

**THURSDAY, 7 OCTOBER 1993**

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

**PETITIONS**

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

**Bardon Professional Development Centre**

From **Mr Quinn** (12 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.

**Native Animals and Plants**

From **Mr Slack** (4 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will actively maintain legal sanctuary and permanent preservation for all native animals and plants in Queensland national parks and revoke all sections of Acts which appear to allow hunting or gathering of native wildlife.

**Kindergarten Funding**

From **Mrs Edmond** (54 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.

Petitions received.

**STATUTORY INSTRUMENT**

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

Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act —

Amendment of TAFETEQ Rules relating to fees and charges, effective from 1 January 1994.

**PAPERS**

The following papers were laid on the table—

- (a) The Treasurer (Mr De Lacy)—  
Queensland Machine Gaming Commission—Report 1992-93
- (b) Minister for Police and Emergency Services (Mr Braddy)—  
Queensland Fire Brigades Employees' Superannuation Plan—Report 1992-93.

Ordered to be printed.

**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE****Death of Mr E. D. Harris**

**Hon. W. K. GOSS** (Logan—Premier and Minister for Economic and Trade Development) (10.03 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"1. That this House desires to place on record its appreciation of the services rendered to this State by the late Edward David Harris, a former member of the Parliament of Queensland.

2. That Mr Speaker be requested to convey to the family of the deceased gentleman the above resolution together with an expression of the sympathy and sorrow of the members of the Parliament of Queensland in the loss that they have sustained."

Edward David Harris was born in Brisbane in 1911. He was educated at the Goodna, Wynnum and Sherwood primary schools, receiving a scholarship to Sherwood. Mr Harris was a clothing manufacturer by occupation, specialising in men's and boys' wear until 1966. He was also involved with horse breeding and grazing. During the Second World War, he served in the Middle East and the Pacific as a member of the RAAF. Mr Harris was the President of the 24th Bomber and 75th Fighter Squadrons Association.

He entered State Parliament as the member for Wynnum representing the Australian Labor Party in May 1966, and remained as such until he was defeated in December 1974. During this period, he was also the minute secretary of the Wynnum Electoral Executive and the president of the Manly branch of the Australian Labor Party. During his eight years in Parliament, Mr Harris earned a reputation for vigorous representation of his electors. His ability to have district problems resolved was well known. He was also a consistent advocate of the need for a district hospital at Wynnum, and was involved in issues concerning the inadequacies of the police force.

Mr Harris was an active member of the parliamentary committees on health, police, and works and housing. He represented the State Parliament at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Canberra in 1970. Mr Harris retired to Mount Tamborine in 1977.

**Mr BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (10.05 a.m.) On behalf of the Opposition, I rise to second this condolence motion for the former member for Wynnum, Edward David Harris. Ted was a proud member of his party and a solid member of Parliament who served for eight years as the member for Wynnum between May 1966 and December 1974. I note that he was born and bred in Brisbane and educated at the Goodna, Wynnum and Sherwood State schools. As the Premier indicated, before entering politics, he was a horse breeder, grazier and tailor, specialising in manufacturing men's clothing. I also note that Ted Harris proudly served his country in the Royal Australian Air Force during the Second World War. He entered the war effort in 1940, serving with the RAAF's 24th Bomber Squadron and 75th Fighter Squadron in the Middle East and in the Pacific.

Ted Harris was very involved with his party at an executive level in the Wynnum and Manly electorates before becoming the candidate for Wynnum following the retirement through ill health of Labor's Bill Gunn. Ted Harris was to be commended for his commitment to the community and to local issues. Upon entering Parliament in 1966, he vowed that he would never cease to be conscious of the tremendous trust that had been placed in him by the electors of Wynnum. He said that it was his intention over the ensuing years to see to it that their confidence in him would not be misplaced. Ted noted that his electorate consisted mainly of working people, pensioners and small businessmen. He felt it his responsibility to deal with matters which he felt were of concern to them and their families.

Ted Harris relentlessly pursued issues such as the adequate provision of police officers and police facilities to deal with crime in the Wynnum area. He was concerned about health services and pushed hard for the establishment of a hospital at Wynnum and the extension of dental services. He was also a keen advocate of the electrification of the Brisbane rail system. At that time, he entered politics and felt that his electorate was developing into an important industrial centre. He often spoke on behalf of the workers in various industries in his area. These were

grassroots issues. It was these sorts of fundamental matters which, as members of Parliament, none of us can afford to ignore.

As a tailor, Ted Harris also took particular interest in the standard of Government uniforms, in particular, that of prison officers. Back in 1967, as the Deputy Premier recalls, Ted Harris felt that the tailoring of uniforms for prison officers made them look like circus performers. Ted said at the time that he spoke on good authority, after making a particularly good living from making alterations not only to prison uniforms but also to railway and police uniforms. When the Government responded by saying that the uniforms were made to measure, Ted replied—

“The people who were doing the measuring were obviously not qualified to do so.”

On one occasion, he even took the step of bringing a uniform into the Parliament to demonstrate his point.

During his time in this House, Ted Harris was an active member of the parliamentary committees on health, police, and works and housing. He also represented State Parliament at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Canberra in 1970. When he left Parliament in 1974, he left with the knowledge that he had served his party proudly and did his best to represent his constituents.

I did not know Ted all that well. During the last few years, I would often see him on the Gold Coast and have a talk with him in his capacity as a member of the committee of the Gold Coast Turf Club, which he also served with great dedication. We on this side of the House pay our respects to Ted Harris and wish to pass on our sincere condolences to his family.

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.09 a.m.): Ted Harris was a grassroots-style local member who fought diligently for his electorate of Wynnum between 1966 and 1974. Ted Harris was a proud ALP man who had worked as a tailor, men's mercer, horse breeder and grazier before entering Parliament. He specialised in men's and boys' wear and criticised the Government of the day over the state of Government uniforms which he said provided a good living for private-enterprise tailors who were forced to repair them.

Ted Harris even touched on my own electorate when he criticised the National Party Government of the day for building a hospital in Caloundra while not building one at

Wynnum. I am very glad that we now have a hospital in Caloundra. I can understand the frustration in trying to get the necessary Government spending in one's own electorate. He fought for his electorate, and he was very proud to help his area. In his maiden speech, he spoke of the growing industry in Wynnum from boat building to the Ampol oil refinery, and of the many new shops and businesses moving into the area. He served in the RAAF in the Pacific and the Middle East during World War II.

As a politician, Ted Harris was a quiet achiever, a man who worked for his electorate without expecting or demanding high public praise. I offer my condolences to his family and friends.

**Hon. T. J. BURNS** (Lytton—Deputy Premier, Minister for Administrative Services and Minister for Rural Communities) (10.10 a.m.): For the first two and a half years that I was a member of this House, Ted Harris was my political neighbour. In fact, my seat of Lytton actually now incorporates much of the bayside area that Ted represented. Ted was the member for Wynnum from May 1966 until December 1974, when he was defeated in an election that saw Labor's numbers cut from 33 to 11.

He was the sixth member for the electorate of Wynnum, following a very popular local member, Labor man Bill Gunn—not the Bill Gunn we all know, but old Bill Gunn who was a Labor man for the area for 22 years. Ted was a bloke who loved a yarn and had a good sense of humour. He was one of the many Labor members between the split in 1957 and December 1989 who spent their entire parliamentary careers in opposition.

I first knew Ted in the 1960s when I was State organiser for the Labor Party in Queensland. In those days it was against the party rules to canvass for votes in a plebiscite.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr BURNS:** Well, it was against the rules. Affiliated unionists as well as ALP members were entitled to vote, but the poor old candidates were not supposed to circulate printed material to solicit their support. At the time, Ted was a tailor and he ran a drapery store opposite the Manly Hotel. He did better than simply distributing a few letters or brochures. During the week of the plebiscite to replace Bill Gunn, Ted placed an advertisement in the *Wynnum Herald* inviting ALP members in the area to call in at his drapery shop that Saturday morning for their free gift on their way to vote in the plebiscite. I

have to say this: we had the best-dressed ALP branch in Queensland, but I have to continue this story. Sitting across the road was the Wynnum Manly Rugby League team, and they had been running raffles. One of the members of the team was the Honourable Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, who was then playing for Wynnum Manly. They saw all these fellows going over there and they said, "We'd better go over there and find what it is about." They said, "Vote in the plebiscite", so half the team voted. The only problem with Gibbsy was that he was dirty that he did not get a free shirt. All these well-dressed members attended the next branch meeting. There was hell to pay as a result of the plebiscite. As an organiser, I was sent down to rerun the plebiscite, but Ted still won it. I am not too sure what he did the second time. Anyway, Ted was the eventual winner and he held Wynnum until he was defeated in 1974 by Bill Lamond, who was the first State member of the National Party elected in a Brisbane metropolitan seat.

Teddy was born in 1911. He was a cousin of Jim Donald. Some honourable members would remember Jim Donald from Ipswich. In fact, at one time I think both of them were in this place together. Of course, Jim was a great old Labor man and leader of the Labor Party at one stage. It is just under 20 years since Ted left this place. As far as I can see, there are now only three members left in our caucus—Ed Casey, Bill D'Arcy and myself—who would have been here with Ted. I do not think there are on the opposite side of the House any members who were here with him. Doesn't that point to the high turnover in this place in 20 years? Out of 89 members, there are only three members left who served with him at that time. He went from here in 1974; and it is now 1993. Sometimes, when attacks are made on politicians and their careers, people ought to realise what a rapid turnover of members there has been, what changes have taken place and the pressures under which we work.

I have said it before and I will say again: it is the families that miss out very much through the efforts of members of Parliament who do their job properly. One could say that Ted was a tight man with a buck. He was a dapper little fellow. If members ever saw him around the racecourse, they would recall that he wore a little hat and that he dressed very, very well. As the Leader of the Opposition said, he was always critical of police uniforms and the uniforms worn by other people. In this place, reference was made to Ted as the member for uniforms.

Ted loved racing. His son, Les Harris, was a good jockey, but Ted would never give you a tip. One day, after I had given him a lot of help in this place, I said to him, "You'd better give me a tip on Saturday." On Monday, he walked past me and waved a \$16,000 cheque, saying that he had a big win, but he had not given me a tip. He said that I would have ruined the price. Honourable members can imagine how much of an effect my five bucks each way would have had on the price!

In 1975, when Bert Milliner died, there was an argument in this place about who would fill the vacancy. There were rumours that Ted Harris would ask to be nominated, but those rumours were untrue. Albert Patrick Field was the person who took that position at that time; it was not Ted.

Ted served under three Labor Opposition leaders—Jack Duggan, Jack Houston and Perc Tucker. During the relatively short period that he was a member of this Parliament, the State was led by four different Premiers: Sir Francis Nicklin, Sir Joh Bjelke-Petersen and, briefly, Jack Pizzey and Sir Gordon Chalk. When he first stood for Wynnum in 1966, Ted's campaign director was a bloke by the name of Jack Comber, who was the Federal Labor member for Bowman from 1961 until 1963. Like Ted, Jack Comber was a tailor, so it was quite a combination—one tailor measuring up or, should I say, stitching up the plebiscite, and another stitching up the election campaign.

Ted was a real good bloke. Many people in the area of Lytton, which I represent, still remember him fondly as their former member in this Parliament. He will be sadly missed by his wife and his mates.

**Hon. E. D. CASEY** (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.16 a.m.): I would like to join this debate briefly because, during my first term in this Parliament after I was elected in 1969, I shared a seat in the Chamber with the late Ted Harris who, as has already been indicated, served from 1966 through to 1974.

At that time, seating arrangements were entirely different. Backbenchers on both the Government and Opposition sides sat in pairs from about the middle of the Chamber to the rear wall. There is always something about sharing a seat in this Chamber. As the Deputy Premier has pointed out, there has always been a big turnover of members. We all know that it can be a very, very lonely job. There is something good about sharing things on a daily basis within the Parliament. Ted was a very interesting character to sit alongside. There is no doubt that, when one spends the

whole day sitting in the Chamber, one builds a very close relationship with the member sitting alongside. Members who sit beside one another develop a particular understanding.

Ted had two favourite topics which he raised on a weekly basis while he was serving in this place. One was the rag trade. I use that particular term because he referred to himself as being a person who knew and understood the rag trade. The other topic was horses. As the Deputy Premier has said, Ted was a very, very successful punter. However, there is no way in the world that he would give anyone a tip before Saturday's races. He would only tell people about his successes on the Monday morning following the races, not prior to the races. I guess that is probably why he was so successful.

I think it was the Leader of the Opposition who referred in this debate to the way in which Ted put up so many cases for an improvement in the uniforms that Government employees were required to wear. I well remember the day when he brought a railway uniform into the Chamber. He referred to police uniforms on another occasion. Also, outside the Chamber, he showed people how sloppy some of these uniforms were and said that the Government ought to provide better uniforms for its employees. He was successful. He pursued this issue relentlessly in this Parliament.

Ted was always a great individual representative of the people and there is no question about the ferocity with which he could attack the Government of the day as an Opposition member when he thought that one or more individuals in his electorate were experiencing problems, particularly those in relation to health matters.

When he was defeated in 1974, Ted retired to the Gold Coast hinterland and led a much quieter life than during the previous eight years while he was a member of this Parliament. The Honourable Minister for Tourism has just reminded me that the Gold Coast hinterland, where he was living, could not really be called Labor territory. But, faithfully and regularly, Ted Harris would line up on election day and work on the Labor polling booth. Even though he was well and truly out of the public scene, Ted continued to display his loyalty to the party during the years of his retirement.

Although I did not have as much contact with Ted in the last few years as I did during my first three years as a member of this Parliament, I regret the passing of Ted Harris.

**Mr D'ARCY** (Woodridge) (10.20 a.m.): I also pay my respects to the late Ted Harris for a few moments. When I became a member of Parliament, Ted was a member of this House. We have heard from other members about his prowess. He was a very dapper man who cared very much about his constituents. Younger members, such as I was at that time, could always talk to him and get advice from him. Unlike two of the members who spoke before me, I was occasionally given a winner by him. I was able to get a lot of advice from him. New members come in here very cold, and he was very warm in that way.

I had a special affiliation with Ted through our love for horses. As Tom pointed out, Ted was certainly very proud of his son, Les, who is still a well-known and well-respected jockey within the racing fraternity on the Gold Coast. He has won several premierships there. Ted was always very proud of Les' prowess as a jockey and his interest in that sport.

While Ted Harris was still the member for Wynnum, he bought a property at Coomera. Quite a few funny incidents occurred. Although it might not have been Labor territory, I held the seat of Albert for the Labor Party. The property that Ted bought was less than a kilometre away from the Hinze homestead, where Russell was living at that time. Then when Eddie Wallis-Smith moved into the electorate, three other sitting members and I were living in my electorate of Albert. Ted always used to make a joke of it.

He was a good family man. He represented his constituents very well. He was one of the people in this place whom one remembers fondly. As Tom Burns pointed out, Ted Harris was famous for knowing a lot about the internal workings of the Labor Party—and perhaps how to manipulate them from time to time. He was fairly free with advice in that direction. One could always get a cheery smile out of him. He would always talk to people, no matter what was happening and how he felt. As a member of Parliament, he will be well remembered by his constituents. One could say that he was a member of Parliament who will be remembered as an honourable man.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK** (Albert) (10.23 a.m.): In common with many other new members of this House, I do not know what it is like to be in Opposition. Ted was a member of the long-term Labor Opposition in this State. I remember visiting Ted in 1986, prior to my running as a candidate in the local authority elections. He lived at Upper Coomera, which is less than a kilometre from where I used to live. I visited Ted to ask him about running as a

candidate in the council elections. He used to give me advice. At that time, it was hard yakka in Albert. I remember Ted manning the Upper Coomera booth all the time for the Labor Party. We used to get flogged there all the time. One could always count on Ted to go there.

I pass on my condolences to his wife, Marion, and his two children, Marion and Les. It saddens me when we lose the old workhorses from this place, the ones who battled away for years and years and never saw the Government benches. When I won in 1989, I went to see Ted. There was no person happier than I was.

**Mr VEIVERS** (Southport) (10.24 a.m.): I met Ted Harris when I won the seat of Southport in 1987. I had passed him, but I did not know too much of him. I remember him saying, "Son, you have done the wrong thing here. Aren't you Tom Veivers' cousin?" I said, "Yes." He said, "What are you doing here? Didn't you hand out how-to-vote cards for Bill D'Arcy when you came home from Sydney?" I said, "Yes, I did." He said, "Well, what's happened to you?" That is how I came to see Ted. I used to see him at the track very regularly. He was a committee man at the turf club. We got on well.

Ted Harris also said that both Russ Hinze and I should lose weight so that we would look better in our clothes; that, until we lost weight, there was never any chance that we would look any good in our clothes. He had a very dry sense of humour. As was the case with Mr D'Arcy, Ted did tip me a winner one day, so there is something wrong with the factions in the Labor Party. I found Ted Harris to be very pleasant. I would say that he did great things for the Labor Party. He was always the complete gentleman. He conducted himself very well. This member of the House found it a great pleasure to know Ted. I offer my condolences to his family.

*Motion agreed to, honourable members standing in silence.*

Mr SANTORO having given notice of a motion—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Clayfield that, in a notice of motion, he does not have the right to make a statement that would be offensive to a member of this House. That reference will be withdrawn when the motion is edited. I am talking about the reference to "a very compliant chairman" of the CJC. In giving a notice of motion, the honourable member does not have the right to make statements

that would be offensive to any member or reflect on any member of the House.

## QUESTIONS UPON NOTICE

### 1. Mining Week

Mr BARTON asked the Minister for Minerals and Energy—

“What will be the main features of Mining Week this year?”

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the honourable member for his question, which he placed on notice yesterday.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr McGRADY:** It is quite amazing that, yesterday, Opposition members spent all of question time on trivial matters yet, when Government members tried to talk about the mining industry, they did not want to hear.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the Minister answer the question.

**Mr McGRADY:** I am very happy to report that Mining Week, which was an initiative of this Government, will start this Sunday.

**Mrs McCauley** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Callide!

**Mr McGRADY:** Mining Week will start with a day of free family entertainment at the South Bank. The day is called the Magical Minerals Family Fun Day and will feature life-size coal and mineral characters, a walk-through coal tunnel, steam train rides and a junior rock show, amongst many other activities. A highlight of the day will be the magical minerals rock show, in which 16 Brisbane primary schools will compete for \$3,000 in prizes in the junior version of the now-famous secondary school Rock Eisteddfod. There will be 500 entrants performing as part of that event. Other activities will include a fashion parade, jewellery making, rock chipping and gold panning. The celebrations will continue throughout the week, with displays and activities in Queen Street. Anybody who visits Queen Street during the next week will learn something about mining and its role in our society. Events will also be staged throughout Queensland mining centres so that people who are actually involved in the industry will also have a chance to participate.

No member of this House would disagree that mining plays an incredibly important part in the everyday lives of every person in this State. Clothes, furnishings—

**An Opposition member:** Table it!

**Mr McGRADY:** No, I will not table it. Clothes, furnishings, vehicles and household appliances are all the direct result of mining, but many people are not aware of that fact.

I had great pleasure in initiating Mining Week last year specifically to illustrate, especially to city people, the importance of minerals and energy to everyday living. Queensland Mining Week is a true community event in which we have aimed to actively involve the people of Queensland in learning more about the everyday activities of the mining industry.

I want to place on record my thanks to the officers of my department, the Queensland Mining Council and the trade union movement. In the words of the Premier the other day, I conclude by commenting that anybody who is not interested in mining is not really interested in the economy of Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the member for Western Downs, I remind members that Ministers may table their answers for incorporation but that they do not have to do so. Equally, Ministers may read out their answers. They may adopt whichever course they see fit. I will not tolerate members continually interjecting, calling for answers to be tabled. The Standing Orders are as I have interpreted them. They will be enforced in that manner.

### 2. Child Protection Register

Mr LITTLEPROUD asked the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs—

“With reference to the Ombudsman's annual report in which grave concerns were expressed about the use of the Child Protection Register and who had access to it because unsubstantiated malicious allegations are entered on that register—

Does she agree that the Department of Family Services' practice of maintaining a Child Protection Register that contains unsubstantiated malicious allegations against parents is a gross violation of the civil rights of individuals?”

**Ms WARNER:** I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

My department has a responsibility to record and maintain all mandatory and voluntary reports of suspected abuse and neglect. This includes the details of investigations

undertaken and their outcomes, which may be unfounded, suspected or substantiated.

The community's concern for our children and their protection from abuse demands that departments such as mine hold accurate and complete information to ensure their protection.

Obviously the issue of individual civil rights is an important one for both the children and parents. The primary purpose of recording and investigating reported is to assess whether concerns exist about the abuse or neglect of a child and the focus is on providing assistance.

The Department does not make a finding of whether a complaint was malicious. Where the intent of the notifier appears to be malicious and the report is unfounded, the maintenance of this information is still important in relation to how any future reports concerning the same child are responded to. This may result in a decision not to investigate a subsequent report of a similar nature.

The issue of how long unfounded reports should be maintained has been the subject of a recent review. As a result, my department is currently implementing procedures to address this very issue. We are also conducting a total review of the child protection legislation and invite comment on a range of issues including how long information should be retained.

The community's concern for our children and their protection from abuse demands that departments such as mine hold accurate and complete information to ensure their protection. I do not regard this as a gross violation of civil rights. The protection of children is of paramount importance.

### 3. Child Protection Register

Mr LITTLEPROUD asked the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs—

“Will she give her personal guarantee that unsubstantiated allegations against people listed on the Child Protection Register have not influenced applications for adoptions by the same people?”

**Ms WARNER:** I seek leave to table the answer and have it incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I would like to point out that adoption assessments are done by professional people—not departmental officers—who make assessments about the suitability of a adoption applicants on a fee-for-service basis.

They do not have access to the files to which the Honourable Member has referred. Departmental records are not checked, as a matter of course, in regard to adoption applications. Most adoption applicants are, in fact, childless and therefore, departmental

records which relate to children are of no relevance.

### 4. Roads, Wide Bay Area

Mr DOLLIN asked the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development—

“What action is the Government taking to improve the road network in the Wide Bay area and specifically to address problems on the Bruce Highway at the Gunalda Range?”

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

Leave granted.

The Member for Maryborough will be pleased to know more than \$35 million will be spent on road construction and maintenance in the Wide Bay District in 1993/94. This funding includes \$9.4 million from the Federal Government for National Roads and \$25.6 million from the State Government for State-controlled roads. Productivity gains from our Road Reform initiative will also allow additional work to be carried out including:

Construction of a number of overtaking lanes on the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road costing \$1 million.

Continuation of construction of the \$17 million bridge and approach works at the new Burnett River crossing in Bundaberg.

Completion of the \$1 million project to upgrade the Isis Highway between Childers and North/South Road.

Completion of the \$1 million project to upgrade the Burnett Highway west from Boundary Hill.

Concerning the Gunalda Range, there is a planned 3.3km deviation on new alignment to bypass the existing highway in Tiaro Shire, about 70km south of Maryborough. This would connect with the new Glenwood Deviation, which was completed in 1991 and which includes passing lanes. It commences on the northern side of the range. The estimated cost of \$7.8 million has now been put on the Queensland Department of Transport's five year program and is planned to start in 1997/98.

Important work on the construction of new overtaking lanes between Childers and Gympie, and several other projects, each costing around \$1 million will precede the Gunalda Range project. Another initial priority is shoulder sealing on lengthy sections south of Maryborough to improve safety and reduce maintenance costs.

### 5. Tilt Trains, Brisbane-Rockhampton

Mr DOLLIN asked the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development—

“At what stage is the Government's proposal to introduce high-technology tilt trains between Brisbane and Rockhampton?”

**Mr HAMILL:** I am sure that this is a matter that is of considerable interest to all members. I wish to assure the member for Maryborough that the Queensland Government is well advanced in delivering tilt-train technology to the people of Queensland. Already, three companies have expressed interest in the project, which will put Queensland Rail in the forefront of tilt technology worldwide. EDI-Hitachi-Itochi (Brisbane), ABB Transport (Brisbane) and Morrison Knudsen Corporation of Australia Ltd (Adelaide) have until December to place their tenders, with the winning tender to be announced in mid-1994. The first tilt train could be in service by late 1996, with the second delivered in March 1997.

Tilt-train technology will slash the travelling time from Brisbane to Rockhampton by two and a half hours. The travelling time to Maryborough will be cut from four hours 20 minutes to three hours 20 minutes. The train design will feature advanced comfort and communications systems, and passengers will have access to video, television and radio, telephones and fax facilities. It is envisaged that two six-car trains will be built, each accommodating 325 passengers. They will be manufactured in Australia, possibly in Queensland, with some specialist equipment imported. EDI-Hitachi-Itochi would utilise Japanese technology; ABB Transport would use Swedish technology; and Morrison Knudsen would use Italian technology.

