitment to economic and social justice. This Government, a Goss-led Labor

Government, believes that a good education, a clean environment, adequate accessible health care, a supporting hand for those in need, a secure community and an opportunity to earn a living are fundamental to a fair and decent society.

I am on record in this House many times as highlighting the achievements for women made possible by this Government. It is very clever for some community groups and the media to pick some issues that in their view have not been addressed, or not satisfactorily addressed, but that does not detract from the substantial benefits that this Labor Government has implemented and is continuing to implement to improve the lives of women in Queensland.

Since a Women's Policy Unit was set up in 1990 to provide advice to the Government on the needs of Queensland women, each department has produced policies and programs to address women's needs. Women's Infolink is an information and referral service available Statewide through a 008 number, and the Women's Consultative Council provides an important link between the Government and women in the community.

Under this Government, the first women's adviser to the Premier was appointed; the first woman departmental head was appointed; the first women inspectors of police were appointed; the first woman master of the Supreme Court was appointed; the first woman industrial commissioner was appointed; and the first Director of Equity within the Department of Education was appointed. The Government has also set up a register of women suitable for appointment to Government boards and statutory authorities to ensure the names of women with appropriate qualifications, knowledge and skills are put forward in the selection process.

Since 1990, there has been an increase of 6 000 child-care places, which includes the establishment of two public sector work-based and eight TAFE-based child-care centres as well as extra advice and assistance to the private sector. Following a report by the now Honourable Minister for Environment and Heritage and me, the Division of Sport has undertaken several initiatives in women's participation in sport. Strategies suggested have encouraged more women to participate by allowing the provision of free/low-cost child care at sporting venues, better media coverage of women's sport, and reduced playing costs. I am reminded that each year in March it also supports the running of a

women's race from South Brisbane to the Botanic Gardens.

The Goss Government is working to make the community safer for women. Women have equal rights and equal status to men and they are entitled to be safe at home and out in the community. As a result, the Queensland Police Service was the first in Australia to specifically address the issues of women's safety through a special women's safety project. Initiatives that have arisen out of this women's safety project include a comprehensive set of brochures outlining women's safety measures; the establishment of rural and regionally based domestic violence services, including a 24-hour 008 telephone service; personal safety displays for police; safety information for seniors—a coordinated package for seniors on safety and security; and neighbourhood safety audits.

The brochures on women's safety have been one of the most popular initiatives of this Government. Wherever I have been, whether it has been handing out certificates at Logan TAFE, addressing schools, particularly senior students, attending morning teas in the electorate, or travelling throughout Queensland, I have had requests for these brochures. The issue of violence against women is certainly on everybody's lips, and this Government has made it a priority that has to be addressed.

Queensland's anti-discrimination legislation has been passed, and this protects Queenslanders from unjustifiable discrimination on a range of 13 grounds, including those that are quite traditional of race, sex, religion and political belief, in a wide range of areas, including the workplace, education and the provision of goods and services. The tribunal's decisions, as established by the Act, are enforceable by law. An historic agreement between the Commonwealth and State Governments was signed on World Human Rights Day, 10 December 1991, to avoid duplication of both bureaucracies' anti-discrimination tribunals. Thus, the State's legislation is administered by the Commonwealth. In an electorate such as mine where there are some 80 different nationalities, this legislation has been welcomed. While queries have been received by my office about the legislation, very few people have in fact needed to use it.

I would like to place on record my support for the Attorney-General and his support for women's rights not only through legislation such as the anti-discrimination legislation but also for his other actions towards the judiciary.

I am reminded of one example. When a claim by a defendant in a criminal trial that he had a right to exclude women from the jury selection process was upheld by the District Court, it was the Attorney-General who had the matter reviewed in a superior court. The superior court affirmed women's unqualified right to serve on all juries. Legislation is one thing, but I think that these actions speak louder than words.

Other Ministers are also to be applauded for their continuing support for reforms. The Government's concern at the unacceptably high incidence of domestic violence in the community has resulted in a new focus on prevention strategies and funding programs as well as tougher penalties for the perpetrators of domestic violence. Under amendments to the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act, domestic violence offenders will automatically lose their right to possess firearms; protection orders will be extended to relatives, friends and workmates; protection orders will be portable between States; and orders will be extended from a maximum of 12 months to a maximum of two years.

Five regional domestic violence services have been established at Caboolture, Emerald, Toowoomba, the Gold Coast and Cairns as part of a long-term strategy to address the problem. While I have been travelling around the State, I have been made very aware of the funding in those areas by the number of signs posted. Such signs make the availability of those services known to women throughout the area, particularly in Cairns and through the western areas.

The Government has worked towards improving women's health by establishing a Women's Health Unit. It has implemented a range of policies which are aimed at recognising the special health needs of the women of Queensland. The fight against two of the most significant health problems facing women—breast and cervical cancer—is being addressed through Statewide cancer screening programs. Queensland is now leading Australia in the number of women undergoing breast cancer screening.

While I have been travelling extensively throughout Queensland, I have continually been questioned on health services for women. Rural women have real concerns about that issue, and this Labor Government has brought services to them. For their failure to provide the necessary services when in Government, Opposition members should hang their collective heads in shame.

The Goss Government has sought to increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in vocational education and training, and to give special consideration to the needs of women. An access, equity and foundation studies branch has been set up to achieve that aim. The branch has policy advisers in the areas of gender equity, people with disabilities, child care and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. That unit has been involved in expanding the child-care facilities I mentioned earlier in TAFE colleges, encouraging more women into training courses and schoolgirls into non-traditional trades. Four long-day child-care centres at Bundaberg, Logan, Caboolture and Cairns and two limited-hours child-care centres at Gympie and the Hamilton Annexe of Gateway TAFE have been opened.

Women in business and industry research grants is another program which has been established to assist in the research of women's employment in Queensland business and industry, and to develop cooperative strategies to enhance their status. Each year, the women's budget statement has been prepared by the Women's Policy Unit to analyse the impact of Government spending for women. That document is tangible evidence of this Government's commitment to women in ensuring access and equity in all areas of government.

I turn now to rural Queensland. My colleagues the members for Mulgrave and Fitzroy have mentioned already the trip by the northern and rural task force last week to south-west Queensland. The purpose of that trip was to discuss the south-west Queensland reconstruction strategy with the stakeholders. In common with my colleagues, I must thank the people of that region for their interest and for their hospitality. That strategy is another initiative of this Government to meet the needs of people in rural Queensland. When one considers programs such as the south-west Queensland strategy, it is obvious that this Government can deliver in those areas.

Earlier, I referred to the failure of previous National/Liberal Governments to truly address the problems of rural Queensland. Members opposite may want to scream and yell, but the truth is that it is this Government that allocated the Rural Communities portfolio to the Deputy Premier. It is this Government whose Premier set up the northern and rural task force. It is this Government that has developed an Office of Rural Communities to scrutinise all legislation to assess its impact on rural Queensland. It is this Government that has committed more than \$68m in State and

Federal assistance since the onset of the drought in 1991. It is this Government that has addressed the inefficiencies of State Government services and implemented the Queensland Government agent to provide 13 one-stop shops for rural and regional Queensland to access Government services. The number of one-stop shops throughout the State is now being increased to 26. It is this Government that provided some \$400,000 for drought councillors to help support the affected families in western Queensland.

Last week during my travels, I had what I suppose could be referred to as the pleasure of speaking to one of those drought councillors. It was quite an eye opener to hear of some of the experiences to which people in drought-affected areas have been subjected. I can say quite truthfully that, although those people admit that they may never vote for a Labor Government, they have certainly been thankful for our preparedness to meet their needs.

Mr Bennett: There is a chance they may repent.

Ms POWER: They may see the light. I am reminded that it is this Government that is preparing a comprehensive rural service directory for each region in the State so that rural people will know where they can go for information on housing and other such services. It is this Government that has agreed to fund remote commercial satellite television services to outback Queensland for another three years, ensuring that approximately 100 000 people will have access to QTV.

Before I turn to the benefits that my electorate has received under this Government, I support the decisions that have been taken by the Minister for Transport on railway truncation. That was not a popular decision and not an easy one to make, I am sure. Last week while I was in Quilpie and over the weekend in a telephone conversation with a friend in Winton, people discussed with me the matter of the railway truncation in those centres, because they knew more about it than me. They told me that they agreed with the closure. The reasons for that attitude were that the rail service to the areas in question was inefficient; it was never on time; and most people did not use rail but instead used road transport.

I turn now to my electorate—the electorate of Mansfield.

Mr FitzGerald: If the member for Gregory was here he would disagree with you, but he is not.

Ms POWER: I am blessed. If a person was in any doubt that Queensland is doing better than any other State or that the building commencement figures appearing in the newspapers are less than those cited, a trip around my electorate would erase any fears.

Mansfield, bordering on the growth areas of Redlands and Logan, is on the move. Development of housing estates is occurring in almost every suburb of the electorate—Mansfield, Wishart, Rochedale, Eight Mile Plains and Mackenzie. Each time I am out doorknocking or letterboxing, I see that another few houses have been established. Of course, with that growing development comes problems, but they are being addressed.

Schools in my electorate have benefited from the many reforms initiated by this Government. The refurbishment program was well received, and semester grants have given school budgets more flexibility. However, the big success has been the LOTE program. Schools have embraced LOTE, and the experiences that the children have had will stand them in good stead in the twenty-first century in the Asia/Pacific region.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! There is too much conversation in the Chamber. It is very difficult to hear the member's speech.

Ms POWER: The opening of the district police headquarters at Upper Mount Gravatt was the beginning of many tangible changes for police in this area. In January, 16 new police constables started work in the area. Extra police are not the only answer. The police computer system has been upgraded, and that has allowed many more police to be put out on the beat. I must pay tribute to the police in the Upper Mount Gravatt district, particularly for their Street Beat program in the shopping centres. I know the program in other members' electorates may not have been as successful, but certainly the residents in Upper Mount Gravatt and around Garden City have been very complimentary of this initiative. Police have been very useful, walking up and down the streets, and calling in at various shops. Shoplifting and any other problems with youths have, in fact, been reduced under that system, which is pleasing to note. Certainly, it has been welcomed in my electorate.

The Mount Gravatt TAFE has been actively developing numerous training programs under the State's funding boost in the TAFE sector. For the information of the House, I point out that the first program was,

in fact, carried out in conjunction with a private company, Partac. Under that program, \$146,900 was paid for a total of 84 training places at Mount Gravatt TAFE. Approximately \$350,000 has been spent on high-tech fluid power equipment for the college. Again, this new equipment allows the Mount Gravatt college to keep pace with the increasing demands from industry for more sophisticated training in industrial fluid, power and control. I have to place on record that Mount Gravatt TAFE is a dynamic institution that is frequently lauded by people in the electorate. It has a number of wonderful business associations, and wherever one goes in whatever capacity, somebody is paying tribute to its business and car dealing courses and, particularly, its fashion house.

Sporting facilities feature strongly in my electorate, and they have been enhanced further by the sale by the Commonwealth Government of the 500 hectare Belmont rifle range to the State Government. That ensures the continued use of the range facilities by various sporting bodies under the umbrella of the Queensland Rifle Association and the protection of significant koala habitats on the property. The retention of this tract will add to Brisbane's bushland heritage while at the same time securing a major sporting facility recognised both nationally and internationally as the best shooting complex in the southern hemisphere.

Roadworks have been ongoing in my electorate. Upgrades to the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road, the Gateway Arterial, the resurfacing of the freeway and various upgrades to intersections of those roads have made them more trafficable. Although such inconveniences have been very wearing at times, especially the hold-ups on the freeway, the final results have been worthwhile.

In conclusion, I wish to place on record my support for the reform process of this Government and my thanks for the assistance that I have received in order that I might serve my constituents well. I support the Bill.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (7.57 p.m.): Tonight, I want to talk about the many very important issues relating to land management. For a long time, I have pursued the issue of land rentals, and much more debate will emanate for a few months from those discussions. I want to talk particularly about one very important issue of land management, one that affects every Australian—every Queensland—and that is the implications of the Mabo decision and the

impact that it will have on land management issues within Queensland.

Mr Stoneman: A blight on our national development and the capacity of Australia to sustain its future.

Mr HOBBS: The member for Burdekin has expressed it very well. The High Court decision on *Mabo v. Queensland* has the potential to up-end the orderly system of land law in this country. The combination of Labor's political agenda and the greed of lawyers getting fat on taxpayer-funded Aboriginal legal services is dangerous for Australia, and for Queensland taxpayers. It is not hard to see that combination resulting in a major redistribution of land in Australia and, effectively, the end to economic development across a wide area of this continent.

Mr Keating makes his objective clear. The Queensland Premier has lost his nerve, and wants a dollar each way. However, the bottom line is that Labor intends to hijack the *Mabo* decision, and to pervert it for the benefit of a social policy agenda no matter what harm it causes to the Australian economy or individual Australians. Labor's response to the *Mabo* decision by the High Court has very little to do with the reality of that decision. It has everything to do with opportunism on the part of the Prime Minister and supporters of the Labor Party. I wonder whether they are the trendoids who Peter Walsh reckoned had hijacked the party. They decided early in the piece that, played properly, the *Mabo* decision offered great, new opportunities to feed the warm inner glow of the Labor Party.

Keating also saw it as a chance to advance his centralist agenda even further and faster. *Mabo* offered Labor the perfect opportunity to put Canberra on top in yet another important policy area. What could be more basic to anyone pursuing power in a capitalist economy than the control of land tenure? That is exactly what Labor wants, and what Labor will get, unless the States are willing to stand firm against the Prime Minister, and that means all the States, including Queensland.

The Premiers must stand firm against another Federal grab—even one disguised as an attempt to help Aborigines and Islanders. Of course, *Mabo*, and even the Goss/Keating perversion of it, offers nothing to the great bulk of people of Aboriginal and Islander descent in this country. Labor claims to be genuinely concerned about the dispossession of Aborigines and Islanders. Only a fool would believe that, because the path that Labor is set on would dispossess even more of those

people. The basic Labor approach is to hand land to traditional owners, and there are very, very few people who can prove that claim any longer. The result for other Aborigines and Islanders is dispossession. There is no place for those people who cannot prove their traditional connections to that piece of land.

We are already beginning to see the results of that madness in this State under the provisions of the Aboriginal Land Act. The residents of four of the biggest Aboriginal communities in Queensland are wrestling with that problem at Yarrabah, Palm Island, Woorabinda and Cherbourg. Most members of this House would be aware of how those communities came into existence. Aboriginal people were taken there from all over Queensland and forcibly resettled. Labor politicians and Labor Governments played a full part in that. It was the National Party, and particularly Bob Katter, who made the real efforts in undoing the worst of those wrongs.

The problem for those communities is that people without traditional ties are in great danger of being forced to move away. Of course, those policies look great to a bunch of lawyers standing around in Brisbane sipping chardonnay—Labor's new-age bunch getting fat on the taxpayer-funded Aboriginal Legal Aid Service.

Mr Stoneman: Shame!

Mr HOBBS: Shame. They are no good to the real people struggling out there. I want to make it crystal clear where the National Party stands on this issue. It acknowledges the High Court decision in the *Mabo* case and the legal requirements imposed by those judgments. The National Party is determined to keep separate the legal requirements imposed by the *Mabo* judgments and the political options made available by those judgments. The judgments set out the law and must be complied with. The National Party is determined to hold the Queensland Government to strict account for the manner in which it implements the genuine legal requirements of the *Mabo* judgments, and will support moves by the State Government which validate all interests in land granted after the date on which the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 came into effect. That is the very basis of land tenure in Queensland, and the very basis upon which we survive.

The National Party will require any determination on individual native title claims to be a matter for the High Court. It will demand that the level of any compensation be determined in the Land Court of Queensland on the basis of criteria laid down

by Justice Brennan in his lead judgment in *Mabo*. The High Court made it clear that native title was not necessarily the familiar form of land title under modern law; that its form would depend on the content of traditional laws and customs. It is an entitlement to use land in particular ways, and will vary from tribe to tribe.

The examination of native title claims and payment of any compensation where extinguishment occurred after the commencement of the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 are the only binding legal consequences of the *Mabo* judgments. Land tenure granted before 1975, including pastoral and most types of mining leases, is secure according to the High Court judgments and is not subject to native title claim. For example, additional leases acquired for national park build-up cannot be affected since any potential native title was extinguished when the leases were first dealt with. These are the necessary legislative responses to the judgments. They are also the limits of action which the National Party will support.

Further actions proposed by Governments and interest groups cannot be justified by reference to the *Mabo* judgments. They are nothing more than political options. The National Party will oppose strenuously any perversion of so-called *Mabo* principles aimed at advancing sectional or political interests. In particular, it will not accept the Keating/Goss strategy of using *Mabo* to justify a social policy agenda that can only end up redistributing Australia's land.

The discussion paper presented by the Prime Minister to the Council of Australian Governments in Melbourne and supported at that time by the Queensland Premier represents nothing more than their preferred political option. It has no legal force, and no more legitimacy than any other political options which will be put forward by any other groups. The High Court ruled that native title might attach to land which was part of the Crown estate at 31 October 1975, whether or not that land has since been alienated. It also found that the Crown could legitimately extinguish that native title by the valid use of its powers provided that there was compensation to the native title holders. There was no ruling on who was a native title holder, nor on the precise meaning of "native title". There was also no ruling on how compensation would be determined, nor who would pay it.

The Commonwealth, supported by Queensland, has embraced a political course

which it pretends is demanded by the outcome of *Mabo v. Queensland*. That view cannot be sustained in terms other than Labor Party desires, and it will not be supported by the National Party. Labor's political response to *Mabo* has been one of the most cynical campaigns that has ever been run. The Prime Minister and the Queensland Premier have gone out of their way to give the impression that a ruling about native title on one of the Murray islands has implications for occupational-style land rights on mainland Australia. Justice Brennan's lead judgment in the case made it clear that native title had a variable form; in fact, it may involve nothing more than a right to traverse the land once a year, or to hunt traditional food occasionally.

Paul Keating and Wayne Goss led the charge in raising the expectations of Aboriginal and Islander people that either land or compensation would be provided, while there is a legal entitlement to little of either. Even the Federal Minister seems to have caught the Goss jitters about that, and spent time last Friday on radio trying to play down the expectations that he helped to raise. Labor politicians have consistently linked supposed elements of the *Mabo* decision with Labor's policy on Aboriginal reconciliation.

When it thought the time was right, the Commonwealth published a so-called framework of principles. That was touted as being to "guide the challenging policy task of responding to the implications and uncertainties arising from the High Court's decision on native title". The framework of principles was presented to the Council of Australian Governments meeting in Melbourne as the basis for the national solution to *Mabo*. Keating thought that he was home free, but he had not counted on the Queensland Premier's lack of steel.

When he got to Melbourne for the Council of Australian Governments meeting, Wayne Goss still thought he was on a winner. He fronted the TV cameras, and this is exactly what he had to say—

"The Prime Minister's principles are a very good start, a very good basis for agreement."

That is what he said when he arrived for the start of the meeting. But by the end of the day the Queensland Premier had lost his nerve and tried to back-door the Prime Minister. He tried to do a deal with conservative Premiers, but they were not buying—and who could blame them!

The Premier can deny it all he likes, but the Prime Minister found out. He was only too

happy to regale a plane load of journalists with the story on the way back from China. Keating reckons that the Premier is about as shifty as a bag full of marbles.

Mr Stoneman: "Slippery", I think was the word that the Prime Minister used.

Mr HOBBS: "Slippery" is probably a far better interpretation.

Mr Stoneman: "Slippery" was what he said.

Mr HOBBS: I would probably agree.

Mr Stoneman: "Old Slippery".

Mr HOBBS: Yes. The framework Paul Keating tried to foist on the Premiers included a number of unacceptable elements. For a start, Keating wants claims to native title determined by tribunals. Honourable members should consider the cost of that. I know that a tribunal has been established in Queensland, but that would be a cost additional to that for the Land Court. Keating wanted the tribunals to be set up within parameters acceptable to the Commonwealth rather than by the courts. As all the Labor lawyers on the other side of the Chamber know, tribunals operate on standards of evidence very different from those acceptable in courts. In common with the rest of us, they know that tribunals would simply be stacked with the sorts of people who could be counted on for the politically correct decision in each case.

Keating also wanted recognition of the need for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to have the statutory function of organising and presenting native title claims, and for those bodies to be resourced by Government on principles of equity and urgency. In other words, he wanted to extend Labor's corporatisation to land claims. In making the claims, individuals would have to give way to large bureaucratic organisations. It seems the Prime Minister is already second-guessing the possible outcome of the Amadeus case. On top of that, he wanted to pour resources—taxpayers' money—into the cases. Just more booty for the Labor lawyers.

At the heart of Keating's so-called principles was the most dangerous concept of all. He wanted to amend the common law to provide that grants of land should not of themselves extinguish native title—that native title and the grant should co-exist. He wanted native title to revive at the expiry of a finite grant. That proposal is a radical departure from the Mabo decision, but it is at the heart of Labor's response to the judgment. The Prime Minister is saying that when a lease expires—or is cancelled, we assume—the land

that is subject to that lease is up for grabs. Add a stacked native claims tribunal to that, and Keating has the perfect mechanism for a wholesale redistribution of Australia's land. Of course, that would impact on the Queensland economy, and even the Department of Lands.

What Keating proposes is a million miles beyond Mabo, but that is what Wayne Goss walked into the Melbourne meeting supporting. To appreciate how far Labor has gone beyond Mabo, honourable members should consider this: the High Court made it clear that native title, once extinguished, could not revive. It could not revive—unless, of course, land laws were changed specifically to provide for that. The Labor proposal is clearly that an alternative form of statutory native title should be created. Would it be on the Queensland model, or perhaps the Northern Territory one? Whichever model is used, Paul Keating's revival proposal poses real dangers.

The Opposition is very concerned about what might be called the hiatus period between the expiry of a lease and its renewal, or the issue of another interest in that land. Some people believe that there is a period—which may be a matter of seconds or of weeks—when the land in question again becomes Crown land. Claims have been made in the Northern Territory related to that hiatus period, and I have it on good authority that the same avenue is under active investigation by the Cape York Land Council. Of course, under the strict interpretation of the Mabo decision, such land which has already been the subject of a lease would not be available for native title claim. But under the Labor plan spelled out in the Prime Minister's principles—in other words, Labor's preferred political option—there is great scope for a transfer of land to one particular class of Australians.

The Premiers did not fall for any of this. They did not bite even on the sweetener that Paul Keating offered—that the Commonwealth would pay any compensation bill. In common with the rest of us, they realise that every dollar of compensation comes from the dwindling number of taxpayers in this nation. Honourable members do not have to be too bright to realise the effect of that on Queensland. Forget about who nominally makes the payout; every compensation dollar starts its journey in the pocket of a taxpayer. So does every dollar Keating wants to use to fund the claims—to pay the lawyers greedy for a piece of the action. It can be safely stated that, by the year 2000, no lawyer in Australia will need to be living in poverty.

Although the Commonwealth could not secure the agreement of all States at the Melbourne conference, the Prime Minister and the Special Minister of State, Frank Walker, have both indicated that their proposals are not dead. The Commonwealth has options available with which to bully the States—if the Prime Minister can take the political heat. It enjoys legitimate powers to intervene under at least two headings. It can use the Racial Discrimination Act 1975 to go to the High Court with a challenge to State legislation to extinguish native title. It might win or it might not. The Commonwealth's own legislative power could be used to override the States, given the supremacy of valid Commonwealth legislation over valid State legislation under section 109 of the Constitution.

The Commonwealth's ability to pass laws for any race was inserted in the Constitution under section 52 (x) (6) by referendum, and allows the Commonwealth to legislate for Aboriginal and Islander land rights. I wonder how many people had a Keating or a Goss or a Tickner in mind when they voted on that question at the time. Any legislative solution proposed by either the Commonwealth or a State will probably be challenged in the High Court. Even with the complexion of the current court and the recent trend to centralist Constitutional interpretations, there is every chance that the Commonwealth would eventually succeed.

There are options that are legally available to the Commonwealth. Premiers united in a strong stand against the Keating agenda could make the political price for the Prime Minister too high. The time will come when Wayne Goss has the chance to prove that his loyalty is to the people and the best interest of Queensland rather than to the Labor Party. The Prime Minister is clearly intent on a legislative answer to the opportunities he sees in Mabo. If he is allowed to succeed, then all the Premier's soothing words will become just that—soothing words.

Since he has got the Mabo jitters, the Premier has been big on pointing out the legalities of Mabo. His people are running around talking about how ancient Queensland law means that most native title has been extinguished. It has, but if Keating gets his way, the current legalities will not matter. He will have new and powerful Federal laws to trample all over the land laws that have served us well.

The private ownership of land is the very basis of our capitalist economy. Security of tenure is thus vitally important. A deed is a

bankable document, the basis on which individuals and companies raise capital to start and continue their businesses. Where tenure is in doubt at all, there is no effective collateral on which to raise working capital. Business is shackled and cannot hope to succeed.

Time expired.

Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (8.17 p.m.): I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on the Appropriation Bill. I continue to say that the electorate of Albert is growing; not only Albert but also those northern and western electorates around the outskirts of Brisbane. I repeat—the electorate of Albert is growing; in fact, it is growing at such a fast rate that it is hard at times to keep track of the many projects that are under way or just starting. The Albert electorate is a community with an infrastructure and population expanding at an enormous rate. With this enormous growth, I find that there is a need to ensure that the money and time this Labor Government has invested in Albert and, indeed, the whole of Queensland, is continued.

With the current turmoil in places such as Victoria, many families are opting to try for a new lifestyle by moving to the sunshine of the Gold Coast or the warmth of Brisbane. We all know that Brisbane and the Gold Coast are growing together. I am sure that electorates all over the south-east corner of Queensland are experiencing massive growth; however, I feel that Albert, with its choice of attractive lifestyles, is bearing the brunt of the southern migratory onslaught. Last year, Queensland experienced a net gain of 43 000 new residents compared with 31 900 for the previous year.

The Brisbane/Gold Coast region is one of the fastest growing areas in Australia. Albert Shire is experiencing growth rates of over 10 per cent. As an example, the Stockland Trust Group has recently started work on Pacific City, the old Rene Rivkin land-holding at Helensvale. Stage 1 consists of 103 allotments; however, the developer is projecting that in 10 years' time the population of that estate alone will reach 20 000 people, spanning their 800 hectares. It is one of the largest residential developments ever undertaken on the coast, and it is strategically located in a major growth area. The projections for the year 2011 in my electorate alone, at this time, consists of about seven State seats. In other words, 140 000 people will be living in that region in 18 years' time. That demonstrates the massive growth rates that are occurring in my electorate. As one of

the fastest-growing electorates in the State, Albert is experiencing important problems which must be addressed, not only in this coming Budget but also well into the future.

Currently, Albert's environment is a beautiful asset with the small acreages, the houses on them, communities such as Helensvale, Ormeau, Beenleigh and Mount Warren Park, the rugged beauty of the Gold Coast hinterland and the thriving cane farming industry. This valuable industry had its humble beginnings back in 1867 and has since gone from strength to strength. The cane industry surrounding the Rocky Point Sugar Mill is expanding, and I am very pleased to see it injecting \$50m into the local economy every year. I must congratulate the owner of Rocky Point Sugar Mill, Bill Heck, and his good team of workers. Not only are they going to value-added products such as methanol but I have also heard on the grapevine that they will hopefully be looking into CO₂ production for the soft drink industry in Brisbane. This Government and I are committed to preserving the way of life of the many families in the Rocky Point area and that valuable industry.

I believe that Albert is a unique community, and it will take the skill and budgeting of a Labor Government to ensure its future prosperity. In the past, Albert has lacked an identity, direction and purpose, but now, as the urban sprawl is becoming more apparent and the success of industrial areas such as the Yatala industrial estate are becoming more widely known, people are sitting up and taking notice. As a Government, the challenge is to ensure that the families opting for a new beginning are placed in homes and have somewhere to send their children. The challenge of costly infrastructure is a key to building a community of which all of Queensland can be proud. Responsible planning by the local authority and the Goss Government will ensure that the necessary roads, police stations, ambulance stations, schools and housing developments are all built in the best interests of those using these facilities. These facilities will undoubtedly prove costly; however, I am sure that all who live in or who have experienced the area would agree that the facilities need to be built to help improve and continue Albert's unique way of life.

There are many challenges to be faced by the electorate of Albert, one being the challenge of continued transport infrastructure. We have all experienced the problems associated with a Sunday trip to the Gold Coast or Brisbane. The influx of people brings

with it an increase in traffic volumes. Current predictions of future traffic volumes on the Pacific Highway do not look good. In the next 10 years, traffic travelling in the Brisbane/Gold Coast region is expected to double. I cite as an example of increased traffic volumes the Coomera stretch of the Pacific Highway which carries 65 000 vehicles a day.

Many times, my constituents ask me, "What are we going to do about this problem?" The Government's solution has been to devise an alternative route to and from the Gold Coast. The eastern corridor will begin in the Redlands electorate, proceed down the eastern side of the Pacific Highway, and will eventually join Smith Street at Gaven. The eastern corridor project is all about planning to manage future population growth in a way that preserves the environment and the quality of life enjoyed by the people who live in the Albert electorate and other areas of south-east Queensland.

I must say that on the weekend I get out on the highway and I know my way around the traffic problems. I see all the people who are stuck in traffic jams for an hour or so just because they are trying to get to Beenleigh, and this causes me some concern. Bearing in mind the continuing population growth of the region, I wish the Government would hurry up and resolve the problems as quickly as possible. These problems will not go away and they should be addressed as quickly as possible.

The Government's decision to proceed with the enormous eastern corridor project has proved to be a contentious issue. People agree that the road has to be built, but many suffer the NIMBY—Not In My Back Yard—syndrome. On this issue, I must congratulate my colleagues who are planning for future traffic volumes. I know that the Goss Government is committed to responsible planning in the Albert electorate and that the chosen route will impact to the least possible extent on the community and the environment.

At this point, I make the observation that I must be the only fortunate member of this Parliament who is not suffering from railway closures. I am the only member who has an electorate that has an expanding need for railway services—a problem caused by the previous National Party Government's neglect of the Gold Coast region. In that regard, I mention another project of which I am very proud. Recently, when speaking to the Minister for Transport, David Hamill, and representatives of Queensland Rail, I was

pleased to learn that the construction of the \$335m Gold Coast rail project is on target. Stage 1 to Helensvale is due for completion in December 1995 and Stage 2 to Robina is due to be completed by December 1997. When the project is completed, a trip from Brisbane Central to Robina is expected to take between 60 and 70 minutes. It will be a fast, comfortable, safe trip, which will compete well with the time it takes to travel between Brisbane and the Gold Coast by road.

Works that are presently under way or are planned include, firstly, the calling of tenders for a \$40m contract to supply two additional high speed commuter trains to support the services between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Hopefully, these new trains will encompass the new tilt train technology. Secondly, an \$8m, 20-kilometre long earthworks project will be undertaken between the Albert and Coomera Rivers and is due for completion in July 1993. Thirdly, a \$6m, 4.6-kilometre earthworks contract is under way at Robina which is known as the Merrimac flood plain contract and which is due for completion in August 1993.

Other projects include a \$600,000 road-over-rail bridge at Ridgevale Drive, Helensvale; a \$6m contract which was awarded in June 1993 to build two adjoining bridges spanning the Coomera River and flood plains, one of which will be the longest-span concrete bridge in Australia; and a \$900,000 road-over-rail bridge at Neilsen's Road, Carrara. In addition, tenders have been called for two major civil contracts comprising three rail bridges and earthworks between Beenleigh and Ormeau and a road-over-rail bridge at Eggersdorf, Ormeau. Tenders were called on 14 May 1993 and closed last month.

Also, tenders have been called for four railway bridges and earthworks at Ormeau, and tenders will be called in early August 1993 for three rail bridges between Coomera and Helensvale. Also in August 1993, tenders for construction of the Albert River bridge will be called. All the projects I have mentioned are acting as a catalyst for further job creation in my electorate and will have spin-offs for the electorate.

Another matter I wish to mention is one that is terribly important to me, namely, the education of the young people who live in the Albert electorate. With so many young families moving into the area, I was glad to have the opportunity to announce recently that construction of the as-yet-unnamed Bahrs Scrub high school is well under way. The

school will be completed in time for the first term in 1994. Additionally, I am pleased to hear that negotiations for a State school site within the Studio Village estate are well under way.

My electorate is experiencing massive problems with education. I know that this Government is spending record amounts on education, but, even so, the staff and resources just do not seem to be able to keep up with demand in my electorate. There are primary schools in my electorate that have approximately 1 000 students enrolled and the enrolments do not seem to be abating. There are also high schools in my electorate whose enrolments are reaching the 1 500 mark. If Opposition members want to query the need for expanding Education budgets, they only have to come down to my electorate to be convinced of the demand.

The health dollar is an extremely important issue facing my electorate. As a registered nurse and as a member of the parliamentary health committee, the discussion of health issues is very important and close to my heart. It is my belief that this Government's commitment to quality—I emphasise the word "quality"—health care must continue. In recent times, stories have appeared in the Gold Coast newspapers concerning expenditure of the health dollar on the Gold Coast. One story reported patients from across the border using the facilities of the Gold Coast hospitals. This means that Queensland is in part bearing the brunt of health dollar cutbacks in other States. I read these stories with keen interest.

At a recent parliamentary health committee conference, I discussed these problems with my colleagues and the Minister for Health. If honourable members do not believe that there are cutbacks in other States, all they have to do is look at the recent closure of the western suburbs hospital in Sydney, the closure of St Joseph's Hospital at Auburn and other hospital closures which are occurring in the health-care systems of other States. One only has to look at Victoria where nurses and teachers are being sacked because the Government cannot afford to keep them on, due to the budgetary problems of that State.

As part of the ongoing planning for the future of my region, I see that it is very important for the Government to consider seriously placing a hospital within Albert. I am not talking about a massive structure, only a small hospital to service the needs of the

Albert community well into the future. I must stress the need to plan for the projected 200 000 people who are expected to live in Albert in the next 20 years. Perhaps to begin with, a small community health facility could be built. At present, Albert is in a medical limbo. When constituents require urgent treatment, it is a long ambulance ride to either Brisbane or the Gold Coast. A small hospital or staging facility perhaps situated in the centre of Albert near the site of the Pimpama ambulance station would be very well received and is much needed.

The need for health facilities is already there. At least some of the needs of the area have been recognised. I am glad to hear the announcement that a medical facility is to be built in the Beenleigh area. The Government is committed to providing quality health service. Soon, my constituents will be able to enjoy the luxury of that much-needed health facility. Stage 1 will cost just over \$3m, with about \$9m being spent all up. It will certainly be money well spent. I do not wish that piece of good news to detract from my argument that a health facility is required in the Pimpama region. The need is still there and must be planned for.

In summing up, the Government is planning properly and responsibly for that region. The development in Albert is moving at rocket speed and the infrastructure that the Government is putting in place reflects its solid commitment to ensuring that the quality lifestyle that the constituents of Albert and the whole of south-east Queensland enjoy is forever improving. The message is that the challenges that the electorate faces are being addressed and that the tough decisions are being made. I support the Minister.

Debate interrupted.

DISTINGUISHED VISITOR

Hon. E. J. Charlton, MLC

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer):

Order! Before I call the next speaker, I wish to recognise the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of the Honourable Eric Charlton, MLC, Western Australian Minister for Transport.

Honourable members: Hear, hear!

APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 1)

Second Reading

Debate resumed.

Mrs McCAULEY (Callide) (8.32 p.m.): We have been through all the media hype and the nonsense of the Premier going to the Premiers Conference and coming back with empty pockets. It is rather amusing when one looks at Mr Goss and Mr De Lacy—

Mr Veivers interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The member for Southport might show some respect to speakers on his own side at least.

Mrs McCAULEY: When we look at Mr Goss and Mr De Lacy heading off saying that they are really seeking fiscal equalisation, we in Queensland know that their hearts are not in it because that is not how they behave when they are here in this State. One has only to look at the difference between the country people and the city people in Queensland to know that fiscal equalisation is not a big deal with the present Labor Government. If it was, the Government would not keep taking things away from the country areas in the way that it does, and does so consistently. Recently, the Government has done it again with the cutbacks that it has announced because of the so-called cutback that it got from its mate Mr Keating in Canberra. I will come to the railway issue in a minute.

Firstly, I will talk about the QTC performance dividend, which has bobbed up again as something that Mr De Lacy and Mr Goss see as the answer to a lot of their concerns. It was only three months ago when Mr De Lacy said—

“The credit enhancement fee has been consigned to the dust bin.”

The credit enhancement fee was a fee of 0.05 per cent on all borrowings through the QTC. Mr De Lacy thought that was such a marvellous idea that he toured through rural Queensland, talked to councils, came back and said that he could not understand why the councils did not want to get their borrowings through the QTC. The reason was that a lot of those councils could do a better deal with their own banks.

Under the new credit enhancement fee, which is now called the QTC performance dividend, the Treasurer has said that it is mandatory for all local authorities to get their borrowings through the QTC. They are really Stalinist tactics. It is an absolute disgrace. It has totally tattered any relationship that the present Government could hope to enjoy with the local authorities and with the Local Government Association. If any members were watching television tonight, they would have seen Mr Soorley saying that he had

been betrayed, and Jim Pennell saying that he had been doublecrossed. After this, it will be very, very difficult for Mr Mackenroth to work with his local authorities. That is purely and simply what it is. It is a doublecross of the worst sort possible.

The many councils throughout the State that can get cheaper funds through their own banks will now be forced to refinance their loans through the QTC. If that is supposed to be sound financial management of this State, I would sure as hell hate to see the Government mess it up. This is really bad news and it will continue to be bad news for some time. For those councils that thought that some of their loans might be finished this year, they will not be. They will continue on, and they will have to continue on as an impost on the ratepayers simply because of the Government's actions.

I feel sorry for Mr Mackenroth in one respect. He was obviously rolled by the Treasurer and the Premier on that issue. It is his job to work with the Local Government Association, to support local authorities and to go in to bat for them against the Federal Government and all other predators such as the State Treasurer. The Minister has been done over, which will strain the relationship considerably. This one will not go away. The local authorities are as mad as hell and they will be screaming.

Mr Stoneman: He's a vindictive little man.

Mrs McCAULEY: Who?

Mr Stoneman: The Treasurer.

Mrs McCAULEY: He is indeed, and he is being very careful not to listen. The briefing note stated—

“All Queensland public sector borrowers currently enjoy:

the benefits of an explicit State Government guarantee;

the benefits that flow from the credit standing of Queensland relative to the other States; and

the opportunity to participate in the Queensland Treasury Corporation.”

It does not matter that the councils decided that that opportunity to participate was worth passing up because the QTC was much more costly than their own banks. That briefing note from Treasury said that the councils would have a substantially lower cost of funds from the QTC but, as I have said, that is not quite true. The briefing note continued—

“The QTC performance dividend will be imposed upon QTC's financial

management liability operations. It will reflect a fifty percent sharing of the financial benefits that flow to borrowers as a consequence of the support that the financial backing of the State provides and the superior performance of QTC.”

Those, I might add, are the words of the Treasurer's department and not the words of the local authorities throughout this State. The fact that not only the local authorities but also all statutory authorities will be required to utilise the QTC in future concerns me greatly. As we have seen from other States, Labor Governments do not have a good track record when it comes to running bodies such as the Queensland Treasury Corporation.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! Honourable members! My apologies to the member for Callide, but there are too many audible conversations in the Chamber. I ask honourable members to please show some respect for the member on her feet.

Mrs McCAULEY: Jim Pennell, who is the President of the Local Government Association of Queensland, described this particular backflip on tax on council borrowings as outrageous. He went on to say that over the past two years this tax, which is a tax on ratepayers, has had three various guises. It was first of all served up as a capital guarantee fund. That was knocked on the head. Then it came in as a credit enhancement fee, and the Government floated it but it did not float; it sank like a stone. So it said, “No, we won't do that.” Now it has come back again as a performance dividend. Each and every time it was canned, he said, because it was unfair and unwarranted. It is still unfair and unwarranted, but we have got it.

Mr Gilmore: It was thrown into the rubbish bin.

Mrs McCAULEY: I am sorry, what did the honourable member say?

Mr Gilmore: It was thrown into the rubbish bin.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! If the honourable member wants to say it, he should say it from his own seat.

Mrs McCAULEY: He said it was consigned to the rubbish bin. Councillor Pennell pointed out that only a few months ago the State Government advised a north Queensland council, which had asked it to assess the relative merits of a borrowing proposal from a private bank and the Queensland Treasury Corporation, that it should accept the private bank's offer. If the

Queensland Treasury's scheme is so darned good, why did it provide that advice? There are certainly lots of other councils, not only those in north Queensland, that have experienced similar situations where they can do better through their own bank.

The little spin-off from this is that in towns the size of Biloela, where I live, where the local authority is a fairly large customer—it is probably within the first six largest customers in the town—the bank will suffer very greatly by not having the borrowing business that the local authority would normally provide. That is a small thing, but it will be a very important thing, because those little banks in those little towns will have lost a very important customer, because the local authority is going through the Government, and that will have spin-offs throughout the community.

Jim Pennell went on to say that no matter which way the State Government wants to dress this up, and no matter what name it wants to give it, it is a tax on Queensland ratepayers at a time when a lot of people in rural communities are suffering very badly, and this Government is paying lip-service—and only lip-service—to helping them. The Government has come out and put another tax on Queensland ratepayers. Queensland councils are now entitled to have real concern about the trustworthiness of this State Government. Councillor Pennell said—

“I will be recommending to all Councils that they overprint their Rate Notices advising ratepayers of this unprincipled grab for money.”

I hope that he does, because people need to be aware of that.

I would like to talk now about the railway closures. In my area, three lines are closing and each line has a different problem caused by that closure. The Biggenden to Monto line is closing. It is rather interesting that the Government has only recently spent \$98,000 on a new shed in that area. It has been upgrading the line for some time. There are only a small number of sleepers yet to be laid to complete that work. The work is just about to be finished and the Government is going to close that line.

That line out of Monto sends out hay, lucerne and bags of chaff. There is a large pork enterprise in that area. Beef cattle are sent out on that line. Sleeper cutters will also be affected. There is a State forest in that area. As well, lots of other produce goes out on that rail. Unfortunately, it is not a huge amount. I would imagine that the Transport

Department could come up with figures showing that that line probably loses money. Also, we have to remember that the passenger lines in Brisbane lose money.

It does not faze me when I say that I believe that the closure of this line is the wrong way to go. It is certainly the wrong way for people such as the Monto Lucerne Growers Cooperative, which represents a large number of lucerne growers. That produce will now have to go out by road, and it is not a very good road, either, I might add. That will mean that the product will cost more because the freight will cost more. At present, there are five staff at the Monto station and it is thought that this number will drop to two. Three will be either relocated or retrained. Three of those five people own their own homes in Monto. They live there. They want to stay there. They do not want to move. They do not want to be retrained. There are 14 maintenance staff, and all of them will probably go. I think it is most unfortunate that, in a small community such as Monto, the closure of the line will affect the town in that way. We are not going to take this lying down. We are going to make a fuss and fight and do whatever we can to try to get the Minister to keep that line open.

I refer now to the Monto to Taragoola line. It has always intrigued me why this present Goss Government did not ever utilise that line when Stickmakers decided to use the timber from the Monto area to go to a factory in Gladstone. I am intrigued why it did not support that line but chose instead to send those logs out by road. I have heard the member for Gladstone boast about getting a million dollars for that particular road down the Boyne Valley, and I have to tell him that a million dollars is simply a drop in the bucket for that road.

Mr FitzGerald interjected.

Mrs McCAULEY: Exactly. Fifteen million dollars is still a drop in the bucket. It will not make that a good road under any circumstances. There is a railway line there that the Government will now close and pull up. Why does the Government not use that railway line? Not only is it good for bringing the logs down to Gladstone—if the Government was too silly to put the Stickmakers factory in Monto where it should have been in the first place—but it is also a tourist route.

Last year or the year before, I went to the dairy festival in Monto. For many years previously when the dairy festival was on in Monto every second year, the organisers would bring up a tourist train. They would load it up with people in Gladstone, come down

through the Boyne Valley and up to Monto for the dairy festival. The people would go to the festival for the day, get on the train and go home to Gladstone. It was a lovely day's outing and very enjoyable. The train was always booked out. People really had a good day out. It cost the dairy festival people \$4,000 to hire the train. Last year, they said to the railways, "We want to do this again. We want to hire the train to bring all the people up to the dairy festival." The railway hierarchy said, "Yes, you can do that, but this year it will cost you \$24,000." Of course, they could not afford to pay \$24,000, so last year the train did not come to the dairy festival.

Mr Grice: A money grab.

Mrs McCAULEY: Yes. It was a ludicrous situation. That train may not make much of money, but it has tourist potential. Most people who visit the Gladstone area also visit Heron Island. However, some people want to go not only out to sea but also to the hinterland area. That train would have provided that service. However, the final word is, "No, we have closed that line; we will pull it up and you will not even know it was there." That is unfortunate. In my opinion, that is very backward thinking.

The last rail line to be closed in my area is that which serves Baralaba. Not too many tears will be shed over the closure of the Baralaba line. However, that area has mining potential. Certain coal mining companies have been exploring and working in that area and have been sending trial shipments of coal from Baralaba for some time. Mining potential exists also in the Mount Ramsay area. I cannot recall the name of the product at the moment, but it is a specific mineral that a certain company was considering transporting by rail. That opportunity has now been closed off, and the mining potential of the Baralaba area is now well and truly dead and buried.

Before I turn to the other cutbacks that have been made in my electorate, I want to refer to a letter from the Chairman of the Quilpie Shire Council. Although Quilpie is not in my electorate, because I am the Opposition spokesman for Local Government, the chairman of that council, John Murray, sent me a copy of his letter complaining about the closure of the Charleville-Quilpie rail link. That letter stated—

"This area was developed when the rail arrived 75 years ago and was instrumental in the development of this Shire and the Channel Country Cattle Industry.

In this drought year (financial) 50,000 head of cattle and 21,800 bales of wool were moved by rail."

The letter went on to state—

"It is ironical that at this time the Northern and Rural Task Force is in the area asking how they can help, the government is considering this major reorganisation which would directly take 15 jobs out of our town and contribute to the contraction of our economy. Loss of jobs is 2.5% of jobs available in the area."

I mention that matter because, last night, I heard the member for Mulgrave going on about the wonderful northern and rural task force. It is unfortunate that that wonderful task force could not have helped the Quilpie area to keep the railway line open by making representations to the Minister.

Mr Bennett: Didn't know about it.

Mrs McCAULEY: That sums it up. That task force really does not know much—but never mind. I guess it is a good PR machine, but that is about it.

I turn now to DPI cutbacks in my electorate. Many stock inspectors have gone from the area. Those who remain have been so overworked because of the drought and the trucking out of cattle that they are working virtually around the clock, seven days a week.

Another DPI cutback which is of concern to me is the proposal to close the DPI research piggery at Biloela. I am aware that, at present, that facility has no research projects. I am aware also that, because of the proceeds received from the pigs that are sold, the facility is almost self-sufficient. It is a fairly cost-effective organisation. The reason for establishing that research piggery in Biloela in the first instance was that it is the only research station in a tropical area. All of the other pig research is done in Brisbane and the surrounding area. It is important to the pork producers in the central Queensland area that that research piggery not close.

Last year, that research facility conducted very sound investigations into the interrelationship between the stress gene in pigs and human cot deaths. In common with many other people, I thought that was important work. That research may go a long way towards unravelling the mysterious causes of human cot deaths. It is most unfortunate that such important research is curtailed because some bureaucrat in Brisbane decides that it is too far away and that he wants to control everything in

Brisbane. That is a matter about which I will approach the Minister.

It seems that that important Government project will close; yet, on the other hand, the Government is foolishly considering reopening the Callide A Power Station. That action may be necessary simply because the Government has planned things so badly, and it is very embarrassed about the likely future shortfall in power generation capacity. The Government has been forced to consider taking the Callide A Power Station out of mothballs and cranking it up again. Those sorts of decisions do not say much for this Government.

Mr Gilmore: They are unprofessional.

Mrs McCAULEY: It is very unprofessional, unfortunately. Recently, I visited the Mundubbera area, where the citrus industry is most important. I toured a citrus juicing factory, and I also toured an establishment titled "Bugs for Bugs", which aims to create a biologically sustainable environment. That organisation breeds wasps which are placed into phials, taken into the orchards and used to control pests rather than spraying with chemicals. I thought that was a very good idea.

Both of those business operators complained to me about the problems that they encounter when attempting to export their goods. The Bugs for Bugs man—he did not like it when I called his place a "bugger"—stated that it was very difficult to send his wasps out of Australia. It was interesting to discover that a big market exists for the wasps in England. He told me that the wasps can be sent to orchards in England cheaper than they can get them on site. He told me also that AQIS causes many problems when he tries to export those bugs out of the country, which seems quite ludicrous to me.

The citrus industry fellow, who exports mandarins to Asia, experiences the same problems. He has more trouble getting his mandarins out of this country than he does getting them into Asia. These are Federal matters, but one wonders why these businessmen are, in a sense, being discouraged. It seems rather foolish to me that that should be the case. It is very sad that the relevant authorities have that attitude. The citrus juicing factory is still producing—

Time expired.

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (8.53 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I enter this debate this evening. I would like to raise some important matters that are of concern to my electorate.

The Proserpine millers and growers have asked me to relay their gratitude to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning, the Honourable Terry Mackenroth, on his decision to not allow a rural residential subdivision on rural lands because of the impact it would have on good quality agricultural land. They see that decision as a signal that the Government intends to ensure implementation of the principles included in State Policy No.1 and its associated guidelines. It is very important to the Proserpine sugar industry that there is a strong commitment to the need to protect valuable agricultural land. The Proserpine millers and canegrowers have taken a pro-active position on this issue in the Whitsunday electorate, where pressure on land resources from development related to tourism is increasing.

The sugar industry in this region is undergoing expansion and is increasing its contribution to the regional economy. Recently, significant investment in upgrading mill infrastructure has taken place, and it is reassuring to the sugar industry that the land resources on which the viability of the industry stands are to receive a commitment from this Government. It is essential to protect this substantial investment and the associated employment and regional income.

Another issue that has been raised by farmers in Proserpine is the encroachment of residential land on agricultural land, as displayed in the proposed town plan by Stenders and Partners. One point of concern is that the land on one side of the Bruce Highway designated as residential land will have a far greater value than the agricultural land on the other side. The plan states that, in accordance with Government policy, the shire's planning provisions should aim to minimise instances of incompatible uses being located adjacent to agricultural operations in a manner that inhibits normal farming practices. Farmers are faced with a conflict with their neighbours, namely, motel owners across the Bruce Highway who have objected to normal farming activities, such as cane harvesting, burning and cultivating. The local authorities will receive some objections if those people who are using agricultural lands are denied the right to farm.

The council's planning must be such that although it cannot stop conflict, provisions must be in place to deal with it in a pro-active way. It would be desirable that, if the council intends to allow residential development close to farming areas, it ensures that potential purchasers are made aware of the possible

nuisances associated with living in close proximity to cane production. Problems in the United States resulting from new neighbours encroaching onto agricultural land have been so profound that they have resulted in right-to-farm legislation being promulgated in all but seven of the continental States. In essence, this legislation ensures that a farmer in a predominantly agricultural area can continue to farm in accordance with traditional and accepted practices, without fear of litigation from disgruntled new neighbours.

I now turn to the issue of the school refurbishment program. As all members know, the Government decided to go to the people of Queensland with a \$150m package from an increased tobacco licence fee to upgrade schools and hospitals in Queensland. That was necessary because the people who now sit in Opposition in this place allowed the schools and hospitals in this State to fall into a state of total disrepair. I am proud to say that every school in my electorate has benefited from this extra tax. In fact, more than \$652,852 has been spent in my electorate. Before I hear the cries of pork-barrelling from Opposition members, I would like to point out that National Party electorates such as Mirani, Burdekin, Gregory and Charters Towers have fared equally well and, in some cases, better.

Gone are the days of punishing school children because their parents did not elect Government members, as was the case under National Party rule. While I am on the subject of the school refurbishment program, I believe that it would be remiss of me to leave this subject without commending the Minister on his appointment of an adviser in rural and provincial Queensland to oversight the program. Of course, that adviser, Mr Robert Schwarten, needs no introduction to honourable members, as he sat in this place representing the electorate of Rockhampton North in the previous Parliament. I know that some Opposition members, including the forever-absent member for Keppel, Mr Lester, chose to attack the Minister for appointing Mr Schwarten to that position. However, let me tell the members of this House that any member from either side of this place who had reason to call upon Mr Schwarten's services would agree with me that the Minister could not have chosen a better person to advise him on the program.

Mr DAVIDSON: I rise to a point of order. I do not believe that the member for Keppel is ever absent. I ask that the member withdraw those remarks.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! There is no point of order. The member will resume his seat. I warn members that I will not tolerate frivolous points of order in the House. I will warn the next person who does so.

Mrs BIRD: Mr Schwarten commenced his working life in the building industry, so he understands that side of the program. He was a teacher, so he also knows about schools. He was a member of the Government, so he certainly knows his way around the bureaucracy. I might add that he has earned the bureaucrats' respect. I say to all of those people who opposed his appointment: find someone who is better qualified. I also point out that among the fairer-minded members of the Opposition, I have heard glowing reports of how Mr Schwarten has tackled problems for them in their electorates. I understand that he has even fixed up some problems in Mr Lester's electorate, although we do not hear him being gracious enough to admit it.

However, for the life of me, I cannot understand why any member of this place who represents a seat outside Brisbane would condemn a Government for improving accessibility to that Government by putting ministerial staff out into rural and provincial Queensland. How hypocritical is it of the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Keppel to stand in this place and wax lyrical about their care for people in rural and provincial Queensland, and then condemn this Government for increasing ministerial accessibility in those areas?

Those of us who have been around for a while will remember the blatant political appointment of National Party no-hopers into well-paid public sector jobs. Nowhere was this more apparent than when the Bjelke-Petersen Government set up the Office of Northern Development in Townsville and staffed it with card-carrying members of the National Party, one of whom went on to be the Mayor of Cairns. However, I challenge anyone in this place to cite just one instance in which Mr Schwarten has failed to cooperate with any member of this place in discharging his responsibilities as an adviser to the Minister. I challenge members to name one school out of over 100 that Mr Schwarten has visited all over Queensland that is dissatisfied with his approach or care for students at that school. If I had my way, there would be more ministerial advisers like Mr Schwarten out there in rural and provincial Queensland advising Ministers on issues, talking to members and generally shortening the communication channels in this huge State of ours.

Mrs Woodgate: He is not just forward thinking, he is forward walking, too.

Mrs BIRD: Yes, he is also forward walking. It is high time that people such as Mr Lester and Mr Borbidge woke up to the fact that they should stop bashing Mr Schwarten and, instead, support the notion of non-metropolitan ministerial advisers.

I pay tribute to the Whitsunday regional office of Q-Build, which is competently led by Mr Ken Kominski. In my visit to schools with Mr Schwarten, we have been accompanied by officers from that office. I place on record here tonight my appreciation to them for the courteous and competent manner in which they conduct themselves.

The extra tax on cigarettes did cause some outcry when it was introduced, but that tax has generated jobs—over 40 in my electorate alone—and taken the schools in my electorate a long way up the ladder from the 32 years of disgraceful neglect of those facilities under the previous Government.