Sweden, Japan, Italy and Spain are all using tilt trains, which are an economical way of achieving high speeds. By tilting into curves, travelling times are cut substantially without the necessity of building new track. Nevertheless, the \$526m main line upgrade which is under way between Brisbane and Cairns will lessen journey times for the tilt trains, which will have a top speed of 160 kilometres per hour. It is also expected to encourage more people to travel by rail. For instance, patronage almost doubled between Brisbane and Rockhampton when the electric Spirit of Capricorn was introduced in 1989.

#### **QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

##### **Changes to Criminal Justice Act**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In directing a question to the Attorney-General, I refer him to his failure to implement most recommendations of the parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee in regard to the Criminal Justice Act and the establishment of yet another record-breaking committee—dominated by the Premier's Office of the Cabinet, the Premier's Public Sector Management Commission and the Police Service—to review the CJC, and I ask the Attorney: why has the parliamentary committee been overridden, and why has he permitted Executive interference in the redefining of the role of the Criminal Justice Commission?

**Mr WELLS:** I think it is important to note that the honourable the Leader of the Opposition is complaining about the ordinary processes of Government—processes with which he was at one time familiar, although presumably never the master of. The information that was provided to this Parliament by the parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee was not, as the honourable member knows very well, provided in the form of a Bill. It was provided in the form of a large number of recommendations for a large number of largely technical amendments which the Criminal Justice Commission wanted to see made into statutory amendments. Those were examined by the PCJC, which has similarly reported to the Parliament.

As the honourable member for Surfers Paradise knows very well, the process that is then required is for the Government to examine those matters and to make recommendations to this Parliament in the form of a Bill. The process of the translation of those matters takes time, particularly when one is dealing with sometimes quite intractable matters. Matters which can largely be described as technical nevertheless are issues which require some process of decision.

I will give the honourable member one instance to which he might be able at a later stage to give us a quick and easy answer. At present, the Criminal Justice Act provides that a vexatious or frivolous complaint can be the subject of a prosecution. However, it also provides that there has to be a warning before the prosecution goes ahead. There has to be a second occurrence. The CJC recommends that we should delete the requirement of a warning. Of course, that raises civil liberties questions. The proposal that the CJC has made may very well have some merit, but it does not seem to me that there is a quick and easy answer.

It is very odd to see the honourable the Leader of the Opposition girding himself for battle on behalf of the CJC. His shadow Attorney-General, the honourable Denver Beanland, stated recently—

“After all, the Fitzgerald inquiry recommended the abolition of the Special Branch. Now, there is very little difference, I contest, between having the Special Branch and the CJC.”

Members should hear also what Sir Joh sayeth—

“The CJC has got to be closed down, and the quicker the better.”

Sir Joh made that comment at a National Party conference dinner. The honourable member for Beaudesert has stated—

“The CJC is virtually working uncontrolled. It is about time that this Government brought back that control.”

With friends such as those, the CJC does not need enemies.

### Mabo

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to his expressions of support for the mining industry, and I ask: how does he reconcile his rhetoric as a champion of the mining industry with the reality that he has both privately and publicly agreed with the deliberate misinterpretation of the High Court Mabo decision by the Commonwealth whereby a mining lease does not extinguish native title?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The Leader of the Opposition either fails to understand or deliberately misrepresents the High Court decision. The High Court decision did not find that mining leases extinguish native title as a matter of law. As I have said to the Leader of the Opposition before that my advice is that it is really a mixed question of law and fact that relates to the nature of the activity. The proposal that is being discussed—in respect of which there is general agreement by not just this State but conservative States as well—is that there will be three categories of tenure, and there will be a provision, subject to Federal Cabinet’s deliberations, whereby some mining leases will go into that category. But it depends very much on the nature of the activity.

### Truancy and Absenteeism in Toowoomba

**Mr PITT:** I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: is he aware of claims of a crisis over truancy and school absenteeism in Toowoomba? Can he inform the House of the success of police involvement with Toowoomba schools?

**Mr BRADY:** The alleged crisis is a figment of the imagination of the member for Crows Nest, who managed to convince the *Toowoomba Chronicle* to run a par in that paper on 16 September in relation to what he referred to as a crisis. The greatest lesson to be learnt from this is by the members for Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South, who were obviously beguiled into joining him in the alleged claim. Lo and behold, I am sure that they have learnt their lesson, because the following day the *Toowoomba Chronicle* went to the trouble of interviewing the three high school principals in Toowoomba, who disavowed the attention and expressed surprise and amazement that the claim had been made.

It is not surprising that the member for Crows Nest engages in this activity. He has been spreading gloom and doom where he can since he became the shadow Minister. Yet here he was disavowed, not by the police officers themselves, but by the principals of the schools.

I refer to the article in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* the following day. When the *Toowoomba Chronicle* approached the Toowoomba State High School principal, Dr Barrett, he indicated that the system was working very well. He conceded that, although three police officers had been originally attached to the squad, there now were two. He was aware that the system had been evaluated and that, in the circumstances, the police had found that two dedicated officers were sufficient. In addition to that, we had instituted a pedestrian beat system in Toowoomba whereby one of the police officers is attached to a beat close to the Toowoomba State High School. In fact, in addition to the Truancy Squad, that officer spends two days a week at that high school. Dr Barrett said that he was surprised at the comments made by the politicians.

The members for Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South had egg on their faces, along with the egg on his face that the member for Crows Nest never seems to notice. The reality is that the Truancy Squad system in Toowoomba is working very well. The three high school principals have publicly expressed their satisfaction with it. Opposition

members again attempted a beat up which ended in embarrassment for them.

### **Ambulance Response Times**

**Mr PITT:** I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: has his attention been drawn to recent figures regarding the average response time of Queensland ambulances to code 1 emergencies?

**Mr BRADY:** It is very important that our ambulance reaction time is monitored and kept as low as possible. Around the world in urban areas the important test for ambulances is the quickness of response to calls that are made on them. The test normally is a 10-minute response time in urban areas. In Queensland, we are finding that the response times are better than that.

Queensland ambulance officers operating from 177 stations across the State have recorded an average Statewide response time better than that required for urban centres such as Brisbane and the Gold Coast. The average response time across the State in the past financial year was seven and three-quarter minutes, which was well below the national average of 10 minutes.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Average!

**Mr BRADY:** We should compare apples with apples. The comparison relates well to the average response time across the country. The yardstick is 10 minutes. The standard that has been achieved in Queensland is less than eight minutes, which was achieved throughout the year right across the State. That flies in the face of the Chicken Little prophesies that continue to come from the member for Crows Nest, with the sky always falling in, as he would like.

The official figures from the Ambulance Service again put the lie to the attempted gloom and doom and the Chicken Little prophesies that he continues to propagate.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

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

**Mr BRADY:** The average response time of seven and three-quarter minutes, which is well below the national average, is better than that of any other service in the country.

### **Mabo**

**Mrs SHELDON:** In directing a question to the Premier, I refer to the inadequate response from the Queensland Government to the High Court's decision on native title and the Prime Minister's statements that Mabo

claims will apply offshore. I table a letter I sent to the Minister for Tourism on 7 September, to which the Minister has not deigned to reply. I ask the Premier: does he intend to ignore the impact of offshore native title claims and claims over the area of land between the high and low water mark, particularly in relation to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the Great Sandy Region National Park, or will he act to ensure that the reef and other important world resources in this State are exempt from such claims?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I am aware of the attempt by the member to beat up some ambit Mabo-style claim on the Great Barrier Reef. I thought it was pretty pathetic. I gather that the press thought that it was fairly pathetic, too, because she tried to get it up two or three times and received very little coverage. It was a fairly disappointing contribution to the debate.

**Mr Borbidge:** As usual, you're doing nothing.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The Leader of the Opposition should calm down. I have all day.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I do not.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** There are issues that could potentially arise in areas such as the beaches, the Great Barrier Reef and so on, but they are quite speculative. These are matters that I raised personally with the Prime Minister and the Federal Government months ago. When honourable members see the legislation that is being debated by Federal Cabinet at the moment—I understand that should occur within the next two weeks—even the Deputy Leader of the Opposition will have to concede that there is no problem.

### **Gold Coast Indy Car Grand Prix**

**Mrs SHELDON:** I direct a question to the Treasurer. In light of the resignation of Indy General Manager Bob Minnikin yesterday and the subsequent decision to appoint Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation Chief Executive Ken Rosebery as a part-time general manager, I ask: as Treasurer, does he believe that the position of Indy General Manager is a part-time job, given the race's losses of \$53m over the last three years and the State Government's continued stake of \$5m in taxpayers' funds this year? What safeguards has he put in place to ensure that the Queensland taxpayers' investment will be protected?

**Mr W. K. Goss:** That's the wrong Minister.

**Mr De LACY:** The Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing is now the Minister responsible for the Indy car race, but I am prepared to take questions any time Opposition members feel like asking them.

Irrespective of what the Government has put in place to ensure that taxpayers' contributions are protected, the State Government has received sufficient comfort to believe that the race can be run with a contribution from Government of \$5m. As the honourable member should know, it is not possible to dot all the i's and cross all the t's this early in the process. Nevertheless, we weighed up the situation on the basis of the benefits that would flow to the Gold Coast, in particular in terms of economic benefits, and the promotion of this part of Australia on the world scene.

In respect of the management of the Indy race, members of the Opposition have been calling for a long time for a shake up of the board and a shake up of management. The Minister and the new board are putting in place a management structure that they believe is appropriate to run the race in the best interests of Queensland. I am sure that the Minister would say that he has great confidence in his new board, and the new board is taking the appropriate action.

**Mr Borbidge:** You should have a full-time manager.

**Mr De LACY:** As to whether or not it should be a full-time manager—the member should direct that comment to the board. We have a very important board with which I am not going to interfere. It will put in place what it believes to be appropriate action to ensure that the whole of Queensland derives benefit from that great race.

#### **Caboolture Police District**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I ask the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: is he aware of claims by the Opposition that, because of overtime restrictions in the Caboolture, Waterford and Mount Mee areas, police are restricted to a Monday-to-Friday, 9-to-5 service? Can the Minister inform the House of the true situation?

**Mr BRADY:** In order to properly assess the resources in Caboolture and similar areas, we must look at what has occurred since the election of the Goss Labor Government in 1989 and compare it with the inadequate resources that were given to that region under

the previous Government. The facts speak starkly for themselves.

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Crows Nest.

**Mr BRADY:** In 1989, Caboolture had 34 police officers. Today, it has 52—an increase of more than 50 per cent.

**Mr Borbidge:** No-one believes you.

**Mr BRADY:** I take the interjection from the Leader of the Opposition. He says that no-one believes that. I presume that the honourable Opposition Leader is saying that, when the annual report of the Police Commissioner shows that the number of police officers in the Queensland Police Service has grown from 5 200 under the previous Government to nearly 6 400 under this Government, the Police Commissioner is lying; that we do not have those extra 1 200 police officers. That shows the falsity of the Opposition's contention that no-one believes that. The people of Queensland do believe it. They also believe the statistics that show the significant—

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Cunningham!

**Mr BRADY:** The figures published by the Police Service—not by the Government—give the lie to the gloom and doom that Opposition members continually try to preach for their own petty political purposes. Since this Government came to power, the number of police officers in Caboolture has grown by more than 50 per cent. Therefore, under our Government, the Caboolture Police Station is staffed 24 hours a day. That is relevant in relation to the Opposition's claim that no overtime is available.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Southport!

**Mr BRADY:** In fact, all available staff are rostered to provide the best possible service to the division. The Caboolture area and other significant growth areas have never been better staffed with police personnel than they are at present. The people of Queensland do not accept the Chicken Little statements that are made continually by that man who has egg all over his face—the so-called honourable member for Crows Nest.

#### **Ambulance Officer Training**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I ask a second question of the Minister for Police and Emergency Services: can he inform the House of any steps that have been taken to improve the level of professional training of ambulance officers within the Queensland Ambulance Service?

**Mr BRADY:** The issue of training for ambulance officers in Queensland is undoubtedly the most significant achievement of the Ambulance Service in the past three years in this State. Last month, I was pleased to attend the graduation ceremony for the first ambulance officers in Queensland to be awarded their Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Ambulance).

**Mr Connor** interjected.

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

**Mr BRADY:** Indeed, that was an historic day. That associate diploma, which was introduced by our Government, is now the minimum qualification for ambulance officers in Queensland. The three-year course, which is conducted through TAFE, requires 1 000 hours of part-time study for each officer. There are currently 1 650 officers studying for their associate diploma.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BRADY:** Members opposite do not want to listen to the facts. An advanced clinical training package is also being developed by the Queensland Ambulance Service to allow officers to undertake medical procedures that they are presently not qualified to perform. A total of 96 per cent of eligible Queensland ambulance officers are now participating in study. I repeat that the training package available to Queensland Ambulance Service officers is the most significant achievement of the Queensland Ambulance Service in the past few years, and it will be maintained until we have the best trained, best educated officers in Australia.

#### **Gold Coast Ambulance Officers**

**Mr COOPER:** In directing a question to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, I refer to the meeting of Gold Coast ambulance officers on Tuesday, which passed a vote of no confidence in the Minister and voted to suspend all duties apart from 000 emergency calls if shifts were reduced, and I ask: did the Ambulance Service Gold Coast District Superintendent, Mr R. K. Trenaman, issue a memo dated 3 September 1993 titled "Staff Establishment/Budget" which stated that only 62 ambulance officers were available for

on-road duties every week in this district; that 56 of those officers were required for a 24-hour coverage; and that only six officers were available to cover nine identified contingencies ranging from air and marine attendant duties, daily Brisbane transfers and medivac transport to sick leave, workers' compensation leave, long service leave and public education courses? Did the memo follow a decision by QAS senior management to further reduce the total of Gold Coast ambulance staff from 108 to 98?

**Mr BRADY:** I thank the member for his question, which is one of the few that he has ever asked in this place. In relation to the Gold Coast ambulance—the first thing that should be said is that, for a population of its size, that area has more full-time ambulance officers than does Canberra. It also has more full-time ambulance officers than does Christchurch in New Zealand.

**Mr Stephan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Gympie!

**Mr BRADY:** Those places have a similar population to that of the Gold Coast. In relation to those ambulance officers—the department made a decision in relation to resourcing the area as it believed it should be properly resourced, bearing in mind that the numbers available on the Gold Coast measure up very well to any appropriate standards elsewhere in Australia or in this part of the world.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

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

**Mr BRADY:** Again, members opposite do not want to listen. Some of the officers on the Gold Coast particularly enjoyed that rostering system.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

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

**Mr BRADY:** However, a decision was made by management—not by Government and not at my suggestion or proposal, although I support it fully—that, with the numbers available, they can more than adequately cope. So a roster was distributed saying, "This is the way that it will be done." I will back them on that.

In relation to the motion of no confidence in me—I understand that, of approximately 100 ambulance officers on the Gold Coast, only 25 attended that particular meeting. They did not have the support of their union for the

meeting. No full-time union official attended that meeting. Less than one quarter of the ambulance officers on the Gold Coast were present and voted at that particular meeting. I make no apology for backing sensible rostering systems on the Gold Coast that are designed to give a good, efficient service to the people.

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

## **APPROPRIATION BILL (No. 2)**

### **Resumption of Committee**

Debate resumed from 6 October (see p. 4799) on Schedule 1—

### **Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development**

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (11 a.m.): This year, the Queensland Government will spend more than \$3.5 billion on transport, of which \$1.5 billion is committed to the maintenance and expansion of our transport infrastructure. That is \$727m for roadworks, \$635m for our rail lines and \$193m for our ports. About three-quarters of this funding will be directed to regional and country areas, boosting employment at a time when drought and low commodity prices have ravaged the economy in many parts of regional Queensland.

The success being achieved by the Goss Government in the area of transport is good news. We are diversifying and strengthening the State's economy, creating jobs, and improving people's choices of employment and lifestyle. Let me assure the Committee that this Budget will continue the process of transport reform, and help maintain Queensland's position as Australia's leading State. Our success in transport reform has been built upon the principles of social justice and financial responsibility. These principles are integral to the development of the Queensland Transport Policy (QTP) Directions Statement, which will plot the course for planning across the portfolio. In addition, the passage through Parliament of modern transport legislation over the next few months will reduce the number of transport-related Acts from 55 to about 20, in keeping with the Government's commitment to legislative and regulatory reform.

With our transport framework firmly in place, it is appropriate that I detail a number of particular programs that will benefit the people of Queensland in the year ahead.

### **Rail**

One of the great stories of recent years has been the regeneration of Queensland Rail. When I was appointed Transport Minister, much of our rail system resembled a working museum rather than a modern railway. I know that dinosaurs are very popular at the moment, but let me tell honourable members that the one the Labor Government inherited in QR after decades of neglect was scarier than anything they would see in *Jurassic Park*. We are breathing new life into QR with a massive rebuilding program, the biggest in QR's 128-year history. This year's annual report highlights the remarkable progress achieved by this Government by management and, most importantly, by rail workers, in the rebuilding process. In just four years, Queensland Rail has delivered its second consecutive surplus with an operating profit this year of \$13.9m—a remarkable turnaround from the crippling losses of the 1980s. For the first time, QR's financial results are presented on a commercial accrual accounting basis as well as in the traditional accounting format. The use of accrual accounting methods means that QR is now in a position to measure its own financial performance against that of other commercial operators. The annual report highlights dramatic improvements in labour and asset productivity, with increases in both by 40 per cent over the past three years, and this process has been enhanced by QR's enterprise bargaining with its work force.

But one of the most important results of QR's strengthened position has been its capacity to invest in the renewal of the network. This financial year, almost \$635m will be spent as part of that investment package including—

\$153m towards the upgrade of the North Coast Line between Brisbane and Cairns;

\$41m towards the construction of the Gold Coast rail link;

\$24m to continue the duplication of the inner-city tunnels vital to the expansion of the Citytrain network; and

\$166m to build infrastructure to support coal and mineral development.

This type of rail infrastructure work is generating over 2 000 direct jobs throughout the State and creating employment for

another 4 000 indirectly, as well as helping to achieve operational efficiencies such as the reduction of freight transit times between Cairns and Brisbane from 40 hours to 27 hours. That is great news for business, and particularly good news for industry in north Queensland.

QR is also promoting its tourist potential. Unashamedly targeting Queensland's third largest industry, last year QR designed, rebuilt and launched a five-star quality hotel on wheels—the Queenslander. A further \$900,000 is being invested in the new Spirit of the Outback service, which will contribute to the growing tourist industry of the central west. This tourism drive will be enhanced further by the recent calling of tenders for a new high technology tilt-train service, which will slash two and a half hours off journey times between Brisbane and Rockhampton when it is introduced in 1996.

These reforms are not only providing a significantly improved transport service but also they are providing Queenslanders with long-term employment security in a modern and viable railway.

#### Roads

In 1993-94, the total amount to be spent on the Roads Program will be a healthy \$727m. Of the overall outlay, the State Government will boost its contribution to \$454m—a 14 per cent increase on last year. This includes \$50m in special funding from tobacco tax revenue—the first instalment of a \$150m three-year commitment. In addition, unlike the approach taken by conservative Governments in other States, the Queensland Government will actually spend the \$31.5m of untied Federal road grants on State roads.

Although the total funds available for roads is less than the record level of 1992-93 owing to reduced levels of Federal funding, it is worth noting that this year's road budget is well above the trend line for road expenditure in Queensland in recent years. I might add that this level of road funding is being complemented by increased levels of road construction and maintenance being achieved for each road dollar. Productivity gains flowing from road reform will allow additional works worth approximately \$90m to be carried out this year. The overall goal of road reform is a 20 per cent productivity improvement by the end of 1995, and we are well on the way to realising that goal.

We are devoting a large slab of our roads budget to roads in non-metropolitan areas, in many cases providing increased State funds to roads which did not benefit from last year's

big boost in Federal funding, which targeted national highways and arterial roads.

We have forged a strong partnership with local government in the delivery of our road reform initiative. Although we are opening up road construction work to market competition, we have put in place safeguards for those local authorities which rely heavily on roadworks for local employment. Nevertheless, we are changing the relationship between the department and councils from one of principal and agent to one based on agreed price performance contracts. It is the difference between asking someone to paint one's house and to send the bill afterwards, or asking for a quote up front before agreeing to the work being done. We are asking councils for a price up front. Queensland taxpayers are getting better value for their money, and councils are reaping the benefits of their efficiency through more roadworks being achieved. I wish to place on record my thanks to local government for its cooperation with the challenge that is road reform.

#### Marine and Ports

While significant reforms have taken place on the waterfront, particularly in the area of stevedoring, the Queensland Government has focused on the reform of the equally vital area of port management. In this context, it is proposed that the recently established Ports Corporation of Queensland, the Port of Brisbane Authority and the Gladstone Port Authority will be corporatised from 1 July 1994, and the remaining port authorities from 1 July 1995.

This Government has also placed strong emphasis on the development of trade growth as a major factor in strengthening our economy. It is pleasing to report that in the past financial year, trade through Queensland's ports increased by 5 per cent, with the system handling almost 120 million tonnes of cargo. Our northern ports of Cairns and Townsville warrant special mention, with trade growth of 24 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. I note that the honourable member for Gladstone is present in the Chamber. Gladstone again achieved record trade figures, while the port of Brisbane continues to outperform other capital city ports through a combination of efficient performance and competitive pricing.

Brisbane's increasing market share of the Australian container trade is reflected in the 47 per cent increase in container traffic since 1988-89. Brisbane now handles more containers per crane per hour than Hong Kong, and it is quickly catching up to

Singapore. Those ports are world renowned for their efficiency and competitiveness.

To further improve the performance of the port, the State and Federal Governments are investing \$85m to build a standard gauge rail link to the port of Brisbane at Fisherman Islands, in a project which will generate 3 000 jobs directly and indirectly, and link Brisbane to the interstate standard gauge rail network.

Other major projects under way include the expansion of the Clinton coal loading facility at Gladstone and the duplication of coal loading facilities at the Dalrymple Bay coal terminal. The Queensland Government has also developed a draft State Port Strategic Development Plan to provide the policy framework within which Queensland ports will continue to grow. Other initiatives for our maritime industry this year include—

the completion of the final stage of the pilotage and conservancy review which will address pricing strategies;

the introduction of a new marine pollution Bill to provide our marine environment with increased protection from oil and other pollutants;

the involvement of local authorities in the planning, management and ownership of small craft facilities; and

the finalisation of an environment policy for Queensland ports.

A major priority this year is the completion of the review of Statewide public passenger transport arrangements. The review team examined interstate and overseas systems and is engaged in extensive consultation with industry, Government stakeholders and other interested parties, to test various policy options.

The team has examined bus, taxi and private hire car operators, tourist and charter operators and providers of community and courtesy transport services. A recurrent theme in the review is the need to link Government subsidies and operator performance. This way we ensure that the best possible public passenger transport services are extended to the greatest number of people. I am determined to see appropriate legislative reforms put in place for passenger transport to assist industry manage future demand and improve levels of service.

The same principle, which is guiding the review of passenger transport services, was also adopted with respect to the extension of remote area air services. Early last year, the Queensland Government began a 12-month review of all regulated and subsidised air

services throughout the State taking into account the concerns of people in rural and remote communities.

As a result, two contracts significantly upgrading western Queensland air services and expanding the number of communities receiving regular scheduled flights were awarded. The allocation of \$3.5m in this budget means additional subsidised air services have been made available to the people of Winton, St George, Cunnamulla, Thargomindah, Bedourie and Boulia.

**Mr Johnson:** Good stuff!

**Mr HAMILL:** I take the honourable member's interjection. It is good stuff, and I ask him to recognise the achievements of the Government for country people.

Market forces alone do not always produce an equitable outcome, and that is why this Government acted whereas successive National Party administrations did nothing. This year, the three-year Urban Passenger Transport Development Strategy, funded by the Federal Government, will be completed. This program was responsible for modern bus interchanges at Toowoomba, Caloundra, Townsville and Cairns and provided for new buses in Brisbane and Rockhampton.

Upgraded bus/rail interchanges have been completed at Ferny Grove and Maryborough, as have improved Park-n-Ride facilities at Burpengary and Petrie. The program has provided bus priority lanes in South Brisbane, new bus shelters in Brisbane and Ipswich, and many minor road projects supporting public transport.

A pedestrian tunnel linking the Ipswich Transit Centre and the Ipswich Railway station has improved access between bus and rail, and the new bus/rail interchange at Sandgate will soon be finished.

The State Government has also moved to improve access to services for those with restricted or impaired mobility. To this end, Cabinet approved changes to the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, effective from 1 July this year. Residents of Government-sponsored accommodation, such as nursing homes and hostels, may now be eligible for taxi subsidies. Temporary membership of the scheme may also be extended in certain circumstances to people with severe but temporary disabilities.

To meet these increased responsibilities, expenditure on this scheme is expected to rise from \$2.5m in 1992-93 to \$3.4m in 1993-94. This year, public transport in south-east

Queensland will move closer to a fully integrated system. The Government has used advanced technologies to establish an integrated information system, TRANSINFO; as well as introducing electronic ticketing. TRANSINFO provides residents and visitors to south-east Queensland with a state-of-the-art telephone-based information system for all modes of public transport, while electronic ticketing is being introduced across the whole of Brisbane Transport's bus fleet and Queensland Rail's Citytrain system in order to make intermodal transfers more convenient. The sophisticated information and ticketing systems developed through these technologies will help make public transport a more attractive option for the region's rapidly expanding population.

In the area of road safety, the State Government continues to provide the essential ingredients for a progressive and successful assault on the State's annual road toll. In April this year, State Cabinet endorsed a whole-of-government Road Safety Strategy with a target of achieving a one-third reduction in road trauma over the next 10 years.

Clearly, we want to maintain the downward trend in the State's road toll. In 1992, Queensland's road toll was 416, the third lowest figure in 26 years. It would appear that the downward trend is continuing with the 1993 toll, as of 6 October, standing at 294, compared with 309 at the same time last year.

While improved driver training and enhanced community road safety awareness are important factors in reducing road trauma, I wish to make special mention of five measures which have contributed substantially to the reduced road toll. They are—

random road watch, which has allowed improved police surveillance over a larger proportion of the road network resulting in an 8 per cent reduction in crashes on these routes this year;

random breath testing, which has contributed to a reduction of almost 20 per cent in alcohol-related crashes this year;

red light cameras, which have reduced crashes at signalised sites by 40 per cent; child restraint legislation and publicity, which has contributed to the number of casualties involving unrestrained child vehicle occupants falling by one-third; and

compulsory bicycle helmet wearing, which has led to a 17 per cent reduction in injuries involving cyclists.

A wide range of other road safety measures will continue to be implemented this year, including the Schoolsafe subsidy scheme which has been allocated \$1m for 1993-94, and the highly successful School Crossing Supervisor Scheme, which will continue at a cost of \$1.7m.

Marine safety issues are also of vital importance to this Government, and that is why we are providing substantial funding for the Juvenile Boating Safety Program, which focuses on marine studies in high schools throughout the State. We will also progress a new marine safety Bill, which includes the provision for the compulsory carriage of emergency position indicating radio beacons or EPIRBS. This new technology is already saving lives and reducing significantly search and rescue costs.

Ensuring that commuters can travel in comfort and safety is also a high priority, and vital to attracting passengers away from private vehicles and onto public transport. Accordingly, this Government will continue to upgrade safety and comfort features at Queensland rail stations under the Operation Facelift Program, and provide support to the operation of the Railway Police Squad and QR's successful Nightwatch security program.

This Government has been extremely active in removing unnecessary regulations that have hampered, rather than helped, industry in the past. In this Budget, further progress has been achieved through the abolition of the licence to hire for carrying vehicles. This \$2m charge on industry had long outlived its usefulness and its abolition has been welcomed by transport operators. In Queensland, the road transport industry carries over 70 per cent of all freight and it is therefore vital that it operates without the burdens of over-regulation.

One of the most important objectives for the road freight industry is to see the removal of costly and often inconsistent regulations across different State and Territory jurisdictions. The Queensland Government is a vigorous supporter of national uniformity initiatives and is leading the debate in a number of important areas. Indeed, we have already indicated our support for a nationally uniform and fair system of road user charges for heavy vehicles from 1 July 1995, and are currently working with other States to devise an appropriate system of driving hours which are acceptable throughout the nation.

Nevertheless, we have also advocated on behalf of the special needs of particular groups, such as livestock transporters and,

accordingly, we have forwarded our submissions in support of volumetric loading to the National Road Transport Commission.

While streamlining laws and reducing red tape, we have not retreated from our commitment to promoting safety in the heavy vehicle industry. Our program of random roadside enforcement is targeting overloaded and unsafe vehicles, and it will be enhanced by the purchase of a further two mobile vehicle inspection units for light and heavy vehicles at a cost of \$460,000.

Most Queenslanders will at some stage in their lives enter one of Queensland Transport's customer service centres for licensing, registration or simply to inquire about transport services. The Department of Transport's one stop shop program is making sure that when this happens, people will be able to transact all their transport business under the one roof. To date, Queensland Transport has opened 50 one stop customer service centres across Queensland.

This program will continue through 1994, with new one stop centres planned for Bundall, Rockhampton, Brisbane City, Fortitude Valley, Nambour and Redcliffe. Queensland Transport services are also provided through a network of over 900 agencies around the State, ensuring that people in rural and remote Queensland are not disadvantaged in accessing the services of the Department.

1992-93 was a year of achievement across the whole of the Transport portfolio, and I am confident that 1993-94 will also be a year of substantial progress. It can only be through the commitment of the personnel within the department and the statutory authorities that the goals of improved service and performance will be met. That commitment is real, and I thank them for their support. I commend these Estimates to the Committee.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory) (11.20 a.m.): In rising to speak to these Estimates, I point out that an examination of the 1993-94 Queensland Labor Government State Budget shows that it can be appropriately labelled a "pay more, get less" document. That is the truth of that document. We are well aware that local government elections are coming up in early 1994. There is no doubt in the world that the Budget was framed to make Jim Soorley look good in Brisbane. The Budget will make the Labor seats in the south-east corner look good. It is a typical Labor big-city Budget. There is no doubt about that.

As the financial year progresses and the real picture emerges, it is obvious that the large, cumbersome, bureaucratic and financially hungry Labor machine that the Labor Government has created since coming to office will need more funding from the already financially stressed Queensland taxpayers. I hate to say that, but it is the truth. It is obvious that, under the Queensland Labor Government, progress in this great State is impossible. I was extremely surprised to note that some sections of the Queensland media were somewhat complimentary towards this year's effort by the Honourable the Treasurer, but then I realised that such comments were made in the light of the Keating/Dawkins Budget—and we all know what a disaster that is.

The Treasurer came back from Canberra to tell us that there was a \$315m shortfall. That was the reason why all of the economic rationalists within the State were making decisions at the eleventh hour that cuts would be made to essential services. People not only in rural, remote and regional Queensland but also in the south-east corner screamed about those undesirable cuts that the Government proposed without consultation. That is the prime objective of this Labor Government. It is a Government of stealth. There is no doubt about that. It does not consult with anyone. The order goes on.

During the current year, in excess of \$3.5 billion is estimated to be spent by the Government on transport programs. That places a very heavy responsibility on the Minister and all of the officers under his control to ensure that that very significant sum of money is spent not only in a financially accountable manner but also for the maximum benefit of all Queenslanders.

Firstly, I will refer to railways. The current Minister for Transport will, no doubt, go down in history as the Minister who presided over the decline of what once was a great railway system and an employer of large numbers of the State's men and women. Members should bear in mind that he is the same Minister who, in April 1989 when he was in opposition, during the debate on the Railway Amendment Bill promised the people of Queensland that, as the Minister for Transport in a Labor Government, he would make Queensland Railways a better place for all those who work within its employ. To say that he would make it a better place for all those who work within its employ is sheer hypocrisy.

He also went on to say that, unlike the National Party Government of the day,

Queensland Railways would not be a profit-making organisation. Today, only three and a half years down the track, we see one drama after another. Employees of Queensland Rail and their families are confronted with a future of total uncertainty. I say to Government members, who profess to represent the working class families of this great State, that they have sold out the employees of Queensland Railways and their families. The Minister, who represents an electorate right in the heart of a railway town, should be totally ashamed of his actions and his endeavours.

The Minister should undertake more consultation. He should speak to those people more often. I would like to take the Minister with me on some of my trips, when I talk to people who work in the railways. They say, "What is our future?" I say, "I cannot help you with your future, but I can tell you what your future would be if we were in Government. We would guarantee your future." That is what the Government has not done. In 1989, the Minister said in this Chamber that Queensland Railways would not be a profit-making organisation. Last year, he said that it made a \$5m profit. In 1993, the Minister said that it made a \$13.9m profit for the year just finished. It is all very well for the people to believe that. However, the Minister has cooked the books, again. I will come to that later. It is totally impossible for an essential service such as Queensland Rail to make a profit. The Minister knows that as well as I do.

Since December 1989, when the Labor Government came to power, the work force of Queensland Rail has declined by 3 499 employees. The employees' morale in that once-great organisation is at an all-time low. We see the uncertainty of some 600 jobs swinging in the breeze, with the men who are employed in the Townsville workshops not knowing what the future holds for them. Has the Minister been to the Townsville workshops to speak to those men? I have been there. My colleague the member for Charters Towers was with me. Those people are very, very worried. The situation is one of total uncertainty.

I know that the member for Thuringowa, the member for Mundingburra and the member for Townsville are three Labor members. However, only the member for Thuringowa has any intestinal fortitude in trying to stand up for what the people of that city want. I say to the Minister that the people of Townsville, particularly the people in the workshops, will not accept it.

Townsville, being probably the most important railway centre in regional Queensland, has been treated with total contempt by the Minister and by the Labor Government. If the downgrading of that facility in Townsville occurs, we will witness a loss of some \$12m to \$15m from the business centre of that city. The economy of Townsville will suffer. As all Government members will realise, some 52 related businesses have direct dealings with the Queensland Railways workshops.

**Mr Davies:** What about the \$110m contract for 40 locomotives that is going to occur in Townsville—that is occurring now?

**Mr JOHNSON:** That is very good. I take that interjection from the member for Mundingburra. I support that. I have never, ever criticised that new venture. At the same time, I put on record here and now: what is the future of those 600 men in those Townsville workshops? What is the future of the railway network in Townsville?

I can assure this Committee that a coalition Government will continue to make Townsville one of the most important railway centres and maintenance networks outside the south-east corner and, at the same time, provide and guarantee employment for all those personnel who are currently employed there. That will further guarantee the importance to the Townsville community and economy of the wealth that will be generated by the presence of Queensland Rail in that centre.

We see in the 1993-94 Budget papers the upgrading of the rail link to the port of Townsville at a cost of \$1m. It is absolutely paramount that the future of Townsville as a port and its strategic location be retained and maintained as the gateway to the north, the south and the west by rail and to our northern trading partners by shipping. As the Minister said, exports at the port of Townsville have grown by between 13 per cent and 14 per cent. It is absolutely paramount that we maintain that facility. In the Budget papers this year, we see only \$2.4m for the freight works at the repair depot at Stuart. I would have thought that, in the \$560m program for Queensland Rail from Brisbane to the north, a substantially larger amount of money would have been directed towards the relocation and rebuilding of the Townsville network. However, we seem to have to wait for another day.

Only \$1m is provided for the redevelopment program for the workshops at Rockhampton. I would have thought that they were two very important centres for the

maintenance and repair of Queensland Rail rolling stock. They have been paid lip-service of \$3.4m in total. In the Queensland Rail annual report for this year, the executive director stated that the 81.4 million tonnes of coal freighted at a revenue of \$1 billion will grow to 85 million tonnes in the current financial year—but listen to this—while maintaining the same level of expenditure as 1992-93 in real terms. I would like the Minister to explain that in his reply. Does that mean further reductions in the number of employees of Queensland Rail? As I said, since the Government came to power, 3 500 employees have been shed. It seems to me that the agenda of stealth is ongoing and will be served by further reductions.

The Minister can boast of the improvements that have been made to the declining system over which he presides. However, many of those changes are cosmetic and have little, if any, long term economic benefits. The Minister appears to be a captive of either his own views or those of his advisers, and he has totally lost the plot. The development role once played by Queensland Rail appears to have come to an abrupt end, and it will take a change of Government to reinstate Queensland Rail to its proper role as an essential service to the people of Queensland as a whole and a carrier of large volumes of commodities that the hard labour of the people of this State have produced.

Before I go off rail, there are couple of other issues that I want to address.

**Mr Hamill:** I think you've been off the rails for half of your speech.

**Mr JOHNSON:** It is very important that we talk about certain matters. There is to be a change to the uniforms of Queensland Rail at a cost of \$4.7m. In a time of recession, in a time of unemployment and in a time of cutbacks to Queensland Rail, the Government sees merit in changing a uniform that everybody recognises—the traditional navy and light blue—to the new outrageous pink and red—or whatever it is—at a cost of \$4.7m.

**Mr Hamill:** Is that where you got yours from?

**Mr JOHNSON:** The Minister obviously condones that.

I want to refer to the proposed cutbacks in railway services to rural and remote Queensland. I know that the matter is presently under review, but I will place it on record. I await the decision of the committee in that regard. I will not say much more about

the matter, but I hope that commonsense will prevail, bearing in mind the important strategic links that those rail lines represent, the fact that they are important employers for the whole of Queensland and that they benefit Queensland in general. I trust that the committee's findings will be beneficial to the whole of the State and not just to one portion.

The Minister says that we in the bush are subsidised. We may be subsidised, but has the Minister ever thought to tell the people of Brisbane that the urban network is subsidised to tune of \$300,000 a day? Does the Minister tell the people that all the time?

**Mr Hamill:** I do.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I hope that the Minister does, because the people in the bush know it. However, the Minister does not say that to the people in the bush.

**Mr Livingstone:** Do you tell them how well subsidised it is out there? I bet you don't.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I tell the people that those lines are subsidised. They know that rail is subsidised, but they also know that it is an essential service. They know that the value-added benefits of the goods that are produced in that region create employment right along the eastern seaboard and in the south-east corner of this State. However, Government members do not acknowledge that point. That is hardly surprising, because there is no doubt that socialists are anti-production.

I turn to road funding. Mr De Lacy informed us in his Budget Speech that this year's spending will total \$727m, which I note is less than last year's allocation of \$767m. This year's report states that there has been a surplus of \$6m. I want to know what happened to that \$6m. Will that be spent on roads, or has it been gobbled up by the bureaucracy somewhere?

Many residents of this State who live in or travel to less-developed areas comment frequently that it is difficult to see where any significant roadworks have taken place in those areas.

**Mr Hamill:** What about Jessamine Creek?

**Mr JOHNSON:** Jessamine Creek is a two-year ongoing saga. In any event, that is Commonwealth money. Last week in Winton, the Minister stated that \$11m will be spent in the Winton Shire this year. That is very good, but that is not \$11m of State money. The bulk of that \$11m is Federal funding. The Minister knows that as well as I do. He is making the Budget look good by saying that the

Government is putting the dollars in, but those dollars are Federal dollars. The Minister does not have a vision; he does not understand what the road networks of this State are all about.

Killer bridges and dangerous bends still exist in their thousands. I suggest to the Minister that he needs to adopt a more compassionate and sensible attitude to cater for locations that present major potential hazards.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I take the interjection from the member for Lockyer. He mentioned the black spot funding. The Federal Government has seen fit to totally wipe that project. That is very good! However, I pay tribute where it is due. An amount of \$10m is left over from last year, and that money will fund the black spot program for a short time. However, as the member for Lockyer just said, that program has been totally wiped. The Minister referred earlier to the reduction in road fatalities in this State. I commend the Government and the authorities that have helped to reduce the road toll. I think that every member of this Chamber supports that initiative. However, the problem of those black spots in the road network of this State must be addressed.

The capital works document which comprises part of the Budget papers refers to the fact that the Department of Transport has conducted a major reform program of road construction. I note that the department has a target of achieving 20 per cent efficiency gains, all of which will be used to undertake additional necessary roadworks. I will be following up that matter. I will be examining the areas in which that money will be spent. I look forward eagerly to that goal being achieved, and I am sure that the Minister will provide me with the details of additional roadworks to be carried out during the current year as a result of that program.

I turn to the question of the south-east corridor. In this year's budget, the Rhodes scholar Minister finally announced that construction will commence on a toll road from the Logan River to the Gold Coast. A sum of \$21.8m will be provided to facilitate the construction of that project on the eastern corridor south of the Logan River. This is the toll road that the Minister could not make up his mind about prior to the last election, but then we read about in the Budget papers. That toll road must feed into the Pacific Highway somewhere north of Beenleigh.

I know that the Minister is working on upgrading the Pacific Highway between

Beenleigh and Brisbane with the intention of making it six lanes by the time it reaches the Redland Bay area. I ask the Minister: how is he going to upgrade the Pacific Highway to cope with another multi-lane highway feeding into it? There will be a minimum of two lanes coming from the Gold Coast on the Pacific Highway and another two lanes feeding into it from the toll road. It does not take a Rhodes scholar to work out that four lanes into three is not going to work. Why does the Minister not come clean with the people of Brisbane and Redlands and admit that he has every intention of extending the toll road north of the Logan River, cutting right through two koala habitats, and extending it all the way through to Brisbane?

It is all very well prior to the State election to delay unpalatable decisions so that the Government can retain the seats of Redlands and Cleveland, but what about the residents of those areas? They wanted some honesty and openness from the Minister, not just a back-door approach to road planning in the outer areas of Brisbane. I ask the Minister to explain how the eastern corridor will link up with the Pacific Highway without causing massive congestion, or does the Minister have every intention of carrying the eastern corridor through to Brisbane?

I turn to road safety. The Minister mentioned earlier the reduction in road fatalities, for which I commended him. While on the subject of road safety, I will also comment on the road safety education programs conducted by the Minister's department—or, more correctly, the lack of such programs. I recall that the previous Government sponsored a very positive public education program to inform all road users of their best survival tactics when using today's roads. Media road safety programs appear to be a thing of the past. One never hears publicity for the excellent defensive driving courses, which appear to have been largely discontinued.

**Mr Hamill:** You obviously don't listen to any of the schools in your electorate.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I wrote to the Minister some time ago asking him to advertise on TV or explain in the newspapers the correct procedures for entering and exiting roundabouts. I never received feedback on that. My colleague the member for Tablelands wrote to me in relation to that matter. We wanted to make that a State program, but that was not to be. I hope that the Minister is not becoming complacent because of the recent decline in road fatalities. Many

thousands of people are still being killed or injured on Queensland roads.

Time expired.

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central) (11.40 a.m.): I would like to depart from my prepared notes for this contribution on the Estimates to take the opportunity to respond to a number of matters that were raised by the honourable member for Gregory.

**Mrs Edmond:** Untruths.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Certainly untruths. The honourable member for Gregory gives the impression that he has been around for only about five minutes. From April 1978 to October 1981, I was the State Secretary of the Queensland Railway Station Officers Union and a union advocate in the Industrial Commission.

**Mr Pearce:** A good organisation.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Indeed it was. I place on the public record that it was run incredibly well by wonderful people. During that time, I observed the performance of the National Party Government. When the honourable member for Gregory comes into this place and talks about what has happened to the railways under this Labor Government and tries to sanitise what the railways were like under the National Party Government, he is doing a disservice to the people of Queensland. It is dishonest and I am not prepared to allow it to happen.

When I was the State Secretary of that union, I spent some time looking at members' accommodation throughout the State. When I spoke to employees of Queensland Rail and members of my union in country Queensland and areas not so far from Brisbane, I found that they were living in squalor. They were living in bondwood huts and in the most appalling conditions that any railway employee anywhere in the world would be expected to live in. I do not know where the honourable member for Gregory was in those days, but he was not taking any interest in the accommodation of railway workers. When I travelled in country Queensland, I was sick to death when I saw the accommodation in which they lived.

It is a joke to see Vince Lester come into this Chamber—

**Mrs Woodgate:** Not very often.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take that interjection. On the rare occasions on which I see Vince Lester in this Chamber, he makes comments about the railways. On one recent occasion, he endeavoured to try to embarrass the Minister

about the pineapple line to Yeppoon, and he turned up with a couple of pineapples. In 1979, I went to see accommodation provided for rail workers in Emerald, which was in the electorate that Mr Lester represented. It was some of the worst accommodation that I had ever seen. Do honourable members opposite know why something was done about the accommodation provided by Queensland Rail? It was because the then Government was embarrassed into it.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The honourable member may have been around for five minutes, but I can tell him that the National Party Government expected railway employees to live in slums. The honourable member should not try to tell me what that accommodation was like. I know what it was like, because I saw what it was like. Members of the former Government treated those employees with contempt. It was an absolute disgrace.

**Mrs Woodgate:** What about Coppabella?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I will come to Coppabella. The honourable member for Gregory reckons that he represents these places. In 1979, I visited Bogantungan. There was a fifth-class station master there whose wife was eight months pregnant. They were living in accommodation which had no hot water and no electricity. As well, they lived in an area which was surrounded by high grass. The woman was terrified of being bitten by snakes, of which there were an abundance. That is the track record of the National Party. The honourable member should not come into this place and try to suggest that this Government has done something that is untoward and that his former colleagues had some holier-than-thou track record. What a lot of absolute nonsense!

**Mr Pearce:** What about the voluntary employment agreements for the railway workers? They didn't get them, did they?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Exactly. The honourable member for Gregory spoke about what has occurred in terms of technology. When I was a union official, a new train control system—CTC—and a new accounting system—EDP—were introduced. But were the station masters and railway staff trained in the use of those new systems? No! They were just rammed in. Some of those poor members had to retire from the railways. They had heart conditions and all sorts of problems.

**Mr Ardill** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take that interjection, because Mr Ardill shares my passion for rail.

He knows that what I am saying is true. Those poor beggars were put under an enormous amount of pressure. They did not have the sorts of schemes that were implemented by this Government to make sure that, when new technology is introduced, there is a degree of consultation and education. For the benefit of the honourable member for Gregory, I point out that I saw what happened to those people. He should not suggest that under this Government there has been a lack of consultation. The fact is that there has been more consultation than ever before.

I was not happy to see some suggestions in recent times about the closure of railway lines, either. Honourable members would understand that, with my background and my friends, I did not support that. However, I understand the logic. I was delighted when the Premier announced that the Deputy Premier and the Transport Minister would review those decisions. I fully supported that review. I fully support the work that the Deputy Premier, Tom Burns, and the Transport Minister have done in relation to those railway lines. I am not being hypocritical about it. My position is very clear. However, I do not want it to be suggested that compassion was shown in the days of the former Government. I know that at that time the honourable member for Gregory was not a member of this Parliament, but I can tell him that no compassion was shown by that Government. It treated railway workers like dirt.

**Mr Johnson:** I can't agree with that.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The honourable member might say that he cannot agree, but I was there; I saw what happened.

**Mr Hamill:** They were treated like the floors in some of the houses.

**Mr BEATTIE:** That is exactly right. I went into those houses. They were infested with cockroaches. How could the honourable member support the provision of houses in the 1980s that did not have electricity and hot water? Is it any wonder that there were break-ups in railway families? The poor station master at Bogantungan had to bring a baby home to a dump—to squalor. Yet the honourable member comes into this Chamber and tries to say that the National Party did something for the railway workers. I saw the accommodation that was supplied for them by that Government. It was absolutely pathetic.

The honourable member spoke about the Government closing railway lines. Honourable members should look at the track record of the National Party between 1955

and 1987. Almost 60 lines were closed. I will table a document relating to that in a minute.

**Mr Ardill:** And ripped up.

**Mr BEATTIE:** They were ripped up. I grew up in North Queensland. The list that I have reveals—and I remember this when I was a kid—that in July 1964 the Kairi-Millaa Millaa line was closed down. In more recent times, in May 1987 the Tolga-Kairi line was closed down. Those are productive areas. They produce peanuts, maize and a lot of other primary produce, yet the former Government closed down the lines. What is more, there was no corporate plan and no strategy. The Government has in place a corporate plan and a strategy to deal with railway needs. In a moment, I will talk about SEQ 2001, which is an important part of that strategy.

On 1 July 1961, the Nerang-Tweed Heads line—20 miles of it—was closed. On 1 July 1964, the Beenleigh-Southport line, which was 25.1 miles long, was closed. That is a prime example of the short-term, negative, stupid decision making of the former Government. We have to rebuild those lines at an enormous cost. Because the honourable member for Archerfield will deal with the line closures at greater length, I will not go through all of them.

I will table for the information of members a list of those 60-odd lines that were closed, which was a disgrace.

I will move on to other issues in relation to rail. Unfortunately, the necessity to reply to the honourable member's speech diverted me from what I had intended to say. Before I do leave what he was saying, I draw attention to the fact that the honourable member tried to say that we were a big-city Government. What a lot of nonsense! All he had to do was listen to what the Minister said and look at the Budget. I will give illustrations as to why we are not a big-city Government. The honourable member should consult the Budget papers and ascertain how much money we have given outside Brisbane in road funding and in rail funding.

The honourable member ignores the benefits that rail has given to country Queensland. On 2 October, Vince O'Rourke announced that there would be no increase in rail freight rates for the 1993 winter harvest and the 1994 summer harvest. He has done something to help people in the primary industry area. He said that QR's position in this year's discussions was that, in recognition of the plight of graingrowers battling because of adverse seasonal conditions and hence poor harvest, and in recognition of the efforts of its

grain industry partners, principally Grainco, in improving the efficiency and productivity of rail operations, there would be no increases. The honourable member cannot say that there is no commitment from this Government for QR to help primary producers.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** And was he supported by a compassionate Minister in that decision?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Indeed he was. I will table an article from the *Toowoomba Chronicle* which confirms exactly what I said about those cuts.

Let me deal now with rail generally. The Minister needs to be congratulated. After we were elected, there was an amalgam of a number of areas in transport into what some people refer to as a super portfolio, and it does have a number of tentacles. In the limited time that we have in these Estimates debates, it is impossible to deal with all the major ones. That is why I intend to deal with rail, and marine and ports.