I turn now to the third issue that I wish to speak about tonight, which is of deep concern to me and to many women on the Government side of the House. I refer to the issue of safety for women in particular. Regularly, I receive calls in my office from women who have suffered, or are the recipients of, domestic violence or, even worse, rape. There is an unacceptable level of violence against women in our community. It is extremely unfortunate that many women do not feel safe in situations in which they have a right to feel safe. This Government has acted to improve the safety and security of women. Carolyn Mason from the Women's Policy Unit, in speaking to women at Calen in my electorate, said that this Government was breaking new ground in the prevention of violence against women and caring for women who have been the victims of violence. She rightly said also that the whole community must be involved; that we need to look at the big picture and not try to attack the problem in a piecemeal way.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Paul Braddy, recently said that violence against women is a criminal behaviour; it will not be tolerated; it must stop. He is right. Violence against women takes many forms: physical, psychological, emotional, and even verbal assault. All are executed to maintain power and control. Women are subjected to significantly higher levels of violence than are men, and these incidents are largely hidden and unreported.

The Premier has also called for action against domestic violence, and declared that this Government is determined to improve the security of women in Queensland. Our achievements in legislation and policy are reflected in our continued commitment—financial and otherwise—to the Women's Policy Unit; more than \$11m this year on the continuation of safety programs for women and girls; the establishment of a prevention of violence against women training program; the setting up of a women's safety project within the Police Service; major changes to the Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act to improve its administration and powers; and the establishment of rural and regionally based domestic violence services, including a 24-hour 008 telephone service. This Government is prepared to stand by its policies, programs and initiatives. The Queensland community, particularly all women and girls, deserves this commitment.

Mr STONEMAN (Burdekin) (9.06 p.m.): In common with other members, it grieves me to be confronted with a situation in which we are debating in large measure the deceit of the Government's claim in this State that there has been a shortfall in grants from the Federal Government and that these cost-cutting measures have to be undertaken. I wonder where the claim of one vote, one value—or, more correctly, the claim about one dollar, one value—is going in this State. The fact is that the people who are most in need of enhanced services in this State are increasingly being deprived of them at every level of community activity.

Closing down rural services under the guise of their being non-viable is outlandish when one considers the cross-subsidisation in which the whole community has engaged. I do not say that the Government is unreasonable in its support of railway and road services around this city. But, as I have mentioned often in this House, the next thing will be the selling off of school grounds. In some places that is already happening. Will the Government apply the same criteria to urban rail services as it will to the Winton, Mareeba, Cunnamulla and Yaraka rail lines and, more particularly, the Greenvale line in my electorate? That line is going to be torn up. It is no secret that, because an assessment has been made that it would probably get \$12m for the scrap metal, the Railway Department has wanted to tear that line up for years. Because service delivery is easy in the city, it is far more cost effective; so the people in the far-flung areas, the income

producing areas of the State, are being made to pay.

Sadly, my old home town of Winton is at the forefront of a couple of major instances of Government vindictiveness and ineptitude. The railway line between Hughenden and Winton is to be closed and the railway line between Winton and Longreach is to be closed. I note that the Minister for Environment and Heritage is leaving the Chamber. I was about to speak about her activities. Diamantina Lakes, which is a large property that I know well and upon which the people of Winton have depended so much—along with a number of other properties—is going to become another blight on the horizon of this State's economy. In the name of conservation and biodiversity, the bureaucrats are taking over the management of that property. Over the years, a large number of cattle have come from Diamantina Lakes into Winton. Over time, the owners of that property have carried out a number of improvements. I used to live on a property that was serviced by the same mail service that goes to Diamantina Lakes. It was on the Thursday run and we were on the Sunday run. Huge sums of money used to be spent annually at Diamantina Lakes on fencing and water improvement. Of course, the return was the fat bullocks that came off.

In my view, a partner in what one could term almost a criminal activity against the people of that community—the Winton district—is Mrs Janet Holmes a Court. To sell that property, she must be strapped for cash. She has certainly sold out the pastoral industry of this nation. She is almost lionised in some of the newspapers. I say that she is an absolute disgrace to the pastoral industry of this nation.

Mrs Woodgate: She is a very caring person.

Mr STONEMAN: She is caring only of one thing—the dollar. She has much to answer for. The hatchet job that she has done on the credibility of the pastoral industry of this nation is outrageous. Generations of people who have managed properties such as Diamantina Lakes have done a marvellous job. It has not been razed or torn up, but now it will be handed over to a mob of bureaucrats who say that they can manage the property better than pastoral managers such as Arthur Stadhams and the Milson family, who for generations understood the management of that property. Now it will be given to a bunch of people who would not have a clue.

Unfortunately, Janet Holmes a Court has been a partner in that activity. I say, "Shame

on her!" Nature conservation should be left to the experts and those whose living depends on the land and the resource use, not the people who think that they can dictate the processes involved in nature conservation, people who have never lived there and do not understand the land—people such as Janet Holmes a Court. I say without reservation that that has sent, and is sending, a signal to the investors of this State and, more particularly, to the people of the Winton district who will no longer have a rail service from the north or the west. Large properties such as Diamantina Lakes will be dried up as productive units and become places where dingoes and animals and vermin will abound. There is no way in the world that any person in any Government department could hope to manage that property in the manner in which it has been sustained over generations. If they were bad managers, the property would not have been worth resuming. The \$3.7m that has gone from the taxpayers of this State for the purchase of that property will go not only out of the public coffers, but it will go out of the Winton district. As someone who lived in that district and associated with the people in that pastoral area for many years, I feel for them.

In my electorate, there has been a loss of service capacity in so many other areas. When we were in Government, there was talk about closing down stock routes because people no longer used them—just the same as this Government is saying that people no longer use railway lines. Let me remind Government members that the wheel turns. If Mr Beattie and Mr Ardill and an increasing number of Government members get their way—I am sure that inevitably they will—and a fuel tax is imposed in this State, suddenly the viability of railways will change dramatically. That will kill off the road transport system. It is being killed off in any case. How will cattle be moved from properties such as Diamantina Lakes? Closing down railways lines and locking up productive land such as Diamantina Lakes is like closing down stock routes and selling off the schoolgrounds.

At least Mr Beattie and Mr Ardill are honest in that they recognise that, if this Government's spending is to continue in its present fashion, more taxes will have to be imposed. There will need to be a mechanism by which this incredible spending increase will be able to be sustained. I give those gentlemen their due; they are honest and sincere. They understand that there will need to be new taxes. They say, "Let us have fuel taxes." Of course, Mr Ardill only uses half a tank of fuel a month and Mr Beattie uses

even less. That is not their fault; they live 15 minutes from here. The people out at Winton, Roma, Mount Isa, and the people all over this State have to fill their cars to go to town and they have to fill their cars to get home again; they cannot even do the round trip on a tank of fuel. Members on the Government side do not understand about such huge distances and the impact that a fuel tax would have on those people.

Mrs McCauley referred to the doublecross by the local authorities. I refer again to Winton and the triple whammy that they have had to sustain in recent times. That begs the question: how can they exist? What hope can the honest battler have? The ringers are disappearing and the shearers will soon be disappearing because the services are disappearing. The number of schools will be reduced. Already, the people of Winton have lost their courthouse. When I first visited the Winton district 35 years ago, there was a daily aeroplane service with two services on Sunday. At present, there is not even a train service into that community. I feel for them. The problem is that this Government is sending a signal to communities such as Winton that it no longer cares about them. Unless one lives within 10 minutes of the GPO in Brisbane, this Goss Government does not care. No wonder the Prime Minister suggested that the particular person in charge is pretty slippery!

I turn now to the Townsville region. My colleague the honourable member for Thuringowa has finally woken up and started to recognise what is happening to the honest worker and the battler in the Townsville region, and he has publicly disowned the Goss Government initiatives. When the member for Gregory, the member for Beaudesert and I collectively talked about the job losses on the railways in Townsville, it was put up as a sham. It was supposed to be a figment of the imagination of a desperate Opposition. Honourable members opposite should ask the rail workers now about that figment of imagination when we said that 765 jobs would go. Now, suddenly, it has been verified. The documents are there. We had the Cabinet documents at the time because there are some honest people who thought that the people in that region should know about it.

Townsville is an area that should be the centre of regional and rural Queensland; yet, it is continually being dealt a blow. It should be an international destination; it should be an interstate destination; and it should be an intrastate destination. But, unfortunately, Townsville is only a place on the way to

somewhere else. We should consider what it might be. The international airport is now supported only by two international carriers—Garuda and Air Niugini—and, at odd times, another carrier pops in. Unfortunately, those carriers are pretty sketchy and low density carriers.

Magnetic Island should be the jewel of the Pacific, certainly the jewel of the Queensland coast, because where else does one find an island only a few minutes from an international airport? I have to say without equivocation, however, that Magnetic Island is a disgrace because it is a wasted resource. We have had the greenies and the do-gooders attempting to halt a development there, and the Government, to its credit, has said that something needs to be done, but it does not know what to do because it is not game to tackle those people who are standing in the way of progress.

The Strand in Townsville is world class. It would leave anything Cairns has for dead by a mile, and I even say that in Cairns on a clear day one can see the water. However, on travelling up and down the Strand one can get run over by motor cars or face the risk of old buildings falling down or dealing with the no-hopers hanging around there. It should be a jewel of the city because it is an incredibly good resource. I pay a tribute to the Townsville City Council, with all its faults, because it has been able to develop a mall that is world class. Unfortunately, the mall is empty. I do not denigrate Mayor Moonie and his team. They do not do things the way that I would do them, but I do believe that they are starting to wake up.

The other day in Townsville the Premier gave a lecture. He said that things have become so bad that they have to pull up their socks, or else. I agree; the Premier is right. But what about the signals that this Government keeps sending? Townsville desperately needs secure power. What does the Government not do? It does not develop the Tully/Millstream project because of a couple of acres of bush. Let me say that after a couple of good blackouts, they would do a 180 degree turn. They are going to have a fuel-fired turbine in the middle of the city. Where will the greenies be then? The Heritage Council has held back the development of Castle Hill. Fortunately, it seems that it might be under way again. I believe that the Heritage Council should be sacked. It should be an advisory body, but it is an excuse to pass the buck, and that is something that this Government does all the way down the line. It will not make the hard decisions.

I am pleased to see that the Premier is in the Chamber, because he will probably learn something when he goes back over this speech and reads some of the points that I made. Having heard the speech that he gave to the Chamber of Commerce—which I agreed with—I think that he has probably been listening more and more to those members on this side of the House. The region, as I have said, has everything—it has sunlight, a harbour, the islands, a reef, a city and city centre, fishing, wetlands—

Mr W. K. Goss: Roads.

Mr STONEMAN: Well, the roads are improving. Yes, it has roads, but it does not have people and it does not have investment, and that is what is needed. It has the wetlands, the goldfields, the irrigation scheme, the Ingham area and Hinchinbrook Island. However, it needs leadership. It needs a parochialism to lift the area above party politics. I hope that the member for Thuringowa and other members in the Labor Party will acknowledge the need for us to join together, not in a political sense, but in a spirit of cohesion that recognises the needs of the region above petty interest. If Townsville is to assume its rightful place in this community, the things about which the Premier spoke have to happen. The area needs local and State Government support because, at the moment, the consultative process, such as the one associated with the Heritage Council, is a farce and that is dragging the area down. Another example of the failure of this Government to undertake a consultation process is the relocation of the railway workshops. I should ask the member for Thuringowa, who has just woken up, how badly he thinks that was handled.

Mr McElligott: Do you support amalgamations?

Mr STONEMAN: No, I do not. I do not support forced amalgamations. I support amalgamation, if that is what the community wants. I have said so time and time again. The ambivalence associated with development projects on the Strand, Magnetic Island, Castle Hill and the airport should be dispensed with. The Government should be working to bring all interest groups together because the region is a marvellous area.

Mr McElligott: You are being parochial.

Mr STONEMAN: No, I am not. In answer to the honourable member's interjection, I would have to say that parochialism means progress because it means that people will fight to get facilities that their neighbours have

and to make what they have much better. I believe that the people in the Townsville community have been well served by a number of local authorities instead of the local government structure being centralised. In that sense, parochialism is a positive advantage. At the local government level, I do not have any hassles with amalgamation if the whole community is in favour of it, but under no circumstances should amalgamations be forced.

Recently I read an editorial suggesting that Townsville Enterprise and the Townsville Chamber of Commerce should get together. I believe that is reasonable, but the analogy drawn between that arrangement and local government amalgamations is not valid. The situations are totally different because those commercial bodies should be working for the good of the whole region whereas local authorities work for the benefit of their own area of operations and they have a duty to deliver services appropriately. The Government should be presenting initiatives that reflect the needs of the total region's economy as well as the beauty, benefits and capacity of that part of Queensland. The Government should be providing infrastructure development that sends positive investment signals. We do not need projects such as the Tully/Millstream farce. We need to build up the Townsville region and we do not need local government king hits in this area.

In conclusion, I cite as an example of investment disincentives a phone call I received from America just the other day. An American who owns a property in my electorate phoned me and said, "I have run the gauntlet of the Aboriginal Land Act"—apparently he was going to be confronted with that—"and I have had legal advice on the Mabo decision, but now I have just been advised that my property is listed on the national heritage register. Mark, doesn't your Government in Queensland or Australia want our investment in your nation?" That is the signal that is being sent to investors.

Time expired.

Mr STEPHAN (Gympie) (9.26 p.m.): While listening to this debate on the Appropriation Bill both yesterday and today, the thought crossed my mind that this Government is softening us up for a Budget that will not meet the expectations of Queenslanders generally and certainly not those of members of the Opposition. Taking into account some of the comments that have been made recently, I am reminded of how the wheel turns full circle and how situations

can be viewed differently by people, depending on their perspective. Recently, I read the following comments—

“Somehow, it is always Canberra’s fault. The Ministers say ‘We haven’t got enough money because of Canberra. We can’t build enough roads because of Canberra. We haven’t got enough teachers, police and nurses because of Canberra’.

The reality, of course, is very different from this constant negative whingeing from the Government about imaginary wrongs which have been done to Queensland.”

Government members interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: Who do Labor members think made those comments? Back in 1988, Mr Wayne Goss made those comments and complained that the previous Government was whingeing about Canberra and about not getting enough revenue from Canberra for roads and teachers, etc. What has happened now? We now see that the wheel has turned full circle and Mr Goss is now finding himself at the wrong end of that type of criticism.

Mr W. K. Goss: Will you take an interjection?

Mr STEPHAN: The Premier can make a suggestion, yes, but I am afraid that his suggestions are about three or four years too late.

Government members interjected.

Mr STEPHAN: Mr Keating is not listening to the Premier. The fact that he has not received from Mr Keating the amount he thought he was going to receive has made it very difficult for him to meet Queensland’s budgetary requirements. This Government’s performance should be compared with the performance of Governments in other States. When the Goss Government came to power, the people were promised that there would be no new taxes during its first term and that increases in taxes and charges would be no more than CPI increases, yet the past three Budgets show that the increase in overall spending by the Queensland Government was 21 per cent. This increase makes Queensland the highest-spending State Government in Australia. In comparison, South Australia’s expenditure has increased by 5.6 per cent and Western Australia’s expenditure has increased by 8 per cent, yet Queensland’s Premier is complaining about not having enough money.

Mr Livingstone: Do you want cuts, do you? Do you want cuts in Gympie?

Mr STEPHAN: The Premier’s own backbenchers are saying that the Government will not increase taxes, but the point is that this Government has to live within its means.

Mr Livingstone interjected.

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

Mr STEPHAN: The Labor Government will not be able to do anything constructive for Queensland if it increases taxes with the idea that the money can be spent better by this Government than by the rest of Queensland and private enterprise. Most Queenslanders want this Government to get its hands out of the taxpayers’ pockets. The Government should let people spend their money as they see fit. I would like to spend my own money as I wish, and I would like to think that members of the Labor Government would like to spend their own money as they wish, too.

I begin to wonder about this Government when I hear the comments that are made by the member for Brisbane Central, Mr Beattie. I wonder whether Mr Beattie has the Premier’s support when he suggests that a fuel tax should be introduced to make more revenue available for the Government to spend. The point that should be borne in mind is that such a proposal would not result in more money for private enterprise and the private individual to spend but, rather, would result in the Government having more money to spend, and the money would certainly not go very far. Mr Beattie also made the comment that we must be sensitive to the unemployment issue. Of course, we must be sensitive to the unemployment issue. We must realise what it is doing to the confidence of this State.

We must realise what it is doing to the families of this State and be able to do something more about it.

In the past three or four years, the Government has lived off the hollow logs—the money that was left by the previous National Party Government. For example, the Government has spent \$120m out of the Auctioneers and Agents Trust Fund. It has also spent money from the ambulance fund that was raised by people in the community. Now the Government is beginning to realise that money does not grow on trees.

In common with the Opposition spokesman on local government, I want to comment on the move by the Government to tax the Local Government Association and the local councils. How can the councils expect to keep going if the Government turns around

and tells them that they shall borrow through the Queensland Treasury Corporation, that they shall pay the interest rates as determined by the State Government and that they shall make a contribution to the State Government? It must be realised that people in local government have the ability to make their own decisions and to negotiate very, very competitive interest rates.

If the Government says to the local authorities that they cannot borrow from their own lending authorities or the banks in their area, the banks will not receive sufficient business to remain viable. They will lose the very substantial amount of money that is generated through the borrowing programs of the local authorities. Again, the Government is going down the wrong track. I have noticed that happening from time to time. The Government is cutting services and that, in return, is having the effect that the production sector of the State is not getting any support.

Where is the support for the producers? I cite the example of the rail closures that have been mooted in the past week or so. The Government must realise that those rail lines were put there as a service to the local communities. In the same way as rail lines provide a service to communities in the larger metropolitan areas, so too do they provide a service to communities in country areas. If the Government will not accept that and if it will not take into account the service that those railway lines provide, it will soon find out that a greater contribution from the State will be required for other services to replace the service that was provided by the railway lines.

I take account of the statement that was made recently about the closure of railway lines, in particular, the Mary Valley line in my electorate. The local newspaper, which keeps its ear to the ground and does fairly well in finding out what is going on, has made a statement that—

“There are many who will mourn the passing of rail services to these areas, not the least the primary producers who have depended on the lines to move produce and associated requirements to and from”—

the centre. It continued—

“These small rail services, inconsequential though they may seem to the ‘powers that be’, are a link many believe should not be severed.”

The newspaper stated that, without its regular rail service, the district will see an increase in the number of semitrailers

that already use the roads in the area, in particular the Mary Valley Highway. It stated further—

“It would be too much to hope the Government realises this stretch of road is unable to cope with such volumes of heavy traffic and will upgrade it accordingly.

There are many who would agree a better idea would be to retain the line and expand it to a passenger commuter service for the many Mary Valley residents who travel to and from Gympie two or more times a day for work.”

An indication of the thinking and the attitude of the Government is its short-sighted decision to cut the service and, in some instances, to pull up the rail lines themselves in some areas. The decision is not only short-sighted and divisive but also a false economic decision that can lead to serious questioning of Labor’s ability to make any rational decision at all. For example, 18 000 tonnes of produce from the pineapple industry and the timber industry are freighted out of the area by rail.

If the trains stop running in that area, will funds be allocated to upgrade the roads to enable them to cater for the increased volume of traffic and to ensure the safety of the growing number of people who are using the roads? The roads must be able to cater for the increased volume of heavy vehicles to enable the traffic to move at all. That is not to mention the fact that a great number of school children travel through that area every day. It certainly will not do very much for the children or for their parents if the quality of the road surface is downgraded because of the Government’s decision. The Government must consider the safety angle. For that reason, the decision is a frightening one. The Government’s attempt to save money should be seen for what it is: an illogical and ill-considered blunder.

That statement can equally be directed at other changes to railway services that were announced recently. The Transport Minister made the announcement that the Government will charge for a travel voucher for pensioners who use their pensioner passes on the Queensland Rail. That in itself has brought a reaction from the community and, particularly, as members can well imagine, from pensioners. Today, a couple of pensioners came to my office. They were very upset and concerned about that extra charge, that extra tax, that the Government has seen fit to place on pensioners and about other

increases that they have been experiencing in past years.

That goes to show the attitude of the Government. It wants to gather money from whatever source it can. Eighteen months ago, the Government said that if pensioners travelled from Gympie to Brisbane and did not return on the same day, they would not be able to use their return ticket. It said that if they were going to stay overnight, they would have to use their travel vouchers. Fortunately, in that particular instance, the Government decided to change its mind. Commonsense prevailed, and that ill-considered decision was reversed. I would like to think that the Government will rethink some of its other decisions also for the benefit of Queensland and for the benefit of those who use the Government's services.

I turn now to water conservation. A couple of years ago, dams in south-east Queensland were very close to running out of water and there was doubt as to whether water would be available to the population, be it in the residential areas along the coast or in the rural community. I have not been heartened by the decision relating to the future use of water and water conservation measures in the Mary River Valley. The major recommendation was that the height of the Borumba Dam be raised.

Mr Nuttall: Give it away.

Mr STEPHAN: No, I am not giving it away. I certainly will not give away the need to conserve more water or to have more water available. I do not think the honourable member would want to give it away, either. It needs to be borne in mind that there is a need to conserve water in that region.

Mr Budd: You're not blaming the Government for no water, are you?

Mr STEPHAN: I am blaming the Government for not taking steps to ensure that there is a lot more water available. When there is an increase in the population along the coastal stretch from Brisbane to Gympie and the Government is not making allowance for any more water conservation, what else am I expected to do? It is not good enough for you to say that when the decision is made within the next 10 years, you might see your way clear to increasing the water supply of the Borumba Dam.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am not going to tolerate any more interjections, nor the member for Gympie not speaking through the Chair.

Mr STEPHAN: It is very important that action be taken to ensure that extra water is conserved for the population, whether it be the farming community or the residential community, and that that action be taken within the next five years, not within 10 years as has been suggested for the raising of the level of the Borumba Dam.

Many people have other concerns about water conservation that they want answered in the meantime. Not the least of these concerns is where future dams will be built, if in fact future dams are to be built, or whether other methods of water conservation will be used. As far as I can see, there is a considerable amount of water in the underground system. I believe that we should be taking greater steps to investigate the use of the underground system.

There is a big possibility that the desalination of sea water is one direction in which we should be heading. Both of the methods I have raised will not be without cost, but they certainly are steps that need to be taken, and taken very, very soon, because of the present population growth and the expected growth in the next 10 years. Unless action is taken, we will find ourselves without enough water to drink. I do not think even you, Mr Deputy Speaker, would want that to happen. We can recycle water and do a lot more with it than we are at present. However, we must do a little more than just talk about it, as has been the case thus far.

Another expectation of the community is the provision of an ambulance service. The present Ambulance Service is becoming increasingly out of the reach of many in the community. Many people expect that if they get sick, they will be cared for in a way that is commensurate with their ailment. I have said in this House before that many people are not ambulance subscribers, and many of them have a very good reason for not doing so. Mostly, it is because they cannot afford to subscribe. We now find that the ambulance subscription has increased by about 25 per cent. That will not encourage more ambulance subscriptions; it will encourage fewer ambulance subscriptions. The suggestion is that, instead of it costing \$1,000 to transfer someone from a hospital in Gympie to a hospital in Brisbane, it will cost very close to \$2,000.

On a very regular basis, I receive letters of concern about this particular aspect of the service and the service that existed in the past. A number of letters begin with the comment, "I am writing to express my disgust

at the service"—or it should be the non-service—"of the Queensland Ambulance Service." These things are of concern. We cannot blame the local bearers at all. We cannot blame the local committees which were in place and doing a fantastic job. In the case of my electorate, plans were drawn for the construction of a new ambulance centre. Tenders had been called for the construction of that centre and the money was there to pay for it. Yet this present Labor Government decided not to proceed with it, and it looks as though it will not proceed with any future ambulance building in the next four or five years. Therefore, we cannot see an increased Ambulance Service in the community.

I am not in a position to support the Government on this Appropriation Bill. The Government certainly needs the money, but I would like to think that, in its wisdom, it will see its way clear to be a bit more responsible in the spending of the money that it has raised.

Dr WATSON (Moggill) (9.45 p.m.): It is a pleasure to enter the debate on the Appropriation Bill 1993, despite the fact that my contribution is at a late stage of the proceedings. Mr Deputy Speaker, I am sure that all members welcome you back from your important CPA duties. I am sure that all members are pleased when you are in the Chair, because you keep control of this place very well.

One of the advantages of speaking in the late stages of a debate is that it gives one the opportunity to consider some of the arguments that Government members have advanced. In this contribution, I want to concentrate on the Interim Budget Statement which the Treasurer tabled yesterday in this House. It is important to consider that statement in detail, because it sets out the rationale for the forthcoming Budget cuts which have already been announced and which are of legitimate concern to so many Labor Party backbenchers. The first question that needs to be addressed is whether the \$115m supposedly cut from the Budget is a real \$115m and, in particular, whether or not that will grow to \$220m in the 1994-95 financial year.

The Leader of the Opposition has already raised certain issues in relation to that matter. In question time today, the Treasurer attempted to answer those issues. For the purposes of argument, I am willing to assume that the Treasurer is approximately right—that a cut has occurred in the Federal contribution to the State Budget, and that Queensland will suffer somewhat. The important issue is

whether the proposals that the Treasurer has put forward are justified under the circumstances or whether he is going too far, and whether there really will be a shortfall of \$220m in the future.

I noted that, in his second-reading speech, the Treasurer quoted with some sort of approval a recent Access Economics report. That was a State Budget outcomes report that was published last week or the week before by Access Economics. The Treasurer stated—

"Access estimated that Queensland would achieve a substantial negative Net Financing Requirement in 1992-93 and again in 1993-94. The estimates reflect Access Economics' assessment of the strength of the Queensland economy and its confidence in the management of the economy and Government finances."

The Treasurer referred to that report later in his second-reading speech, and I will return to that. That report has been quoted, I believe, with some sort of approval.

However, that same report sets out the basis—the figures—for its conclusion. I think that is worth looking at. Access Economics partly based its assessment on its estimates of outlays for the coming financial period as well as for the financial period that has just ended, together with the revenue that it believes the State of Queensland will receive. Access Economics estimates that, in 1992-93, from general revenue and hospital funding grants, Queensland will receive \$3.414 billion. A perusal of the Budget figures reveals that that is approximately the amount that the Treasurer proposed at the beginning of the last financial year.

Access Economics estimates that, in 1993-94, Queensland will receive \$3.597 billion from the general revenue grant and the hospital grant. From what the Treasurer has been saying, the problem seems to be that, although Access Economics and Queensland Treasury may have predicted that amount or something close to it, the funding provided by the Federal Government by way of the general revenue grant and the hospital grant fell \$115m short. Let us leave aside for the moment all of the other grants and payments that might flow through to Queensland Treasury.

Access Economics demonstrates quite clearly—and I think that this was also referred to today by the Treasurer—that it had estimated before the Premiers Conference that Queensland would have a negative Net Financing Requirement of \$392m—in other words, Queensland would be able to reduce

its debt levels by in the order of \$392m. If one adjusts the Access Economics figures to incorporate the supposed \$115m that the Treasurer says he has lost, what does that mean? In simple terms, it means that, instead of being able to pay off \$392m of debt—in other words, reduce the debt further—the Government will be able to pay off only \$277m. The Treasurer quotes approvingly that estimate of Access Economics, and compares approvingly the effect on Queensland's debt situation of the revenues and outlays as against what is happening in the other States.

In his second-reading speech, the Treasurer referred to how the New South Wales net debt will increase from \$22.6 billion to \$26.4 billion; how the debt in Victoria will increase from \$31.8 billion to \$37.9 billion; and how the debt in other States will increase from \$21.6 billion to \$27.2 billion, but how Queensland's debt will decrease.

Mr Beattie: What does it mean?

Dr WATSON: The member for Brisbane Central asks, "What does it mean?" That is the critical question. When considering the alleged \$115m shortfall and the cuts that are proposed, one must ask whether that is an appropriate response under the economic circumstances that this State faces. One must ask whether cuts in programs, in health, in education, in transport and other areas is an equitable response to enable the Government to reduce the debt by only \$277m in the next financial year rather than by \$392m. I bet that the Treasurer did not provide those negative Net Financing Requirement figures to the caucus, and I bet that the caucus members had no idea of how they were to evaluate whether those cuts were equitable.

However, it goes further than that. The Treasurer has estimated that the \$115m is going to grow to \$220m of required cuts in 1994-95. That is critical, because when one looks at the forward projections that he has given—and they are on page 5 of the Interim Budget Statement—so far, this Treasurer has gained a cut in the 1993-94 financial period of \$109m, and the forward projections that he has provided show that that is going to grow to \$185.6m. In other words, it is going to grow in the following period. He says that we have another \$6m of cuts coming in 1993-4, and they are going to grow by \$35m so that the 1994-5 total will reach \$220m. How does he justify, this year, introducing cuts that are going to have a cumulative effect at the next Budget, not of \$115m, but of \$220m?

On page 2 of the Interim Budget Statement, the Treasurer comes up with some

figures. Those Government members who have not looked at it ought to read it. It says in total that those factors will mean a potential real reduction of \$220m in 1994-95 as follows: a real reduction in Commonwealth grants from 1993-94, \$115m; and Queensland's share of further addition to the Commonwealth Medicare agreement guarantee payment to New South Wales and Victoria, \$21m. What does that add up to? \$136m. That is a long way short of \$220. How does he balance it? There is another \$84m there, and what does the Treasurer say? He states that is the estimated cost of the Commonwealth's refusal to provide in real terms guaranteed payment beyond the 1993-94 years. In other words, to justify the cuts that he is making for this year, he is inventing a number—\$84m of cuts—that he thinks are going to come in the future. We have not even arrived at next year's Premiers Conference, and this Treasurer is throwing in the towel in a fight with the Federal Government—before he has even stepped into the 1994-95 ring. How does the Treasurer stand up for Queensland when he presents figures to this Parliament that indicate that he is going to give up already, when he has not even stepped into the ring? That is what the Budget statement says, and that is how the Treasurer calculates the figure of \$84m.

Government backbenchers are running around wondering about what is happening in their electorates, and how they are going to explain the \$115m; but it is going to get bigger, and Queensland has not even received the cuts yet. Keating and Dawkins have not even made the cuts, but the Treasurer is giving up. How does the Treasurer stand up for Queensland? The Treasurer and the Premier say that they stand up for Queensland, but they are giving up before they even get into the ring.

Mr Davidson: They've been told.

Dr WATSON: There is no doubt that they have been told. They talk about forelock tugging, and such things. They are forelock-tugging, Canberra-fixated republicans. When they look at Dawkins and Keating, they cannot help bowing down and giving up before they even get into the ring.

Mr Quinn: A white towel job.

Dr WATSON: Yes, they throw it away.

Mr Beattie: If Hewson was your leader, you wouldn't give in; you'd give up in despair.

Dr WATSON: Government members will be the ones who will have to sell the Budget. I bet none of them have read this Interim Budget Statement. If they had read it, they

did not understand it because they would have stood up to him in caucus better than they did. They would not have been going out into the community and trying to introduce a fuel tax. Instead, they would have been saying, "How can you justify knocking off the equivalent of \$84m even before we have had to do it?"

On looking at the Interim Budget Statement, for once I was intrigued to see some forward estimates. I can remember back in 1990 asking the Treasurer if he was going to introduce forward estimates. He said, "Yes, I am going to do it next year." We have not yet seen them in the budgetary process. He keeps saying, "We have not got the model right." Last year, and the year before, he said, "We cannot get the model right. We cannot give forward estimates of expenses or forward estimates of revenue", but he has them here. When the Treasurer brings down the Budget, I am going to be very interested to see whether or not forward estimates of revenue and expenses are contained in that Budget. We now know that the Treasurer can do it, and if he is talking about fiscal responsibility and reasonableness, they ought to be there. If they are not there, then we know that the Interim Budget Statement is a con job, that he has plucked out some figures to fool other Government members for some unknown reason, and that he is trying to fool the people of Queensland.

Talking about con jobs, I want to look in more detail at that figure of \$115m. On page 5 of the Interim Budget Statement, that amount is broken up into different sections, and one of those sections is Medicare. This financial year, Queensland is supposed to lose \$42m, and next year, a further \$21m, because Victoria and New South Wales received a better deal.

I want to refer to the history of the Medicare agreement. In October last year, the Minister for Health said, "I am not going to get into bed with the Liberal States. I am not going to get into any intrigue with New South Wales or Victoria about Medicare." He was not interested in any meeting of intrigue with State Liberal Health Ministers. He stayed away and said, "No, I am going to go with my Labor mates. I am going to go with the Labor States of South Australia and West Australia and the ACT."

Mr Davidson: The real tough negotiators.

Dr WATSON: That is right. He was going to stick with his Labor mates. What happened then? When the time came for the Premier to

sign the Medicare agreement, he said that the new Medicare agreement was good news for Queensland. Good news for Queensland! Yet five months later the Premier said—

"I am particularly disappointed that the Commonwealth is making all of the States pick up the tab for a couple of election-eve Medicare deals with NSW and Victoria."

What kind of game does this Government think it is playing? In February, we knew that the Federal election was imminent. We knew also that the Federal Government was absolutely desperate to reach a deal on the Medicare issue. It wanted the deal for political purposes.

Mr Beattie: That's uncharitable.

Dr WATSON: I know, but sometimes I get uncharitable. This Government knew that the Federal Government was virtually willing to do anything to stitch up a Medicare agreement. So did John Fahey and Jeff Kennett. Everyone in Australia knew it. There was no question about the objective—political point scoring.

Mr Davidson: Even I knew.

Dr WATSON: Even the member for Noosa knew that. So the question is: why was it done? It was done for cheap political purposes. Wayne Goss and the Minister for Health are intelligent individuals. They have degrees from a good university—one in law and one in accounting. They are respectable, professional people who know how to read contracts and probably advise their clients out in the real world how to read contracts and how to anticipate what might go wrong. But what happened when they were confronted with a Medicare agreement? They did not read the fine print. Can one imagine a lawyer saying, "I am sorry, I did not read the fine print"? Can one imagine a tax agent saying, "I am sorry, I did not read the fine print"? They did not anticipate. Why not? For one reason, and one reason only: they were interested in the political fix. That is what the Medicare agreement was all about. They wanted to use it in a political campaign.

What happened with that Medicare agreement was quite simple. They knew that the deal could be reached. They knew that New South Wales and Victoria could take a better deal out of it. They knew that there could be side deals. They were well aware of that, and they did it for a political purpose. They were prepared to sell out Queensland for the sake of Queensland Labor. And what happened? John Fahey in New South Wales

and Jeff Kennett in Victoria did what they were elected to do as Premiers of their States. They stood up for their States and they got the better deal. But what happened here?

The Premier of this State and the Minister for Health in this State gave in. The Minister for Health wanted to help out his Socialist Left colleague Brian Howe in Canberra. They said, "We want to help you." The Premier wanted to help Prime Minister Keating get re-elected. The Premier and the Health Minister said, "We will do what we have to do." Behind the scenes, they probably said, "There is no need to worry, because Keating is not going to get back in in any case, so we will not have to worry about what we sign here. We will not have to worry about the implications of this, because the Labor Party will not get back in and the Liberal/National coalition will rewrite the Medicare agreement in any case." That is what it was all about. They knew about the possible side deals, but they chose to stand up for Queensland Labor rather than Queenslanders. It was another con job, and the chickens have come home to roost.

When one considers the figures, there is no doubt that there are significant questions to be answered about what the Treasurer is doing with them. There are significant reasons why Queensland is in trouble. It is in trouble because the Medicare agreement was a political fix. This Government wants to blame Canberra. I am all for blaming Canberra. I reckon that Paul Keating and John Dawkins have a lot to answer for in this State, but they do not have to answer for the incompetence of this Government. They do not have to answer for the hypocrisy of this Government. That is not their fault. That lies solely and wholly in the hands of this Treasurer and the Premier of this State.

Mr GRICE (Broadwater) (10.05 p.m.): Yesterday, Queenslanders woke up to headlines about all the services that the Goss Labor Government is going to cut—services that it was elected to deliver. We are to lose vital rail services under a strange kind of logic that says that we should be destroying infrastructure rather than building it. We are to see increases in class sizes, when Labor campaigned for years in the 1980s on the absolute need to reduce them. We are going to see in-service training for teachers put virtually into their own time. How does that sit with past bleatings? How fair dinkum is the Teachers Union to cop that? Maybe the union leadership puts avoiding rocking the Labor vote ahead of its duty to its members.

We are going to see even more cuts in the public hospital system. The Treasurer tried to put a good light on it yesterday, claiming to need funds to preserve services in the growth area served by the Logan hospital. I wonder whose electorates will benefit from that rearrangement of spending. Could I be so bold as to suggest a couple of names? What about the Premier and the former union boss, the member for Waterford?

We are also supposed to see cuts in the Government's PR machine. That would not be before time, but I would not count on it happening. The Government ducked and weaved when EARC wanted to know how much it was spending. EARC came up with a figure like \$38m for that spending by departments on promoting the Labor message. I reckon that is a conservative figure. Every Labor hanger-on who has anything to do with publishing gets a guernsey every year when annual report time comes around. They get plenty of consulting work on fat fees for jobs such as designing, typesetting and even basic writing that has to be worked over by staff people after that. It is a rort and it should go, but I doubt that it will.

The few real cuts are targeted mostly away from Labor areas. It is time that the Government got serious about trimming genuine waste. That should be happening anyway, and not blamed on a shonky claim of a shortfall. We have all been told about whose fault it is; certainly not "honest" Wayne, and certainly not that shining example of fiscal rectitude, the Treasurer. None of those, heaven forbid! The villain of the piece is Paul Keating. He has cut poor old Queensland by \$115m. The old one about the tooth fairy holds as much water. The truth is that Queensland came away with a better deal than it did last year. It actually received an increase at the Premiers Conference.

Repeated statements by Goss and his lame-duck Treasurer that they have had money taken off them is as fair dinkum as a Labor promise. Let us put it in terms that even an old union heavy or a factional seat warmer can understand. Imagine that someone earning \$50,000 a year in his job goes to the boss looking for \$70,000, but the boss comes back and says, "No. I will give you \$60,000." Does that mean that the boss has cut him by \$10,000? Of course it does not. That is the sort of logic that the Premier and the Treasurer are using, and Government members have fallen for it.

The real drama for Queensland stems from the way in which the Premier and his

sidekick have handled the State's money in the last three Budgets. They have spent like drunken sailors on all the pet projects Labor had been sitting on for 32 long years in the wilderness. They also spent up big on all the wacky academic theories on managing the public sector. Most of all, they spent up big on getting the chattering classes into high-paying jobs on the public payroll. The sins of the past three Budgets have come back to haunt them and they need a scapegoat. Who better than the man they tried to keep out of the Prime Minister's seat in the first place? Who better than the man who got up, in spite of their best efforts to keep him out?

Earlier this year, I warned the Government that Paul Keating would not miss them when it came around to handing out the favours—and he did not miss. But I have to confess I am surprised that he let Wayne Goss off so lightly. We all know that Keating is a vengeful man. The whole of Australia knows it after watching Labor hang out its dirty washing through the excellent television show *Labor in Power*.

Mr Beattie: I enjoyed it.

Mr GRICE: Of course, the interviews for that show were done before the election, and everyone thought that Labor would lose. It was time to settle a few scores, and the knives were well and truly sharp—and they were put to good use. I kept waiting for the Premier to appear and sink the boot in, but the producers seemed to have forgotten him. Perhaps they did not regard him in the same important light as he did himself during the leadership strife. Keating let Queensland off lightly for the sins of its Premier, but I reckon he might have a bit more in store further down the track.

Mr Beattie: That is a very cynical attitude.

Mr GRICE: It is cynical, but the Labor Party is a cynical organisation to which to belong. After all, the Premier does not seem to know when to stop. One would think that, after he lost his bid to keep Hawke in the No. 1 job, he would have accepted the facts of life and laid off Keating. Certainly, he toed the line during the Federal election campaign earlier this year. He used this House in a cynical exercise to convince the media that we would all be better off under a Keating Government than under the coalition. He made it very clear that Queensland would suffer cutbacks under Hewson, while the future would be rosy under Keating. He reckoned that there would be plenty for all of us—tax cuts, no new taxes, a fair distribution of the Commonwealth cake from taxes, and no consumption tax.

The Premier was doing everything he could to mend his fences with the Prime Minister, but it did not work. Paul Keating proved that he had not forgotten. He did Queensland's Premier no favours at the Premiers Conference. Perhaps he remembered Wayne Goss' performance in Melbourne at the Council of Australian Governments when the Queensland Premier doublecrossed him again.

Mr Robertson: Over what? It's not in your script, so you don't know. There's no substance.

Mr GRICE: The performance of the Australian Government over Mabo. The honourable member must not read the newspapers, or perhaps his colleagues have not told him. He must be in the wrong faction and they are not telling him what is happening.

We should all remember that both men had been running around for the best part of 12 months trying to turn the Mabo decision into a political tool for the ALP. The line was that Mabo required us to hand over land and compensation as part of a reconciliation process. Keating stuck to his guns on that. We must give him full marks for staking out his ground and defending it.

The Premier, however, is driven by something other than principle. Public opinion polls are the dominant influence with him. He went to Melbourne saying the right things, such as the Prime Minister's 33 points were a good basis for agreement. But all along he had been reading the polls. He knew that the Labor agenda was not a winner, and he was ready to shoot the Prime Minister down by means of a deal with the conservative Premiers. That came unstuck, and the Prime Minister found out. He was not happy. He had no sense of humour about being duded by the Queensland Premier. Maybe he believes Graham Richardson's fairytale line that all the factions have fallen in behind the great man.

Mr Davidson: Is that Richardson or Keating?

Mr GRICE: Neither. That might be true of the new young member for Lillie. He has learned the error of his ways and decided to tug the forelock to Keating in Canberra. But his co-conspirators against Keating's rise, Wayne Goss and Bill Ludwig, show every sign of not being reconstructed. They persist in the foolish belief that they can stand up against the toe-cutters and the stranglers in the New South Wales Right. Even with Bill Ludwig pulling the strings, they will not be able to do that. At the end of the day, the Federal

Government can still call the shots against a Premier who has lost his nerve. By the time Wayne Goss got on the plane back from Canberra, he had failed Queensland totally—and there is no excuse.

Conservative Queensland Premiers always—remember this—did better. That includes the times Sir Joh fronted Gough Whitlam, and they were not good mates. It includes Sir Joh and Mike Ahern going in against Hawke and Keating, who had no reason to love them. They did well because they went to Canberra to fight for Queensland. They had no personal axes to grind. Wayne Goss should have got everything he was looking for. He was one of only two Labor Premiers left in Australia fronting a Labor Prime Minister. One would reckon that the party connection would have been enough but, of course, it was not. Keating would not cross the street to do Wayne Goss a good turn.

The Premier's overly inflated view of his own importance has cost Queensland a far better deal than the one he came back with. It will happen again and again while these two men hold their present jobs. It is not good enough that Queensland has to pay the price for Labor's preoccupation with factional fights. We should not believe that factions do not come into Commonwealth/State fights. Honourable members might remember yesterday's media effort by the Federal Labor member, Gary Johns. He is a Queensland, but he was happy to put it to the Premier about the spurious claims about the shortfall. For the sake of the people of Queensland, it is time that Labor members remembered who they are meant to represent and who they are meant to serve. However, I have no faith that that will happen because the ALP factions in this State cannot learn to play it straight. They are still up to their old tricks when it comes to trying to dominate the Labor Party and, thus, the State.

Only last Saturday, the State President, Ian McLean, tipped a bucket on his great rival, the AWU. McLean regaled a group of 70 unionists and ALP members with the story of how the AWU bodgies the membership figures. According to McLean, the Socialist Left heavy, that is done in order to boost their position in the faction fights. To do that, they pretended that a membership of 40 000 was really 60 000. That is not just a fib; it is a lie, and it is a real whopper. It is almost as big a whopper as the line about Canberra taking money away from the Premier and the Treasurer, but the worst thing is that the people perpetrating the lie are the very people

who form the Premier's power base in the ALP. They are the people who pull the strings in the running of Queensland under Labor. They set the standards for this Government, which came to power with promises of honesty, openness and accountability. What sort of faith can we have in a Government dominated by the AWU?

Of course, Mr McLean is not an entirely disinterested spectator when it comes to the affairs of the AWU. A few years back, he and the AWU heavies were good mates. It was a deal between the Socialist Left and the Australian Workers Union which sold off poor old Nev Warburton in the Centre Unity faction for control of the parliamentary party. Of course, that deal put Wayne Goss where he is today.

Some people tell me that "SL" stands for "slow learners" as well as "Socialist Left", which has been referred to today. "Slow learners" must be the right term for the deal they did to help Goss into power—they were duded. My source in the faction is very bitter about the fact that the Socialist Left was grossly under-represented in the first Goss Cabinet. That is the one that stood the test until the CJC revealed a few little indiscretions and the Premier dumped a few scapegoats. Even with the new vacancies, the Socialist Left was still short-changed. Its Cabinet numbers came nowhere near reflecting its numbers in caucus. Far be it for me to advance the case for the looney Left, but where I come from, a deal is a deal. They did a lot of the knife work on the Old Guard and they were duded. Justice was still not done after the State election last year. Again, the Premier's Independent and AWU factions arranged things to suit themselves.

Mr FENLON: I rise to a point of order. I draw to the attention of the House the content of the speech being made at present. It does not have any relevance to the current debate.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! Debate on the Appropriation Bill is very wide ranging. I have listened to the speech by the member for Broadwater, and I suggest that at some stage he does mention some money matters.

Mr GRICE: Far be it for me to advance the case for the looney Left—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr GRICE: Again, the Premier's Independent and AWU factions arranged things to suit themselves. There were some bones for the Labor Unity people, including, of

course, the Premier's hit man and Labor's walking accident, the Leader of the House. The poor, old slow learners again failed to crack the numbers in Cabinet that they thought their numbers in caucus deserved. The member for Brisbane Central lost out again, presumably still a victim of the Premier's paranoia about a possible successor. I am told that he now has to bolster his endorsement by stacking his branches with his own supporters to make sure that the Premier and his mates cannot dig him out of a seat.

I refer again to the slow learners. The unholy alliance became even more unstuck when Wayne Swan was handed his safe seat in the Federal House. Poor old Ian McLean thought he should have got the nod, but the members of the AWU are a greedy lot. They are not content with dominating Cabinet and making most other Labor members of Parliament just fillers to put their hands up when they are told. They wanted to hang onto the organisation too, so McLean missed out again.

Mr Deputy Speaker, we are well and truly in the hands of the dominant ALP faction—McLean and Ludwig. It is well and truly in the driver's seat, and that must be a great comfort for the AWU boss, Bill Ludwig. But even he must be getting the shivers about how the State is running under the guidance of his protege. The rest of the State is starting to get the shivers about the way things are going. We are facing up to real cuts in essential services; we are staring increased State charges in the face; we are bracing for some very hard times. With all this going on, we have a Premier whose factional dealings leave him in no position to concentrate on giving us the best Government possible. We are in the hands of an incompetent Government waiting for the factional lid to blow. The blue in the Government's caucus room this morning over the proposed fuel tax is only the beginning of the blow-up. After Mr McLean's outburst last Saturday, that time may not be very far off.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore) (10.23 p.m.): The Goss Government has to be money hungry to even think of ripping off surf lifesaving clubs that occupy prime beachfront Crown land. It sounds crazy, but that is what is proposed under this Government's mutated form of user pays. This is all for the sake of funding the excesses of a Government that has increased its spending by over 20 per cent since 1990-91, which is the largest increase in comparison with other States in Australia. The Commonwealth Government

has increased Queensland's grant by 5.3 per cent, but this Government is still hungry. Under this Government's proposal, the Alexandra Headland Surf Lifesaving Club will be facing a rental hike of up to 30 times in three years. This club has the misfortune of being one of four surf lifesaving clubs in Queensland that will be slugged under a new formula for calculating rents on Crown land based on the land's unimproved capital value.

Undoubtedly, many other sporting clubs that have direct lease arrangements with the State Government will be in the same boat. But, obviously, surf clubs such as the Alexandra Headland club are some of the worst hit under this new formula because, by their very nature, they are going to be occupying prime beachfront land. They would not be much good at the back of Bourke, would they? If a club has no liquor licence, the Government plans to slug it with a rent equal to 1 per cent of its unimproved capital value. For clubs with liquor licences, the slug will be 3 per cent, and it will be 5 per cent for clubs with a gaming licence.

Mr Davidson: Those clubs provide a wonderful service, too.

Miss SIMPSON: That is right. Those clubs provide a tremendous voluntary service to the community. The slugs are ludicrous when surf clubs are resorting to pokies and liquor licences just to help keep up with the very high costs of saving lives on our beaches. Club members are quick to tell me that they have no alternative but to take on the pokies, because many of their traditional fundraising activities have run dry since other clubs preceded them in the push for pokies. Personally, I do not like pokies, but I can understand why many clubs have gone down this avenue.

The surf lifesaving clubs contribute a great deal to the community through sport and the training of young people, but their primary role is to serve the community by keeping our beaches safe, and that is all done voluntarily. In this Government's desperate grab for cash, it has lost sight of the true value of these clubs and the service they provide. In a letter written by the Minister for Lands to me and the surf lifesaving movement, he stated his belief that these annual rentals need to reflect the so-called commercial content of some of the activities that clubs may undertake. However, I believe that the Minister and his Government do not understand the work undertaken by surf lifesaving clubs.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Miss SIMPSON: The honourable member should remember that many of the people involved come from Brisbane and do not reside on the coast.

Of the four surf lifesaving clubs threatened by this new rental formula because they have direct leases with the Government, three of them are on the Sunshine Coast and two are within my electorate. The Maroochydore club is not due to have its lease renewed until the year 2016, fortunately, but the Alexandra Headland club faces its lease renewal in 1996 and its neighbouring club, Mooloolaba, faces renewal in 1997.

I turn now to examine the unimproved capital value of a club such as Alexandra Headland. In 1991-92, the land was valued at \$815,000. Based on that year's valuation, the Government's proposed grab for cash would mean that the lifesavers would be slugged \$40,750. This year, the club's land is valued at \$690,000 with a possible rental under the new formula of approximately \$34,500 a year. That is a big hike from \$1,200 and will mean a massive jump in expenditure for the club when it is framing its budgets and repaying existing bank loans. Who knows what the value of the land will be after the next valuation and what unpredictable rental hike the club will face?

Mr Davidson: Times are tough.

Miss SIMPSON: That is right. It is hard for these clubs to raise revenue, and it should be remembered that they exist to provide a great voluntary service. It seems that the thrifty are penalised under this Government's push to kill off volunteer organisations that deliver what big-spending bureaucratic Governments, such as the present Queensland Government, cannot, that is, cost-efficient services paid for by blood, sweat and tears, and all for the love of helping others.

A similar situation exists in the Queensland Ambulance Service. In the last couple of years, this Government has blown \$42m in financial reserves. Millions of dollars from the old district ambulance boards have been washed down the drain in gross financial mismanagement by this Government, in spite of the fact that the funds were raised by the efforts of community-based volunteers. When those funds were centralised, the Goss Government said, "Trust us", and I am sure that all honourable members will remember that. But look what happened! Those millions of dollars have now gone.

Incidentally, the Government also promised the ambulance officers that not one

would be worse off under the new system. Baloney! If members of the Government spoke to ambulance officers, particularly the older blokes who are the truly dedicated members of the service, they would know that those officers feel as though they have been sold down the river. These people have given their best, yet many have found that there is still no place for them either because of job reallocation or because of unbelievable stress. It is a fact that, over the last couple of years, several officers-in-charge in the Queensland Ambulance Service throughout the State have committed suicide. I challenge the Police and Emergency Services Minister to tell the people of the Sunshine Coast just how much money was taken from the old Nambour district area—which, of course, covers Maroochydore—and how much of this specific reserve money has come back to the district.

Mr Davidson: I am told that it is now quicker to get an ambulance from New South Wales than to get a Queensland ambulance these days.

Miss SIMPSON: And it is not because those ambulance officers are not trying. They have really been given a hard time. The people who live on the Sunshine Coast and in the Maroochydore electorate have a right to know where their money has gone. One thing, though, is for sure: it certainly has not gone towards upgrading the Maroochydore ambulance station which is no better than a beach shack.

The great tragedy on the Sunshine Coast and in the rest of the State is that these volunteers who have given so much of themselves in supporting the local ambulance service and who have enlisted the help of the wider community, including service clubs and other organisations, have understandably had enough. I was speaking to a bloke in my part of the State who has given decades of service to the local ambulance board. He told me that next month, he will be off the board. He has given his best, but no longer is the Queensland Ambulance Service listening to local people or using their expertise. Local boards have no say in the use of funds.

It is not just that the Government has wasted all the money; those local boards were able to buy locally some vehicles for \$1,000 less than the Government's purchase price, thereby supporting local businesses. Since they have been forced to use Government sources, they have had to pay higher prices for some of the vehicles that they want to use.

Another subject of relevance to this debate and my electorate of Maroochydore is

the Government's real attitude to tourism. This is a gem in Tourism Week. The Government Ministers are poncing around mouthing sweet platitudes about the importance of that industry, but one must look at the Government's track record or, to be more accurate, its road record. One of the major problems of the Sunshine Coast road network, aside from the dismal toll roads, is the lack of good signage. That is an enormous problem for our tourists who mainly use their own vehicles to visit the coast. Does the Transport Department want to help the tourists get where they are going?

For such a vital industry, I cannot believe the attitude of some Transport Department bureaucrats. Let me read a letter from the district transport office in response to a request from an award-winning tourist attraction, Nostalgia Town. Nostalgia Town was asking for a brown and white road sign directing tourists to its attraction, which it would fund; one to be placed at the Pacific Paradise exit of the Sunshine Motorway for vehicles travelling north and another at the Coolum interchange for vehicles heading south.

One would think that a Government desperate to prove the viability of toll roads on the Sunshine Coast would give all the help it could to tourist attractions which were encouraging patronage of the dismal toll system. But no, the answer that Nostalgia Town received was like something out of the *Goon Show*. I quote from the Transport Department's letter of 25 June 1993—

"I refer to your letter of 22 April 1993 requesting a sign be placed on the Motorway showing the way to your establishment. From the visitor figures you quote it appears that people have little difficulty in locating Nostalgia Town.

The basic premise that is assumed for guiding drivers through the road system is that they have made some preparation prior to commencement of their journey, to determine the routes that may be followed.

To get to Nostalgia Town, visitors would have to be aware that it is located on David Low Way, Pacific Paradise. As David Low Way is signposted from the Motorway, getting to the general area should present no problem."

So they say. The letter continues—

"Nostalgia Town is clearly visible from the David Low Way.

From the foregoing I consider there is no justification for signing of your

premises on the Motorway, and cannot accede to your request."

There ends the letter.

What sort of bureaucratic gobbledegook is that? A department is telling an establishment that it does not need road signs because people must know where it is, as shown by the visitor figures that it happens to have. People might be able to see it from the motorway, therefore it does not need a tourist sign. It is a great advantage to the tourism industry to know that the Transport Department is so customer friendly. I would urge the Transport Minister to overturn that kind of rot and allow better signage on the coast roads, particularly when a private enterprise is willing to pay for it.