As the Minister indicated when he tabled the QR annual report yesterday, Queensland Rail has delivered its second consecutive surplus, turning around a cash accounting deficit which was our legacy from the National Party Government. In 1989, we inherited a \$133m deficit. In the last two years there has been profit. The profit for last year was \$13.9m. If it were not for the change in the accounting system, it would indeed be much higher than that. Under this Government, we have a profit. There has been a major turnaround in what has happened in Queensland Rail.

In terms of transport generally—I refer to SEQ 2001. As a member who has spoken about this issue on a number of occasions, I am committed to the concept of planning. We need to have better planning of infrastructures. With the amazing population growth that is occurring in the south-east corner of Queensland, particularly through interstate migration, there needs to be better planning. Major challenges are confronting housing, sewerage, water and transport. As is pointed out on page 54 of the annual report of the Queensland Department of Transport, the challenges that must be met in the metropolitan region include the transport needs of a rapidly growing population that is expected to exceed two million by the year 2011. If we can get those transport infrastructure planning strategies right, that will save us a great deal of money.

Within that planning, we need to be courageous. We must ensure that we look futuristically towards our transport needs. That

is why I am a firm advocate of two things. Firstly, we must consider a major ring-road around the whole of Brisbane. We need to look seriously at a road on the other side of Mount Coot-tha. We have to do that, and we must do it quickly. When one considers what is in place in cities such as London, Paris, Munich—any of the major cities in the world—one finds that they all have ring-roads. London has the M25. I forget the name of the road in Paris, but it is a major ring-road. If we do not do this, I know that my constituents on the north side of the river—

**Mrs Edmond:** And mine.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Indeed—and the honourable member's constituents will be forced to oppose suggestions from some quarters for roads through the city. That is stupid, senseless planning. We have to divert people around the city. People who want to travel by road from the Gold Coast to the north coast, or vice versa, should be able to do so by way of a ring-road.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They do that via the Gateway Bridge now.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes, but we need to form a complete circle. That is why we need a road on the other side of Mount Coot-tha.

**Mr FitzGerald:** It would benefit the people going to the north coast—my constituents.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Indeed. We need to grasp that idea and implement it. I hope that one of the major legacies from successive Labor Governments will be a coordinated transport system that takes into account planning such as that.

Previously in this Chamber, I have raised the tunnel project. If I remember correctly, another \$24m has been allocated in this Budget for the quadruplication of tunnels in Brisbane. When that is completed, I shall look forward to an inner-city rail loop that will serve the QUT Kelvin Grove campus, the Royal Brisbane Hospital and various schools on Gregory Terrace. I have written to the Minister about this. I know that he understands my argument. That sort of futuristic planning is important. I hope that, in conjunction with the tilt-train technology and other high-technology services that will be introduced, this will make rail an even more attractive proposition than it is now, not only in commercial terms—which is what the tilt train is chiefly about—but also in terms of the Spirit of the Outback, to which the Minister referred. I hope to be one of the members of this House who will travel on the inaugural journey of the Spirit of the Outback.

I believe that that is the sort of thing that will encourage tourists to the western parts of this State. I say to the honourable member for Gregory that this Government has a commitment to ensure that our rail network is improved on a Statewide basis, not simply on a small, regional basis.

Together with the honourable member for Mount Coot-tha, I recently visited Cape York with a number of officials from the Department of Transport. I saw at first hand the new professionalism that the Department of Transport is demonstrating. Since then, this matter has been discussed at committee meetings with the Minister. I put on record my admiration and respect for those Transport Department officials who, I believe, are blazing a new attitude and a new professionalism towards transport in this State.

In the last few seconds available to me I shall deal briefly with marine and ports. I am delighted at the effort that has been put into improving ports in this State. Under this Government, the overall ports system increased trade by approximately 5 per cent. We must continue that commitment. We are placing a lot more emphasis on trade with Indonesia, Vietnam, China and other countries in our region. A key part of that is ports. I am delighted that that subject has been given a high priority by this Minister and this Government.

Time expired.

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (11.55 a.m.): I am delighted to have followed the member for Brisbane Central in this debate because, in his brief recitation on the history of rail closures in Queensland, he made a couple of points that I was going to make. He was absolutely correct in what he said, particularly about the stupid, short-term planning perspective of the Department of Transport in the past. I am sure that the member for Archerfield, in his own inimitable way, will continue in the vein later. He, also, will be correct. Quite clearly, there is no benefit to a community, a State or a nation to tear up assets and remove them when, at a later time, we will regret having done so. Clear evidence of that is the removal of the rail line to the south coast.

The member for Brisbane Central mentioned a couple of rail lines in my electorate that were closed during the time of his youth in Atherton. We all regret those closures. I trust that the Minister and departmental officers present in the lobby learnt something from the history lesson given by the member for Brisbane Central. Whereas we might rush out and pretend that, in the

short term, it appears to be a great idea to close railway lines, in the long term history has demonstrated that we almost always regret closures.

I express some deep concerns about a number of matters—all of them the responsibility of the Minister and all of them relating to my electorate, which is a large, highly productive, developing agricultural area. It has very little opportunity for further processing and manufacturing so we must live with the things that have been given to us and take best advantage of them. My electorate has a reasonable infrastructure of roads and, until recently, rail. It is still there, but its future is pretty wobbly. However, a lack of a decent and progressive rail and road network in my electorate is crippling and destroying the future potential of that area. I shall give members a number of reasons why I make that statement and I shall go into some detail.

In respect of the developing sugar industry in far-north Queensland—recently, I was pleased to praise the Minister for Primary Industries for his view that the sugar industry should expand. It has provided great opportunities for farmers in the Atherton Tableland region to grow sugar as a means of expanding the agricultural and financial base of the tableland region. I regret to say that the Department of Transport has its feet well and truly bogged in the mud. It is unable to change its priorities as emerging opportunities arise for regional areas in Queensland. That has been clearly demonstrated in the last several months; first of all by the suggestion that we should close our rail lines and, secondly, by successive issues that have come to light since then.

The Mossman central mill has been taking cane from the upper tablelands region for some time. The road infrastructure is being used to transport cane from my electorate, down the Rex Range to an interchange area at Cassowary. Irrespective of the fact that the Mossman central mill has spent a considerable amount of money on that road and that it is shifting only 100 000 tonnes of cane, that road is coming apart at the seams. Nothing is being done by the Department of Transport to ensure the continuation of a decent road link between Mareeba and Mossman.

The Mulgrave mill recently moved to develop an industry of about 300 000 tonnes of sugar in the tablelands region. Representatives from that mill wrote to me and said, in effect, "We regret that we have had to pull out of that opportunity for the

people of the tablelands to develop that part of the sugar industry. One of the most disappointing aspects of our work on the proposal was the fact that we were not able to achieve a competitive freight rate from Queensland Rail." That was the linchpin—the basis of their withdrawal of support from the sugar industry on the tablelands. Now we have the Mossman central mill at one end of the tablelands and the South Johnstone mill coming into the red soil area north of Atherton.

**Mr Hamill:** How big a subsidy should Queensland Rail provide?

**Mr GILMORE:** I will come to that in a minute. The South Johnstone mill wants to move on to the red soil areas south of Mareeba, north of Atherton and, of course, out to the Innot Hot Springs area. Over the next three or four years, the South Johnstone mill is looking to process 300 000 tonnes of cane from this area. The entire tonnage will have to be transported by road simply because Queensland Rail is not interested in taking that sort of a tonnage to the South Johnstone mill. Let me tell the Minister that at 30 tonnes a load—

**Mr Hamill:** It is too expensive to use rail.

**Mr GILMORE:** The Minister simply cannot come to grips with the necessity for Queensland Rail to take the pressure off his collapsing road infrastructure. He should sit and listen for a minute. I listened to him. The Minister is talking about putting in an extra 20 000 single heavy vehicle road movements in a six-month period on the road from Innot Hot Springs and the red soil country north of Atherton, through Malanda, Millaa Millaa and down to the coast. Currently, that road is so overloaded that it is coming apart at the seams. We have a major problem of road disintegration between Malanda and Millaa Millaa. I have mentioned that previously in this Chamber.

Recently, I received a letter from the Minister saying how wonderful it is that he has spent \$1m a year for some years on the Palmerston Highway, and he quoted the Ithaca Creek bridge as an example. Several million dollars was spent on that section, but the rest of the roadway is coming apart. If over the next three years his department is unable to change its priorities to meet these emerging needs, then that road is going to be a bog hole. It is in the superwet area and is currently falling to pieces even without those proposed extra 20 000 road movements.

The expanding sugar industry in that region has a major problem in that we do not

have a B-double route from the Innot Hot Springs region across the Gentle Annie Range, down to Millaa Millaa, and along the Palmerston Highway. Therefore, we are going to have vehicles double banking across the Gentle Annie Range. That will increase the number of road movements, and it will also have extraordinary effects on the dairy industry, to which I will refer in a moment. It is my view that the only viable option for the expanding sugar industry in the tablelands region is the rail movement of that cane. We can move easily 1 000 tonne loads with 60-tonne locomotives because the heavy haul from Atherton towards the coast is all downhill. It would be easy to schedule 300 trains a year instead of 20 000 road vehicle movements.

However, it appears that Queensland Rail, under the Minister's tutelage, is not prepared to provide a reasonable subsidy to the expanding sugar industry and to the people of far-north Queensland. My colleague mentioned that he is subsidising the people of Brisbane at the rate of \$300,000 a day. That is not bad. However, the Minister is not prepared to do anything for the people of far-north Queensland. He would rather sit there and mouth off about how wonderful he is. However, he is moving to close that line, but will not even put any money into roads. I can tell him that he does not have what it takes to be a Minister.

Before I run out of time, I will tell the Minister about the effect this increased traffic will have on the dairy industry. There is a need for cattle creeps on main roads in the Atherton Tableland region, particularly in the dairying area. Large numbers of cattle cross those roads a couple of times a day. I have been carping at the Minister for probably 18 months now about this problem. The end result has been a meeting that was held yesterday in my electorate with officers of the Department of Transport. The only outcome of that meeting was that it was decided to establish a code of practice for cattle crossing that road. The Minister is presiding over a potential disaster.

The roads about which I speak are the ones upon which he is going to put an extra 20 000 road movements a year. Not two months ago, on that road, a semitrailer killed 24 head of cows in one hit. The Minister has refused to provide access to money to fund half the cost of cattle creeps in those areas where they are most needed. Yesterday, the Minister's department said, "We will provide you with designs." That is a great effort on the part of the Minister! It demonstrates his absolute contempt for the people of far-north Queensland. The roads about which I speak

are heavily trafficked. It is high country, subject to heavy rain squalls for extended periods and, during winter, dense fogs. It is almost impossible to see cattle crossing those roads. Regardless of codes of practice, I inform the Minister that it has only been through the grace of God that more cattle have not been killed, or, heaven forbid, a farmer, his wife or child. That will happen. If one of my constituents is killed, I will hold the Minister personally responsible.

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks personally offensive and I ask that they be withdrawn.

**Mr GILMORE:** I withdraw.

I would like to refer to the necessity for road train routes for the cattle industry, particularly from the Forty Mile Scrub through to Mareeba. There is an enormous gap in the road train route in that area. The road between Forty Mile Scrub and Mount Garnet is a disgrace, and it is a road train route. It is very dangerous for the travelling public. On numerous occasions, I have contacted the Minister's office about this matter. I have written to him and to his department about the necessity to fix up that road, particularly the section from Mount Garnet to Ravenshoe.

New industries simply cannot evolve and develop properly because the single-lane bitumen road is coming apart, which is hindering the development of transport infrastructure. The Roads Division simply will not spend the money to provide reasonable road access. People are taking semitrailers back to Mount Garnet simply to pick up a dolly. They have to run with no trailer, just a dolly on the back, because the Minister's department determined that as soon as they put a dolly on the back of their semitrailers, with articulated vehicles, they become road trains. From anybody's point of view except the Minister's, they are not road trains. Right now, people are being prosecuted every week because it simply costs them \$250 to run empty in a truck with a dolly on the back. That is an unreasonable impost on the developing industries of far-north Queensland.

In the time left to me, I would like to refer to the Forsyth and Chillagoe rail lines which, of course, are under a heavy cloud they are part of the proposed rail closures over which the Minister is presiding. It is well-documented that the only reason that the Chillagoe rail line closed was that Queensland Rail refused to accept loading from Red Dome.

**Mr Hamill:** That is not true.

**Mr GILMORE:** It is true.

**Mr Hamill:** It is certainly not.

**Mr GILMORE:** In the year prior to its closure, that line carried 28 000 tonnes of minerals—these are his figures, not mine.

**Mr Hamill:** I'll give you the correspondence, if you like, just to prove that you don't know what you're talking about.

**Mr GILMORE:** I have discussions from time to time with the people at Red Dome. They say that they saved \$300,000 after the Minister forced them on to road. Indeed, that is evidence—

**Mr Hamill:** They asked to go.

**Mr GILMORE:** Indeed, Red Dome asked to go by road. Of course they asked to go by road—the Minister would not accept their loading, simply because he would not put two bins of heavy mineral on those lines until it reached Cairns. Queensland Rail said, "We will not accept that loading." The Minister did not even have the brains to put in a decent-size forklift to load the mineral on to those wagons when the train reached Cairns. So we have a major problem there.

Since 1991, the Minister has not accepted cattle loading on the Forsyth line. I have a document that proves that the Minister refused to accept that loading. He closed the loops on that line in 1991. The Minister should not tell me I do not know what I am talking about; I do.

As to tourism—I have a document that states that the Government is going to improve the tourist facilities on that Forsyth line, and that it has limited the number of passengers to 56. It is dated 8 September 1993. It states that the capacity of this particular train will be limited to 56 passengers, and that that figure cannot be amended without the direct authority of the General Manager of the Traveltrain Division, John Angel. That was an internal Queensland Rail document. The Minister is limiting the capacity.

**Mr HAMILL:** You are out of date.

**Mr GILMORE:** The document is dated 8 September 1993 and I am out of date?

Time expired.

**Mrs EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha) (12.10 p.m.): It is indeed with pleasure that I join this Transport Department Estimate debate for the fourth year in a row. I have to say at the outset that there are so many exciting developments in the Department of Transport and I find it very difficult to limit

myself to a couple areas of particular interest. One of the areas of the Department of Transport in which I have a particular interest is that of road safety. I would like to spend most of my time discussing that.

At the outset, it is worth pointing out that this Government has taken road safety from the fringe of transport issues with a budget of around \$7m in 1988-89—I draw that, in particular, to the attention of the member for Gregory, who seemed to think that it did have some status under the former National Party Government—to a full divisional status within the expanded Department of Transport. This is a significant and important area where some \$100m has been spent since 1989.

I know as well as anybody that spending money willy-nilly in an area does not necessarily solve problems, but it does illustrate the recognition of the seriousness of the problems and the cost of road trauma, whether they are social, economic or public health problems. It is worth noting that if the road fatality rate of the 1970s had continued without efforts to reduce the trauma and to improve road safety, we could expect to see 1 500 people dying on the roads in Queensland this year, whereas on current trends it will be below 400, even though the road usage over that period has increased substantially.

This is a significant achievement and highlights the importance of continuing to target road safety and why it is so worth while. However, even with this reduction, motor vehicle crashes are estimated to cost Queensland around \$950m a year and ranks with cancer as the largest single cause of productive years loss. Of course, the personal loss, the grief and the suffering cannot be measured.

It is because of this fact that I was so pleased in April this year to attend the official launch of the Queensland road safety strategy at Lang Park, which is in my electorate. This 10-year strategy is a whole-of-Government approach that has been developed through extensive consultation with over 500 relevant organisations and through individual research, and, as I have indicated, whole-of-Government cooperation.

The road safety strategy has the admirable aim of reducing the road toll by 30 per cent over 10 years. We have shown that this is achievable with this coordinated and considered approach. The overarching principles of the strategy are that road safety programs must be, firstly, cost effective; secondly, widespread in implementation; and,

thirdly, well managed and evaluated. These principles have been applied to a number of road safety programs and initiatives over the last 12 months and have led to some significant gains.

Let me talk about a few of those gains in terms of the road toll. In 1992, Queensland's road toll was 416, the third lowest in 26 years. That downward trend appears to be continuing with the 1993 toll. The last figures I saw, as at 22 September, were 8 per cent lower than for the same period last year. It can be shown that a substantial proportion of this decrease is due to specific measures introduced by this Labor Government. Let me give you some examples. The Minister has already spoken about the Random Road Watch. I can tell honourable members that that is out and acting. I see an increased number of police vehicles on targeted roads in my electorate, such as Coronation Drive. I warn all members to drive carefully and safely. It currently targets roads which account for 46 per cent of Queensland's fatal road accidents. There has been an 8 per cent crash reduction on those routes.

Random breath testing and the associated publicity has had a positive impact, as I am sure some members can tell us. Currently, around 30 per cent of the road toll involves alcohol. There has been a reduction of about 20 per cent in alcohol-involved crashes in 1993.

Red light cameras are addressing problems at intersections, with 4.3 per cent of the road toll involved. There has been in excess of a 40 per cent crash reduction at signalised sites treated with red light cameras. I welcome the extension to this program.

Child restraint legislation and publicity are targeted at crashes representing that very precious and vulnerable area of our population. This involved 3.9 per cent of the road toll. There has been a one-third casualty reduction involving unrestrained child vehicle occupants. It still upsets me that some parents do not care enough to use readily available and cheaply hireable safety restraints. There can be no excuse for not doing so.

Bicycle helmet wearing is aimed at addressing 4 per cent of the road toll. There has been a 17 per cent reduction in injuries involving cyclists. I would also like to support the measures for improving cycling facilities off main roads with the safe cycling paths supported by the local government, State Government and Federal Government funding. Enforcement by the police has

targeted the most vulnerable groups of cyclists who are reluctant to wear helmets. That has been, in particular, the teenage group. These five measures alone have contributed substantially to the overall reduction in the road toll over that of last year. Coupled with these, a wide range of other road safety measures are being implemented this year in a bid to further reduce the road toll.

The Schoolsafe subsidy scheme, which provides grants to local authorities on a dollar-for-dollar basis to improve safety facilities around schools, has been a particular interest of mine, and I am glad to see it is continuing this year with another \$1m. I have to say that Toowong High School saw its set-down area opened this year after a long delay which I thought was regrettable. This was due to the problems of the Education Department owning the land and the city council's maintenance program. It has finally opened, and I think the delay in that procedure meant that the final set-down area was more attractive and better planned than it had been in the earlier phase.

The final phase of the federally funded black spot program is being implemented. That program is being phased out—

**Mr FitzGerald:** It is a disaster phasing it out, isn't it?

**Mrs EDMOND:** I had wished it would go on. I do think it is a disappointment that it is being phased out. I would like to see it continuing. I have to pay credit to the work that has been done through that program—in particular, in the major local problem area, Kaye Street. The work there is nearing completion. It is about to get to the stage of extensive landscaping.

A \$120,000 contribution to the new car assessment program will assist in encouraging car manufacturers to rapidly improve the safety of their cars, people movers and four-wheel drives, making the results of crash tests of their vehicles widely available to motorists. There is an increasing and welcome recognition by manufacturers that consumers are interested in safety features and are prepared to pay more for their family's safety.

In 1992-93, we saw the completion of the Roadsafes school road safety education program for pre-school and primary school students. I am disappointed that the member for Gregory does not seem to be aware of the extensive work that we are doing in educating young people in this area. I do not know how he missed all the publicity about that. He obviously does not talk to the schools in his area that are thrilled with the program.

Three separate curriculum integrated kits were produced and distributed to all pre-schools and primary schools in Queensland. The focus in the coming year will be upon developing, in consultation with the Education Department, strategies to optimise utilisation of these resources and also upon identifying the road safety education needs of secondary school students. The school crossing supervisor scheme, I am pleased to say, will continue at a cost of \$1.7m in 1993-94. During the year, significant effort has gone into enhancing post-licence driver training and development programs. These have been based on the Mount Cotton training centre, which has been recognised interstate and worldwide.

There have been welcomed moves very, very recently for more appropriate speed limits, such as 50 kilometres in residential streets. This is a move that I have urged for some considerable time. From my experience as a mother working in that area and on P & Cs, I think it was an historical anomaly that we ended up with a 60 kilometre speed limit. This limit is too fast for the residential areas of Brisbane. I welcome moves for that change and I also welcome the support of local governments to do that across the State.

There is one area that I believe has not received enough attention. In case the Minister has not heard about the effect of fatigue on drivers, I draw it to his attention. The effect of fatigue on drivers has long been recognised in terms of long-distance drivers, and moves have been made to limit the length of driving times across Australia. Recent research has also highlighted concerns that I have held about the effect of sleep deprivation. This research is just as relevant to all members of Parliament, especially city members, as it is to shift workers, and I believe it does need stressing.

I know that I am reluctant to have even an occasional alcoholic drink here in this House when I know that I have to drive home in the wee small hours that we often keep. My concerns have now been verified and quantified by Dr Drew Dawson, a researcher in Adelaide, who has confirmed my suspicions that sleep deprivation does impair one's driving skills. His team showed that staying awake one night until 3 a.m. caused a slowing in reflexes and reactions on a par with a blood alcohol content of .05, that is, at the legal limit. It does not take much imagination to realise that the cumulative effect of several nights' lack of sleep or reduced sleep would worsen those results and that adding even one alcoholic drink would mean that our

driving impairment would be that of someone well and truly over the legal blood alcohol limit.

As someone who does have to drive home after parliamentary sessions, I am concerned at this and also at the effect of sleep deprivation on many other people driving in the community—taxi drivers, shift workers and students. I know several students who work at night on Pizza deliveries. I have to say that I wonder how they are coping with that, and I ask: are they aware that their driving is impaired? It is an issue to which I believe we do need to give some serious thought, and perhaps we should start by giving some serious thought to the sitting hours that we spend in Parliament.

My other area of interest in this debate is that of urban public transport. In an inner-urban electorate such as Mount Coot-tha, traffic incursion is always a concern. Whilst I have one persistent critic who constantly carps to the media about my rejection of a major freeway through these residential suburbs—and he must be a Liberal supporter, because he always displays a Liberal Party sign during elections; it is not hard to tell and I know that there are one or two around—I know that the majority of my electors support this stance.

I remain convinced that the only acceptable way to reduce commuter traffic is by the improvement of public transport facilities and determined efforts to get commuters out of their single-occupancy cars. I also wholeheartedly agree with the member for Brisbane Central on the need for a bypass road to the west of Mount Coot-tha, and I have raised this on other occasions in this Chamber.

**Mr Beanland:** Tell us about the upgrade on Route 20.

**Mrs EDMOND:** I am happy to take the interjection from the member for Toowong, who was so keen on Route 20, on pushing a freeway through the residential suburbs of my electorate, that he was out on every occasion having his photo taken, with his hard hat on, parading around Route 20, showing what engineering skills he had. It was certainly the policy of the Liberal council at that time to push a major freeway through the residential suburbs of Brisbane. Sallyanne Atkinson—the mayor at that time—wrote, castigating people who opposed Route 20.

**Mr Beanland:** What are you doing to it—upgrading it? You promised to stop it.

**Mrs EDMOND:** Yes, and I did stop it.

**Mr Beanland:** You said there would be no widening of Route 20 and no upgrading.

**Mrs EDMOND:** I am happy to take that interjection. If the honourable member were to go out into my electorate, he would see that there is no widening of Route 20. We have effectively tackled a severely dangerous area of 600 metres of killer road that that man opposed. He would prefer to see people killed on Kaye Street than to have 600 metres of killer road improved. That is what the honourable member is saying to the people of Mount Coot-tha. He would prefer them to be killed. That is not what his pal on Rouen Road wants. The objection of his pals, the Liberals on Rouen Road, is that the Government is not going ahead with Route 20. They write to the press constantly because the Government is not going ahead with Route 20. They are the honourable member's Liberal mates who are pushing for a freeway through the area, and I think that is a shame.

As I said, I believe that the solution to the traffic problems in Mount Coot-tha—and there are traffic problems in Mount Coot-tha, as there are in all inner-urban electorates—is to get people out of cars firstly into public transport and then push very, very hard for the expensive proposal, I know, of a bypass road to the west of Mount Coot-tha—not, as Mr Beanland has suggested and has pushed for, a major freeway through inner-residential suburbs where there is no room to ameliorate the effects of noise, dust, pollution and all of the nasty things that go with freeways. I had a lot more to say on the very positive aspects of the Transport budget.

**Mr Beanland** interjected.

**Mrs EDMOND:** I am happy to stand on my record of Route 20. The Route 20 freeway is something that I am proud that I fought against.

Time expired.

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly) (12.26 p.m.): The Minister is not in control of his portfolio. Time and time again, major debacles occur in the Transport Ministry. Clearly, the Minister is not on top of his ministerial responsibilities. In recent weeks, we saw the closure of many country rail lines in this State. We know all about the backdown in the face of great pressure. We know how that was done. The Minister was not even consulted beforehand. He was told to go out and do it. We know about the rail cutbacks in my own electorate, to which I will refer in a few moments.