Twin Waters, now known as Novotel Twin Waters—another award-winning destination—has also had the same problem with a department refusing its request to pay for its own signs to its resorts. It is ironic that, despite the Government's mutated ideas of user pays and white elephant toll roads, something as simple and helpful as a tourism sign paid for by business seems impossible. Maybe this is all a sign of the times in which we live, or certainly the Labor State in which we live.

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (10.34 p.m.): I want to bring to the attention of the Parliament the absolute disgust that is felt by the people of Keppel following the State Government's decision to close the railway line to Yeppoon. What has upset the people so much is that, only two and a half weeks ago, I received a letter from the Transport Minister, Mr Hamill, about rumours that the line was to be closed. I did the right thing by the Government and wrote to the Minister. I stated that those rumours were going around and I asked the Minister to tell us once and for all whether or not that line would close. Back came a letter. At least the Minister answered it. He said, "The line will not close."

I did the right thing—truly, I was not playing politics on that occasion—and I published that letter as is. There it was for everybody to see. So everybody relaxed and thought, that is good, the line will not close. Now, here we are. We learn that the line has closed. When one really thinks about it, it is a terrible thing to have happened.

The pineapple growers who send their pineapples to the Northgate cannery are already subjected to enormous international competition. Pineapple juice from other parts of the world is being sold in supermarkets and in other places. When those people have to

truck their pineapples to Brisbane or to the rail head at Rockhampton, they will face enormously heavier costs. Members might recall that, before the last election, Mr Crean, the Federal Minister for Primary Industries, visited the Northgate cannery because of the tremendous problems that the cannery was experiencing in competing. He said that the cannery would have to cut its costs and export its product. Here we have the Government cutting off the lifeblood of an industry on the Capricorn Coast.

Mr Springborg: Shameful.

Mr LESTER: It is shameful. It is absolutely disgraceful. There is much more to it than closing down the line. An industry and lots and lots of jobs are being put under threat. If any members at any time drive along the road between Yeppoon and Rockhampton, they will find that the road is extraordinarily busy and it is difficult to pass slow drivers. Unfortunately, a head-on accident is waiting to happen. During the pineapple season, the road will be clogged with slow-moving trucks. It will be yet another disservice. The bit of money that the Government might save on the railways will obviously have to be spent on the road. But knowing the Government and how little it cares for country people, obviously not much will happen.

When the National Party was in power, we made quite a considerable amount of that road into a four-lane highway. It is all very well for the Labor Party to say that these things are not important, but there is more to Queensland than the south-east corner. A four-lane highway all the way to Yeppoon would be an enormous help. The remaining part that is not a four-lane highway will be clogged up even more. I cannot express sufficiently the absolute disappointment of the people of Keppel at the fact that—and I am able to say it—the Minister has told a lie, because the letter proves it. At least he could have had the gumption to tell the truth and not give the people false hopes.

People are now concerned about all sorts of things. They are concerned about their schools. The Byfield, Keppel Sands, Coowonga, Mount Chalmers and Nerimbera schools are all good little schools in their own right. All of a sudden, people can see these schools under threat. After all, the lifeblood of our State is in those smaller areas, with their production of goods and merchandise and their construction of sporting facilities. If the schools are closed down, the lifeblood of those little communities disappears. As a

result, there will be more buses and other traffic on the roads. The Government is speaking with a forked tongue. On the one hand it asks people to use public transport, yet on the other it is closing down railway lines so that people have to use the roads, resulting in an enormous amount of extra traffic.

Much has been said about the Ambulance Service. I will not go into it in any great detail. I want to at least praise the ambulance officers who do their best. Recently, at about half-past 5 in the morning in Yeppoon an 82-year-old lady fell and broke her hip. She was picked up in Yeppoon and taken to St Andrews Hospital. When it was found that this 82-year-old lady was in enormous pain, the St Andrews Hospital arranged for her to be transhipped to Rockhampton, where she could be operated upon. The ambulance was to pick up this 82-year-old lady for an operation later that morning at approximately 10 past 10.

It so happened that by 1 o'clock the ambulance had not arrived. Distraught people from the hospital contacted my office and eventually the lady was picked up at half past 1. However, this lady, in enormous pain, was still delayed in getting to Rockhampton because it was necessary for the ambulance on this mercy dash to collect another patient on the way to Rockhampton. The lady did not actually reach Rockhampton until after 2 o'clock. That lady was in excruciating pain. Honourable members can imagine what it is like for an 82-year-old person to have a broken hip. Nurses tell me—and they are not very happy with the Government, either—of the distress that that pain can cause to the kidneys and other parts of the body.

The late arrival of the lady meant that the allocated time slot for the operation had passed. In fact, the doctor had to do other things and he was not able to schedule an operation for her until 6 p.m. the next day. Have honourable members ever heard the likes of an ambulance being ordered for 10 past 10 and the hospital being told, "Sorry, we have only got one ambulance on duty in Yeppoon; we can't let it out in case something more serious happens"? It was then found that an ambulance could not be sent from Rockhampton because apparently the Tuesday was the rostered day off for most of its ambulance drivers. I ask: just what on earth has come over the State Government to allow something like that to occur? I am sure that in the years BC—before Christ—injured people would have received a much better and quicker service. That particular incident has

done an enormous amount of damage to the State Government. People just do not have any faith in it.

Mr McElligott interjected.

Mr LESTER: I must say to the member for Thuringowa, Mr McElligott, that I doubt that this would have happened had he been the Minister. I think the situation would have been very much improved. I am also very aware that, from some of his utterances in recent days about the Labor Party losing its touch with the common person, he sympathises with what I am trying to say. I thank him for his interjection.

Recently, an interesting incident occurred in my area. The road between Rockhampton and Emu Park is called the scenic highway. With great hype, the State Government announced that this scenic highway, which runs from Rockhampton to Emu Park, through Yeppoon and back to the Bruce Highway, should be better utilised. It said that, as their part in the greening of Australia, people should be encouraged to grow trees along the highway. Prior to last Christmas, the Progress Association of Nerimbera decided that it would seek permission from the Lands Department to actually beautify the area between the railway line and the scenic highway.

Because the land had not been cared for, it was an area in need of an enormous amount of attention. It was a major project, but one which the dedicated progress association decided to undertake. However, after that decision was made, the progress association was informed by the Lands Department that it would be charged \$50 per year for the privilege of beautifying an area that did not even belong to it. I have never heard such a thing! I was able to embarrass the Minister, Geoff Smith, into rescinding that determination. To the credit of the Minister, that group can now beautify that area without having to pay \$50 rent for doing so. Those sorts of incidents indicate that the Government is losing its way.

Traditional Labor supporters in Rockhampton cannot work out what on earth is going on. This is the Government that so many of those people wanted to see elected, yet it takes decisions such as that to which I have just referred for them to wake up. A large group of people were informed that they would have to pay \$50 for the privilege of beautifying a small section of land that was a harbour for snakes. It should be mentioned that the beautification of that area was in line with the ideals of the Labor Party's Greening Australia policy.

People on the Capricorn Coast are worried about whether they will lose ambulance services and police personnel. At present, an inquiry is being conducted into fire services. Naturally, the people on the Capricorn Coast are worried about that. I understand that there are moves to cut the number of firemen at the Yeppoon Fire Station. If that occurs, the ludicrous situation could prevail in which one fire unit is based in Yeppoon and, even if there is a bad fire, that fire unit will not be able to attend to it just in case a worse fire breaks out down the road. The same happened recently with the Ambulance Service. The Capricorn Coast is one of the fastest-growing areas in Australia, yet the people of that region are facing those threats. Of course, no-one ever dreamed that the railway would be closed, even though precautionary steps were taken to make sure that it was not.

Another group that is disgruntled with the Government is the Rockhampton and District Historical Society. It had made an arrangement with the Government whereby, if it restored some train carriages, it would be allowed to run a scenic train to Yeppoon. In light of the promises from the Government, that historical society has gone ahead and restored the carriages. It was working on an engine, but that seems to have fallen through. However, it turns out that the society will not be able to run the scenic train to Yeppoon as it would have hoped to be able to do. The Government seems to forget that some of the great tourist attractions of the world are trains that run along scenic routes, such as the one that runs from Inverness in Scotland to the Isle of Skye.

The State Government will have to wake up. It will not make much difference to me, but there is no way in the world that the people of Keppel will ever elect a Labor candidate. It is of grave concern that vital services are being cut back. It is mind boggling and heartbreaking to the people who have worked so hard to build up their areas only to see it all fall down around their ears.

Mr DAVIDSON (Noosa) (10.50 p.m.): I acknowledge my very good friends who are sitting in the public gallery—my mate John Pulman and his wife Caroline; my friend Joe Dodd and his wife Marie; and my very good wife of many years, Nicole.

It gives me great pleasure to enter this debate. I want to get something straight right from the start. For a long time, I have listened to Government members claim the credit for the state of the Queensland economy. No

matter what any person says—whether it be a politician, an economist, a financial analyst, a consultant, an adviser or just an average person in the street—about the economies of all State and Federal Governments, the one and only clear fact is that the Queensland economy was in such a balanced state at the end of 1989 because, unlike all other Labor Governments in Australia, the Queensland conservative Government did not go on a borrowing spree in the eighties. Every other State in this country was touched by Labor Governments which went on borrowing and spending sprees and which left a financial mess and the economies of their respective States in ruins. I will not harp on the Cain and Kirner efforts in Victoria, but they have left to the people of Victoria decades of debt.

Day after day, I sit in this House and listen to the self-promotion of the Treasurer and members of the Goss Government who have no understanding of commercial reality and who promote themselves at every turn and say what wonderful financial managers they are. The Premier and the Treasurer swan around this State attempting to convince everyone and anyone who will listen that they are financial wizards and that, because of their skills and abilities, the Queensland economy is outperforming all other economies in the country. The problem is that no-one outside their own tight little circle of camp followers trusts them or believes them.

Let me say again that the only reason the Treasurer is able to hold his head up and sing his own high praises on the healthy state of the Queensland economy is that the conservative Government of the past left him balanced books and no debt, and that conservative Government did not go on spending or borrowing sprees in the eighties.

Mr De Lacy: The only one who believes it.

Mr DAVIDSON: Every time that he steps into this Chamber, the Treasurer talks about New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. However, he never explains to the members of this House that the economies of those States are in such a bad condition because Labor Governments were in office in those States for many years. The Treasurer claims credit for the healthy state of the Queensland economy and makes comparisons between Queensland's Budget and that of Victoria under Mr Kennett. His Government has been in office for only six or eight months. Fancy making a comparison! The Treasurer has a hide to make a

comparison between his abilities and those of the Kennett Government in Victoria.

I often sit here and ask myself, "Do those people on that side of the House really know the value of a dollar, where it comes from and how it should be spent?" Every time I shake my head, and I am now of the opinion that the only dollar most of them have ever known is the one that arrives in the mail every second Wednesday. Like kids who believe that milk comes out of a carton, those workers who believe that their pay comes in a packet, and those people with plastic cards who believe that money comes out of a hole in the wall, Government members have no idea how wealth and revenue is created. They are embarrassed by big business and wealth creation, because they have a problem explaining to their union mates that without wealth creation, there would be fewer jobs in our society.

The growth of the bureaucracy in Queensland has blown out by \$1 billion in four years under a Labor Government. A person such as myself applies a small-business principle that the only way to make money is to have people hands on, up-front, providing a service, instead of comfortable seat warmers out in the back room shuffling paper producing absolutely nothing. As I said, many bureaucrats produce absolutely nothing. All they do is sit in their offices and dream up new laws, regulations, taxes and charges in an attempt to justify their existence. In fact, their very existence means that the Government has gone wrong, and the people of Queensland are paying for growth in the number of back-room bureaucrats instead of real growth in Government services and facilities for the general tax-paying public of Queensland.

In the four years of this Government, Queensland has become so overregulated through those dreamers, whom I refer to as bureaucrats, who believe that their licences, permits, new laws and excessive taxes and charges actually produce something in Queensland. However, the real producers, small business, industry and investors are losing money, hope and confidence in what was once a great State in which to live, work and make money. If the bureaucracy continues to grow at a rate far outstripping Queensland's ability to support it, then this once great State will fall into the financial disgrace that Victoria, South Australia and West Australia now face. I am sure that the Governments of Burke, Bannon and Cain were equally as cocky, arrogant and

overconfident as the Goss Queensland Government is now.

An Opposition member: Every bit, they were.

Mr DAVIDSON: Unfortunately, every bit and more. Where are they? They are still walking down the streets with some of the lurks and perks that they enjoyed when they were in office. Unfortunately, in the long term, the average Queensland family has to pay for that arrogance. It is time that this Government realised that after four years, the party is over, it is time to go.

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr DAVIDSON: Mr Grice explained the deal between the Treasurer, Keating and Mr Goss, and how by not supporting Keating but supporting Hawke instead, Keating and Goss made the bad mistake. The party is over, and it is time to get to work. Government is a business and it is past time for those Ministers to start facing reality and to apply some sort of decent business principles to a State Government which is fast running out of excuses, money, credibility and time.

I sit here and listen to Ministers and Labor backbenchers promoting cuts in education, and I am absolutely appalled to think that the children of Queensland—the kids of today and the adults of tomorrow; the Queenslanders of the next five or six decades—will be the scapegoats of the mismanagement, ignorance and just plain financial incompetence of the State Labor Government. I am absolutely embarrassed to think that I have to deliver the news to my electorate—not only to school children but also to their parents, their grandparents and, in some cases, their great-grandparents—that the Government is denying their children the basic right of a good education. It is a basic right—or it was during 30 years of conservative Government—for all Queensland children.

Now Queensland has the reformist, social justice Labor Government in power, and what happens? Education gets cut. It is a sad day in my life, and a feeling of helplessness comes over me as an elected representative of the people to have to face the fact that members of this Government will deny the greatest possible need for every Queensland child—the right to a good education. I hear stories many times from parents, teachers, p. and c. associations and principals about a decaying system that does not have enough teachers, classrooms and schools and not enough money for education in this State.

Mr Bennett interjected.

Mr DAVIDSON: I will talk about speech therapists. A school in my electorate has had five hours of speech therapy in one year. This is from the great, social justice and reformist Labor Government. In one year, that school received five hours of speech therapy. Last week, the Minister for Education said that the Government was advertising all over the world to find a speech therapist. The Government may have trouble finding one who will go to Mount Isa, but I can say that it would have no trouble at all in finding one who will go to Noosa. A speech therapist from anywhere in this country would take up a position in Noosa. However, the Cooroy State School received five hours of speech therapy.

The education system may have decayed under this Government, but with the latest proposed cuts, it is putting the last nails in the coffin of a once-proud Queensland education system. I am very fortunate to be able to afford to send my children to a private school, and I bear that cost as a parent who is concerned enough for his children's future to realise that in today's work force, with limited job opportunities—about which we are all aware; not one member of this House would deny that job opportunities are very limited in today's work force—the greatest gift of all that I can provide for my own children is a decent education. That is a right that the State Labor Government is now denying Queensland children who once would have been proud to go to a State school.

I would like to bring to the attention of the members of this House the total lack of funding for those special needs in our communities, and I would like to talk about charity and community organisations. In my electorate, as I am sure is the case in every other electorate, I have an absolute army of volunteer, charity and community organisation workers. The lack of services provided by the Government is forcing many battling Queenslanders—

Mr Pearce: What about your electorate allowance?

Mr DAVIDSON: These are all your people. These people are all members of the working class and below. You should listen to this.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I suggest to the member for Noosa that he address his comments through the Chair. Perhaps then members opposite would not interject.

Mr DAVIDSON: Please accept my apology, Mr Speaker.

The lack of services provided by Government is forcing many battling Queenslanders to turn to charity organisations such as the Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army, Lifeline and community clubs to keep away the cold and put food in their families' bellies. It is becoming harder and harder for these organisations and the people connected with them to raise funds. The Treasurer must be aware of the enormous impact that Scratch-Its, Lotto and, more recently, poker machines have had on our society. Not only are people who can ill afford to waste any vital funds pushing money into poker machines but also charities which rely on public donations, raffles and bingo meetings are being bled dry by a lack of funds available from the public. These charities have not only been hit by a Labor-led recession which has severely cut their donations; they are also being hit by competition from pokies and Lotto on the much-travelled charity dollar. This is at a time when demand has never been higher, and the need for that charity dollar has never been more vital.

I appeal to members of this House to take time out from their own cushy, public-funded lives of luxury and look around at what really is happening to the once prosperous State of Queensland. If they take the time, they will find that Queenslanders are hurting like never before. And if Queenslanders hurt, they rely on charities, because this Government has no sympathy for the average Queensland family which has been touched by this tragic social disease of poverty, unemployment, social security and despair. Unfortunately, the charities themselves have also been hit by Labor's tight-fisted financial mismanagement which, on the one hand, bleeds them of donations through tough taxes and new revenue-raisers such as the pokies, while on the other hand hitting them with tens of thousands of more destitute Queensland families.

I am sorry that the member for Brisbane Central is not in the House, because he is a mate of mine. He is not a bad bloke. Actually, I am on a couple of committees with him. The member for Brisbane Central proposes that a fuel tax should be introduced to pay for after-school care. In 1993, when we are all supposed to be wise and learned in this business of politics, and when we have been conditioned to believe in the principle of user-pays, I find the statements made by the member for Brisbane Central to be no more than headline grabbing.

The member for Brisbane Central proposes that we tax motorists to pay for

education. I wonder whether he would also promote the taxation of schoolkids to pay for roads. Maybe he has never heard of user-pays, but to suggest that we tax the motorists' fuel bill and put the revenue into roadworks is a classic example of members of the Labor Government having no idea of what financial management and revenue-raising strategies are all about. With these one-off, headline-grabbing proposals, it is no wonder that the Labor Government is struggling to come to terms with financial management and the duties and responsibilities of it all.

I have never been afraid of taxes and user-pays, provided that the revenue raised from tax is spent on making the lives of taxpayers better through proper Government administration. The question that I and every other Queenslander would immediately ask is: what has happened to the money raised by every other tax and charge imposed by the Goss Labor Government? Poker machines, the cigarette tax and extra charges thrown on builders, businesses and anyone else have not created more roads, better hospitals, extra schools and teachers or anything to make the life of the average Queensland taxpayer better. In fact, under this Government, things are going downhill fast. It was never my intention to suggest that this Government should give people anything and everything that they want. But surely, as the Queensland Government, it must provide what they need. That is the great failure of this Government, because after 30 years of prosperity and only four years of Labor, it can no longer provide the basic needs of every Queenslander.

Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (11.04 p.m.): In taking part in this debate on the Appropriation Bill, I wish to touch upon a number of issues which are of great concern to the Darling Downs area and my electorate in particular. Firstly, I find it amazing that, given all the assurances over the past few years that we would not see rail closures or schools closing, those cuts are now being made. We have witnessed a supposed sleight of hand by the Treasurer, who has tried to deny that Queensland received a 5.3 per cent increase in funding from the Commonwealth, even though this has been shown conclusively by many financial commentators around the State and other parts of the nation. In fact, it was indicated very clearly by Gary Johns, the Treasurer's own Federal colleague, that this is the case.

Let me deal with some of the cuts that will be made. What will these cuts mean? I shall give honourable members an example of what it will mean. The Toowoomba-Cecil

Plains line runs through Oakey and past many of the silos that are very important in terms of supplying grain that is carried by rail. If honourable members are honest with themselves, they will admit that, to a great degree—other than the coal lines and the mineral lines that carry massive tonnages—the railways do not pay. But they are a very necessary public utility. Opposition members do not bag this Government and say that Brisbane should not have a transit authority that uses electric trains to transport people to work. That is in the interests of the environment and getting cars off the roads. It also dovetails with the Park-n-Ride stations and coordinated bus services. The Opposition accepts that. By the same token, this Government should accept that there is a very real need in country areas to provide rail services to ensure that goods and services can be transported from point A to point B without creating unnecessary traffic on the roads.

My colleague Mr Len Ardill, the Chairman of the Travelsafe Committee, goes around trying to promote measures that will ensure that people's lives are saved in the long term in this State. I believe that Mr Ardill is a very sincere member who does an excellent job. But it is interesting to note that, in these cuts, we are seeing the antithesis of what Mr Ardill promotes. For example, thousands of tonnes of grain are transported along the Toowoomba-Cecil Plains road from silos at Cecil Plains, Nangwee and Bongeen. How do members think that that grain will get around the countryside if it is not transported by rail? It will go onto trucks, so there will be more trucks on the road. That in turn will create a multitude of problems for the community. The roads in that area are built mainly for light traffic.

Mr Springborg: On moving blacksoil.

Mr ELLIOTT: Exactly. As the member for Warwick so rightly says—and he has many similar roads in his electorate—those roads are built on blacksoil. As members would be aware, very real problems are experienced in trying to maintain the consolidation of the foundations under those roads, to stop them from sinking and being wrecked in a short period. Unfortunately, there are a few cowboys who will overload their trucks and drive along those roads. If that occurs, we can kiss the roads goodbye. As a result of cuts in rail services, additional trucks will be carting grain on those roads. Is that what the Government wants? Is that what the boy wonder—the Rhodes scholar—from Ipswich wants? Is that what he is all about? I thought he was an

intelligent person. I would have thought that, to have achieved what he has achieved academically, he would be capable of analysing the position and working out what will happen.

Mr Turner: He is not a "Roads" scholar.

Mr ELLIOTT: It is not spelt that way. That is one small example of what is occurring. The cuts in rail services to Cunnamulla and Quilpie will impact on areas closer to the coast. If the rail head is nearby, some people will transport cattle in their own trucks to that rail head. However, once cattle are loaded onto an expensive double-decker truck or a road train, they will not be unloaded again at, say, Charleville. If honourable members believe that will occur, they must be away with the pixies. The cattle will be transported by road all the way to their destination. That will cause chaos on the roads.

The Government is flying in the face of all the things that it has been preaching over the years. Government members come in here, adopt a pious attitude and preach about road safety and other matters, yet they break all their own rules. They are all about short-term expediency. They were elected as a supposedly reformist, zealot Government which would change everything in this State for the good. What have they done? Absolutely nothing! This is the first decision that the Government has taken. It is cutting services to the bush with hospital closures and with a reduction in DPI stock inspectors. They are services that people in the bush have taken for granted for years.

Mr Veivers: When are they going to see the rail to the Gold Coast?

Mr ELLIOTT: It will be interesting to see when the rail line to the Gold Coast is constructed. The Government keeps talking about it. We have the famous mirror Ministers.

Mr Veivers: They are going to look into it.

Mr ELLIOTT: They are going to look into it. I am greatly concerned at what is occurring in the schools. I am absolutely ashamed of Ms Mary Kelly from the Queensland Teachers Union. She is supposed to look after the members of the teaching profession, which is an honourable profession. Most honourable members have children who are attending school or who have attended school. Mary Kelly sold them all down the river. She said, "We don't mind if they amalgamate the schools, so long as it is in the best interests of amalgamation." How can it be in the interests of our area to amalgamate schools and put

children on buses for an hour and a half in the morning and an hour and a half in the afternoon? Do Government members believe that is in the interests of the children?

If teachers lose their jobs, do Government members believe that is in their interests? Mary Kelly is doing nothing to help them keep their jobs. She is doing a Pontius Pilate, because she is a Labor stooge. I do not often stand up in this place and say unkind things about people, as honourable members well know; but I note that she has not stood up and been counted as far as the teachers are concerned.

Mr Veivers: They are waiting down the coast for her to stand up for them.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is right. The morale of the teachers on the Darling Downs has been shot to pieces. In the past, most teachers have been Labor supporters. However, if Government members believe that at the next election the teachers will be supporting them, they have another think coming. The Government has challenged just about all the teachers, including the principals whom it made re-apply for their own jobs. It has created traumas in their family life. It has transferred teachers in my electorate on 24 hours' notice. Teachers at Cecil Plains have had to move all their gear to another school at short notice. In small schools, the students just begin to relate to teachers when they are transferred because student numbers have dropped one below the magical number. The Government says, "It does not matter. This is a conservative area and the people will never vote Labor in a fit, so let's move the teachers." That is what occurs.

Mr Campbell: You'd do the same.

Mr ELLIOTT: I take the interjection from the member for Bundaberg South, or whatever he calls his electorate.

Mr Campbell: I just call it Bundaberg.

Mr ELLIOTT: I will settle for Bundaberg. I find his attitude absolutely disgraceful. His attitude is the same as that adopted by the Deputy Premier, "If it was done to us, we will do it to you twice over." In *Hansard* tomorrow, he will be recorded as the absolute hypocrite that he is. You came in here and said that you would bring a fresh approach to Government.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member for Cunningham should direct his comments through the Chair.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is no better than the worst examples we have seen in the past. If the honourable member thinks that is something to be proud of, he has another

think coming. We want to see the children of this State and their parents and their teachers respected. There should be consultation before teachers are moved from any school, because it impacts on the lives and futures of those children. The Government does not care; it thinks that it is a big joke. The Deputy Premier has just completed a trip around the bush. He has been travelling around saying, "Oh, no, we're not going to touch your services." Good old Tom!

An Opposition member interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: That is right—the mouth! Because of his lack of ability, I am absolutely appalled when I think about what he might say to the rest of the Cabinet when he gets back to Brisbane. If in fact he does get up, I would like to be a fly on the wall to hear what he really says in Cabinet. He goes out to Goondiwindi and other areas and says, "I stand up for the country people. I speak for the country people", but what does he really do when the chips are down? He wants to take away all the rail services and all of the rolling stock. That will mean the loss of 123 jobs in Toowoomba. What will he do about it? Not one thing! He is a pussy cat; he is hopeless.

A Government member interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: He can talk under wet cement with a fish in his mouth, but that does not mean that he gets results. I would be interested to know whether he stands up for us in Cabinet or whether he just goes to water. The results are there on the board for everyone to see. That is the story; the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the eating is not very palatable at all.

Mr Ardill interjected.

Mr ELLIOTT: The honourable member does not know too much about history. The next thing that he will say is that Neil Turner did not, either. It is always interesting to see how the Government members go down in history.

I turn now to the Ambulance Service. There are people in our electorates who for years have stood out in the boiling sun to raise funds for the Ambulance Service. They have almost cried tears of blood to see the Government and its supporters waste and squander those hard-won funds that were supposedly held in a trust account and were to be used to buy ambulances. What has happened? They have featherbedded a lot of jobs for people who will not have them in the future because those jobs were not even

allocated by the PSMC. The entire service is a disaster.

Before I conclude, I want to speak about a small problem in Goondiwindi. Although it may appear to everyone else that it is a very small problem, it is in fact quite real for the business sector in Goondiwindi. That problem concerns the roundabout that a driver encounters when he crosses the border over the new bridge. There are signs; however, what is really needed is a decent-sized sign with a big circle on it demonstrating the available options to the southern traffic coming into Queensland. It should provide details such as—the Cunningham Highway via Warwick to Brisbane; the Gore highway via Millmerran to Toowoomba and Brisbane; and the Leichhardt Highway via Moonie and through to Dalby or wherever that traffic wants to go. At present, if they have not been to Goondiwindi before, people do not have a clue, and they do not know what services are available. The entire business sector has suffered quite severely since the roundabout and the new bridge were constructed. Prior to that, all the traffic was directed through the town—and no-one wants to see that—

Mr Bredhauer: When did you write to the Minister about it?

Mr ELLIOTT: I have made representations to a number of people about, in particular the regional engineer at Main Roads. I have also communicated with the Minister about it. It is something that should be looked at very seriously. It is all very well for engineers to construct new facilities, and they are magnificent—no-one is arguing whether the roundabout is effective or whether the bridge is effective—but there are two problems. Firstly, on the New South Wales side of the border, the speed limit is too high—it is 100 kilometres per hour and it should be 80 kilometres per hour because all the stock trucks and headers being inspected make it very dangerous; and, secondly, the roundabout should be marked effectively so that everyone knows what the options are and where and how they can travel to Brisbane or to other centres in the State.