Time and time again, we see the debacle that is occurring in the Minister's portfolio. The people who work at the Townsville railway workshop are seeing it, also. They understand

that the workshop will close. However, one will not find that happening at the Ipswich railway workshop. That will develop from strength to strength. It is in the Minister's electorate, of course. Whenever matters are related to the Minister's electorate, they develop and grow. Outside his electorate, the Minister attempts to close down the railway workshops.

A few moments ago, the member for Mount Coot-tha prattled on about Route 20 and made a number of outrageous statements about me and other members of the Liberal Party. In most instances, they were quite untrue. The member's own actions speak louder than words. Although the Labor Party said that there would be no Route 20—no upgrading of those streets that then constituted Route 20—what happened? Never mind about taking a sign down and putting a sign up. Those streets that then constituted Route 20 are now undergoing major upgrading. To see that, one has only to go to the member's electorate. Obviously, she has not been there for a while. Kaye Street runs up past Government House. A couple of acres of heritage land have been taken from Government House. A huge, four-lane road is being constructed there. That development must continue on those other streets to relieve the traffic congestion that will now occur there.

I turn to Kingsford Smith Drive. Today, we saw a photograph of a terrible accident that occurred a couple of days ago on Kingsford Smith Drive in which a person was killed. That traffic hazard exists because of the increased flow of heavy vehicles choosing that route. Since the Government raised the tolls on the Gateway Arterial Road, the cost to heavy vehicles travelling across the Gateway Bridge has increased substantially. That has caused a dramatic increase in the number of heavy transports travelling along Kingsford Smith Drive and the Story Bridge. The situation is so severe that people waiting at bus stops have seen material falling from trucks.

However, as I said, a more serious situation occurred a couple of days ago on 4 October, one which residents in the area have been predicting for some time. A 24-year-old woman was sandwiched between two semitrailers and killed after a vehicle travelling in front of the first semitrailer stopped suddenly. The possibility of that situation occurring would have been greatly reduced if Kingsford Smith Drive was not a main route for heavy vehicles.

The purpose of constructing the Gateway Bridge was to divert heavy transports around the city. Indeed, it served that purpose until

the tolls on the Gateway Bridge were increased. In January of this year, the cost of a two-axle truck travelling across the bridge rose 30c to \$4.50; the cost of a five-axle truck rose 50c to \$9; and the cost of B-double trucks rose by \$1 to \$11. At the time of the increases in tolls, the manager of the Gateway Bridge Company said that increases were necessary to ensure that the company was able to repay construction loans and annual franchise and service fees to the Government.

As far back as 1991, I recall that a Transport spokesman was quoted in the daily newspaper as saying that a fee reduction was one of the more promising means of stopping heavy trucks using routes through Fortitude Valley. The spokesperson said—

“We have to get vehicles out of the inner-city area. We'll be looking at definite proposals within the next few months.”

Those few months have turned into a few years. Urgent moves need to be made to rectify that situation. It will only be a matter of time before another life is wasted. I call on the Minister to deal with some of those important issues.

I turn to the identification required to obtain a driver's licence. An idiosyncrasy exists in the department regarding the documentation required for the granting of a driver's licence. The forms of identification required before a licence is granted vary greatly between Transport Department offices. For example, the McGregor office requires to sight a birth certificate, amongst other forms of identification, whilst the Valley office does not require to sight a birth certificate. Departmental officers advise that the policy states that the forms of identification that need to be sighted may vary depending on the discretion of the individual manager.

Some offices require an applicant to produce a birth certificate because of the increasing number of fraudulent applications for licences which have been made. However, as all offices do not require applicants to produce a birth certificate, a person wanting to obtain a fraudulent licence could simply go to another departmental office. It also appears that the number of forms of identification required is not standard, even within the same office. On two approaches to the Fortitude Valley office, a person was asked for two forms of identification on the first approach and three forms of identification on the second approach. That is another conflict.

I turn to the Ipswich Road upgrading, a subject that I am sure is familiar to the Minister as he represents that area. Residents from

Centenary Village are concerned that the roadworks currently under way at the intersection of Ipswich Road and the Centenary Highway will not provide a better, safer passageway for the public, and that it has been designed without regard to providing reasonable access for the people of Centenary Village. The roadworks allow access to the village only from Ipswich Road inbound, so entry from the city or other Brisbane suburbs has been denied, and residents are forced to travel all the way back, adding an extra five or six kilometres and up to 20 minutes in peak hour traffic just to return to their homes. It is believed that the proposed intersection will result in delayed access and unnecessary backtracking for emergency vehicles such as ambulance, fire brigade and police should there be an emergency situation within the village. It will also result in residents incurring extra travel costs either through having to drive a longer distance or paying higher taxi fares. Many of those people are already isolated because of the lack of public transport.

There have been a number of inquiries to the manager of the metropolitan south office requesting information on the upgrading of that road. I understand that those people have subsequently been advised that the information has to come from the Minister's office and that its release has to have the Minister's approval. That is fair enough. On 17 September, the Minister's office was contacted by one or two people to check on the progress of the release of that information. However, they were told that its release had not received ministerial approval. Today's date is 7 October, and the information has still not been released. Other complaints about the inability to obtain information from the department abound, all because we are constantly told that the Minister's approval is required.

I turn now to the Townsville Port Authority and its board, and particularly to the former Mayor of Townsville, Mr Mike Reynolds, who is chairman of the Townsville Port Authority. Mr Reynolds was appointed to that position in September 1990. In June 1992, he left Townsville and moved to Canberra. I understand that he is on secondment to the Australian National University. That is fair enough, but Mr Reynolds still retains his position as the chairman of the Townsville Port Authority. I understand that his family moved to Canberra in December 1992.

In September of this year, Mr Reynolds' time as chairman of the authority expired. In fact, the tenure of the whole board expired on

16 September. To this date, no new appointments have been made. No action has been taken by the Minister. For more than 12 months, Mr Reynolds has not lived in Townsville, yet he has been travelling to Townsville at considerable cost to conduct the business of the port authority. Because Mr Reynolds has spent so long in Canberra, he cannot possibly have his finger on the pulse of the city and the development and growth occurring there. I appreciate that he is on secondment and that at some stage he may return to Townsville. However, that scenario does not augur well for the port authority and is unprofessional.

We are aware of Mr Reynolds' background. He has a number of abilities. It could be said that his appointment was a job for the boys but nevertheless he brought a number of abilities to that position. However, a lack of accountability exists in this case, and the Minister cannot deny that. Mr Reynolds will either have to resign from the board or return to Townsville so that proper work can be carried out on behalf of the people of Townsville.

I turn to the Gateway Arterial-Logan bypass road on the south side of the city. When I last spoke about that subject in this Chamber, the member for Sunnybank seemed to become very excited and very sensitive. The day after my last speech on that topic, the member for Sunnybank attacked me with the vigour of a dead sheep. He said that I had been sold a pup on the issue of Karawatha by someone who had recently received significant criticism from a member of his own party. I have not been sold a pup on this issue. The other statements on that occasion by the member for Sunnybank demonstrate gross arrogance towards his electorate. Two options have been put forward for that bypass road. Both will cut through the Karawatha forest bushland and both take in very sensitive areas. We have heard very little from the member for Sunnybank about either of those options. The red option also takes in a huge number of areas covered by Brisbane City Council vegetation protection ordinances.

Bushland, forest park, a number of protected vegetation areas, a number of sensitive environmental areas and the magnificent area of Karawatha will all be destroyed if that bypass road continues. The only response by the member for Sunnybank has been to abuse me. He has not fought this proposal. It has been left to other Opposition members and me to bring the matter to the

public's attention and to stand up for his electorate. It is about time the member for Sunnybank did some of the work and looked after his own constituents rather than leave it to the rest of us to do his job. The local residents view the area in question as being very sensitive. They will not tolerate the arrogance being displayed by the member for Sunnybank.

I turn now to rail services in my electorate. We have heard a great deal from the Minister about consultation. At the end of the day, little or no consultation was undertaken on the closure of services in the country and the slashing of services through the western suburbs. I refer particularly to the stations of Sherwood, Chelmer, Graceville and Taringa, which are all in my electorate. Because I raised this issue, a slight improvement has occurred. But listening to the Minister and Queensland Rail, one would swear that they were out there consulting daily with the people. In truth, all we had day after day was a head count, not consultation. Anybody can go around and count the number of passengers getting on and off trains. Let us set the record straight about what consultation means. The Minister has reinvented the word. He need not bother being arrogant about this matter in his reply. He knows that is true. I have witnessed with disgust the arrogant attitude flowing through some of the material that has floated around, and the contempt in which the public is held.

When I first raised this matter in May, the Acting Minister wrote me a very arrogant and abusive letter. I was aware of the matter for months, but not a word was said by him. I did not believe that any Government could be so stupid or foolish as to slash services as this Government has done in the western suburbs. After several months of clarifying my information before I did anything about the matter, I finally raised it in the public arena because this Government did not have the guts to tell the public about it. As a result, I was abused and told that I was being unhelpful to a meaningful discussion. I had not participated in any discussion. No-one had the courtesy to talk to me about the matter. Of course, the Government would have wriggled away from blame if I had not forced it to face the truth. After all that, I was sent a letter from Queensland Rail—which is under the Minister's portfolio—thanking me for all the consultation that had been undertaken with my constituents! Leaving aside the work done by a number of my constituents and me, there has been a total lack of consultation on the part of the Government.

The same applies to schools. Many schools have complained to me that there has been a lack of consultation. Of course, a great deal of rearrangement is to occur in the delivery of education. Time and time again, members of the public are witnessing this Government's lack of delivery of services. Consultation requires more than going out and counting a few heads to see how many people travel on different rail services. Daily, my office is being inundated with complaints about the overcrowding on trains because services have been cut, and about the enormous amount of inconvenience that has resulted. In peak periods, 17 services to western suburbs have been cut. At present, only one train every 20 minutes travels through the stations to which I referred earlier—areas which are very close to the city. At the same time, advertisements appear on television encouraging people to improve the environment by travelling by public transport.

The Minister may be able to claim that some of his constituents are better off. However, a huge number of people in the city have relied upon the rail system because of the poor bus service. Nobody complains about the inadequacy of the road system that we put up with.

Time expired.

**Mr DAVIES** (Mundingburra) (12.40 p.m.): I want to spend a fair bit of time talking about what has happened in the Transport portfolio as it relates to Townsville over the last few years since we have been in Government. However, before I do that, I must take issue with the previous speaker, the member for Indooroopilly, in relation to his disgusting comments concerning the Chairman of the Townsville Port Authority, Mike Reynolds. I was one of those who pushed strongly for Mike Reynolds to be made chairman of the Townsville Port Authority, and I do not resile from that. It has been one of the best appointments that we have made in Townsville since this Government was elected.

**Mr Bredhauer:** A fine public administrator.

**Mr DAVIES:** I take that interjection, because I know that he thinks very highly of the member for Cook, and I know that he would want those comments on the record. Mike Reynolds has a long history in public administration in Townsville. He was the lone Labor alderman on the Townsville City Council and he was partly and significantly responsible for the turning of Townsville into a Labor stronghold. He has done an incredible amount of work in the Townsville community. Not only

does he deserve the position that he is in because of the contributions he has made to the Townsville community, he has performed excellently in that position. He has overseen and continues to oversee the greatest development in the history of the port of Townsville.

I have been involved in many of the negotiations with Mike Reynolds, with the then Federal Minister, Bob Collins, with David Hamill, with my parliamentary colleagues in Townsville, Ken McElligott and Geoff Smith, and with many other senior executives of both the Federal Transport Department and the Queensland Transport Department, the Premier's office and so on. Mike Reynolds is a very good negotiator. He works incredibly hard for Townsville; he has always done so and he has continued to do that in his position. I will not sit here and listen to the ravings of this lunatic on the other side when he wants to character assassinate Mike Reynolds.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I rise to a point of order. I find those remarks offensive and ask that they be withdrawn. Not only that, they are unparliamentary and unbecoming of the member.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Ms Power): Order! I ask the member to withdraw those comments.

**Mr DAVIES:** I withdraw. What I meant to say was "the lunatics on the other side". Mike Reynolds has a very strong history in Townsville. I will not sit here and listen to him being character assassinated by people on the other side who know very little about Townsville. One only has to look at the history of the Liberal Party in Townsville to see how successful they have been.

**Mrs Woodgate:** They don't have a history.

**Mr DAVIES:** They do not have a history. The member for Kurwongbah correctly interjects that they do not have a history in Townsville.

**Mr Bredhauer:** The last meeting in Townsville was attended by four people and a dog.

**Mr DAVIES:** I remember that.

**Mr Bredhauer:** The dog was lost. It had a patch over both eyes.

**Mr DAVIES:** The interjections are so amusing that I have to take them. The then Leader of the Liberal Party, Angus Innes, for whom I do have some regard—unlike the current Leader of the Liberal Party—did attend a rally in the Townsville Mall at which there

were four people and a dog. One of the people who attended was the candidate for the Liberal Party who was opposing me at the time, shadowy Jim Cathcart. It is obvious that the member for Indooroopilly is listening to shadowy Jim Cathcart, because he is the only person in Townsville who ever criticises Mike Reynolds. No-one listens to him. The business community in Townsville know what a good job Mike Reynolds has done, and his staff know what a good job he has done.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Should he be still chairman of the board?

**Mr DAVIES:** If the member for Lockyer believes where a person is domiciled in terms of residence is important in running a multimillion-dollar organisation such as the Townsville Port Authority, he is absolutely wrong. Where a person is domiciled does not matter; it is the direction that is important. Mike Reynolds is providing the direction that the Townsville Port Authority has needed over the last few years in this major expansion program of more than \$90m, and he is doing a great job. Honourable members opposite cannot argue with the results. If the honourable member for Lockyer is worried about the fact that it costs us a few grand extra a year to fly him up to Townsville for the monthly meetings when he saves significantly in terms of his management, the honourable member shows that he understands nothing about management.

**Mr Beanland:** So you're paying for his air fares? The board is paying for his air fares?

**Mr DAVIES:** I would assume that the board pays for the air fares. The honourable member is worried about a few grand in air fares when in terms of management he is doing a magnificent job. I will defend him, as I have done, at any time that he is attacked. He does not go on the offensive telling people how great he is, but I can do it and I will not resile from it. Any time the honourable member for Indooroopilly wants to take issue with it, he should be ready for me to defend him, because Mike Reynolds does a great job.

In contrast to the fine record of achievement and leadership that he has given the Australian Labor Party in Townsville over a long period, the honourable member should look at his record. He is the deposed Leader of the Liberal Party. He is trying to get back there again, but he will never get there.

**Mrs Woodgate:** Sneaking around.

**Mr DAVIES:** He is sneaking around the corners trying to backstab Joan.

**Mr McElligott:** He can't get five people.

**Mr DAVIES:** He cannot get five people. The reason why he cannot get five people is that he cannot count. His management experience is absolutely hopeless. He cannot walk around and count five people so that he can take over the Liberal Party. He has no hope. He is so bad that he could not run a chook raffle and make a profit out of it.

**Mr Johnson:** Is this relevant to the Transport Estimates?

**Mr DAVIES:** I am only responding to the unprovoked attack from the member for Indooroopilly.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I rise to a point of order. I did not say a word about the member for Mundingburra in my speech.

**Mr DAVIES:** I would now like to talk about some of the transport achievements in Townsville. Over the last few years, record funding has been provided for transport infrastructure in Townsville. At the moment, major road projects are close to completion, or have been completed, and more than \$20m has been allocated to expansion of the port of Townsville.

Townsville is experiencing a major economic boom driven by tourism, massive mineral interests to the west, and new industry. It is vital that transport facilities continue to evolve with the growth of population and industry within the area. Townsville is a key air, rail and road link between northern, western and southern Queensland and provides an important sea gateway to South East Asia and the Pacific Rim. Possible new irrigation areas in the Burdekin and the new mining developments in the north west will strengthen Townsville's economic development. Our transport facilities have to be ready for the future.

As to roads—Statewide, record road funding of more than \$760m by the State and Federal Governments in the current financial year is bringing major benefits to the Townsville/Thuringowa area. Large-scale projects are under way or close to completion on the Bruce Highway to the north and south. In Townsville City, work is gearing up to bring the new National Highway link on University Road up to standard. Preliminary work is beginning on the \$4.5m first stage of the plan to duplicate University Road to four lanes. This will improve safety and reduce traffic delays on a road that forms part of the National Highway link through Townsville. Besides carrying highway traffic, University Road is a key local arterial serving the Annandale area and the Lavarack Army Barracks.

The Mark Smith Drive to Angus Smith Drive section is the first stage of a plan to construct four lanes from Stuart Drive to Angus Smith Drive. Preliminary funding of just over \$1.1m has been provided from Federal Government National Highway funds to purchase materials, including bridge and drainage components, service relocation, survey and design. Major construction on the project will begin towards the end of the year and is expected to take about seven months to complete, providing employment for about 40 people.

Meanwhile, on the northern outskirts, projects on the Bruce Highway totalling more than \$10m will give Townsville/Thuringowa a modern, four-lane northern entrance. Some of those works have just been completed. The work that was completed recently consists of the four-lane duplication of the Bohle River bridge and approaches, worth \$5.2m. Not only will that bridge work, which was completed last December, provide a four-lane crossing of the Bohle River but also the new higher-level structure will end lengthy wet season delays at the crossing. The approach roadworks are expected to be completed in July.

The four-lane duplication work over 2.3 kilometres from Wagner Creek to Stony Creek, which is worth about \$4.7m, includes a new bridge over Saunders Creek, the realignment of Gearneys Lane and traffic lights at the Gearneys Lane/Garland Road intersection. The bridge was completed last October, and the roadworks have recently been completed. The Minister recently opened that particular development.

**Mr McElligott:** It was a great occasion.

**Mr DAVIES:** It was a great occasion. I know that the member for Thuringowa, in whose electorate those works are located, is very pleased that the work has been completed. He has been pushing for that for a long time. Under the previous Government, it did not receive the priority that it deserved. But this Government and the Federal Government have listened to the lobbying by the member for Thuringowa, Mr McElligott, and the Federal member, Ted Lindsay.

Other Bruce Highway works that are currently on track include a \$2m project funded from National Highway funds to widen and strengthen 1.8 kilometres at West Barratta Creek between Ayr and Townsville. That work, which will not only improve safety but also upgrade flood immunity, should be completed by December. The \$4m Collinsons Lagoon project between Ayr and Townsville, which is part of a continuing program to

upgrade flood immunity on the Ayr-Townsville link, includes new road and bridge structures. Preliminary work is also under way on a \$2m project to widen and strengthen three kilometres of highway between Toomulla Beach and Wild Boar Creek, just 42 kilometres north of Townsville. That work should be completed by December. Work has also recently been completed on a \$1.9m project to widen and strengthen 2.6 kilometres of the highway between Wild Boar Creek and Surveyors Creek. As well, a \$2m project is under way to upgrade the Bruce Highway on Townsville's southern approaches.

The State Government has also directed part of its record outlays for road funding to projects in the Townsville area, including just under two kilometres of the Herveys Range Developmental Road near the Bohle River and a \$600,000 project to construct a new pre-stressed concrete bridge over Elphinstone Creek. That bridge replaces an old timber structure that was demolished because of termite damage.

Flinders Highway projects are also very high on the list of priorities. Even though they are not located in my electorate or the Thuringowa electorate, they link Townsville with the very important mining region of Mount Isa. The highway from Townsville to Mount Isa across the top of northern Australia is an incredibly important link in the National Highway. I know that the Minister places great priority on those particular projects.

I place on record my appreciation to the Minister for visiting Townsville recently to announce a massive \$110m contract for Queensland Rail. Earlier today, the Opposition spokesman criticised what this Government is doing with Queensland Rail. As far as I can ascertain, that particular project—the \$100m Goninan project for 40 new rail locomotives—is the biggest contract awarded to Townsville by the State Government in its history. That is the significance of that particular announcement.

Time expired.

Sitting suspended from 12.56 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett) (2.30 p.m.): I rise with pleasure to support the speakers from the Opposition who preceded me and, of course, the shadow Minister for Transport. I support entirely his contribution to the debate today. From listening to the Minister for Transport and some of the speakers on the Government side, one could not help but believe that

everything is rosy in the garden of transport in Queensland, that we do not have any problems, that our road funding is more than adequate, that we are delivering on our programs, that our rail network is being operated efficiently, that we are realising a \$13.9m profit from rail and that there has been an increase in road funding of some 14 per cent or 15 per cent. As I say, everything sounds rosy. However, when honourable members examine the figures and listen to some of the complaints, they will start to wonder whether what they are hearing from the Government is correct, and whether the picture is as rosy as it is painted. Certainly, we have read the nice, glossy brochures that say how wonderful everything is and, as I have said, we have heard the Minister for Transport explain how everything is running according to plan throughout the State.

However, the Federal Department of Transport special study in respect of roads found that, on average, the age of Queensland's road network is increasing. Some 41 per cent of the pavement in the State's declared road network is more than 20 years old, which is the normal service life of pavement. Six per cent of the pavement is more than 30 years old. Obviously, there is an enormous backlog of work to be done. However, the level of funding available for roads cannot keep pace with current and increasing demands, let alone address the backlog. At current funding levels, the rehabilitation of pavement is occurring at the rate of 300 kilometres a year. To do more than prevent further deterioration of the road network and arrest the ageing process, approximately 875 kilometres of pavement a year needs to be rehabilitated. Some shires in this State are literally digging up their roads and replacing them with gravel and dirt because they are finding that it is too expensive to replace the pavement. Why is that happening? I am not blaming the State Government for this situation. It should look to its Labor mates in Canberra.

**Mr Ardill:** What's the date of the report?

**Mr SLACK:** It is a current report. The Government should consider the last allocation that it received for road funding out of the Federal Budget, and the allocations before that, and work out their value. As members would know, Federal allocations are based on population, not distance. Queensland has suffered, because it is a very large State and it does not have the level of population that is required to receive the level of funding that is needed. As I have said, the

Federal Government has not maintained the level of funding that is required to develop roads.

Queensland's national highways, for which the Federal Government claims full responsibility, are the worst in the country. The Federal Department of Transport and Communications report on a special study of roads found that 78 per cent of Queensland's national highways were good when rated on driver comfort. Other States' roads were better, or received good ratings. As to other States—95.5 per cent of Western Australia's national highways were good, 98.2 per cent in the Northern Territory were good, 97.9 per cent in South Australia were good, 94.2 per cent in Victoria were good, and 85.2 per cent in New South Wales were good. Commonwealth funding of Queensland roads in real terms fell from \$374m in 1991-92 to \$254m in 1992-93.

**Mr Ardill:** In New South Wales, they've got one road from border to border.

**Mr SLACK:** I point out to the member for Archerfield that I am comparing like with like; apples with apples. Between 1983-84 and this year, there has been a 32 per cent drop in funding. That is not taking into consideration the special grants that occurred under the One Nation package last year. At the same time, Queensland's population has been growing at a rate of 2.6 per cent a year. The Queensland Department of Transport indicates that the rate of vehicle ownership and road use went up 74 per cent in that time. Motorists pay \$7 billion in fuel taxes to the Commonwealth, yet get back only \$1.2 billion in road grants. As I said, I am not blaming the Queensland Government directly for that. However, the Queensland Government and the Minister for Transport do have a responsibility to ensure that Queensland roads and Queensland transport are adequately funded, and that Queensland receives its fair share from the Commonwealth. After looking at those figures, it is time that the Queensland Government jumped up and down and did something about it. Queensland is going backwards in respect of Federal allocations for road funding. The member for Archerfield would have to acknowledge that.

It should be noted that although there has been an increase of 15.9 per cent in road revenue, Commonwealth expenditure on roads is being cut by 34 per cent. After the Premiers Conference, the Premier announced that he was disappointed in the fact that Queensland did not receive \$115m. There is much more money involved than that \$115m

that was talked about because Queensland has been losing out on Commonwealth funding for roads and transport during the period to which I referred earlier. If we continue on in this way, there is no way in the world that we will end up with the types of roads that are needed to service our growing population, our country areas, our ports and our rail headquarters—if any of them are left by the time the Government has finished making its rail cuts.

When the Premier came back from the Premiers Conference, he talked about Queensland being down \$115m. As I said, that figure is not nearly as high as the real figure in terms of Commonwealth road funding in previous years. If we consider the State's contribution to roads—it is very difficult to determine where the money is being allocated in the Transport budget because it is shown as one amount, and there is an overlap. I found it very difficult to determine what was what. If one combines the Queensland figures with the Commonwealth figures, one finds that Queensland is actually down 2 per cent in road funding for this year. That does not include the funding allocated last year in the One Nation package. Queensland is going backwards, and this Government needs to impress on the Commonwealth much more strongly than it is doing that roads are the lifeblood of this nation in regard to the development of its economic base, the servicing of its economic base, and the servicing of its ports, its rural industries and its railways.

I mention the railways because when the Premier came back from the Premiers Conference he automatically went into decline mode and announced the closure of 29 railway lines. I do not know that the Minister even knew that was going to happen before it was announced. The hypocrisy of the Minister is evidenced by his appointment of Mr Burns—who would have been a party to that decision—in an attempt at mending the fences with the union organisers, who had already seen 3 500 railway jobs go and feared that many more would go. Mr Burns was appointed to assess the situation but, as yet, we have not had a determination as to whether those lines are going to be closed, or which of those lines are going to be closed. Even in my own area, and the area that I represented before the change in electoral boundaries, 66 more jobs will be lost if the line in that region closes.

As the Opposition spokesman on Environment and Heritage, I have a vested interest in seeing many of the rail lines stay

open because they are part of the history of this State. Obviously, if the rail lines are losing massive amounts of money, or if they are not providing a service, I am not saying that they should stay open. However, it must be borne in mind that we are currently experiencing a drought and a recession, and the throughput on those lines might not necessarily be the same as that which we could expect in a few years' time.

There is also a social implication in closing lines without due consideration to the effect that it will have on the communities involved. The beginning of the communities was associated with the coming of the rail. For argument's sake, Winton, in the electorate of the member for Gregory, developed out of the rail line coming into that area. Many towns had a similar beginning. Over the years, those towns have been declining and they have felt the effects. Morale is very low. It is wrong to come in at a time when morale is very low and announce out of the blue, after having assured everybody that the lines would stay there, "Sorry, they are going." Imagine what a morale booster that was! What did it do to the morale of the people out there and to their hopes for the future? It was one of the things that sounded a final death knell for the towns from which the railway operated and that were serviced by it. The people in those towns wondered what their future would be.

I turn to the train services in Brisbane. It has come to my attention of late that there have been many changes to the timetables. I am sure that the member for Brisbane Central will agree that those changes have caused much pain and anguish. There has been a reaction to them. Those timetables have been changed without due consideration to the convenience—

**Mr Hamill:** That's nonsense—absolute nonsense!

**Mr SLACK:** It is not. For argument's sake, the high school students in South Brisbane could catch the 3.20 p.m. train. The timetable has been changed to 3.40. My figures may not be correct, but I am correct in saying that there was a massive reaction because their convenience was not considered when the timetable was changed.

The locomotives have been repainted. It is true that they carried the National Party colours and have now been repainted. A fair amount of money is being spent on that change when there is an argument as to whether lines out in western Queensland should be closed.

**Mr Hamill:** They had National Party colours on them.

**Mr SLACK:** Those trains were green and the colour has been changed.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** Listen to the thinking.

**Mr SLACK:** No. This is—

**Mr Hamill:** Let me assure you that Don Lane and Joh Bjelke-Petersen are still doing hard labour up in the coal mines.

**Mr SLACK:** As the shadow Minister said, the new uniforms cost \$5m, yet these lines are being closed. There is a \$5m contribution for new uniforms when things are supposedly so tight.

I compliment the Minister because he is intending to raise the speed limit to 110 kilometres per hour, not on a broad plane, but on certain sections of road where it is practical and sensible to do so. I bring to the attention of the House that I raised this matter shortly after my election because it seemed ridiculous to me that on a four-lane highway people were passing others at what seemed to be 120 kilometres when the speed limit was 100 kilometres per hour. A raising of that speed limit to 110 seems to be very responsive to the present situation and the capacity of today's motor cars.

Another point that I would like to raise, which concerns the environment, relates to the expansion of roads, particularly in the south-east corner, which takes in residential land and particularly parkland. I note that the Minister for Environment has come into the House. It is time that the Government looked more seriously at providing nature corridors or little tunnels under those roads, or fencing the roads, which obviously will have to go through parks. The fact remains that fences and tunnels have been very successful overseas. They are a means of addressing this problem. I acknowledge that at times roads have to go through parkland. By the same token, we have a dwindling area of parkland. In that situation every provision has to be made to preserve our animals, such as the koalas that were mentioned before, and their habitat, so they can continue to exist.

Time expired.

**Mr FENLON** (Greenslopes) (2.45 p.m.): I rise to speak with great pleasure in these Estimates for the Minister for Transport and the Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development. In doing so, I would first of all like to mention some very substantial local issues with which I have had the pleasure of working closely with the

Minister for Transport, Mr Hamill, to the great benefit of local constituents.

One of those, in particular, is the project regarding the noise abatement and beautification on the South East Freeway. I stood in this place about three years ago and described the very appalling situation on the South East Freeway where the major entrance to the city was a picture of neglect and essentially environmental mismanagement. The South East Freeway was constructed from the seventies on and the original landscaping work that had been done was of a very low standard, without any thought to irrigation and long-term environmental strategies. It was neglected. It was left with withering wattles and stunted trees and a lot of rubbish left along the road.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** And now you have got the Gary Fenlon memorial fence.

**Mr FENLON:** I take that interjection—

**Mr Beattie:** Not memorial, surely.

**Mr FENLON:** Indeed it is not a memorial, since I am alive and well, but it is locally known as Fenlon's fence. Since the erection of the fence, which has been erected to contain noise on the South East Freeway, I have continually received calls from local residents who convey anecdotes to me such as, "I can now wake up in the morning without having to turn the clock radio up another notch so that I can hear it over the passing freeway traffic". They also say things like, "I can now have visitors stay in my back room." People can now use their whole house.

That project essentially had three main phases. The first was the erection of that sound barrier which now extends on both sides of the South East Freeway through to the Holland Park West/Ekibin area. That fence has heights of two to four metres.

The second phase, as I have already indicated, was the beautification by way of vegetation with the cooperation of Greening Australia. They have been contracted to do that work by the Department of Transport.

Thirdly, there has been a very fine innovation by way of a new open grade asphalt surface which has been laid on the South East Freeway. My colleagues from the southern suburbs who drive to Parliament via the South East Freeway would recall the very delightful experience of driving through the Greenslopes electorate. They drive along in the car and suddenly, instead of that whirring sound of their tyres on the bitumen, they hear a soft hum and experience the beauty—

**Mr Nuttall:** You can hear the bellbirds.

**Mr FENLON:** Just above the bellbirds they can see the beauty of the grown vegetation and they can imagine the tranquillity enjoyed by the local residents behind those sound barriers, which is an added benefit to their lifestyle. It is a benefit because the figures show that there have been significant reductions in the decibel levels of noise that have been experienced by those people. This has been a very satisfying experience for me because those people actually can say that their lifestyle is far better by virtue of that project. I would like to thank the Minister for his efforts in that regard and I implore him to continue with the expansion of that project along the South East Freeway according to the noise policy that has been developed.

That shows how far we have advanced in the few years that we have been in Government. Prior to this Goss Government coming into power in Queensland, there was not even a noise policy to which residents could have reference. They had no right to say that they were getting too much noise or that there should be some remedy. The former Government did not have a noise policy. After coming to power in this State, one of the fundamental things that we had to do was to formulate a noise policy. We now have that. Constituents in my electorate and in other electorates can expect fair treatment throughout the suburbs where inordinate levels of noise are being experienced.

Another major project that is impacting upon my own electorate is the standard gauge link to the port of Brisbane. In his speech, the Minister indicated the substantial benefits that that project will create for Queensland in terms of the employment and economic flow-on to the citizens of this State. Here again is a contrast between this Government and previous Governments, which bulldozed ahead with projects without any regard for local residents. I have been able to talk confidently to my local residents, who will feel the impact of that project by virtue of the additional rail line coming through Coorparoo, and say to them that they will receive a net benefit from the project, because noise barriers will be constructed to reduce the noise. Those trials are currently proceeding. The residents will also benefit from better timetabling of trains, so that fewer trains will run at the most disturbing times of the day, particularly at night-time during the hours when one would normally wish to sleep.

In terms of the trials of the noise barriers—that project is now well advanced, with barrier design which is intended to

mitigate diesel exhaust noise. To the public, that has been the most objectionable source of noise from trains. A reduction in noise levels of approximately 10 decibels is desired from that project. It is intended to include that in the design. That requires barriers similar to hoardings, approximately six metres high with treated plywood in the upper three metres only. At present, the trial barriers will be built on one side of the track only, and will include both reflective and absorptive surfaces to test their effectiveness on both sides of the track.

Some comments have been made about the aesthetic merits of those noise barriers, particularly by those people who have the pleasure of driving past the barriers on the South East Freeway. I can certainly relate to honourable members that the effect of those barriers upon local residents far outweighs those aesthetic considerations. The people who are benefiting from lower noise levels are the last to want to protest about any disturbing aesthetic considerations. Those people want quieter lives, and they get them via those sorts of noise reduction devices.

One other substantial matter that I draw to the attention of the Minister, which has received attention in recent years and will, I expect, receive further attention in the future, is local area traffic management. Although a majority of the streets in electorates such as mine are within the province of the city council, there are interrelated matters. In terms of local area traffic management—one of the fundamental causes of complaint is the incidence of people speeding—if not at high speed, above the speed limit—and rat-runners. There is an interrelationship between local streets and main, State-controlled roads such as Old Cleveland Road and the South East Freeway which has a direct impact upon the State.

When I was a member of the Travelsafe Committee, which continues to be ably chaired by Len Ardill, an important matter that I raised—and that I understand is still on the agenda of the committee—is the role of the State Government in ensuring that forms of local area traffic management are economically attainable and provided in some way. The provision of local area traffic management within our suburbs has a very direct impact upon not only the lifestyles of people but also road safety. If we could slow down traffic in local streets and keep unwanted traffic out of local streets, we could reduce noise levels and lessen the impact of that traffic.

One very important issue that must be addressed in the future is that of controlling the speed of vehicles on local streets. Members would be aware that some attention has been drawn to the prospect of increasing certain speed limits and decreasing others. That matter must ultimately be linked to the use of devices such as speed cameras. Although that might be unpalatable to some of the population, the indication that I am receiving from local residents who live in streets that have a high incidence of rat-running and substantial problems with local traffic is that they are prepared to consider anything in an effort to find a way of systematically and effectively reducing the number of cars and the speed at which those cars travel through their streets. That issue must be addressed and grappled with by local communities. The use of devices such as speed cameras should be introduced with the support and cooperation of local communities.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** Doesn't the Victorian experience indicate that it lowers the road toll, too—saves lives?

**Mr FENLON:** I take that interjection. There is certainly good evidence to that effect. I am sure that, in Queensland, we can enjoy the full benefit of that.

Finally, I turn very briefly to the major changes that we are seeing in the infrastructure of the State. I welcome the references that the Minister made to the improvements in the rail system throughout the State, and particularly to the very modern and creative approach that the Minister is adopting towards the plan to introduce tilt trains into this State. That would have a very beneficial effect in terms of the broad agenda of economic reforms in the State and making our rail system more efficient. It would also be of great benefit to the citizens of Queensland. At this point, I make a special reference to my father, Bernie Fenlon, who is in the gallery today and who, as a pensioner, regularly uses the train between Rockhampton and Brisbane. He will benefit greatly from that innovation, which will reduce the number of hours of travel.

**Mr Hamill:** Two and a half hours off the travel time.

**Mr FENLON:** Yes. I will be able to see Bernie much earlier. The introduction of tilt trains will be a great innovation and a great benefit for those citizens of Queensland who live in centres outside Brisbane. I support the Estimates. The department has been managed very efficiently.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Briskey): Order! I acknowledge the presence in the gallery of Year 7 students from the Dunwich State School.

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore) (3 p.m.): The 3 500 people in the Yandina district and 700 people in the Yandina township have been put through hell for the past 12 months because the Federal Government decided to overturn a State decision and put a consultant in to examine all possible highway routes for the Yandina Highway upgrading. Quite frankly, if the Federal Government was going to make a decision—keeping in mind that it has given two necessary approvals—it should have done so last year and not put people through the farce of the \$100,000 study by consultants Ove Arup and another 12 months of uncertainty. I am sure that the State Minister understands the utter distress that people feel when, for two years or more, they do not know whether their home is going to be bulldozed or whether they will have a job.

The new Yandina Highway route should be chosen where the least number of homes and jobs have to be destroyed, where homes are not flooded by road embankments and the cost is not excessive so that it can be built quickly to solve the present highway problems. I hope that the Federal Government believes that people's homes and jobs are important, too. I sincerely hope to God that the Federal Government does not use this report as a measure of any of these impacts, because the real-life impacts will be sadly less rubbery than those studied in a highly unprofessional way in this study.

Let us look at the facts. Ove Arup has identified eight possible routes—five to the east through flood plain; a central option; and two western options. Members should not be fooled by references on page 69 of the report that intimate that the Ove Arup central route option is similar to the Queensland Transport Department's resumed central route. On page 69, the report states—

“In view of acquisition of land and disruption which had already taken place it was considered appropriate on social and community grounds to adopt this land as the basis of a central route.”

Yet Queensland Transport's 1991 estimates of construction for their central resumed route, as stated at public meetings in the town, were between \$20m and \$25m. Ove Arup's central route costs are \$41.9m which—surprise, surprise—makes it almost comparable in cost with the eastern routes which go through flood plain. Why the \$20m jump in cost for the

central route? The difference between a 1991 and 1995 construction date could not add that amount to the cost. Ove Arup said that it had extended the length of the central option to make it comparable with the western and eastern routes that it was considering. But that adds only at the most two kilometres, and that could not cost \$20m. Then I discovered in the road cross-sections at the back of Ove Arup's report that its central route was five metres higher through the middle of Yandina than was Queensland Transport Department's central route. How amazing! That is almost double the height, and Ove Arup was supposed to be looking at feasible routes!

I have copies of the Queensland Transport Department's cross-sections and those of Ove Arup if there are any doubting Thomases who wish to read them. One will see that Ove Arup also unnecessarily builds up the central route embankment to the south of Yandina over the railway crossing. Ove Arup's own western option, crossing at a similar point to the central route, has a clearance of 6.5 metres, but Ove Arup's central route option has a height of about 12 metres. Of course, the Queensland Transport Department was able to design a central option at this point with a crossing over the railway line of about 6.5 metres in height.

How did Ove Arup explain some of these height differences? Its representatives told one person at the display that the Queensland Transport designs were deficient. I know that at the display one of the consultants cast aspersions on the Queensland Transport Department by telling people that the central route was 20 years out of date. The same consultant, a Mr Peter Rice, has been telling people that the central route was a 14-metre tall China wall. I thought that I would mention that matter today, because that is not how an unbiased consultancy team informs an already distressed town about the eight options.

Heaven knows why a supposedly professional company would so deliberately overdesign its central route option. The Queensland Transport Department did not have to do it, so I suspect that Ove Arup was doing the bidding of the Federal Transport Department in order to skew the results. It is so unnecessary and unprofessional. I have tried to draw these faults to the attention of some ministerial minders, but they do not seem to want to know that such an expensive and long-awaited report could be so flawed. I beg the State and Federal Ministers not to be snowed by their departments, because people's lives could be put at risk.

Putting roads through flood plains, particularly for a town in the confluence of two tidal rivers, is potentially fatal for residents living in the immediate vicinity and in the town itself. Building roads with less than desirable and inconsistent curves—which Ove Arup believes are acceptable, as stated on page 68 of the report—to me would be a future black spot waiting to claim a motorist who has driven a relatively straight road.

There are some other very interesting anomalies in the report that I have asked the Ove Arup engineers to explain. I am still waiting for the answers. For example, the forecast traffic flows on page 73 are a feat of mathematics which seem to clash with the Queensland Transport Department's traffic counts. Either Ove Arup is wrong or the Queensland Transport Department is wrong.

**Mr Hamill:** Which do you think?

**Miss SIMPSON:** I tend to think that the department's traffic counts are correct. The 1991-92 traffic counts of Queensland Transport found that between Bunya Road to Yandina's north and Wappa Falls Road to the town's south, there were 10 400 local vehicle movements per day on the existing highway through Yandina. The total number of movements of through traffic and local traffic is about 18 000 vehicles. Considering that many more people live outside the town than inside the town, as the 1991 census shows, this high level of local traffic is not surprising.

At page 72, the consultants say that the local traffic/through traffic split is about 50/50—quite a bit lower than the Queensland Transport Department's traffic counts. For the sake of analysing this report, let us use the 50/50 split of Ove Arup. On page 73, the report comes badly unstuck. A table appearing on that page estimates the traffic flow which will remain on the old highway in the town as part of the local traffic network and the traffic flow which would then be carried by the new highway. That table gives different breakdowns for the eight different routes. If Ove Arup's figures are right, it is predicting taking between 30 per cent and 44 per cent per cent of local traffic—and I am not talking about the through traffic but local traffic—out of the local road network and putting it on the new highway. That impact does not seem to register in the economic analysis.

Let us look at the figures a little more closely. If we use Ove Arup's worst example, it predicts that a central route with an interchange will suddenly end up with very little traffic remaining on the old highway, because

most vehicles will be using the through road. Ove Arup's 1995 prophecy for traffic on the old highway is only 1 100 vehicles, with the balance of the 17 000 vehicles per day overloading the new four-lane through highway almost as soon as it is built, necessitating a six-lane highway just after the turn of the century. That is what the representatives of Ove Arup were telling people at the display, and that is what they have been saying in a newspaper article which I would like to now table.

That figure of traffic of 1 100 vehicles remaining on the old highway through town is rather amazing, considering that Ninderry Road alone—a road which feeds school traffic on and off the existing highway in town—has a figure much higher than 1 100 vehicles. In Queensland Transport Department counts for 1991, Ninderry Road had 1 620 vehicle movements over a 12-hour period. By 1995, that number will be far higher. There are, of course, many roads in addition to Ninderry Road which are feeding local traffic on and off the existing highway within the study area to come to the 10 400 vehicles figure per day out of the present 18 000. But Ove Arup believes that it can make over 9 000 vehicles disappear to get a figure of only 1 100 vehicles. That is very interesting.

I turn to another point. Assuming that the Ove Arup consultants used their own traffic figures in assessing other impacts, one should consider the planning balance sheet in the report. It assesses the impact that various highway options would have upon local traffic safety, pedestrian safety and cyclist safety. Now that we know that Ove Arup's consultants believe that only 1 100 vehicles are left on the old highway in 1995 if a central route is constructed—the lowest figure for all the routes—one would think that would mean that Ove Arup's central route would therefore be the safest of all for local traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. But no; it ranks a lowly two against the west option's ranking of four and the ranking of six for east 1, east 2, east 3 and east 4. That is very interesting.

I should explain more about the planning balance sheet. We are told by the consultants that it was highly important in determining their advice to Government. After studying it, I would say that it is about as useful as a stone to stone soup, if members know that old bush story. In other words, it can be whatever the author wishes it to be if he or she adds the right garnish and flavour after taking out the stone. Subjectivity is rife. The apparent complexity of this table cons people into not reading and questioning it. I will cite an

example. Once one learns the formula for turning the fancy pluses and minuses into numeric forms, one then has to know the formula to make sure that one is comparing apples with apples and not apples with oranges between the 50 different categories of long term impacts column in the planning balance sheet. I have here a planning balance sheet with these weighted numeric figures to allow proper comparison, which I will now table.

**Mr Hamill:** Who took the option to go near the farm—Ove Arup's option?

**Miss SIMPSON:** All of Ove Arup's options affect agricultural land.

**Mr Hamill:** All the ones from the east.

**Miss SIMPSON:** No. The eastern and western options all affect agricultural land, but it depends on whether they use the highly skewed bridge on the road to the north of the town.

**Mr Hamill:** The railway lines in there, too, could cause further confusion.

**Miss SIMPSON:** I would be surprised if they would want the railway line to the north of the town to cross on that angle. It would be quite skewed. They are more likely to put the crossing in another position.

**Mr Hamill:** What about the east/west links for traffic that wants to move between Yandina and the coast?

**Miss SIMPSON:** From the west?

**Mr Hamill:** Yes.

**Miss SIMPSON:** There is no interchange on the western routes. That is right. I want to table this document because it is the only way that honourable members will understand what the pluses and minuses mean. Then they will start to understand what this very important planning balance sheet in the Ove Arup report is about. It is important because the consultants will be using it to advise government. That is how ridiculous it is. Flooding is reduced to relatively minor impact out of the 50 categories. The flood plains skirting Yandina's east have claimed lives within sight of the town only 20 years ago. More lives will be threatened, along with homes, if a walled embankment is put through flood plains. An independent engineer to whom I talked recently said that there is no way a road could be built through those flood plains without flooding the people in the town.

Yet in the Ove Arup planning balance sheet, flooding is less important than views. There are three separate categories for views in this table. Flooding is also less important

than a combination of categories such as highway rest spots, camping areas and picnic spots and the image of the State forests, which are not anywhere near the roads.

Sugar land needs are worth a pittance to this planning balance sheet and in no way reflect their major importance to Yandina and the Sunshine Coast region. In the planning balance sheet table, sugar land has to compete with 49 other categories of long-term impacts, some of which seem to repeat themselves under similar names such as "viewing points", "landscape/views" and "views in and out".

Construction costs in the planning balance sheet have a weightage of 1.3 per cent out of 100 per cent and are ranked as having less importance than Mount Ninderry, ranked at 1.4 per cent—whatever Mount Ninderry is supposed to mean. The consultants will argue that this is the result of community feedback. Well, let them prove it, because no scientific and quantifiable means has been used in this whole study to gauge that.

At the community focus groups and interest groups where Ove Arup consultants asked community members to rank this list of 50 categories they handed people, they told people that the categories could mean whatever they liked. They also let them use basically whatever means they wanted to rank it, whether one was the highest or 100 was the highest. It was only when people questioned them that they said that one would be the highest. No standard was used across the groups.

What about the process of community consultation they claimed to have used? I call it the gut-feeling approach and as scientific as an old boot, because the consultants have refused to poll the people. Yet Ove Arup continues to make comments to the media about their perception of public opinion. The people should be polled so that we can obtain their views.

At the display at Yandina, a visitors' book is available for people to sign and make comments in. I have seen Bypass Yandina Organisation members read that book and copy people's names and comments. I would not be surprised if those people received nasty phone calls. I know all about the members of the Bypass Yandina Organisation and their phone calls!

Let us go back to the minor attention that Ove Arup's planning balance sheet gives to the sugar industry. Each sugar farm has to have a certain amount of unalienated land to

be viable. A road cannot be put through the middle of a property without throwing a lot more out of production due to row lengths, drainage and access. Each sugar farm helps maintain the viability of a central mill. Sugar land cannot easily be replaced because it must be located within an easy radius of the mill to keep transport costs down and production viable.

In the last 10 years, the Government has resumed 327.5 hectares of Sunshine Coast sugar land for roads, airports, industrial land and schools. That includes 38.3 hectares for the Nambour bypass and 51.2 hectares for the Sunshine Motorway. As well, with the new airport runway, the local authority is taking 127.9 hectares out of production. What is more, the Department of Industrial Development took 104 hectares.

The Sunshine Coast has lost more sugar land from government resumptions than all the other sugar-growing areas put together in Queensland. That vandalism has to stop. There are hundreds and hundreds of jobs at stake. I believe that the Government must heed its own policy of preserving good agricultural land.

I would also like to draw attention to how they have looked at residences in the noise column. They refused to tell me for a long time how many houses would be affected as a result of the social impact. Finally, at page 77, I found a reference to the matter. I was surprised because the report predicted that 10 houses would supposedly be affected by the central route. I questioned that, because I knew that four houses would be affected. Some of them were old sheds and there was a relocatable house.

**Mr ARDILL** (Archerfield) (3.16 p.m.): The Department of Transport is one of Queensland's mega departments. It is a very logical amalgamation of all aspects of transport that has led to a better appreciation of and coordination of mobility in this State than has been previously achievable. I believe that in the future, with good management, direction and planning, it can improve the lifestyle of all Queenslanders.

A lot remains to be done. When I first received my driving licence and joined the RACQ, bitumen on the Bruce Highway ran out at Eumundi, 130 kilometres north of Brisbane. The Pacific Highway was a two-lane road with a severely corrugated section over the Coombabah flats near the Crab Farm. A trip to Coolangatta took well over two hours, including a stop at Yatala or one of the roadside pubs for a drink.

This year, expenditure from consolidated revenue is estimated to be \$1.318 billion, with an estimated \$3.219 billion from the Trust and Special funds. A further \$907m will be spent on the Capital Works Program. That is the difference between those days and now. The funding that has been made available by this Government is essential to upgrading the system and providing mobility for the people of Queensland.

Unfortunately, Federal road funds this year will be reduced by 35 per cent on last year's figure. This is unacceptable, and Queensland Treasury will be increasing its content in road funding despite the fact that the Federal fuel tax should be funding a greater share of the maintenance cost. Funding on maintenance during the 1970s and 1980s resulted in a situation in which over 40 per cent of Queensland roads, and those of other States as well, had reached the stage of being irreparable. Under this Government, those roads have not been returned to gravel surfaces, as has happened in other States. Transport has embarked on a program to replace these roads. This program will rely on economies being found and acted on. With roads, there are three major demands on funds: maintenance of existing roads, reconstruction, and the glamour segment, the construction of new roads and facilities and duplication of pavements to accommodate increased traffic.

With an expanding economy and a massive increase in population, the new construction factor is always a pressing demand, but we ignore the maintenance factor at our peril, and successive Governments have done just that because of shortage of funds. The cost-benefit ratio of transport facilities has been generally ignored in Australia, except in the Territories where money is no object, and in the small, high-density State of Victoria. This has been a national folly which must not continue.