I promised the Leader of Opposition Business that I would not speak for my full time, so I will now resume my seat.

Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (11.21 p.m.): I want to support my colleague the member for Cunningham in a lot of points he made about services in this State. We are running into major problems, there are no two ways about that. The Labor Party is paranoid about the user-pays concept. We are seeing a lot of

services closed down because they are deemed not to be efficient. We are seeing the closure of railway lines throughout the western area; we are seeing the sacking of railway workers; we are seeing cuts in emergency services; DPI staff are being made redundant; and so it goes on—the list is endless. But, of course, the important point is that there is a major growth within the Executive of this Government. On many occasions, we have seen massive figures produced by the Opposition demonstrating just how much is being spent in that area.

Firstly, I will refer to my electorate, because it is important that this Parliament is well aware of some of the things that I believe could be done in that electorate. The TAFE college at Innisfail—Johnstone TAFE in particular—is an excellent facility. At present, it is involved in running courses in agriculture and bin hauling, and it initiated a justice course for Aboriginals, which has been a very effective initiative for the Aboriginal people. The Johnstone TAFE is to be commended for the work that it has done. What is very disappointing, though, is that prior to the 1989 election there was clear indication that Ingham should have a TAFE college and a number of building facilities. We came very close to the point of construction. Land was looked at and plans were put together with a view to reaching a decision on just what type of facilities were required for this particular area. Unfortunately, when this Government came to power, the proposal was scrapped completely.

Mr Bredhauer: Pork-barrelling has gone.

Mr ROWELL: It is not pork-barrelling as far as the people who live in the Ingham area are concerned. They are disappointed that most of the courses that are provided are being run on an ad hoc basis. As a result, the area is not realising the full potential of TAFE within the Ingham district. Land was sought in the Tully area also. A man who owns land adjacent to the high school offered his land. Unfortunately, that did not come to fruition, either. As far as TAFE facilities in my electorate are concerned, the only one that has been provided is the one that was made available by the previous National Party Government, and that is the one located at Innisfail which is operating very successfully.

I turn now to the provision of ambulance services in my electorate. There are probably four or five different ambulance service centres in my electorate that are run by dedicated officers. However, one disturbing matter is that calls for an ambulance service on weekends, or at times that are out of

business hours, are relayed through Townsville. As a result, there have been a couple of instances of which I am aware personally when patients probably could have walked to the hospital faster than the ambulance could have got them there. It is absolutely ludicrous that it takes approximately 50 minutes for a very short trip that usually takes five minutes or less. I think that is ridiculous and it shows that the system that has been devised is not effective and needs to be reviewed. Otherwise, a person could lose his or her life as a result of the present standard of service.

Because of the lack of funds associated with the present service, the money that needs to be raised for a four-wheel-drive vehicle will be provided by the people of the Ingham district. I have approached the Minister to obtain his assurance that when the vehicle is purchased, it will be retained within the Ingham district. It will be an essential device in the event that, due to boggy or wet conditions, it may be difficult for an ambulance vehicle to get to cane harvesters or people who live in the western areas of the region.

Right throughout the electorate, hospital facilities are generally of a pretty good standard. However, I am concerned about the loss of staff. Managers and dispensary staff have lost their jobs and, as a result, a minimum staff is presently running the hospital facilities. A clear indication has been given by the Minister that the jobs of cleaners, laundry staff and catering staff may be in jeopardy. What will probably happen is that some big organisation will come in and provide the service as a result of the present rationalisation.

Mrs Bird: That is not true.

Mr ROWELL: I am sorry, but it is true. This morning's *Courier-Mail* contains an indication given by the Minister that he is considering ways of saving \$5m by rationalising services.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr ROWELL: If the *Courier-Mail's* story is not accurate, then the Minister should attend to it. Nursing homes in my electorate are located basically in Ingham and Tully. The Warrina home at Innisfail is currently building a new facility to provide some 40 beds for patients in the Innisfail district. Last year, State Government funding for furnishings ceased. As a result, I have made an approach to the Minister which I hope will result in a successful conclusion of the matter. After all, the nursing home got under way in all good faith and in the hope that the State Government would

provide funds for furnishings. The provision of medical aids is also a matter of concern in the area of health care. The short supply of artificial limbs and wheelchairs is a continuing problem, and a whole range of patients face hardship as a result of the shortage of the medical aids they require, which, I understand, has occurred as a result of a lack of funding. I believe this problem needs to be addressed.

One of the most successful Government organisations is the QEC, which has been very well run. It is a Government owned enterprise, but I believe that the Government's corporatisation Act will gut that organisation. I believe that the Government sees the QEC as a source of revenue that will enable it to carry on in its present mode of management and meet some of the shortfalls that have occurred as a result of its social programs. It appears that the Tully/Millstream project, which would have minimal environmental impact while providing a clean energy source as well as job opportunities, will be stopped. I am not quite sure what is happening with that project.

I notice that the Minister for Minerals and Energy is presently in the House. Recently, he has been spreading furrphies about gas turbines being located in Cairns and Townsville. Those sources of electricity will belch carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and certainly will not have the environmental qualities that are offered by the Tully/Millstream project. Another option that is being bandied around is a link between Queensland and the national electricity grid. If this State's power system takes in New South Wales electricity, which is probably more expensive than the present cost of electricity in Queensland, electricity costs are likely to increase. There is some indication that \$300m is involved and that it will take about 10 years to get the project under way.

In 1989, one of the projects of the Queensland Government was the electrification of the northern rail line. That would have provided some impetus in terms of jobs and a fast rail system for produce coming out of north Queensland.

Mr Bredhauer: It was a bit like the hydrogen car.

Mr ROWELL: The honourable member might laugh, but does he not want to see a faster rail service than we have now? Electrification reached Rockhampton, and the service has been very successful. Why can it not go further? However, the project has been knocked on the head. Now we are hoping to see some upgrading of the current line. It

certainly needs to be straightened and realigned so that we can have a faster service to Brisbane, which is absolutely essential for products that come out of north Queensland. Many fruits such as bananas are transported on the rail system. Later, I will give some figures of how many cartons of bananas annually are transported on that rail system.

The QIDC has lacked the impetus required to provide long-term loans in Queensland. In recent years, many people have come to me saying that they were having problems with the QIDC in getting the type of service and facility of loan that is essential on a long-term basis. The Treasurer can probably laugh about it. However, he has backed a few losers himself. He has not been terribly successful in identifying projects such as Compass, which was a major embarrassment for the Queensland Treasury.

Poker machines certainly have not done very much for the State of Queensland. They are a social disaster. As a result of the introduction of poker machines, organisations that run bingos, silver circles and chook wheels are suffering. Although those clubs that are able to support poker machines make a reasonable turnover and get some benefit, certainly a lot of people in the smaller towns find difficulty in raising funding for many projects that they would like to get up and going.

Some important industries are located in the Hinchinbrook electorate, probably the most important of which is the sugar industry. A whole range of rural industries are located there, but sugar is the biggest industry in the electorate. It is worth about \$250m to Queensland and at least \$200m in export income. With mechanisation and efficiency, the industry is able to compete against many of the low labour cost countries. Much of that equipment was developed in Queensland, and the development took place because an alternative to the manual cutting of sugarcane was required. That was very successfully done with the development of the cane harvester. We have now moved into green cane harvesting, which is environmentally sound, and the industry is keeping abreast with technology. That is very important, certainly for plant breeding. The BSES, which is a State Government and an industry funded organisation, certainly does an excellent job.

As the sugar industry expands into the flood plains in the wet tropics areas, it requires special consideration. Some major consideration must be given in terms of Government legislation and support. An

indication has been given that some of the \$40m that is proposed for the sugar industry infrastructure may be used to resolve some of the problems in that area. I hope that that does happen. About 80 per cent of the sugar that Queensland produces is exported to Japan, Malaysia, Canada and the Republic of Korea. They are the major areas to which sugar is exported around the world. There are many others, of course. Sugar is amongst the five major export industries in Queensland.

In terms of the importation of sugar, poor support has been given by the Federal Government. Over the past three years, cuts in tariffs on imported sugar are up to about 50 per cent. Giving developing country concessions to the extent of 5 per cent to countries such as Thailand is grossly unfair when one considers that Thailand is probably growing faster than we are at 5.4 per cent. The foreign aid that was given to Thailand by the Federal Government totalled \$38.4m. The other disturbing feature is that, back in 1984-85, the Federal Government paid out a loan to Cuba for buying harvesters from Versatile Toft, a multinational company. At that time, the world price for sugar was particularly low. We had to compete against that country while our Federal Government supported the country in its ability to harvest the crop using our technology.

Another very important industry in the Hinchinbrook electorate is the banana industry. It is the second biggest industry in the electorate. In the northern sector, it is more valuable than the sugarcane industry. Sixty-five per cent of north Queensland bananas are grown in the Hinchinbrook electorate. That industry provides employment for some 1 300 people on a year-round basis. Between 1972 and 1991, the industry grew in size about five times. Transport to southern markets is an important issue. That is why I wanted to raise the issue of rail.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr ROWELL: I want to tell members about the Hinchinbrook electorate. It is very important to have a good rail service. Anything that we can do to speed it up by straightening the line is essential. Other crops such as cucurbits are grown. Without an efficient rail and road service, the 7.35 million cartons of produced bananas, of which 4.76 million are put on road and 2.58 million are put on rail, would not get to their markets in good condition. Australia is free of disease such as black sigatoka and moko. It is important that we retain—

Mr De Lacy interjected.

Mr ROWELL: Who is that guy over there who is talking to me? It is important that we do provide these essential services to two industries, such as the banana and pawpaw industries. I want to support a research station upgrading for the tropical agricultural area in Innisfail. I think it is most appropriate that Innisfail is used as such an area because it really is in the true tropics and it would be an ideal spot to provide a research facility for tropical agriculture. We have seen the closure of Kamerunga—the annihilation of a research facility—up in the Cairns area. It was very beneficial as far as tropical fruits were concerned, but if we are ever going to improve our prospects in a lot of these areas, we certainly need the type of facility that has been proposed by the Government and something that I have spoken about at some length in the Innisfail area.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I have been requested to reduce the time available to me. I do not know whether I will move to be allowed an extension of time. However, there are a few other industries that are very important in the Hinchinbrook electorate, and one is the tourist industry. The future of the tourist industry certainly will depend on services that are provided such as roads; sensible, sustainable, low-key developments in highly attractive tropical areas; and boat ramps to allow access for boating.

Certainly, consideration has to be given to areas such as Dungeness, where there are major problems with access to the sea. At present, there is a major project on the drawing board for Oyster Point. I hope that the Government views sensibly the request by the developers. This project could be of major importance to the electorate. That area certainly needs to be cleaned up. It has been a major embarrassment in the development of tourism. I think it is essential that the Government gives favourable consideration to the proposal submitted by the developers.

I think it is of some significance that most of the exports from the State of Queensland in 1992 are from the major provincial centres. I refer to meat, at 15 per cent; sugar, at 7 per cent; wool, at 1 per cent; coal, at 37 per cent; non-ferrous metals, at 8.2 per cent; and cereal grains, at 0.5 per cent. About only 29 per cent of the export potential of this State is developed in the metropolitan areas.

Time expired.

Hon. N. J. TURNER (Nicklin) (11.41 p.m.): I am delighted to rise to speak on this "misappropriation" Bill. Coming 174th on the speaking list, I may on some occasions after

two days repeat something that has been said by some other member. We really do not have a money problem in Queensland, rather we have a priority problem. This irresponsible, inept, inefficient Government would have to go down in history as the last of the big spenders. The Government will not like hearing this, but it inherited a stable economy, a balanced budget, the best-run State in Australia and the lowest-taxed State in Australia—a great tribute and credit to the National Party Government which had inherited an economic mess and a run-down State from the ALP in the 1950s when it took Government.

It is sickening to listen to the Treasurer and Mr Goss bleating about a \$115m shortfall in funding from the Federal Government. What they do not tell the people—and I think it has been mentioned—is that their Federal allocation has been dramatically increased over the last two years and that this year they received an increase of some \$300m over the amount allocated last year. If they do not want to believe me, I guess they would probably take some notice of the Federal Labor MP Mr Johns. I will not go through it all.

Mr Beattie: Who wrote this, Marc Rowell?

Mr TURNER: No. I did not go to school for very long. I did not have the fortune of going to school as the honourable member did. Of course, education does not always equal wisdom. Mr Johns accused this Government of Canberra bashing. He went on and said that it was a political ploy by the Queensland Government to blame the Federal Government for its own Budget decisions. They are not my words but the words of one of the Labor Party's Federal members. Talk about crocodile tears!

In a few short years we are seeing Mr Goss' own words coming true: that he will do for Queensland what Mr Cain and Mr Bannon did for Victoria and South Australia. We now have John Cain revisited here in Queensland. We have heard about cutbacks of \$115m, when in reality the Government has received from its socialist mates in Canberra \$300m more than it did last year. The Government did not worry about how it spent money when some \$50m was put into the Indy car race, when \$100m was put into the purchase of poker machines, or when tens of millions of dollars went into Gondwana and Compass Airlines. The Government did not worry about the millions that went into refurbishing the Premier's floor at the Executive Building. It thought money grew on trees when it employed a Cabinet secretariat of 100, when

Sir Joh, Ahern and Mr Cooper employed a staff of only five.

Money was no problem when Ministers such as the Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Casey, employed an additional staff of 10 in his ministerial office, which was more than the number that I had when I was Minister. If all of the 18 Ministers had done the same, it just boggles the mind. Money did not matter when the Government could drain all the hollow logs left there in trust funds and other areas by the National Party Government. When the Government could get its sticky fingers into the cookie jar of the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Fund, the Nominal Defendant Fund, the Casket and superannuation funds, wasn't it great! The Government could bring up all the ALP Mexicans from down south and give them jobs—and jobs for the boys. The Government made an art form of it.

This Government's latest announcement of cuts in health, education and railways alone is nothing short of criminal. No wonder railway workers at Townsville and Ipswich are leaving the ALP by the bus load—and why not?

Mr Beattie interjected.

Mr TURNER: The member for Brisbane Central should not worry. I have a spot reserved for him later on. He should not get excited. This Government should not feel bad. Every other ALP Government in recent history has been a total failure. One has only to look at a list of the leaders such as Whitlam, Hawke, Keating, Wran, Cain, Bannon, Burke, Dowding, Lawrence, Kirner and now Goss—I might have even forgotten some, but wherever they were they were all failures—to appreciate how a Government can effectively ruin a State or a nation.

Let us consider what the inept Goss Government is doing to our railway system. It is worth giving some of the younger and newer members of this House—particularly those on the Government benches—a history lesson. I lived in the west during the forties and fifties, when the ALP Government was last in power. Other members have mentioned this, but at that time the railway service was appalling. When Labor was last in power, it took six or eight hours to travel less than 60 miles from Morven to Charleville. At that time, the fettlers lived in tents, shacks and hovels under appalling conditions and received pathetic wages.

When the so-called terrible Tories came to power, we improved the wages and conditions of the workers. We built cottages and residences at every little siding. We provided the flying gangs with transportable

vans and with electricity. Do Government members want me to tell them some more? Do they want me to tell them how every little town had a couple of SP bookies who were paying the police? Government members talk about corruption. What about it? The conservative Government established the TAB. Under the then Labor Government, unless publicans were paying the police, they could not stay open, but the conservative Government amended the drinking laws to allow every hotel to stay open for two 2-hour sessions. Government members would not have a clue! They are still wet behind the ears.

The conservative Government upgraded the lines and the locomotives. It electrified the rail service as far north as Rockhampton and beyond. Who built the railway stations in Brisbane? Government members should have a look at the Toowong complex; the Roma Street interchange; Central Station; Brunswick Street Station; Beenleigh; Nambour—everywhere. Who built those stations? Not the mob opposite—not when they were in office previously, and not since. They are the greatest wreckers.

What a proud record the National Party has—not to mention what it achieved with events such as Expo and the Commonwealth Games. It abolished probate and gift duties.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr TURNER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I ask you to control some of the members in this Chamber. I am finding it very hard to make my speech.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey): The honourable member is doing extremely well for himself.

Mr TURNER: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. The National Party built five bridges over the Brisbane River. What a marvellous achievement! Those bridges help many Government members to travel to this Parliament. They should be thankful for what we have done. They have no gratitude at all.

Let us now compare the achievements of the National Party with those of the ALP Government over the past four years. It is costing railway workers thousands of jobs. It is closing railway workshops. The Labor Government has introduced and will further expand cartage by road. It already gives the railway carriers that carry by road an advantage over the ordinary carriers operating out of any town. Those ordinary carriers cannot buy their vehicles free of sales tax or gain any other advantage. This Labor Government is driving them to the wall, and it

does not care. It is throwing traffic onto an already congested road system.

The Labor Government is cutting out 29 branch lines. Other honourable members have mentioned the effect that will have on the grain industry, the peanut industry and wool and cattle producers. The Labor Government is closing the Charleville-Quilpie and the Charleville-Cunnamulla lines. It will need a tremendous amount of money to maintain and upgrade roads. That factor was mentioned earlier by the honourable member for Keppel, and I think he did so very eloquently. I do not think that Government members have any idea of the misery and hardship they are causing in country towns and districts. For instance, approximately 15 railway families live in Quilpie. A total of approximately 40 or 50 children would be part of those families. Because of the policies of this Government, the school at Quilpie will probably be reduced from a four-teacher school to a two-teacher school. The town will lose half its police and its hospital will start to be downgraded. The policies of this Government have a snowball effect on business and the whole community. This Government stands condemned.

The Labor Party loves glamour industries. However, do Government members not realise that when the mines are all mined out, this nation will rely on what it grows out of the soil and what can be grazed upon it. Rural industry has been and continues to be the backbone of the nation. The majority of the people who enjoy a good life-style in the cities, who work in big buildings, who are shuffling papers and faxing and photocopying all day and who are on big money, owe their prosperity more directly to the national export earnings from primary industry than to any other factor. The European Economic Community recognises that the people in Europe starved during and after the war. European countries are prepared to pay a premium to offer protection to their primary industries. What does this Labor Government give? It gives only despair and heartache.

People have been protesting here today and all over Queensland about the increase in Crown rentals of up to 200 per cent and 300 per cent. Does this Labor Government not have any heart at all? Money is being gathered from destitute people. It is going directly to the Government, which is imposing an increased charge on those who can least afford it.

The ALP in Australia today—and that includes this inept, inefficient, incompetent

Goss Government—is like a mouse in a silo; it is eating the grain, but it is putting nothing back in. How can this Cabinet go to Cairns and say, “Don’t blame us; blame the Federal Government.” Where are the cranes in the skies today? Over the past two days, the newspaper has carried 10 pages of names of young people who have received degrees from university. Those young people cannot find a job.

How can the ALP Government create, accept and condone 11 per cent plus unemployment? How can it tell school teachers to accept larger class sizes? As other honourable members have said, where is the Teachers Union today? For years when Government members were in Opposition, they shed crocodile tears about class sizes. They really know how to talk with a forked tongue! Mr Keating must have been teaching them.

The Government will impose a charge on people visiting national parks. That is a user-pays philosophy, and I do not want to talk about that because I do not have much time left. The Minister for the Environment is also considering grazing in national parks. I hope that she considers that proposal carefully. It is unfortunate that, since it came to office, this Government has in the main adopted a policy of not allowing grazing on national parks. That only serves to create a build-up of dry feed, and a dry lightning storm can start a fire which will destroy all the flora and fauna of a whole area. Such areas are better off grazed, and that policy certainly would be refreshing. I hope that the present Minister for the Environment adopts that policy—unlike her predecessor, who could have saved 500 dying cows and calves last year by allowing them to graze on Deniver Lakes but refused permission.

I would like to touch on what the member who interjected said. I am becoming like the member for Keppel. I am glad that the honourable member for Brisbane Central interjected, because during this debate he proposed a fuel tax to raise revenue. What a novel concept! It is patently obvious that the honourable member has never been off a concrete footpath in his life, because a fuel tax will impact directly on people in remote areas, on rural industries, on the transport industry and on all people in a decentralised State such as Queensland who must use a vehicle in the line of their employment and business.

Mr Veivers: It doesn’t worry him. He is driving his new Saab turbo 900.

Mr TURNER: The honourable member is not wrong. The people least affected will be those living in the honourable member's electorate in the centre of Brisbane, who enjoy subsidised rail and bus services. That proposal is certainly not one of his brightest suggestions. Perhaps he was having a subtle dig at his Premier, Mr Goss, over the statement made by the Federal MP, Mr Johns, in which he attacked the Queensland Government. When will this Government and the Federal Government realise that there are 800 000 small businesses out there——

Mr Beattie: Is that it?

Mr TURNER: Does the member want a little bit more? The honourable member is not satisfied. The vapid member for Brisbane Central has had his go, and he is trying to interject during my speech because he does not like what he is hearing. However, there are 800 000 small businesses out there. When will this Government and the Federal Government recognise that if they cut the bureaucracy, if they give some genuine incentives to all those business people to employ just one extra person, it would do away with unemployment.

I had hoped to continue, but members have been asked to wind up. I will respect the request that was made by the Leader of the House.

Government members: More, more!

Mr TURNER: Government members should not worry, there will be more later on.

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah) (11.55 p.m.): The first thing I would like to say is that I must not again put myself on the speakers' list after the honourable member for Nicklin. He is a hard act to follow.

I rise to speak on this Bill in the knowledge that the cost of endemic unemployment affects just about every aspect of the State Budget. The members for Waterford and Brisbane Central in particular, and others, have spoken with great compassion about this subject. Unemployment is not confined just to the welfare budget. More people are remaining longer at school, TAFE colleges and universities not only because of a desire to enhance their skills—which is admirable—but also because of the lack of jobs. That affects the Education budget. More people are in gaol because many people are tempted into a life of crime as a result of the difficulty in finding paid employment. That affects Police, Justice, and Corrective Services budgets.

I have no doubt that much of the current level of family breakdown is exacerbated, if not caused, by the financial problems of unemployment. Of course, that places great strain on the Family Services budget. One could go through the Health, Housing and, of course, Employment portfolios and paint a similarly bleak economic Budget forecast. However, I believe that we should address the problem rather than the symptoms. Who among us in this House who were in the work force during the 1950s and 1960s would have tolerated any Government, State or Federal, that presided over unemployment levels between 10 per cent and 12 per cent? When reading the history books of the future, who would believe that in mid-1993 the Governments of this country would be debating specious issues such as republicanism when one million people were unemployed? Yet 89 elected representatives of the two and a half million people of Queensland sit in this place apparently gripped by the same mental paralysis that has immobilised the best intentions of Governments of all persuasions around this country.

In my first speech just six months ago, I suggested the importance of considering the establishment of an employment committee to find ways of giving the opportunity to all Queenslanders to share in the responsibilities and rewards of being gainfully employed. However, a young, unemployed lady constituent wrote to me two weeks ago and questioned the limited reference to unemployment in that speech—just a few lines, or 40 seconds in a 20-minute speech. Obviously, I do not consider myself to be beyond the scope of the perceived inertia displayed by all Governments on this subject.

Few members in this House are not working hard to assist their constituents who come into their offices requesting help with such things as public housing waitlists, lack of public transport, restrictions on legal aid, domestic violence and vandalism. All of those problems, and many others, are exacerbated by the reality that too many people in this country rely solely on welfare. I do not have to convince honourable members of the social cost, let alone the economic cost, of unemployment.

The challenge is to find a circuit-breaker. The solving of the unemployment problem must be seen as the most important and most urgent task of all Governments. Unlike the Federal Government, this Government has not seen fit to form a committee to address the problem. Notwithstanding that, who would

contribute to such a committee? Who really has the answer? Are there any real answers, or are we stuck with a situation that we will have to learn to live with? The Prime Minister himself has suggested that perhaps we have to reassess the validity of the work ethic. He has sown a seed of doubt as to whether everyone has the right to expect full-time employment. I would be extremely disappointed if his committee achieved no more than giving some official sanction to institutionalised unemployment in this country. Honourable members, I do not, and will not, accept such an outcome. I could expend the remainder of my time outlining the reasons for the growth in unemployment over 20 years, but that would be pointless. Suffice to say that none of the current objectives of Governments in the economic arena, even if successful, will make a big impact on general unemployment levels.

We have had various initiatives—all of which, I suspect, were honest attempts to address job creation—such as the NEAT scheme, Newstart, Jobstart and many others. All have had some degree of success, and it would be churlish in the extreme, and unfair on the participants and the organisers, to say that they did not achieve some success. The difficulty that they all experienced was that they had to work within tight guidelines and restrictive agendas. I believe that it is time to break the mould of past thinking and break down the barrier that stands between the one million unemployed in this country and the work that needs to be done to make this country strong again.

We should commence with a few basic premises: firstly, most of the one million unemployed would rather be involved in meaningful work than continue fruitless searches for work at best, or to lapse into frustrated anger at society at worst. Secondly, employees do not want to see a lowering of wage levels, which they see as not necessarily solving the problem, anyway. Thirdly, Australians continue to see the necessity for an effective safety net for disadvantaged people. Fourthly, there are a lot of businesses—large and small—that could benefit by extra staff, and private enterprise businesses make the most efficient employers. Fifthly, in our modern commercial and political worlds, employing staff has been rendered expensive and complex. Lastly, at least 10 per cent of the work force will continue to be a charge on the public purse for the next few years despite any improvements in the economy, and a safety net must be left in place. In other words, a

large and growing welfare bill will be with us for a long, long time.

What I propose is a completely new approach. I believe that the wealth of experience, skills and enthusiasm—desperation, if one likes—that is latent in the pool of unemployed must be integrated as soon as possible to the needs of private enterprise to produce more and better quality goods and services without the attendant obstacles of traditional employment creation. This can be achieved by what I have called the One for Ten scheme. This scheme enables all employers to recruit any unemployed persons who are on benefits at the rate of one person per existing 10 full-time employees, or part thereof. This means that those very important small businesses that currently employ one to nine persons would have access to an extra employee of their choice who is on benefits for the cost of the difference between the dole and the award rate for the job that the employers want those people to do, or the legally registered contract wage.

Employers of 10 to 19 full-time employees would be able to take two new employees on the same full subsidy, and so on, without any restriction on size. At this juncture, I point out that any participating employer who dismisses a full-time employee and does not replace that person with another full-cost employee loses the rights to one subsidised employee.

I would go so far as to suggest that those employers who increased their work force could have their entitlement extended; one extra full-time employee would entitle that employer to an extra subsidised one. This would be a real incentive to those best suited and best situated to create real job opportunities and non-formal training. Private companies have the materials, the equipment, the infrastructure, the management skills and, most importantly, the incentive to provide this work. Let us encourage them to do so.

Potential employees, of course, have the opportunity to apply to any participating employer in any industry in any region in Australia. This is better than training schemes that lead nowhere, or Government-funded, public, make-work schemes that dry up when the funds run out. The initial major difference with this scheme is that it is the first full-blooded job-creation scheme in the private enterprise area. Secondly, there is no time limit on the offer. It can continue at the Government's pleasure. Of course, the ratio of

subsidised employees to full-time employees can be adjusted in line with unemployment levels in the future. A major shift is that it is not targeted to specific types of employers or specific types of employees. It is simply intended to give the whole private enterprise sector a no-strings-attached opportunity to soak up and take advantage of the pool of willing unemployed.

Similarly, it is also intended to give the whole pool of willing unemployed—and I believe that most unemployed people desperately want to work—thousands of radical new opportunities of finding fully-paid, permanent jobs—real jobs—in every industry in every region in Australia. This scheme would be available and fully applicable to all potential employees regardless of age, gender or other factors. There would be no disincentives; and no bias regarding gender, ethnicity, duration unemployed, age, occupations, industry or locality. Employers would select their own workers. Employees would select their own enterprises. Additional programs to assist disadvantaged groups can still be implemented without conflict to this refreshingly simple scheme.