In Queensland, this Government has begun the process of addressing the problem. There are major benefits to the economy in providing efficient rail services and an effective road network. Although there is seldom any kudos for authorities in provision of adequate facilities, there is severe danger in not providing them. Road trauma, congestion, confusion, infrastructure cost escalation and loss of mobility to people are the results.

As I said, there is now a strategy to provide the transport and road infrastructure we need, and work is being done. The main western highway has seen massive work out

of Brisbane, which is a decade overdue. Other major work is still needed in Brisbane, including an urgently needed overpass on Route 20 at Kessels Roads and Mains Road, Robertson. The present ring road 10—the inner road around the central city—and ring road 20 are severely overused and must be supplemented by an outer ring road right around Brisbane, just as every major overseas city has provided for its people.

Route 40, which would continue the Gateway Bridge route right around the metropolitan area, has been proposed for over two decades. It must be planned and defined now to obviate the problems being experienced in the Sunnybank electorate. In case Opposition members think that the country electorates are being ignored, I remind them of the restoration and replacement work that is being done on major country highways at Balfes Creek on the Flinders Highway; between Mount Isa and Camooweal in the north west; on the Capricorn Highway over the Gogango Range; and on the Landsborough Highway at Jessamine Creek between Longreach and Winton. Bridge work and maintenance work are being carried out on the Kennedy Highway between Ravenshoe and The Lynd—despite what the member for Tablelands said. Major work is also being carried out on the Bruce Highway west of Bowen, which is long overdue.

I hope that similar work can be done on the rail line between Bowen and Home Hill. It is quite ridiculous that, for a century, that rail line has dipped into creeks and prevented trains from maintaining a proper speed on that section of basically flat, straight territory. The speed of trains in that area could be increased considerably if that section were reconstructed to the same extent as that of the Bruce Highway. That major work should be carried out on a section of the north coast rail line. An increase in the speed of trains through that area is vital to ensure that passenger trains get from Mackay to Cairns in a reasonable time.

The allocation of \$526m for the upgrading of the main line is a major, intelligent decision that will serve Queensland very well. Queensland Rail is the lifeline of Queensland. It is the natural way to carry out the speedy distribution of freight between the capital city and centres up to 2 500 kilometres away. This is the most decentralised State in Australia. An effective freight and passenger rail system is vital. In fact, it is even more essential in Queensland than it is in any other State.

There are three categories of need for rail in Queensland: firstly, the heavily used main lines which, because of the large distances involved, require comfortable passenger trains with dining cars and sleeping cars, as well as fast freight services; secondly, branch lines that serve and support small country towns and rural areas; and thirdly, the large metropolitan and regional centres. Despite the efforts of the Nationals to close down most of Queensland's rail system, it still has the best and most comprehensive rail system in Australia. During their time in office, the Nationals closed down 21 lines—some of them in sections. I will not go over that again, because I mentioned this during a recent speech in this Chamber.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** They ripped up some of the tracks, too, didn't they?

**Mr ARDILL:** They certainly did. They ripped up most of those tracks. The Nationals also eliminated most country passenger services, except the major airconditioned trains.

While on the subject of airconditioned trains, I draw the attention of members to the role of Jack Duggan in providing airconditioned trains, which are still a major part of Queensland's infrastructure after nearly 40 years. The late Jack Duggan was closely involved in every aspect of the design of those cars, as he was with the entire rail system. Those cars, which were world leaders, were copied around the world. They were the first airconditioned sleeping cars owned by an individual State. They were leaders in the supply of 240-volt head end power. They had total forward-facing sleeping berth cabins—against the world practice of alternate facing. They also made use of pastel colours suitable for a journey in tropical conditions. They were a radical change from the previous practice in cars in many ways, not the least of which was steel construction and noise reduction.

The genius who was responsible for the design and construction of the cars, Eric Adam, had this to say about Jack Duggan. He said that Jack Duggan was an excellent administrator and a decision maker of the first order. Those cars are still in use. It is to the shame of the National/Liberal Party Governments that they purchased practically no cars between Jack Duggan's time and electrification in the late 1970s. Mr Adam was the manager of COMENG, in which Evans Deakin has a 25 per cent interest. It is interesting to note that EDCO is now involved in the construction of rapid transit vehicles for

export. It has certainly performed well in Queensland. Most large provincial cities could also make use of that rapid transit system in Queensland.

As I mentioned before, the Queensland airconditioned car design resulted in the construction of many cars of a similar type around the world. Five hundred went to South Africa. This must be the way to head into the future, if we are to provide meaningful work for our young people. We must provide an industry that produces transport vehicles for overseas. The Duggan airconditioned cars have now been refurbished with the guidance of David Hamill. Beyond doubt, they are still leading the way as part of the best train in Australia, that is, the Queenslander. People can take the Ghan or the Indian Pacific, but the best train experience is the Queenslander. It is indeed a cruise ship on rails. The service is superb, the entertainment is much appreciated in both sections of the train, and the food is excellent. The decor was designed by the same person who designed the decor on the Ghan, but she was only practising on the Ghan. Despite the fact that the car that I travelled in was commissioned in 1954 as part of the fifth airconditioned train, the Midlander, and was involved in the wreck at Medway Creek in 1960, it still provides excellent and comfortable service as the Coral Sea car in 1993.

It is hard for someone not closely associated with rail journeys to fully understand the aura of a wonderful rail journey such as the Queenslander provides. The journey is of sufficient time to give one that cruise feeling of relaxation. This must not be allowed to dissipate by speeding up that service too much. Anything less than 20 to 24 hours does not fit the bill. The journey on the Queenslander represents a wonderful two days of relaxation. This is not to say that there is not a market for the tilt train to replace the Sunlander. There is. This Government would do well to plan for this once the electric tilt train technology is proved under Australian conditions on the Brisbane-Rockhampton route.

A great variety of public transport needs can be served by rail. These range from the cruise and backpacker needs—both supplied by the Queenslander—through to the Sunlander, the Inlander, the Westlander and the Capricornian overnight journeys, the magnificent day trains of the Spirit of Capricorn, and through to local services and the pioneer experiences such as the Forsayth Last Great Train Ride and the huge success of the Kuranda Tourist Train.

The Chief Executive of Queensland Rail, Mr O'Rourke, and his staff, including Traveltrain manager, John Angel, and others deserve the thanks and acclamation of this Parliament and the people of Queensland for the imagination and flair that they have shown in providing for the needs of Queensland Traveltrain services. The Spirit of the Outback, which is to commence next month, will be a welcome addition to the stable of world-famous trains.

Queensland is way ahead of the other States in terms of the services that it provides. I suggest that, instead of staying at Kuranda from 10 a.m. to 3.15 each day and cluttering up that station along with two other trains, the Kuranda Tourist Train should continue to Mareeba or Atherton, with bus connections radiating from one of those points. On the day after the Forsayth train goes through, part of the train—together with any load that is brought up the range on the Forsayth train from Cairns—could then proceed to Chillagoe, which has a tourism future. Kuranda trains make use of some of Queensland's historic cars from last century, as well as the Davidson cars that have been used on that service for decades. On that service is a complete set of Sunshine Express cars, which were constructed between 1935 and the war years to provide what was then considered to be a luxury service from Brisbane to north Queensland. Those cars have been adapted and modified for easy access on the Kuranda service. Sooner or later, Treasury must accept that public transport, and particularly rail services, are a public service for which capital must be provided. Lack of capital expenditure was the problem that Queensland Railways faced for 30 years under Liberal and National Party control. That has now changed, and must change further. The Government must accept that keeping branch lines open is a community service obligation, not something to be subsidised by Queensland Rail's customers.

Time expired.

**Mr LINGARD** (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.31 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak in this debate on the Estimates for the Department of Transport. As we are all fully aware, Queensland is the most decentralised State in Australia, and an efficient transport system is important for the social and economic fabric of the State. I support fully the comments of Mr Vaughan Johnson, the shadow Minister for Transport. He is a person who talks not from academic experience, but from personal

experience, and I know that he has a great grasp of this portfolio.

Although I have some specific transport-related matters pertaining to my own electorate that I wish to discuss, I intend to also raise a number of points with the Minister about how the department is functioning and how money is being spent. I note that in the Client Services Program, which is responsible for the delivery of a range of motor and boating services across the State, the departmental budget has doubled between the years 1991-92 and 1993-94. A large proportion of this has occurred in administrative costs, which have gone up by nearly 400 per cent. On capital outlays on plant and equipment, the outlook for 1993-94 appears to revolve around a number of warm, inner glow programs, most of them typical of an academic approach towards running a department. It does not seem to solve the problem of people waiting for months for new registration stickers after they have been sent their renewal notice and they have sent in their money. I know personally of one case in which a person has been waiting three months for his registration sticker, even though the cheque was cleared months ago by the Department of Transport.

The Marine and Ports Division of the Minister's department is responsible for navigation aids, waterways and boating facilities, private pleasure vessels, vessel surveys, nautical information and marine safety education. However, for some unknown reason, the boating patrol is the responsibility of the Department of Primary Industries. I find it amazing that the enforcement agency for a large proportion of the Marine and Ports Division's activities is located in an entirely separate department. I ask the Minister to explain how he justifies that as an efficient use of resources.

The Minister has, justifiably, received much criticism for the bungled attempt to close 29 railway lines throughout Queensland. In the Minister's defence, I understand that he actually did not know that he was going to be closing 29 railway lines until he was told about it during a Cabinet meeting. Evidently, the whole idea was really concocted by the Office of the Cabinet and the Treasury Department. It is reassuring to know that the Ministry is being run by public servants, and to know that the Minister has no control over what takes place within his own portfolio.

The freight and passenger transport services of the department are obviously the

core rationale for the department's existence. I note that spending on passenger transport services has remained fairly constant over the last three years, with expenditure in 1991-92 amounting to \$52.5m, and in 1993-94, \$57.5m. The two areas of freight and passenger transport, of course, are not actually involved in providing the service. They are there to provide the guidelines and the legislation. Even so, the two services between them will spend approximately \$150m this financial year—a drop of \$20m since 1991-92.

The real expenditure incurred by the department in moving freight and passengers is incurred by the rail transport area of the department—an area responsible for the expenditure of \$2 billion and the employment of 17 000 people. It is in the railway area that the Minister and his philosophies have had the greatest impact—a philosophy that is quite happy to subsidise commuter transport in the Brisbane metropolitan area to the extent of \$1 billion per annum, yet expects every country rail line to at least break even if it does not run at a profit. I refer also to the documents of the February 1993 Cabinet meeting in Townsville in which this Cabinet, this Government, skited—and I will read the first page of this very special, secret Cabinet document—that the Queensland Rail—

“ . . . staff reduction of approximately 3,000 over the past two years has been achieved with minimal industrial disruption.”

We know why there has been minimal industrial disruption—because there have been retrenchments and great payouts. That is what has occurred. I will refer to some other pages of this secret document which was delivered in Townsville. It states—

“As with elements of the rail reform program in other parts of the State, implementation of rail reform in the Townsville region will result in a reduction in total job requirements. Due to the introduction of more efficient infrastructure and changing requirements over a number of years, the impact in Townsville will be particularly severe. These reductions would be phased over three to five years as facilities, particularly the Workshops, are wound down. Given that it is not intended to move away from the existing policy of no involuntary retrenchments, a longer period would be involved depending on the take up rate under the Voluntary Early Retirement Scheme.”

Then it states—

“Due to their extremely sensitive nature”—

that is, this document and the removal of jobs from Townsville—

“issues related to the employment impacts of the rail reform program in Townsville have been limited to confidential discussions between Queensland Rail and the Minister for Transport and the Minister and the Honourable Geoff Smith and Messrs Davies and McElligott and David Barbagallo.”

Obviously, all of those people knew about it, but they did not tell the people of Townsville before the Cabinet meeting. This Cabinet, meeting secretly, decided to do away with all of these jobs in Townsville. The Minister has no qualms about throwing away hundreds of millions of dollars of infrastructure in closing rail lines—infrastructure that could not be replaced in this day and age because of the costs involved. However, that does not concern him because these railway lines are in electorates where the Labor Party gets very little support.

In the metropolitan area, the Minister has no qualms about the inefficiencies of the commuter network.

**Mr Ardill:** What about the Beaudesert line?

**Mr LINGARD:** I hear the member for Archerfield talking about the Beaudesert line. Let us talk about the Beaudesert line, because the Beaudesert line goes from Bethania through Jimboomba to Beaudesert. Let us have a look at what the Minister has just said about the Beaudesert line. It is not one of those lines that is to be officially closed, but let us see what his comments were when we spoke to him. He stated—

“Queensland Rail is now a corporate body which is required to operate in accordance with sound commercial principles.”

Fair enough. He continued—

“It is therefore progressively restructuring its freight business to eliminate the major financial losses currently being incurred.”

I point out to the member for Archerfield that the Minister stated further that livestock is the only traffic that is using the Beaudesert line, and that that livestock is coming from Australian Meat Holdings. He said that it is the only rail traffic between Bethania and

Beaudesert, which is completely untrue. A lot of private people in that area send their cattle down that line instead of offloading them at Dinmore. It costs an extra \$7 a head to unload them at Dinmore, and so private people have always been using that line at all hours of the day and night. Therefore, it is completely and utterly untrue to say that AMH is the only group using that line. This business is, therefore, required to generate all funds needed to pay for the line's upkeep and train operating costs. Therefore, this Government is saying to AMH, “You are the only one”—which is untrue—“using the line, therefore you have to maintain the whole thing—the whole upkeep and the whole train operating costs.” That is what it is saying to AMH. I say to the member for Archerfield that that is the future of the Bethania to Beaudesert line. Already, private contractors are down there starting to move parts of that railway. Obviously, they are going to close that line in the future. The Minister stated in this letter to me—

“Unfortunately, the volume of livestock traffic currently using this line only covers a fraction of the line's overall operating costs.”

So already it says that AMH has to cop the whole lot. Already it says that that is where the costs are incurred, and already the Government is saying, “However, the volume of traffic does not cover the costs.” These costs are exacerbated by the line's light construction, which prevents the use of QR's more powerful and efficient locomotives. If that statement is not saying indirectly that the Beaudesert line is going to close down very soon, once the furore of the closure of 29 railway lines dies down, then the member for Archerfield is completely incorrect. The Government is saying that one company has to pick up the total cost; it is saying that the line is already inefficient; it is saying that the line is too light for the company's locomotives and, indirectly, it is quite obviously saying that the Beaudesert line is going to close down. I note that the average wage for people employed in railway operations is some \$40,000 per annum. I find that an extraordinary amount when it is spread over 17 000 people.

I wish to skip very quickly to a particular problem that I have about roads in my electorate. When I entered this Parliament in 1983, my electorate extended to Springwood. Therefore, in my electorate I had the South East Freeway development from Kingston to Beenleigh. The electric train development from the city down to Beenleigh came through my area. the Cunningham Highway passed

through my electorate, as did the Ipswich bypass. Most importantly, the development of the Mount Lindesay Highway occurred in my electorate. Those people who have used the Mount Lindesay Highway will know in that period there was development from Compton Road down to Johnson Road, Browns Plains and then along to Vansittart Street at Regents Park. It was a massive development. Included in it between 1983 and 1989 was the Logan Motorway development.

Since 1989, the only development on the Mount Lindesay Highway has been about 400 metres from Vansittart Street to Middle Road. The indirect problem is the fact that there has been no development between Regents Park, Browns Plains and Beaudesert. This has left a massive problem at the Jimboomba bridge; something on which the Minister has refused to meet the people. He has refused to come to a meeting. He has said that he has not received the letters, even though his staff have signed for certified mail. He knows full well that a few weeks ago a young boy was killed at the Jimboomba bridge. There have been other deaths there.

The difficulty with the Jimboomba bridge is this: although the Minister says that officially it is wide enough, on one side the traffic lane is 11 feet wide. From the centre of the double lines to the rail is 11 feet. Therefore, a massive vehicle such as a truck or a bus, which are officially eight foot two inches wide, such as the buses going through to Beaudesert State High School, have rear vision mirrors extending so far that the real width of the bus is nine foot seven inches. If two such buses pass on the bridge, which has two lanes 11 feet wide, it is not too hard to work out that there is only have a matter of inches between them. Either they miss each other by inches or one of them stops. The traffic behind then has to stop. The other night, a young student from Kooralbyn stopped behind a bus and a third vehicle ran into the back of his vehicle. It pushed him into the back of a bus. He spun out to the side and into the oncoming vehicle on the bridge. Unfortunately, it was a prime mover. The student was killed. His was not the first death on the Jimboomba bridge.

**Mr Ardill:** No. It has been there for years like that.

**Mr LINGARD:** I am telling the honourable member that other people have been killed on the Jimboomba bridge. I do not know how to answer the member for Archerfield. It is unbelievable. Of course, it has been like that for years.

What we have said to the Minister is that something has to be done quickly. The Minister has stopped the development of the Mount Lindesay Highway. The development has been extended only about 400 metres since the Government took office in 1989. All the previous development occurred between 1983 and 1989. Anyone who drives down towards Beaudesert will see a mass of yellow flags and ribbons, which is part of a massive public campaign.

On Tuesday, I presented to this Parliament a petition containing 3 500 signatures of people at Jimboomba who say something must be done about the bridge. We do not expect a four-lane highway to Beaudesert, although that will eventually happen when enough money is provided, but at least either the western side or the eastern side of that four-lane highway should be constructed. Not only is it dangerous to the people, but also whenever there is a heavy rain the section that floods and prevents access to Beaudesert is around this particular bridge.

The Minister has received a petition containing 3 500 signatures. He has received many invitations to come to a meeting with these people. There is a meeting on Sunday which the Minister has refused to attend. The Premier has also refused to attend. I say to the Minister on behalf of the people of Jimboomba that this is an extremely dangerous situation. I do not expect the total cost of \$2.6m for the development of the four-lane highway, but the part of the western part of the highway needs to be developed, firstly to save lives, and secondly, because when flooding occurs no-one can use the Mount Lindesay Highway.

**Mr ROBERTSON** (Sunnybank)  
(3.46 p.m.): Mr Temporary Chairman—

**Mr Beattie:** At last we'll hear some common sense.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I take that interjection from the member for Brisbane Central. I am pleased to rise today to speak on the Estimates for the Department of Transport. In particular, I would like to address my initial comments to that part of the Capital Works Program dedicated to intermodal transfer and urban transport system development.

The 1993-94 Budget has dedicated an amount of \$13.5m to be spent during 1993-94 for the development of transport infrastructure to enhance the operational efficiency and effectiveness of urban public transport systems. As the Minister would be aware, since entering this House I have

developed a keen interest in public transport issues, particularly those in south-east Queensland. This interest has developed as a result of my representing an electorate on the outskirts of Brisbane that continues to experience high rates of population growth.

My electorate of Sunnybank also experiences pressures from the adjacent Logan City and the associated high rates of growth in population and resultant issues highlighted recently in the SEQ 2001 study reports. As a result, I have become particularly interested in initiatives which encourage higher usage of public transport and the development of more efficient and effective public transport systems. Initiatives such as the implementation of integrated ticketing for Brisbane transport services will, I believe, provide real improvements to the efficiency of rail, bus and ferry services in Brisbane.

It is in the light of such initiatives that I was concerned to learn that a dodger was recently distributed on Brisbane City Council buses alleging that the State Government was proposing to deregulate the council's bus services. This dodger caused a great deal of concern to constituents in Sunnybank who are, by and large, served very well by city council bus services.

That is why I was pleased to be advised by the Minister for Transport that this Labor Government has no intention of deregulating urban bus operators, as has occurred in New Zealand and Great Britain. The allegations made in the dodger are clearly wrong and have misinformed the public.

This Government's aim is to improve service levels to the public and to ensure that the fastest growing areas of the State, including new suburbs within the Brisbane City Council area, such as Stretton in my electorate, receive high frequency services to encourage greater use of public transport.

My electorate of Sunnybank has already benefited from programs designed to attract more people to public transport. For example, Queensland Rail has invested \$1.1m upgrading safety and comfort features for passengers at the Altandi, Kuraby and, just outside my electorate, Trinder Park Railway Stations. These station upgradings have been completed under Queensland Rail's Operation Facelift program and will benefit a total of 425 000 passengers each year.

The improvements to these stations have focused on improved safety and comfort features for rail passengers. Safety is a top priority, with better lighting and improved vision on platform areas. In addition, emergency

help phones have been installed to provide instant access to the central rail control room, and to police, if required. These are worthwhile improvements for all rail customers that aim to attract more people to the convenience of our comfortable, airconditioned rail services in Brisbane.

That, after all, must be one of this Government's primary goals—to encourage increased patronage of public transport so that, together with the Brisbane City Council, this Labor Government can address the increasing pressures on our existing road system. An example of the city council's contribution to this goal is the construction of a bus transit lane from Mains Road, Sunnybank, to the South East Freeway resulting in shorter travel times to the city for bus passengers.

The extent of the pressures on south-east Queensland's transport network was demonstrated again in the Brisbane City Council's recently released Livable Brisbane plan. The imperative to find alternatives to the increasing usage of private motor vehicles is highlighted in this document by the fact that in 1991 in Brisbane people made 3.7 million private trips by car every day. This is expected to increase to 6.3 million daily trips by 2011. The driving force behind these figures is the continuing population growth and increasing car ownership, particularly here in south-east Queensland. It is important to note that, although the number of people using public transport has increased, as a proportion of the total population it has declined. In 1960, 40 per cent of all personal travel was by public transport. In 1993, that has dropped to only 8 per cent. The reasons for that decline have already been widely canvassed in studies such as the South-East Queensland Passenger Transport Study.

**Mr Beattie:** An important study.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Indeed. Many of the recommendations arising from that study have already been and continue to be implemented by the Government. An example of the ongoing implementation of those recommendations is the allocation of \$6.2m in this year's Budget to the implementation of integrated ticketing for Brisbane's transport services. Passengers should be able to travel from the start of their destination on one ticket, valid for all sections of their trip, and importantly covering all forms of public transport—buses, ferries and trains. This Budget initiative will achieve that aim.

The Budget also allocates \$151.2m for the expansion and upgrading of Brisbane's suburban rail system. That allocation has

come at a time when the Department of Transport recently completed its review of Queensland public transport arrangements. That review was timely, providing as it does an analysis of areas in Queensland that are poorly serviced by public transport. It is also timely given the prediction in the SEQ 2001 reports that, by 2011, the number of passenger trips per day in south-east Queensland will increase from the current 477 000 to close to 718 000.

I was therefore pleased to read the speech that the Minister for Transport delivered at the opening of the Bus and Coach Association's biennial maintenance and information conference in August this year. The speech by the Minister clearly demonstrates that this Government is aware of the issues to be faced by transport providers now and in the future. Given that the State Government funds public transport to the tune of more than \$270m a year I believe that, as a Government, we do have a right to make demands on private bus operators to improve the delivery of their services to the community. As the Minister pointed out in his speech to the Bus and Coach Association, years of ad hoc and uncoordinated decision making have produced a public transport system which, in many areas of Queensland, provides either poor services or no services at all during off-peak times, at night or on weekends.

It is not only the private bus operators on which we should make demands to improve the level and standard of their services. Local authorities have a responsibility to also pay their share by providing funding or subsidies to ensure that quality services are provided in an equitable manner throughout their city or shire. If the current funding and operational arrangements with respect to the provision of bus services are to remain, the ongoing commitment by the Brisbane City Council to the provision of an efficient bus service, using a constantly upgraded bus fleet, should provide a model to many of the larger city councils throughout Queensland.

I am not suggesting that local authorities should necessarily operate their own bus fleets. I am simply calling on local authorities to recognise the important role that an efficient and modern bus service has in resolving planning and infrastructure issues, not to mention also protecting the environment. For example, Brisbane ratepayers subsidise the council's bus service to the tune of \$26m on top of the significant annual contribution by the State Government

and money earned from the fare box. Yet, in adjoining Logan City, the Logan City Council does not make any contribution to the operation and, importantly, the expansion of private bus services in Logan. That is in spite of the fact that many residents in adjoining cities such as Logan use BCC bus services, paid for, in part, by the ratepayers of Brisbane.

I would argue that social justice demands that the Logan City Council again looks long and hard at contributing to the operation and expansion of bus services in that fast-growing region. It is not good enough for that council to sit back and accept, and in some cases demand, expansion of the road network to cope with increasing traffic pressures generated by population growth in Logan while, at the same time, ignoring its own responsibilities to ensure the expansion of the public transport network in Logan. Unless the council accepts its responsibilities in that area, Logan will continue to have one of the highest ratios of motor vehicle ownership per household in the whole of south-east Queensland—a ratio that will continue to increase into the future.

The limited growth of public transport services in Logan imposes an onerous and environmentally irresponsible burden on a section of the population that can least afford to own two or even three cars per household. The initial purchase and annual running costs of an additional car on an average household's budget must be more significant than an appropriate increase in rates dedicated to an expanded and more efficient bus service in Logan City.