For those members who suspect that such a scheme would not survive the barbs and arrows of the Federal bureaucracy, I advise that the submission has been in the Brisbane office of the Department of Education, Employment and Training for a couple of weeks, and I have received cautious but unofficial support from that quarter. I am advised that the submission is worthy of forwarding to the Prime Minister's special committee.

It is my intention to provide all honourable members who are interested with an outline of the details of this One for Ten scheme. I invite all members to contact me regarding details and to make constructive suggestions. I now invite the Premier to form an all-party ad hoc committee to discuss this and other employment-generating proposals, because I believe that it is the most important task that is before this Government and all other Governments in Australia.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Have you been to Mr Foley to put your case?

Mr LAMING: This is going to Mr Foley right now. I am happy to discuss this with Mr Foley and any other member. I would like to do that in an open manner, because it is for the benefit of all Australia. Could I be bold enough then to anticipate that we do send an all-party submission to Canberra—a

submission which I believe will make a huge impact on the scourge of unemployment on Australian society?

I would now like to spend a few moments talking about a couple of matters relating to the Appropriation Bill as it affects my area of Mooloolah on the Sunshine Coast. I refer particularly to matters of health and, in particular, the lack of specialists at the Nambour hospital. I have been in touch with the Minister about this issue, which is becoming quite critical. We are very short of orthopaedic surgeons to the point at which there is not one at the hospital at the moment. We also need an ear, nose and throat specialist, a specialist in the psychiatric ward, and urologists.

As to education—it is good to see that a new primary school being built at Mountain Creek will open next year. I congratulate the local principals of surrounding schools on the work that they are doing with Mr Peter Mulcahy of the area support scheme. I look forward to that opening smoothly next year. I impress upon the Minister the importance of a high school in the same area to be built next year and opened in 1995. Maroochydore is absolutely bursting at the seams and will not be able to contain the growth in that area.

As to law and order—a police beat has been tested at Mooloolaba. I compliment the local police for the way that that was handled. In the past 12 months, the crime rate in that area was reduced by 50 per cent. I believe that police beats should be permanent in places such as Mooloolaba which have a large population during holiday times.

I turn to transport. Unfortunately, losses of about \$15m a year are being sustained by the Sunshine Coast Motorway and, indirectly, the State Government. I have put forward to the motorway company and the Minister a proposal that, instead of the toll plaza, a 24-hour state-of-the-art service station be located on that site. I am pleased that the Treasurer is in the Chamber, because I can point out to him that the proposal would decrease the losses sustained on that motorway. I ask him to look seriously at the matter. It is an honest way for the Government to lessen some of the financial losses that it is facing.

Tonight, much has been spoken about cuts in rail services in western areas. One would have imagined that services to places such as the Sunshine Coast might have been increased. The population is growing and a large amount of commuter traffic heads towards Brisbane from many stations from

Nambour south, yet there is a four-hour gap in the middle of the day when no services run. People must be encouraged to use rail as opposed to the roads. The only way to achieve that is to provide services that fill those gaps. I mention that there is no service in the other direction for people who want to commute towards Nambour. Because there is no rail commuter service going northwards, people must travel by car to Nambour.

I turn to the subject of land charges and wish to talk about the impact that they will have on surf clubs on the Sunshine Coast. The matter was eloquently covered by other speakers, in particular the member for Warrego, Mr Hobbs, and my colleague the member for Maroochydore. Surf clubs are not the sorts of organisations that should be milked for money. Because they provide a service for the community, they should receive assistance. Their task should not be made more difficult.

Lastly, in the area of local government, I can only say that the performance dividend that is being inflicted on local authorities seems to me to be an unbelievable impost. The Maroochy Shire Council disapproves of the Government's interference in the way that the council has been conducting its financial affairs.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick) (12.11 a.m.): In rising to participate in the debate on the Appropriation Bill, I feel a bit like the extreme tail-end batsman coming in when there are very few runs left to be got. However, I would like to talk about a number of service cutbacks in my electorate. Following the return of the Premier and the Treasurer from the recent Premiers Conference, they were squealing like stuck pigs and saying that they had been hard done by. In fact, we have seen an increase of approximately \$330m in the amount of money that has been allocated to Queensland. It begs the question of the Government by the people of Queensland and all members of Parliament: where has all the money gone in this State? There has been an increase in this year's Commonwealth grant to the State and a gradual upward trend in the amount of Queensland taxes, fees and fines raised since 1989. When one takes that into account and one considers particularly the areas of licences and permits, which increased from \$260m to over \$800m since 1989, one can see that the Government has in many cases had increased revenue to play with.

I turn now to the substantial increases that we have seen in the State Budget for

education and health. I speak to a great number of people in my electorate who work in the health and education areas. They are questioning why the money is not filtering through to them. They are also saying that, in many cases, the administration has gone absolutely mad. That is something that we have failed to curtail or to streamline. In many cases, the administration has been increased because of perceived accountability, but I do not believe that the problems in the past warranted such a huge growth in administration.

The Education Minister realises the problem. As well, the Public Sector Management Commission has realised the problem, because it is talking about the need to get police out of office work and back onto the beat. The Government has adopted the age-old Labor philosophy: if you have got a problem, grab a great big bag of money and throw it into the great big hole and it will fix the problem.

It was interesting to see the Premier and others, prior to coming into Government in Queensland in 1989, running around saying, "We have to increase funding in this State for health, education and other Government services to an equal level with Victoria, South Australia and other States." It was also interesting to listen to the Premier say just prior to attending the Premiers Conference that the other States have to look at becoming as efficient as Queensland and that the service one gets is not necessarily relative to the amount of money that one throws at a problem. I tend to agree with that latter statement, but he cannot have it both ways. The Premier has the audacity to lecture the other States on running an efficient and effective economy and getting value for money out of the public service, yet he is failing to achieve those goals in this State.

I believe that we have seen a dramatic cut in the actual service delivery of many of our Government services, but we have seen the bureaucracy go mad. The Budget papers over the last three years will bear that out. I know that there are a lot of people, not only on the conservative side of politics and within the various Government services but also in the Labor Party, who are concerned and who are talking about this problem. I urge the Government to take this problem seriously. It is something that really does need to be addressed. We need to get away from the notion that the problem is fixed by the relative amount of money that is thrown into it. That is not necessarily the case.

Mr T. B. Sullivan: Have you asked the nurses and the teachers what their increases in salaries have been?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I certainly have. It is interesting to listen to a lot of those teachers and nurses. The other day, I visited a school in my electorate and we talked about the allegations by Government members who have said that our standard of education and our standard of educational facilities in this State are so absolutely appalling that we are still living in the nineteenth century. One teacher said that our standard of education—the actual service at the end and the type of student that we obtain at the end—was equal if not better than the standard in the other States. That has happened throughout the 1980s and it is happening now. There is a great deal of frustration within the health and education departments and within the Department of Primary Industries and other Government services about where all this money is going, how they have a harder job to do at the bottom, and how the bureaucracy and the administration is going completely mad.

I turn now to the issue of the closure of the Wallangarra-Warwick saleyards railway line in my electorate. It is approximately 100 kilometres of railway line. It is a unique piece of railway line to the extent that it has been constructed through the Granite Belt. I was informed that it required a great deal of unique engineering and, obviously, it has required a deal of maintenance over the years, but no more than any other railway. The Government says that we cannot have railway lines that carry six or eight passengers per week. Technically, if one looked at that argument, one would have to agree. The fact is that we will continue to operate railway services in Brisbane after 7 o'clock at night, which are probably not going to be profitable, and we will continue to operate railway services in other parts of the State, which will not be profitable. In 1991-92, the Wallangarra-Warwick line carted 39 970 tonnes of produce from Wallangarra and Stanthorpe through to Brisbane and other destinations. That is certainly no meagre amount. It is 2 000 20-tonne semitrailer loads of produce. Has the Government thought seriously about the impact of this on our road system? I do not think that it has. It is a ludicrous position. That railway is probably returning in freight costs at least several hundred thousand dollars. It may be running at a loss, but there are other railway lines that are running at a loss. We have to consider the

overall cost and the overall impact of closing a line such as this.

An official from Queensland Rail was in my office only a month ago. We were talking about this line, and he said that in northern New South Wales they were getting more frozen meat and more produce for this line. They have done a great job. It has been scaled back and jobs have been cut over the last few years, but they have been out there actively seeking the additional freight for this line. He said that, as far as he was concerned, there were no moves to close that line. That was a month ago, and I was happy with that. However, on Monday morning, I received an anonymous tip-off through my office from somebody within QR who said that the railway line was definitely going to close. That is not good enough.

Mr Beattie: What time was that?

Mr SPRINGBORG: It was between about 8.30 a.m. and 9 a.m. It was not in the newspapers until the next day. We certainly were not consulted about it. The Deciduous Sectional Group Committee, which is the local growers' representative for fruit and vegetables on the Granite Belt, certainly were not consulted. Golden Circle, which has a great deal of investment arising from the need to cart juicing apples from the Granite Belt through to its Northgate cannery, certainly was not consulted, and it recently spent many hundreds of thousands of dollars gearing itself up to be able to cart that produce from the Granite Belt in grain wagons and unload it efficiently and effectively there. QR has geared up. The DSGC has actually spent money on equipment to make sure that it can get more produce through The Summit Railway Station. An amount of 10 000 tonnes of fruit per year will soon have to be transported by road.

The Northgate cannery now has consider constructing a new facility to cater for road transport. What will the impact of 2 000 extra heavy vehicles be on that road? Will the Government increase the amount of road funding for that area? I doubt that it will. It is an absolutely blatant and despicable attack on our already debilitated rural services.

I am prepared to give a little bit of credit where credit is due. If the Government had consulted on these issues, particularly with the groups that have so much at stake, a convincing argument could have been put to keep this line open, at least in the foreseeable future. Over the last few years, the Inglewood-Texas line has been continuously scaled back,

and last year no produce was carted on that line, so I suppose one could put a good case for the closure of that line. However, if the Government had consulted with those people, it would have been more likely to receive an adequate response. Last year, 2 000 tonnes of produce was carted on the Allora-Hendon line. Once again, the first they knew about it was when they read the newspaper. This is the Government which, since it came to power, has prided itself saying that it consults with people. It does not consult with people. I know that there is a great deal of discontent within Government quarters over the way that this was carried out, because they realised the implications of it.

Some Government members have been saying that we need to introduce a fuel tax to be able to curtail these service cutbacks. I do not think that that is necessarily the case; however, I believe that we need to become more efficient and lessen the need for bureaucracy. It has already been stated that a fuel tax would adversely impact on our rural constituencies—on not only National Party constituencies but also Labor constituencies—and certainly on the electorate of the honourable member for Mount Isa, because he has a rather large electorate. Even your constituents, Mr Deputy Speaker, have to travel a long way, and if they have to pay an extra 3c or 4c per litre for their fuel, it will certainly cost them a lot.

I turn now to address briefly another issue of concern in my electorate, namely, the Killarney common effluent disposal scheme. In doing so, I give the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning a lot of credit for the action he has taken.

Mr Beattie: What about the zoning system you have in New South Wales for protecting ordinary people from the fuel tax?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I inform the member for Brisbane Central that I am not convinced that the introduction of a fuel tax and proposed trade-offs or guarantees would save people in rural Queensland from the full impact of a fuel tax. I just do not think that this Government will do it. The reality is that that type of tax will filter through to rural people.

Mr Beattie: Every other State has. The National Party and the Liberal Party in New South Wales have.

Mr SPRINGBORG: But that is a totally different situation. The member for Brisbane Central is making all these lovely suggestions, but recently we were given a similar guarantee that railway closures would not occur. We

have certainly got them now. We were also given a guarantee that there would not be school closures, and I wonder whether the Government's present attitude will again put that promise under the spotlight. One school closure has already occurred on the Darling Downs, so will this mean that more closures will occur? I was beginning to hope and believe some of the promises that were coming from this Government about a moratorium on service cutbacks and closures. However, those cutbacks and closures are certainly back on again, and my constituents and I are heartily sick and tired of them.

Earlier, I mentioned the Killarney CED. I inform the House that recently the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning allocated \$700,000 to the Glengallan Shire Council to provide an upgraded waste disposal system. The system will treat house grey water and effluent from septic tanks. I heartily congratulate the Minister because that system will certainly help the people who live in that area. The Minister took action after becoming aware of the problem, and it is a pity that some other Ministers do not take the same interest in country areas as Mr Mackenroth does.

I turn now to discuss some areas in which improvements could be made in my electorate. The Department of Transport needs to take a wider view of secondary arterial road construction. More and more, we are hearing about the need for quality management and quality assurance schemes that councils have to implement. A couple of years ago, the Stanthorpe Shire Council constructed about 5 kilometres of road which probably did not have the total approval of the Transport Department. The council formed the road, rolled it and sealed it with bitumen. That has been a great stretch of roadway and it was constructed cost effectively. It was recently resurfaced to bring it up to a good standard.

When that type of practice is mentioned to Transport Department officers, they say that roads constructed in that manner do not come up to a particular standard and that councils cannot be allowed to do that sort of thing. What a load of hogwash! That is the only way that people who live in remote areas will be given a sealed road of a reasonably high standard. It might not cost \$200,000 a kilometre; it might cost only \$50,000 a kilometre, but it is a road that has lasted.

A more flexible approach to road construction needs to be considered seriously. Either now or in the future, the State

Government will not be in a position to make millions of dollars available to guarantee that rural arterial roads are sealed. By adopting a more flexible approach, people who live in remote areas will certainly be given a much better service than they are receiving presently.

I now wish to discuss the perception of the Labor Party as the workers' party. Over many years, a great deal has been said about the Labor Party being the workers' party and the great job that it has done. Maybe that was true in the Chifley, Curtin and Theodore eras, but in my electorate, there are a lot of Labor supporters who are feeling let down by this Government and current Labor philosophy. When one considers that the ordinary working-class citizens have not previously suffered as much as they have suffered since the Hawke and Keating Labor Governments came to power and that people are relying more and more on Government assistance and handouts for their everyday life, it is easy to understand why people who have traditionally supported the Labor Party are now saying that it is a party for people who are interested in law and academic life, not in blue-collar workers who cannot get a real input into the Labor Party, anyway.

The people who are supporting the National Party are now drawn from the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum. Australian Bureau of Statistics information reveals that the National Party now represents the poorest electorates in Queensland. I believe that Labor Party members should take a very close look at their supporters because they are feeling let down and the National Party is gathering them.

In conclusion, I wish to briefly refer to the need for the provision of additional water resources in my electorate. Presently, my electorate is experiencing the worst drought in the lifetime of many people who live in the area.

Mr FitzGerald: They are taxing that now.

Mr SPRINGBORG: They certainly are. The drought has lasted three years and water resources are drying up. I ask the Government for a definite commitment to immediately construct the Broadwater dam in my electorate. The proposal has dragged on for far too many years. The dam is proposed for the Stanthorpe area and will give fruit and vegetable producers in the Granite Belt, particularly the northern side, a water resource that will provide them with the economic stability that they require and on which they

rely. Continually, this Government has scaled back funding for water resource works and capital works in this State, and that is not good enough. If this Government is serious about dealing with drought both now and in the future, it will have to seriously consider constructing that dam.

Last year, the Honourable Minister for Primary Industries made much of his pledge to confine all cattle ticks to the north of the Townsville-Mount Isa rail line by the end of the century. I have never before heard such absolute nonsense. On the Darling Downs, a massive scaling-back in the number of stock inspectors has occurred. For example, in the Warwick area, the numbers have been scaled down from five to two and one part-time employee. It has not even been possible to control an outbreak of ticks in an area where they had not previously been found because, as soon as one property is cleaned up, another outbreak occurs somewhere else.

I think that the Government needs to be totally practical in its approach to controlling ticks. It will not solve the problem by scaling back research in the DPI or the field staff. If the Minister for Primary Industries understood that we have a massive problem with cattle ticks building up immunity or resistance to the much-used chemicals on the market, he would appreciate that he cannot achieve total eradication in the southern half of the State. The Minister would be far better off putting the resources into pegging back the new outbreaks in areas such as the Darling Downs.

I made many of the comments that I did tonight out of sheer frustration with the Government's continued policy of attacking people in rural Queensland. I implore the Government to take another look at issues such as the closure of the Wallangarra-Warwick railway line, which carries 40 000 tonnes of produce, and to reconsider the impact that that will have on local growers, on the local railway workers and on the roads. That issue will come back to haunt the Government. It affects the quality of life of my constituents, and I will continue to stand up and fight on that issue. I look forward to the Minister for Transport having another look at it.

Hon. K. E. De LACY (Cairns— Treasurer) (12.31 a.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to the debate on the Appropriation Bill, long and tedious as it may have been. Last night, the Leader of the Liberal Party used her contribution in this debate to launch an extraordinary and cowardly attack on the Under Treasurer of Queensland, a senior and respected public

servant. It was the kind of attack which, if delivered anywhere other than in the sanctuary of this Parliament, would have resulted in making Mr Smerdon a rich man at the expense of the member for Caloundra. The Under Treasurer—

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr De LACY: The honourable member was not game to face it this morning. The Under Treasurer has been guilty of no more than implementing Government policies—policies which I am prepared and obliged to defend at any time and policies which, I might say, have produced three successive balanced Budgets, almost halved Queensland's net State debt and made Queensland's financial performance—

Mr Connor interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Bredhauer): Order! If the member for Nerang wishes to interject, he should do so from his own seat.

Mr De LACY:—the envy of every other State in Australia. The thrust of the attack by the Leader of the Liberal Party on the Under Treasurer was in relation to the QIDC. The issue was kicked off 12 days ago when a national business newspaper based in Sydney wrote breathlessly of a leaked secret report, the so-called Kendalls report.

Ten days later, a local business newspaper bought into the act with a predictable conspiracy theory, namely, that Treasury had leaked the report because it had a hidden agenda to control the QIDC. In a brilliant piece of original research, the honourable member took that newspaper report, together with a number of other previous articles in the newspaper, and wove together a convoluted fairytale totally lacking in facts.

I will now spoil a good story with a few facts. Members will recall that I announced in the Budget last year that the QIDC would be one of the first of the State's statutory authorities to undergo the corporatisation process. Since that time, the Treasury Department has been undertaking a comprehensive review of corporatisation issues in relation to the QIDC. Such a review is a standard part of the corporatisation process.

Earlier this year, a working party with membership that includes representatives of the QIDC, rural industry and unions, was established. That working party has been examining a range of issues relating to the corporatisation of the QIDC. During the corporatisation process, it will not be uncommon for the GOE unit in Treasury to

engage the services of external consultants to augment the expertise available to the department and to ensure that appropriate independent advice is obtained where necessary. Those studies are only part of the review activity and need to be considered within that context. There is nothing untoward in the commissioning of those studies and in their use in the assessment of the organisation being corporatised.

It is unfortunate that, in relation to the QIDC, one of those studies has been leaked to the press, which has resulted in its being considered in isolation from the rest of the information that has been collected and assessed. I am currently unaware of the source of that leak and of the motivation of that person or persons. Let me make it very clear that the unauthorised release of commercially confidential material is a very serious matter and that the person or persons responsible will be dealt with accordingly.

To her everlasting shame, the Leader of the Liberal Party made the totally unfounded accusation that the Under-Treasurer himself had leaked the report and was now investigating the source of the leak. For Mrs Sheldon's information, from day one the Under Treasurer placed the inquiry in the hands of the Official Misconduct Division of the CJC.

Mrs Sheldon: It was a bit late then, wasn't it?

Mr De LACY: Day one?

Mrs Sheldon: What date?

Mr De LACY: On the day of the leak it was placed in the hands of the CJC.

Mrs Sheldon: It was a bit late then, wasn't it?

Mr De LACY: It may be too late, but I do not know how one could have done it before that. In her usual shoddy approach, the member has relied on reported comments that appear to have in turn been made by people who have not read the leaked document. In fact, most are drawing on earlier media speculation. Quite frankly, those people should know better and, in the fullness of time, may regret rushing into print.

The Kendalls report identified that under corporatisation the QIDC would need to upgrade some of its internal management control systems to a standard consistent with best commercial practice. I remind honourable members that this is in part what corporatisation is about—the systematic and comprehensive upgrading of the management and financial controls of all

Government owned enterprises. The Kendalls report also identified that the accounts for 1992-93 would, as a consequence of the very poor rural conditions which have existed over the past few years, require an increase in the levels of provisions.

Contrary to the Liberal Leader's claim, the report was then referred to the corporation chairman for consideration as part of the normal end-of-the-year deliberations on the provisions to be included in the financial statements. I need to place on the record at this point that, prior to his receiving the report, the corporation chairman had already foreshadowed to me the need to increase provisioning in the QIDC's 1992-93 accounts to appropriately reflect current rural industry circumstances.

Mrs Sheldon: Can you say that the Chairman of the QIDC had the report and had seen it before it was leaked?

Mr De LACY: He has the report.

Mrs Sheldon: Before it was leaked?

Mr De LACY: No, not before it was leaked. To assist in that process, the QIDC board has sought specific advice on the adequacy of both its provisioning policies and the valuation of properties held as security for its lending. Those reports will be available to the board in the near future and will enable it to assess an appropriate level of provisions to be included in the corporation's financial statements. While it is perhaps news to Sydney-based journalists, Queensland is experiencing the impact of a severe drought which could cost the State an estimated \$1 billion in lost production. Notwithstanding the very welcome recent winter rain, the drought conditions are widespread throughout the rural sector and will naturally have a negative effect on all the financial institutions which support this sector.

The history of the QIDC has been that it has a large exposure through its rural lending. It was formed out of the previous Agricultural Bank and Rural Reconstruction Board and has a sound reputation within the rural community. The current QIDC board has acted prudently in recent years to reduce the corporation's exposure to the rural sector and has gradually increased the proportion of its lending for non-rural purposes. This will help the corporation withstand the difficulties arising from the impact of the drought on its rural customers.

Meanwhile, the process of corporatisation of the QIDC is progressing, and I expect to be able to provide further details of the outcome in the near future. I have no intention of

releasing at this time any of the studies prepared as part of this process, but I am quite prepared to fully debate the Government's proposals for a corporatised QIDC at the appropriate time—in fact, at any time.

Finally, I would have to say that it is an extreme irony for the Liberal Leader to allege that there is a conspiracy afoot to prevent the corporatisation of the QIDC. This is from a person who opposed in toto the Government's corporatisation legislation and who only recently proposed that the QIDC should be returned to its previous incarnation as a rural bank providing concessional loans to mates of the National Party.

I will make just a couple of general comments about the Appropriation Bill debate. From members of the Opposition we received the same tired old stories. In fact, we went through something like 30 speeches from the Opposition before we got any constructive comments at all.

Mrs SHELDON: I rise to a point of order. I ask the Treasurer to withdraw his statement that I suggested the QIDC should return back to being the Agricultural Bank. That is not correct. It was never said. The Treasurer knows it. It is a misrepresentation of what I said.

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

Mrs SHELDON: It is a misrepresentation of what I said.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. The honourable member will resume her seat. I call the Treasurer.

Mrs SHELDON: I just wonder when a point of order really is a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A. I will not have that disrespect shown to the Chair. I call the Treasurer.

Mrs Sheldon interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I request an apology from the member for Landsborough for the comment that she just made, otherwise I will warn her again under Standing Order 123A.

Mrs SHELDON: I requested a reasonable withdrawal, but you refused to allow it.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I warn the honourable member again under Standing Order 123A and I ask her to leave the Chamber.

Mr De LACY: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. That is a bit of a pity, because I was going to make some comments about the Liberal Leader's abysmal performance.

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. I understand that we had a misnaming of the member. My point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, is that you warned the honourable member, Mrs Sheldon, as the member for Landsborough—I understand that she is the member for Caloundra—on the first warning.

Mr CONNOR: She was not given a warning. I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! On the first warning, I warned the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr CONNOR: You warned the member for Landsborough.

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

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order.

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

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The honourable member will resume his seat. The advice from the Clerk is that I did warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition correctly the first time and that I have properly interpreted the Standing Orders in asking the Deputy Leader of the Opposition now to leave the Chamber, and I so ask.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. *Hansard* will correctly show that you called "member for Landsborough" when you warned her. You did not say "the Deputy Leader", you said "Landsborough", which does not exist. You did not say "the Deputy Leader".

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The honourable member will resume his seat while I make my ruling.

Dr WATSON: Excuse me, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, excuse me. I have one point of order before the House. I want to make a ruling on the first point of order before I entertain any further speakers. The honourable member will resume his seat. On the first occasion, I warned the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, which is correct. On the second occasion, I referred to the——

Mr Connor: That is not true.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I warn the member for Nerang under Standing Order 123A and I request him to cease interjecting while I make my ruling. On the first occasion, I

warned the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, which is a correct warning. On the second occasion, I made a reference to the member for Landsborough. However, I did warn her under Standing Order 123A and I am within my rights to ask her to leave the Chamber, which I now ask her to do.

Whereupon the honourable member for Caloundra withdrew from the Chamber.

Dr WATSON: Mr Deputy Speaker——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a point of order?

Dr WATSON: I have a point of order. I agree that you did warn the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Unfortunately, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is Mr Kevin Lingard and Mrs Sheldon is Deputy Leader of the Coalition.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. The member for Caloundra is commonly referred to on a daily basis as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. There is no point of order. I call the Treasurer.

Dr WATSON: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have made my ruling. There is no point of order. I call the Treasurer.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, whichever way you do it, you have got it wrong.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have warned the member for Nerang under Standing Order 123A. If he persists in interjecting, I will warn him again under Standing Order 123A and I will also ask him to leave the Chamber.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Treasurer.

Mr CONNOR: I rise to a point of order. You neither——

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warn the member for Nerang under Standing Order 123A.

Mr CONNOR: You got it wrong both ways.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I ask him now to leave the Chamber.

Whereupon the honourable member for Nerang withdrew from the Chamber.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the Treasurer.

Mr De LACY: Thank you, Mr Deputy

Speaker. I know the hour is late, but aren't they a pathetic lot! If anybody I have ever seen was showing disrespect for the Chair——

Mr FITZGERALD: I rise to a point of order. I rise under Standing Order 120. I think the Treasurer is making disparaging remarks about members on this side of the House. I know that the time is very late, as the Treasurer said. Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek your protection for this side of the House.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the Treasurer.

Mr De LACY: I will now return to the debate on the Appropriation Bill. I think that exchange reflected the type of contribution from the members of the Opposition during this debate. It is the same old story. I know that it is one of the crosses one has to bear as Treasurer, to sit through Appropriation Bill and Budget debates, which are traditionally wide-ranging debates. However, during this debate, speaker after speaker from the Opposition stood up and spouted the same tired old lines that they have been spouting for three or four years. They have been discredited totally time and time again, yet members opposite still repeat them.

We know the story from the Leader of the Opposition. He says, "They are the socialists." He refers constantly John Cain and John Bannon. The Leader of the Opposition says, "Queensland is going downhill. The Government has problems with its Budget." Now he has a new line about the Goss Labor Government being the biggest-spending Government in Australia. That claim is quite false. All of the statistics, including those from the ABS and the Commonwealth Grants Commission, demonstrate that Queensland spends less per capita than every other State in Australia. Yet for the past three days, both outside and inside this place, the Leader of the Opposition has been claiming that the Queensland Government is the biggest-spending Government in Australia and that it is going down the John Cain line. Those claims are quite wrong, quite false. However, the Leader of the Opposition never lets the truth get in the way. Apart from that, even when it is pointed out conclusively and categorically that he is wrong, it makes no difference. He carries on with the same story.

That applies not only to the Leader of the Opposition. One after one, members opposite parrot the same old stories. To me, that is pathetic, but people expect me to say that. However, the whole world sees that tactic as pathetic. If ever a group was irrelevant, it is the Opposition in Queensland. The other story

members opposite tell is of the great days of the National Party. Finally, they have to face up to the fact that the Goss Government is doing it right; that our Budget is the best in Australia; and that our financial management is the best in Australia. They have to face those facts, but what is their response? They say, "Oh, but they inherited it." When did we inherit it? Four or five years ago? We will be here for 20 years, and members opposite will be old men by then, but they will still be saying, "Oh, but they inherited it."

The member for Nicklin even went back to the last Labor Government in his nostalgic trip down memory lane. All I can say is that unless the Opposition can get something new, unless it can get something convincing, it will remain irrelevant to the process. The Opposition is irrelevant because it does not stand for anything. It stands only for opposing everything that this Government does.

This week, the Government introduced a savings package. There is a bit of pain out there, and we know that. However, for two weeks, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of Liberal Party have been lecturing us, saying, "Do not introduce a new tax. What you have to do is cut your expenditure. The Goss Government is going to introduce a new tax; it should cut expenditure." The Government did cut expenditure, but what happened? The comment from the Opposition was, "The Government should not have cut expenditure. Fancy cutting into railways and education!" The Opposition does not stand for anything except that it opposes every single thing the Government does and says. Its only policy is whining, whingeing and opposing, and that is why it is irrelevant.

Despite what Opposition members say, despite their trips down memory lane, theirs was the worst Government in the history of Australia. In its last years, the National Party Government was the worst Government in history. It was riddled with corruption and had a mob of incompetents running the show. But now, with the benefit of history and a selective memory, members opposite proclaim, "What a great Government we used to be!" It has surpassed that performance—it is a worse Opposition——

Mr FitzGerald: I can't even put a notice of motion on the books. I was a Minister in the last Government. You reckon I'm corrupt, do you?

Mr De LACY: All I can say is that the coalition is a worse Opposition than it was a Government.

Mr FitzGerald: We can't put a notice of motion on the books about any misdemeanours we consider your Ministers are making and you run around accusing us of corruption!

Mr De LACY: I do want to make one positive comment. As I said earlier, the Opposition contributed about 30 speeches to this debate, but not one contained a positive comment, except that of the member for Mooloolah. He did not follow the usual whining, whingeing, carping line. While I am on that subject, I have noticed that, since Opposition members have realised that their message is not going across well, their voices have become shriller and shriller. As fewer and fewer people listen to them, the voices of those opposite become shriller and shriller.

The member for Mooloolah actually said something constructive. He tried to offer a solution to some of the great problems that we are facing in this day and age. I do not know whether his solution will work, but his is the sort of contribution that would make an effective Opposition. That was very rare. In the four years that these characters have been in Opposition, I have never heard a constructive comment until tonight. The member for Mooloolah should be complimented for that.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr De LACY: Yes, get a copy of *Hansard* and see what he said. I want to make a final point to reject all of the nonsense which came from Opposition members. They say that we are the biggest-spending Government in Australia and that we have increased spending. However, they always leave out part of the story. Sure, we have increased spending on essential services, and we have certainly increased spending on capital works. That is why we have such a good employment record in this State. They forget to say that we increase spending without resorting to higher taxes, high debt, or increased debt, and without resorting to asset sales. That means that we have balanced our book, and we have continued to balance our book. If one considered the net debt figures, one would see that the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

An Opposition speaker said, "You are running down your cash assets." However, the net debt indicates debt on one side and cash assets on the other side. While this Government has been in power, the cash assets have been building up, yet Government members hear the nonsense from the Opposition that we have been running down our trust funds and our cash

assets. That flies in the face of all the evidence.

Mr Borbidge started to quote from IPA, the Institute of Public Affairs, which is a Right Wing think-tank. One would expect members of the National Party to quote from it. He was talking about two or three years ago and Queensland getting the lemon. By "getting the lemon", Mr Borbidge meant that Queensland increased public spending faster than any other State. That was a fair comment, but selectively quoted.

This year, the IPA was commissioned by the Western Australian Liberal/National Party Government to give it a blueprint for the future. The report is called *Reform and Recovery—an Agenda for the New Western Australian Government*, and a section of that report is headed, "Queensland is the benchmark". That is what Western Australia has to aspire to. The report states—

"Over the three years to 1991/92—a period of deep recession—Queensland outperformed all States according to most indicators, and it is expected to continue to do so over the term of the Government."

Mr Springborg: But, Mr Treasurer, that hasn't just happened. There was an IPA report about three years ago saying Queensland was the benchmark.

Mr De LACY: No, this year.

Mr Springborg: You're rubbishing what we did in Government. The IPA said the same thing.

Mr De LACY: "Queensland is the benchmark"—this is a 1993 report.

Mr Springborg: They said the same thing three years ago.

Mr De LACY: Is this the old story that we inherited it? The honourable member forgets that four years ago, all the States of Australia were the same. The big difference is now, since Queensland has had a Labor Government. I repeat that the report states—

"Over the three years to 1992—a period of deep recession—Queensland outperformed all States according to most indicators, and it is expected to continue to do so over the term of the Government."

The report went on to state—and members should listen to this because it comes from the IPA, which is Right Wing and likes to get into Labor Governments—

“During the 1990-92 period, Western Australia and all States other than Queensland were, in response to the recession, forced to cut capital works, lay off public servants and pay out more in interest. During the same period, the Queensland Government was able to increase capital spending by 38 per cent, to employ over 4 000 more public servants, cut interest payments by \$100 million, and at the same time achieve a balanced budget, retire debt and fully fund all liabilities, without increasing taxes.”

That is a report of the IPA, the Right Wing think-tank to which Mr Borbidge made reference. But Mr Borbidge quoted selectively, just as he uses figures all the time—quite selectively.

I thank all honourable members, particularly members on this side of the House, for their contributions to the debate on the Appropriation Bill. I thank them for what they said.

Motion agreed to.

Committee

Clauses 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

Third Reading

Bill, on motion of Mr De Lacy, read a third time.

ADJOURNMENT

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

“That the House do now adjourn.”

Pensioner Electricity Rebates; Building Units and Group Titles Act

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (1 a.m.): Tonight, I wish to bring to the attention of the House two matters in which I believe all members will be interested. The first matter concerns pensioners and the regulations governing concessions available to them for electricity usage.

The issue of electricity rebates available to pensioners has been brought to my attention during the past year or so by several pensioners within my electorate and various

senior citizen organisations. I was informed that pensioners who have family members still living at home are not eligible for the \$24 quarterly rebate. Such is apparently the case even when members of pensioners' families who are still at home are dependent. Such dependent family members may be unemployed or disadvantaged in some way or still undertaking studies and, therefore, are unable to obtain or undertake paid employment.

On behalf of my constituents, I have written to the Minister for Minerals and Energy, who kindly informed me that since its introduction in 1986, eligibility for the rebate has been restricted to holders of a Pensioner Benefits Health Card—more recently known as the Seniors Card—or those who receive one of a number of pensions. Those eligible pensioners receive the \$24 quarterly rebate. However, only one rebate may be claimed per residential unit. That is not at all unreasonable, and my constituents understand and appreciate this. I have also drawn to the attention of the Minister the condition which has been of even greater concern to potential recipients of the rebate, including my constituents.

This means that no rebate is available where a pensioner shares the residence with another person, other than a spouse or another pensioner receiving income. The purpose of this condition, I have been told, is to limit the rebate benefit to genuine pensioner residences and to avoid exploitation by households where there are other members, in receipt of income, who would normally be obliged to pay the full cost for their electricity. Again, this is a quite reasonable condition, but does not always lead to equitable outcomes.

The Minister has informed me that the Commonwealth Government has recently made changes to the benefit care system providing the card to both part-time pensioners and long-term unemployed persons. The Minister also indicated that the Queensland Government is conducting a review of its policy and administration in the area of concessions. Accordingly, public consultations have been held, and groups such as the Australian Pensioners League have been involved in these consultations. The Queensland Government, the Minister says, will be reviewing the eligibility criteria applying to the electricity rebate and other concessions provided by the State Government.

As I have mentioned, the policy of not extending the rebate to pensioners who have income-earning members of their family living under the same roof is reasonable. However, I believe that it is also reasonable to amend the regulations relating to the rules governing concessions that the Government provides for pensioners, including the electricity rebate, for those pensioners who have members of their families living with them and who are dependent. I realise that there are difficulties in establishing proof of legitimate dependents. Some unscrupulous people will endeavour to exploit rule changes and ruin things for everybody else. However, there must be a way to take needs, such as I have outlined above, into consideration when reviewing the Government's policies and administration regarding the electricity rebate. I would appreciate the Minister giving this review his urgent attention, and offer him and the Government my personal support in this endeavour.

The second matter concerns the powers of individual unit holders or lessees to call extraordinary general meetings where the lessee or unit holder rents or owns a unit in a block which consists of four or fewer lots. The relevant Act is the Building Units and Group Titles Act. Earlier this year, I received a letter from a constituent who informed me of his frustration and that of other neighbouring unit owners about another unit owner who has called six extraordinary general meetings since early 1991. I might add at this juncture that I appreciate and understand that the referee provided under the Building Units and Group Titles Act functions as a mediator when disputes arise. Another mediator remedy and process that proprietors may call upon to help with the resolution of disputes is available through the Community Justice Program.

In the case of my constituent, the referee advised that as his building consists of four units—equal lots—and as the Act states that 25 per cent of the proprietors of a building units plan are entitled to request the convening of an extraordinary general meeting, then the proprietors or lessees acting on behalf of the proprietor of one block may request that such a meeting be called. In addition, extraordinary general meetings may be called to handle matters that cannot wait until the annual general meeting. Consequently, an extraordinary general meeting may be convened for any trivial matter. My constituent has owned and occupied his unit for 24 years, while one of the owners of another unit in the block has been a resident for 23 years. Both residents are now

elderly and say that they find the continual interference upsetting.

My constituent proposes that the Act be amended to take account of those people who own or live in blocks of units that consist of four or fewer lots. He suggested that the words "or a minimum of two lots, whichever is the greater" be added immediately after "25 %"—the wording already contained in the Act. This amendment would qualify the number of lots required to call an extraordinary general meeting. It would also protect owners of units in blocks of four or fewer lots from being constantly harassed by an individual or agent of the proprietor. Under the Act as it stands, an individual living in a unit which is one in a lot of five or more cannot cause the same problem as can an individual in a block of four or fewer lots. I ask the Ministers involved if they would be kind enough to consider these representations from my constituents. Again, I offer my support as they go about doing so.

Time expired.

Sandgate Meals on Wheels

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate) (1.04 a.m.): Through this term, I have made a very conscious effort to be involved at the grassroots level in the Sandgate electorate. This task has meant focusing on concerns and issues which face my constituents on a day-to-day basis. Thankfully, in this capacity I am able to acknowledge the contributions made by dedicated volunteers who, through their efforts, do much to maintain the quality of life for local residents. Outstanding in this category are the more than 160 volunteers from the Sandgate and district branch of Meals on Wheels. Like many regions around the State, the Sandgate area comprises many residents who face constraints to their mobility. This situation is not limited to the elderly, but applies also to the younger sick and disabled. Unfortunately, it seems that as time passes and as the region grows, demand for these services increases. Commendably, however, this committed group has kept pace with these needs.

On its first day of operation in October 1965, Meals on Wheels delivered only seven meals. Volunteers then numbered 20. From these modest beginnings, the Sandgate Meals on Wheels can now boast to be one of the largest of the 158 services spread throughout the State. I am pleased to add that eight of the original 20 volunteers are still active in the service. It is a record of which to be very proud.

A typical day would see an average of 30 people working from 5.30 in the morning to well into the afternoon. Each volunteer would be involved in a variety of chores, from cooking and preparing meals and washing dishes to delivering meals. Every day, they manage to provide almost 200 meals for their clients. This adds up to a staggering 53 000 meals in a year. I should also add that the menu that is offered is changed each day, and every meal must fit the individual's special dietary needs. Volunteers also make special provisions to ensure that their clients enjoy a decent meal on Saturdays as well.

Special thanks must be extended to the meals convenor, Ivy Braiden, whose efforts have ensured the continuous, smooth running of the kitchen five days a week, all year round, over the past 18 years. I would also like to point out that the area of operations is quite extensive. It covers not only the whole of the Sandgate area but also includes Brighton, Shorncliffe, Deagon and Bracken Ridge. In servicing the sick and disabled in this region, they tirelessly maintain nine runs, five days a week. Surprisingly, many volunteers still find time to serve on the committee which ensures the efficient running of the service.

In particular, I applaud the efforts of the president, Miss Nell Jones, the secretary, Gerry Escott, and Harold Roberts as treasurer. I think it is safe to say that we can all be proud of their years of service to the elderly, sick and disabled residents of the Sandgate region. Fortunately, these efforts have been some way supported by the Government's Home and Community Care program. This program subsidises the cost of each meal by \$1.05—assistance which has certainly proved vital to the functioning of this service. Financial aid has also come from the gratitude of individuals. A substantial sum of money was bequeathed to the Sandgate Meals on Wheels by Percy and Dorothy Dorfield and that has facilitated the extension of the kitchen which, up until recently, was little more than a small shed.

Overall, I believe that the Sandgate district Meals on Wheels is of immeasurable value to the community which I serve. The support structure that these people provide relieves much of the pressure from families who wish to care for their more elderly relatives themselves. There can be no doubt that, without such voluntary assistance, many of the more disadvantaged members of this community would unnecessarily end up in institutions. Volunteers ensure that people retain their dignity. Due to such efforts, those people can still live at home. As well, for many

of the beneficiaries, these regular visits provide one of their few opportunities for personal contact and to see a friendly face.

My hope has been to draw some well-deserved attention to the Meals on Wheels organisation and to express publicly my appreciation for their sacrifices. This appreciation, I believe, is shared by the wider Sandgate community. For many in the region, Meals on Wheels has really made the difference, and it is my honour to recognise this small group of dedicated locals.

Time expired.

School Bullies

Mrs GAMIN (Burleigh) (1.09 a.m.) It is quite frightening to see an estimation of 60 000 children bullied in Queensland schools each day. This figure came forward last year in reported statements by a Brisbane psychiatrist, and he also said that, in a class of 30 students, three children would be victims and two would be bullies. Some children are so tormented and stressed at school that they cannot concentrate in class. Bullying affects both boys and girls from Year 1 to Year 12.

Each one of us in this House can look back to our own school days and remember—and identify—who were the bullies and who were the victims. If pupils get away with bullying—and it is clear that this often happens—then they are learning that they get their own way by imposing their greater strength or power on other individuals. Domestic violence studies show that, in children growing up in a violent home situation, bullying can be one of the side effects. Witnessing violence between parents provides the worst possible role model for children. They soon learn that the only way to cope with stress is through the use of violence. Children learn to think it is legitimate to use force to accomplish their goals. Bullying may be one manifestation of violence at home—although, of course, not all school bullies come from domestically violent situations.

Bullying does not have to be physical. It can range from verbal teasing—making life hell for someone without touching that person—right up to severe beatings. When a child is victimised in this way, his or her school life becomes a living nightmare. The tragedy is that the victims are led to believe there is something wrong with them, but in fact they are quite normal—it is the bullies who need psychiatric or psychological help.

The victims often feel trapped because they think that, if they tell anyone, the bullying will get worse. And parents, if they do find out, are absolutely anguished because they feel powerless to help. There are no clear guidelines for parents and teachers on how to deal with bullying. Children can be subjected day after day to forms of behaviour which are not only unacceptable in the adult world but also illegal.

We have anti-discrimination legislation now—adults are not even allowed to tease each other—but teasing is often the very least that many children have to cope with. There are special legal processes and tribunals for adults to stop persistent offensive behaviour—offensive remarks, body contacts and offensive signs and innuendos, etc. Heavy penalties are provided to stop the harassment of one adult by another. Why does it only become an offence to repeatedly use unkind or upsetting remarks relating to a physical handicap or feature, or the colour of skin or ethnic origin when the offender is an adult?

Although we hear a lot about human rights and about the rights of the child, there is no similar protection for children. Surely it is not acceptable that children in schools should not have the same rights of protection from their tormentors as adults in the work place have. Research has been done on school bullying in the United Kingdom, in some European countries and also in the United States. United States statistics show that 25 per cent of schoolyard bullies went on to serve long gaol terms for violent crimes.

Less work has been done in Australia, but in August of last year the Catholic Education Office held a conference in Brisbane on this subject. A further seminar will be held later this year, and I mean to attend. I have also recently received some very worthwhile material from Associate Professor Ken Rigby, Director of the Institute of Social Research, University of South Australia.

The various types of bullying that children endure have never been satisfactorily identified in a written code of behaviour for the school playground. There are no set courses of action for parents to take when a child is bullied. Not all children tell their parents, anyway. So the task of identifying this sort of problem behaviour falls back onto the educators themselves—to pick it out in early childhood; to identify it in the lower primary classes; to listen to children and their parents; and also to learn to distinguish between fact and fiction as they help pupils to differentiate between proper and improper behaviour.

I see that there is a draft report being prepared on Schools and Discipline: Management Behaviour in a Supportive School Environment, but I do not believe that is what we are looking for. Instead, I have recommended to the Minister for Education that a task force on school bullying, similar to the task force on domestic violence, should be established to obtain reliable information on the causes and effects of school bullying.

Domestic violence—often a carryover from violent behaviour at school—has attracted the attention of law-makers, but little has been done in dealing with the problem at an early stage when a child shows abnormal behaviour at school. In fact, kindergarten and pre-school are not too early to start. School bullies who are not restrained regard violence as normal behaviour and carry that trait into adulthood. And for the victim, being bullied at school affects a child's ability to learn and can cause serious psychological effects later in life. The lives of victims are made miserable, and in extreme cases they can become suicidal.

Time expired.

Queensland Justices Association

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy) (1.14 a.m.): I rise to speak about the turmoil in the QJA State council which has been spoken about in the House this week. I feel that it is important to remind the 45 000 justices of the peace in Queensland who are not members of this association and the 10 000 who are that the Government is doing, and will continue to do, its level best to ensure that their professional needs are being met and that information about JP reforms is readily available.

Tremendous progress has been made in this State since the new JP and commissioner for declarations legislation was passed by this Parliament in 1991. Even though there is absolutely no need for current justices to undergo additional training or make any change during the next five years, I know that in my electorate alone there are many justices of the peace who have transferred to the commissioner for declarations and many more who have sat for free JP exams offered by TAFE in order to satisfy their application to become a justice of the peace (qualified).

While the QJA State council is trying to sort out this crisis with its executive, it is important that justices know about and use the current support systems offered by this Government. It is important that justices know that the whole reform process is overseen by the Justice of the Peace Council. This council

meets regularly to discuss all issues in relation to JPs. It advises the Minister for Justice and Attorney-General on selection criteria, on appointments, training courses, manuals and the special needs of JPs in rural and isolated areas and within Aboriginal and Islander communities. The council looks at all issues affecting justices, and is an efficient mechanism by which all justices, no matter where they live, have a direct voice to the Minister.

Most significantly, the council has advised the Attorney-General on the training course which is now on offer throughout the State. In fact, training agreements have now been signed between the Department of Justice and the Attorney-General and TAFETE, the University of Queensland, the University of Central Queensland, Walker Pender Consultants and Dynamic Speakers and Management Consultants. All of these training providers deliver the approved training program for commissioners for declarations and justices of the peace (qualified). The training program is standardised throughout Queensland and replaces the mishmash of training previously available.

Not only has this program standardised course content, but it has also standardised evaluation procedures. In order to become a justice of the peace (qualified), applicants need to pass a competency assessment test. It is a three-hour examination held throughout the State. It is an open-book examination, and is offered free of charge. The test covers material taken from justice of the peace manuals 1 and 2. Those manuals are available through State members of Parliament under the JP library loan program. They are available on loan to any other persons who wish to become a commissioner for declarations or justice of the peace (qualified). Those manuals can also be purchased for a small cost from the Registrar of Justices.

Last June, 434 people Statewide sat for the JP examination; of those, 348 passed. Those people who were not successful can now appeal their result through the Registrar of Justices or opt to sit for the next examinations due to be held on 7 and 9 August and 27 October this year. Further, in a week or two, JPs throughout the State will be receiving an edition of *Justice Papers*—a publication designed to inform justices of the status of reforms in Queensland, of changes in legislation and of specific information relating to those functions.

Finally, the MP hotline installed by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General allows me and other MPs in this State to gain first-hand information from the State Registrar on the processing of applications or any other issues of concern to my constituents. In addition, the department has installed a 008 number so that persons wanting to know about the reforms can telephone direct, free of charge. I know that there is much interest in my electorate from people wishing to participate in these vital reforms, and this is to be commended. The spirit of this volunteer brigade of justices serving the local community is to be applauded. I commend these Queenslanders for their service.

At the same time, I want to congratulate the Attorney-General for his commitment to justices across the State. There is a certain amount of pride among these people now. They feel that they are being given the recognition that they deserve, and they feel that they have a worthwhile role to play in the community. I congratulate the Attorney on his commitment.

Time expired.

Workers' Compensation; Shoalwater Bay

Hon. V. P. LESTER (Keppel) (1.19 a.m.): I want to bring to the attention of the House a concern that exists for those people attending TAFE colleges and participating in work experience. A young lad in Rockhampton—and I will not, for good reasons, mention his name in the House; but the Minister would be aware of who he is—who was working on a roof had an accident in which he tore tendons in his hands. He is unable—at this point, anyway—to have his private medical bills paid for under the compensation that one would expect that young lad would be entitled to.

The accident has proved to be a rather nasty one, and hundreds of dollars have now been spent on specialist medical attention, as it seems that only a specialist can handle this particular problem. Of course, one would have expected that this young lad would have been covered, and yet, the harder he has tried—and his father has tried—either through Suncorp, workers' compensation, the TAFE college and the regional office, we still have not received a satisfactory answer to this problem. He has just been told that he should have gone to the public hospital. Quite honestly, the facilities to fix this rather difficult problem do not exist in the public hospital.

I am led to believe, however, that he was told that if he had managed to cut off a finger he would have received compensation. However, I do not really think that is the answer to a problem such as this. I simply ask the Minister to look at it because it is a serious matter. Before this young lad took up his work experience, it certainly was not explained to him that should he have an accident other than losing a limb or whatever he would not be covered for medical expenses of a private nature.

When I was speaking about the Yeppoon railway line, somebody told me to produce the letter from the Minister saying that the line would not be closed. The bottom line of the letter said that we could be assured that there were no current plans to close the Yeppoon line, and that this situation was expected to continue while current volumes of pineapple transport traffic continue to use the line. The Minister said that he hoped that that information would allay the fears and concerns of everybody in the area. That letter is dated 31 May 1993, and it was not very nice of Mr Hamill. Fair dinkum, the Minister was leading people up the garden path, and it is not appreciated.

I turn now to the Shoalwater Bay sandmining inquiry. We have some grave concerns with that because the real issue for the inquiry, in my view, as to whether we should or should not have sandmining at Shoalwater Bay is quite bluntly whether or not the Yeppoon water supply will be affected. I am concerned about that issue and also the effect on fishing habitats, leaving aside for the moment all the other issues. The most important matter of concern, however, is one that does not appear to be addressed by the inquiry.

I suggest that the inquiry should not bring down a finding until such time as a determination can be made in relation to whether or not Yeppoon's water supply will be affected. It will take some considerable time before answers can be found, but there would be no point in an inquiry making all sorts of recommendations when the key issue of possible contamination of the Yeppoon water supply by sandmining has not yet been determined. The only alternative would be to bring water from Rockhampton at a cost of approximately \$90m but, of course, as most people would be aware, there is basically not enough water to meet Rockhampton's demands. Clearly, taking into account the growth in population in the Capricorn coast area, this is a very big problem. As nicely as I

can, I call on the Government to address the real problems of this inquiry.

Comments by Member for Clayfield

Mrs BIRD (Whitsunday) (1.24 a.m.): I am sure that all members would well remember the feigned hurt and indignation of the honourable member for Clayfield the last time this Parliament sat over what he claimed were slurs against racial origin. I draw to all members' attention the hypocrisy of the member who grossly overreacted to an answer given by the Honourable Minister for Housing, Local Government and Planning. Because of the politically convenient sensitivity of the member, I will not repeat the comments. Any thinking person would agree that that statement, in the context in which it was made, was clearly non-racist. However, Mr Santoro went out of his way to gain as much political mileage and public sympathy from the issue as he could.

In fact, on the Rod Henshaw program, Mr Santoro said—

"I have never accused anybody in the Parliament who had been born elsewhere or who has some particular ethnic quirk or trait . . . but anybody who has some peculiarity in terms of origin I haven't brought it up."

All that sincerity came from the honourable member who, in 1990, spoke in Parliament about problems he was experiencing in his electorate. Mr Santoro said—

"I will not go into great detail about occurrences associated with the Aboriginal community which have led to the threatening of life and property, the destruction of private property, invasion of privacy, indecent behaviour and the disturbance of public peace."

Mr Santoro was only too quick to tar all members of the Aboriginal community with the one brush. He did not speak about isolated members, but collectively victimised the entire Aboriginal community by portraying them as vandals. The hypocrisy shown by the member is quite apparent. However, the member has placed on record that he subscribes to the Liberal Party's philosophy which he says is based on respect and support for basic human and individual rights. Mr Santoro is yet to demonstrate his support for this philosophy which, at this stage, can be added to the growing list of hypocritical actions. He also stated—again on the Rod Henshaw program—as follows—

“People are constantly making in a sneering, slow way remarks about people’s place of origin, tossing words in like the Mafia.”

Mr SANTORO: I rise to a point of order. Standing Order 120 entitles me to feel offended by what the member is saying. The Aborigines to whom I referred were breaking the law, and I made comments in support of the rest of my constituents. I find the member’s remarks offensive, and I ask for them to be withdrawn.

Mrs BIRD: Mr Speaker, I am quoting from *Hansard*.

Mr SPEAKER: I think it might be easier if the member withdraws the remarks.

Mrs BIRD: I withdraw. I think that most people who heard that would have had a good laugh when they looked at Mr Santoro’s record.

Mr T. B. Sullivan interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mrs BIRD: Only a month ago, the member was bleating that he felt insulted for the people upon whom these slurs were being cast, yet in this Parliament his own words speak for themselves. In this Parliament, he certainly has gained quite a reputation for name-calling. Even the most spiteful schoolyard bully would be proud of the repertoire of stinging and personal rebukes which he has compiled over the past four years and which include, to quote just a few, “the sucker for Stafford”, “the peacock from Archerfield”, “the mouth from Mount Coot-tha”, “the numbskull from Nundah”, “the gutless Premier”, “bottlebrush”, and “the intellectual midget”.

In a letter to the editor of *Business Queensland*, the member claimed that use of the words “Sicily” and “Mafia” is a racial slur, yet on three separate occasions in 1991 in this Chamber Mr Santoro threw around the word “Mafia” when he referred to the “Goss legal Mafia”. Mr Santoro has either radically changed his views on what is and is not racist in the past two years, or obviously uses such occasions for his own political gain. In fact, for a person who publicly claims such respect and affinity with the cultural traditions of his Italian heritage, his recent actions would point to the latter, that is, political gain.

The member was asked to help establish a group of Italian politicians from throughout Australia who would work closely with and for the Italian community. He refused to join as he did not want to be identified as ethnic. This

man is happy to use his heritage when he believes it can——

Mr SANTORO: Mr Speaker, the statement which has been made by the honourable member is totally untrue. That invitation was never extended to me. She is indulging in a lie and I find her comments offensive. I ask her to withdraw them.

Mrs BIRD: I withdraw.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 1.29 a.m. (Thursday).