Public transport is an important part of any social justice strategy. Low-income earners, pensioners, the unemployed, students and women rely heavily on public transport to access employment, services, shops and recreation. Therefore, it should not be only the State Government that is committed to social justice and the provision of services. There is also an obligation on local authorities and even private transport operators to accept that they, too, must recognise the importance of public transport in providing equality of access to employment, education and recreation for all residents in south-east Queensland.

I now turn to that item in the Estimates that refers to funds committed to the extension of the passenger rail line to Robina on the Gold Coast. Of the \$151.2m committed in this Budget to the expansion and upgrading of the commuter rail system, \$40.4m has been allocated to the further

construction of the Brisbane-Gold Coast railway. The Minister is aware that I recently had the pleasure of accompanying the Minister for Environment and Heritage to Perth to inspect the Transperth integrated rail and bus public transport system. In particular, that visit enabled me to inspect the operation of the new passenger rail line to Joondalup, some 26 kilometres north of the city centre.

Joondalup itself is a fast-growing regional centre, which has in part developed along the lines of Queensland's planned Robina integrated development project. However, what is significant about that project is that the public transport infrastructure was put in place early in Joondalup's development. The Joondalup rail line has only recently been opened using electric rolling stock manufactured here in Queensland. The trains are an adaptation of the electric trains currently running on Brisbane's suburban rail network. The new Joondalup line has already been a substantial success, with patronage high and increasing daily. Patronage on the Joondalup line has exceeded Transperth's estimations.

An important success of the Joondalup line is its integration with the Transperth Bus Service. As both bus and train services in Perth are operated by the one State Government authority, efficient integration of services has been achieved. As a result, bus services and train services do not run in competition with each other but compliment each other and feed off each other. Instead of bus services running directly into the city, the bus routes circle major bus and train interchanges. Part of the success of the strategy has been to construct attractive but, more importantly, functional suburban bus/rail interchanges, integrated timetables and an integrated ticketing system. Having witnessed the success of those systems in Perth, I am able to compliment the Minister for his commitment in this Budget to the introduction of integrated ticketing and electronic ticketing machines throughout the suburban rail network in Brisbane.

Of particular interest to me was that the Joondalup rail line runs up the middle of the northern freeway from the city centre. As a result, bus interchanges are elevated above the freeway, and access to the rail stations below is by elevators. Transperth is also committed to a program of converting its bus fleet to run on environmentally sensitive fuels, such as natural gas. The new Joondalup line is a practical demonstration of what can be achieved with imaginative, practical solutions to urban transport problems. I am aware that

senior officers at Queensland Rail have already visited Perth to inspect that new rail line, and many of the features on the Joondalup line will be integrated into the Gold Coast rail link. I am also confident that we will be able to do it even better here in Queensland.

I take this opportunity to thank the senior officers of Transperth for their time and informative tour of the Transperth operation. I also acknowledge the foresight of the former West Australian Labor Government to commit the necessary funds to the construction of the new Joondalup line.

In conclusion, I want to make a couple of comments about the new suburban rail timetable. It is clear that a review of the timetable was long overdue. However, unlike members of the Opposition, I believe that the level of consultation by departmental officers from Queensland Rail was very good. Departmental officers listened to my concerns about the draft timetable as it affected the Runcorn Railway Station. As a result, Runcorn is now one of the three stations in my electorate where express services stop, the others being the Altandi and Kuraby Railway Stations.

**Mr Beattie:** You're a good local member; they're not.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I take the interjection from the member for Brisbane Central. Unfortunately, my submissions with respect to Sunnybank Railway Station did not achieve the same degree of success. Whilst I accept the arguments of Queensland Rail that Sunnybank Station cannot be part of the express rail service, I hope that Queensland Rail will keep that matter under review.

As the Minister is aware, the Park-n-Ride facility at Altandi Railway Station is very popular and always full from Monday to Friday. I simply request that, if patronage increases at Sunnybank Railway Station—which incidentally has a very good and secure park-and-ride facility—that that be taken into consideration in any further review of the Beenleigh line timetable. Finally, in supporting the Estimates of the Department of Transport, I express my appreciation to the Minister, his staff and departmental officers for their support during the past year to achieve a number of important local transport initiatives, some of which I have mentioned in the Chamber today.

**Mr SANTORO** (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (4.01 p.m.): I wish to use the time allotted to me in this Estimates

debate to deal with the concerns of my constituents who are being affected by the operation of the Minister's department and the policies of his Government. As the Minister is aware, during recent times I have referred to him and to his department several issues which have concerned my constituents. The results that I have obtained from my representations have been mixed, but from the outset I wish to thank various departmental officers—some of whom are here today and many of whom are very senior officers—for the courtesy and attention which they have extended to me and to my constituents. Officers from Queensland Rail and the Transport Department have made themselves very accessible to me and have provided formal responses which, if not definitive in their ability to resolve issues to the satisfaction of my constituents, have at least been informative.

I also thank the Minister for his interest in the issues that I have brought to his attention. Obviously, we did not agree on all the matters that we have discussed. At least the Minister has made himself available to discuss those issues, and he also made time to attend a public meeting which I organised in relation to the Eagle Junction-Pinkenba rail service.

I wish to touch on several issues during this contribution, including the Eagle Junction-Pinkenba rail service, the Nundah bottleneck issue, the Northern Transportation Corridor and several other issues which, although not as high profile as those three specific ones, certainly impact on and are important to my constituents.

As members would be aware, in late September 1993, rail passenger services ceased on the Doomben-Pinkenba line. The residents of the area always suspected that this move was on. Despite the claims that consultation was occurring on the fate of that line, I have always contended—and the local residents certainly contended—that its fate was preordained and predesigned. I agree with some of the comments by the member for Indooroopilly, who said that the Minister and some officers of his department have redefined the definition of "consultation". Consultation started occurring—and the flow of information to my constituents then became enormous—only after we got involved at a political level. It was at the point when the decision was made about the new timetable and I started circulating information to my constituents that they really were in the know.

Needless to say, the community disagreed strongly with the decision taken by

the Minister and the department. It is of no use for the Minister to claim that the local community agrees with him because, with respect, I can assure him that the local community does not. The Minister may think that it was the right decision, but the community does not. Absolutely nothing that the Minister says or does will convince those people otherwise. The Minister should be aware that the local rail action committee remains constituted, and it will continue to monitor the situation. Already, formal correspondence has begun to flow through and about 12 phone calls have been received in the last couple of weeks from people who have been genuinely inconvenienced by the new timetables and by the less user-friendly aspect of the service now being provided. The Minister should be aware that those complaints were immediately forwarded to his chief executive officer. I have advised that officer that we will keep on this issue until all of those concerns are resolved. Those are the sorts of commitments that the Minister made.

I wish to thank the people who were involved in supporting the campaign to save the Eagle Junction-Pinkenba rail line.

**Mr Hamill** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** To save the Eagle Junction-Pinkenba passenger rail services.

**Mr Hamill:** Some people have been saying that we are closing the line. It would be quite scurrilous to suggest that.

**Mr SANTORO:** I take the interjection from the Minister. That is a scurrilous suggestion. Every media release that I have issued—and, as the Minister would be aware, they are many in number—referred to "passenger rail services".

**Mr Hamill:** I know you wouldn't do it.

**Mr SANTORO:** I take the interjection. The Minister and I disagree on many things, but I agree with the Minister when he says that I would not tell lies or do anything as scurrilous as some others—including some members of this place—may. I thank the rail action committee and the general community for their support on this issue. I undertake to keep the feedback forthcoming.

Another issue that is important to my constituents is broadly defined as the Nundah bottleneck on Sandgate Road. In order to resolve that problem—which, to be resolved permanently, requires the injection of an enormous amount of funds—the Minister arranged for some parking restrictions to be implemented. I told the Minister that I would keep him, this Parliament and his

departmental officers informed on the impacts of those restrictions. I surveyed all of the small businesses along Sandgate Road that are affected by those restrictions. Quite a few responses have been returned. The Minister may be aware that I asked several questions, including questions about the decline or increase in the number of clients per week that those businesses have observed, the turnover, security on business premises, and passing traffic and custom. Invariably, of the responses that have been returned, about 25 per cent of the businesses surveyed have said that their business and their turnover has decreased as a result of those measures from between 5 per cent and 35 per cent. I will compile the results of that survey, and I will let the Minister know the results when I do.

I think it is important that the Minister is aware of the impact on my constituents of decisions made by him and his department. The Nundah bottleneck is a very worrying problem. It was one of the matters that the Minister and I discussed. Obviously, we could not determine what would happen until the information was properly compiled. I am in the process of doing that. However, the early returns, if I can use that term, from small businesses are not encouraging.

Another issue in which I have taken some interest is the so-called transportation corridor in the Woolloowin/Kalinga area. The Minister would be aware and would acknowledge that there is a lot of concern within that area about the possible widening of roads or the creation of new roads to assist traffic flows around the north side of Brisbane. I want to pay tribute to the Minister's senior officers, who—obviously under his instructions—received a delegation of myself and the two local aldermen. Those officers set out the history of that issue, and they have also made themselves available to answer specific questions on the issue. I have circulated my constituency with the names and telephone numbers of those officers, and that system of information exchange is working well. I want to stress that the local residents do not want a freeway or a Route 20 situation. They want their residential amenity to be maintained. I support them totally in that. I think it is a big step forward when I am able to say that, these days, the complaints are being directed straight to those officers who are responsible for providing information. As a result, my constituents can be made aware of the location of property owned by the department and the location of the line on the map for the suburbs in question.

Another issue of great concern to the residents of Pinkenba is that of access to and

exit from Pinkenba. There is an enormous amount of concern within that local community—and I accept that the concern is valid—that if there is an emergency along Kingsford Smith Drive, such as a fire caused by fuel spills or whatever, the exit from the area for the residents of Pinkenba could be impaired severely.

**Mr Hamill:** To Kingsford Smith Drive?

**Mr SANTORO:** The Minister would have to agree that, if Kingsford Smith Drive is blocked or is cut off, access from Pinkenba is limited severely. I have already had some discussions with the Federal Airport Corporation about the problem, and that body is looking into the matter, but there is not much that it can do. However, I intend to pursue that issue even further.

I remind the Minister of a point that was raised by the member for Indooroopilly. The accident that occurred recently on Kingsford Smith Drive should be of general concern to the Minister in relation to that transport corridor. Obviously, because of the sensitive nature of the accident, I have not sought to enter into any public debate. However, I encourage a thorough investigation and a consideration of solutions that are equitable not only to heavy-duty vehicles but also to the regular traffic that uses the local traffic corridor.

Time expired.

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (4.10 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members for their contributions to this Estimates debate. I admit that I come to close this debate somewhat chastened by the attack that has been launched upon me by honourable members opposite. Indeed, I really felt guilty when the member for Gregory accused me of making this Budget look good. To drive that point home, it really hurt, because it is a good Budget. This Government has nothing to be ashamed of in the Budget that has been brought down in this place, particularly as it relates to transport. It is a Budget of achievement.

As I indicated earlier, the Budget provides a massive investment in infrastructure in Queensland. Contrary to the claims by the member for Gregory, it is not a Budget for the cities. He quoted in his remarks that it was "a pay more, get less Budget". I ask him to tell that to the local authorities, who are seeing massive funds pass through them for roadworks and road construction. He should tell it to the disabled who are benefiting, as I indicated earlier, from the far more liberal

arrangements with respect to the disabled taxi subsidy scheme. He should tell it to the people in his constituency who are benefiting through the extension of those remote area air services.

**Mr Johnson:** I endorsed that, and you know that.

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member cannot have it both ways. He cannot suggest in one breath that it is a Budget which is costing people more and they are getting less when, quite clearly, it is a Budget which contains such a range of initiatives which is providing quite tangible benefits to a wide range of people across the length and breadth of the State. I invite him to tell it to the people employed in Queensland Rail, employed by local councils, employed by the Department of Transport or by contractors who are benefiting through jobs that are being generated by this Government's record investment in infrastructure development in terms of roads, rail and ports. It is all in the Budget.

I was also intrigued to hear the honourable member for Gregory quote from a speech of mine. Obviously, he finds it a particularly interesting one. I always found it a particularly interesting speech. In fact, there is a lot of good material in it. But parts of that speech were incorrectly quoted back at me. As my recollection of what I had said seemed to be at variance somewhat with the remarks made by the honourable member, I thought that it would be nice to get the speech out and see what I had said about the poor performance of the National Party and their erstwhile Liberal coalition partners when they held the reins of power and ran Queensland Rail into the ground. I will quote from that speech the piece which the honourable member tried to use quite wrongly to misrepresent the remarks that I made in this place in April 1989. Let me quote from a very reliable source, namely myself. I stated—

“When the Commissioner for Railways can appear on television and state that members of the Queensland public have to get it through their heads that the railway is not there to provide a service, but rather must be a commercially viable undertaking, then I suggest that the railways, under this Government, are on the wrong track.”

I stand by everything that I said at that time.

Nothing in that quotation detracts at all from this Government's performance in relation to management of the rail system. What we have not done is cast out the notion

of service. We have directed our attention to improving the quality and the effectiveness of service. It is not a very good service that is seeking to operate with poor facilities, poor equipment, poor marketing and poor market share. A good service is a service that people are going to use, and that service should provide them with a substantial improvement in their amenity. That clearly was not happening when the National Party held the reins of power, apart from in the mining industry, and even it was getting screwed with respect to the National Party's hidden royalty taxation policy which this Government in this Budget has set aside. The suggestion that rail ought to be a viable and commercial undertaking sits very well with providing high quality service. Unfortunately, the National Party did not see them as going hand in hand. It saw that profit at all cost—it never got one—was given paramount consideration, and service ran a very poor last.

This Government has sought to run the two concepts together, and the results speak for themselves. I never thought that I would hear the parties which claim to be the pillars of private enterprise—the pillars of competition—actually suggest in this place that somehow profit would be a dirty word. Yet the member for Gregory stated in this place that it was impossible for an essential service to make a profit. It is little wonder that he sits on the Opposition benches today and his party is still not in Government in this place.

This Government believes in high quality service, but it also believes in prudent fiscal management. That is exactly what we have brought to bear with respect to Queensland Rail.

I will refer further to the speech that I made in 1989. A number of the issues that I raised in that speech tended to be raised again at various stages of this debate—sometimes by the Opposition but more particularly by members of the Government. Reference was made in that speech to a need to upgrade the north coast line between Brisbane and Cairns by straightening the track and providing better services. That is exactly what this Government is doing, and proudly so. An amount of \$155m of the investment in rail this year is towards upgrading the north coast line, a commitment that I made in 1989 and which I am very proud, as Minister, to be able to fulfil.

In that speech, I urged the Government to get on with the job of ensuring that the port of Brisbane and Fisherman Islands were connected with the national standard gauge

rail network—a commitment that I made in Opposition as Transport spokesperson, and a commitment that I am delivering as Minister. I am very proud of that. This Budget is delivering that commitment.

Another aspect to which I drew particular attention in 1989 was the state of Queensland Rail's workshops. I was enthralled to hear the honourable member for Gregory talk about the National Party's record in office when it came to provision for rail workers. My colleague the member for Brisbane Central very persuasively put the case of how rail workers and their families ran a very poor second in the consideration of the previous National Party Government. So was it with respect to the workshops. When the National Party was in office, work was being taken out of the workshops—contracted out.

I might say for the benefit of the members of this place that one of the key features of the enterprise bargaining agreement which was negotiated between Queensland Rail and Queensland Rail employees was the recognition of railway work in the workshops remaining railway work in the workshops. What is also the case, though, is that this Government has recognised that we cannot have railway workshops in this State with the cutting edge of technology of the 1860s. That is exactly the legacy that the coalition Government and then the later National Party Government left us in this place.

I remember visiting the old Cairns workshop to see wagons being moved with crowbars. There were no shunt tractors available for the blokes in the old Cairns workshops to move the wagons about. Such was the standard of high technology available in the days of the National Party Government. Honourable members might care to go and look at some of the machinery which adorns the floors of workshops in Ipswich, Townsville and Rockhampton. Indeed, it was the conservative Governments prior to T. J. Ryan that made the funds available for some of that machinery.

The National Party may be able to live in the past but, if railways in this State are to have a future, they have to be modernised to meet the needs of the community not of the 1890s but of the 1990s. The decisions which the rail board has taken with respect to investment in workshops are without parallel in this country.

A few months ago, I had the pleasure of being the host for my counterpart from Western Australia. When we discussed the

issue of workshops, he was staggered that we were going to keep any railway workshops operating in this State. Mr Charlton, a National Party Minister from Western Australia, was presiding over the closure of the last railway workshop for Westrail. What are we doing? Through the rail board, \$55m worth of new investment is going into workshop facilities around the State. I know that the member for Gregory may not be a whiz-kid with balance sheets, but he quite falsely suggested that only \$1m had been allocated to Rockhampton and \$2.4m for Stuart. Obviously, he did not bother to cast his eyes further along the line showing the time for the delivery of that \$55m worth of new investment for railway workshops in this State. In the Townsville region, there is significant new investment at Stuart in terms of wagon and locomotive maintenance. In Rockhampton, \$20m will go towards redeveloping the railway workshops. In Redbank, there is a \$35m investment involving the consolidation of workshops in the southern part of the State.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** The honourable member is bleating about employment uncertainty. Uncertainty of employment in the railways existed when a coterie of National Party Ministers presided over the destruction of the rail system and its future in this State. There was no future for those employees who were in a run-down industry that was being continually run down by an uncaring, unsympathetic, visionless Government. Under this Government, the jobs of Queensland Rail employees are secure. There is no question about that. People say that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. I can conclude only that the member for Gregory is not dangerous at all.

I draw the attention of members to some of the misguided comments of the member for Tablelands, who suggested that rail was losing its position in the market on the tableland because this Government is not interested in livestock, primary produce or Red Dome. For financial reasons, the Red Dome mine chose not to move its product by rail. Had this Government not responded to those sorts of requests, the very same member who has been casting aspersions on the Government and Queensland Rail would have been casting aspersions on this Government for the loss of jobs on the tableland. The Opposition cannot have it both ways.

**Mr Johnson:** You heard what the member for Tablelands said.

**Mr HAMILL:** I heard what he said. So much of what that member said was arrant nonsense.

**Mr Johnson:** He has the papers to prove it.

**Mr HAMILL:** I have the papers here. I am more than happy to embarrass that member in any public forum. Queensland Rail is negotiating with the sugar industry in north Queensland—and proudly so. But there are some limitations. It is a matter of having modern infrastructure. There is still a maximum axle load of 10 tonnes over the Kuranda range. Modern-day requirements will not allow modern-day handling methods when there are physical limitations such as that upon the rail system.

A number of members spoke about passenger transport. As I indicated in my opening remarks, passenger transport is a major priority for this Government in this term. We regard passenger transport as an integrated package—whether it be in country areas, where we strongly support passenger transport through Queensland Rail and private bus and school transport arrangements, or whether it be in south-east Queensland, where our support for passenger transport and, indeed, the patronage of it, allows us to spend the lion's share of our road budget in country areas. If we did not support passenger transport in the cities, quite frankly we would have a far greater demand for dollars for major roadworks in the cities. I will put my money with passenger transport services any day.

This Government has sought to revamp rail services. One of the features of that is a change to the railway timetable. The world does not stand still. South-east Queensland looks a lot different from what it did 15 years ago. People have moved to different areas and there are different demands on the rail service. Contrary to claims made by some members opposite, through extensive consultation this Government has reshaped a rail timetable and, consequently, bus timetables that better reflect an ability to meet new levels of demand. I make no apology for that. In fact, I make no apology for trying to put seats in places where people need them. When there is unused capacity in some areas while people are virtually falling out of buses and trains in other areas, something is wrong if we cannot redistribute that capacity and put seats in places where they are needed more. That is exactly what we sought to do.

**Mr Johnson:** That's in the south-east corner.

**Mr HAMILL:** In response to that interjection by the member for Gregory, I point out that people in the country have not missed out. We support country rail passenger services to the tune of \$50m.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr HAMILL:** The member does not like me putting this on the record. But let me put it on the record especially for him. About \$50m a year goes towards supporting country rail services. Over \$3m—a significant increase from the funding provided in the days of the National Party Government—is going into remote area air services. School bus arrangements and passenger transport services in provincial cities also come under the umbrella of the passenger transport reform arrangements that I have already outlined.

I know that some honourable members opposite really cannot help themselves when they get an opportunity to make a snide comment. The arch architect of the snide comment would have to be the member for Indooroopilly, who took the opportunity to make some snide comments about the Chairman of the Townsville Port Authority. The Townsville Port Authority has done an outstanding job in its development of the port of Townsville. During the chairmanship of Mike Reynolds, there has been an increase in trade through that port. I place on record my appreciation of the working relationship that I have had with Mike Reynolds in that role. He is a very inexpensive chairman to maintain. Members of the Liberal Party tried to make some snide comments about the costs involved with Mike Reynolds having to travel to Townsville to undertake his responsibilities as chairman of that port authority. I point out to honourable members that the chairmanship of the port of Townsville costs only about half of what it did when the Chairman of the Townsville Port Authority came from the Burdekin—when he was a mate of the National Party Government. We might run lean, mean, cost-efficient operations, but I make no apology for calling upon the talent of the best people to do that job.

I wonder whether the same snide comment from the member for Indooroopilly would be directed at the activities of the rail board. One of the members of that board is brought down from north-west Queensland to attend board meetings. Is that inappropriate? Should country people be denied the opportunity to sit on boards and have a

considerable say in the day-to-day activities of their lives? Should we allow boards to hold meetings in country areas, so that those members can listen to the interests of local people? Or is that a waste of money? The member for Indooroopilly should not indulge in smutty, slimy, political point-scoring. Rather, he should look at performance. Under Mike Reynolds' chairmanship, the Townsville Port Authority has seen record trade figures and, last year, returned a \$3m profit for the people of Queensland.

The achievements in transport are clear. They are set out very clearly in the Estimates. I shall refer once more to that speech which was so fondly used earlier by Mr Johnson. In relation to what we would do with Queensland Rail, I said—

“The Labor Party will restore quality and service to the goals of Queensland Railways. The Labor Party will recognise that the quality of life for all Queenslanders will be enhanced by a safe, efficient transport system to service this State's economic and social needs. The Labor Party envisages Queensland Railways playing its part alongside other modes of transport in achieving that goal.”

Time expired.

Progress reported.

### **TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE (RAILWAYS) AMENDMENT BILL**

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (4.30 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Transport Infrastructure (Railways) Act 1991.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (4.31 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

This Bill provides for amendments to be made to the Transport Infrastructure (Railways) Act 1991 which was proclaimed to commence on 1 July 1991. It was envisaged at the time that a review of the Act would be carried out after an appropriate period. This proposed review has been completed, and a number of miscellaneous amendments are now required. These miscellaneous amendments are designed to improve the drafting of the Act by removing certain inconsistencies within the Act and to enhance certain administrative procedures under the Act. The Bill also removes certain redundant and unnecessary sections and reflects current drafting practices.

By far the most important objective of this Bill is to effect certain amendments which are designed to help counter the problem of fare evasion on the Queensland Rail Citytrain network. It is estimated that Queensland Rail currently loses approximately \$5m each year because of fare evasion. Accordingly, Queensland Rail has developed a revenue protection strategy which includes the implementation of an infringement notice—on-the-spot fine procedure—and the introduction of a new type of automatic ticket machine. The introduction of the new automatic ticket machine is expected to recover a significant proportion of lost revenue by providing passengers with a ticketing facility during the hours that stations are unattended. In addition, the introduction of an infringement notice, which streamlines the fare evasion penalty procedures, will provide incentive for people to ensure that they always purchase a ticket.

Presently, the Act requires that all offences under the Act must be prosecuted by way of complaint and summons. The adoption of an infringement notice procedure will provide a more effective mechanism for the enforcement of offences under the Act, and will also achieve savings in costs associated with court proceedings. The implementation of an on-the-spot fine procedure will be facilitated primarily by amendments to the Justices Act 1886 which will shortly be introduced into the House. Certain miscellaneous amendments to aid in the adoption of such a procedure by Queensland Rail are contained in this Bill.

The Bill amends the Act to provide for the introduction of a new form of automatic ticket machine. It is intended that automatic ticket machines will be installed at all suburban stations to operate during the hours that stations are unattended. The introduction of the machines will mean that every passenger will be required to have a ticket prior to

boarding the train. Existing automatic ticket machines are capable of issuing full fare tickets. An optional new form of automatic ticket machines will issue tickets of a specified value and show the time and place where the ticket was obtained. Where the value of the ticket is less than the correct fare, the correct fare is required to be paid at or before the end of the journey. Importantly, Queensland Rail will launch a comprehensive community awareness campaign to inform the travelling public about the introduction of the new automatic ticket machines and on-the-spot fines prior to their introduction.

The offence provisions in the Act have been amended to provide for the operation of automatic ticket machines. Offences under the Act will be enforced by authorised officers, including inspectors appointed under the Act, as well as police officers. The intention is that inspectors will have the primary responsibility for enforcement with police providing backup to inspectors where necessary.

In conclusion, this Bill represents a significant step forward in combating the significant problem of fare evasion faced by Queensland Rail. I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Johnson, adjourned.

### **EAGLE FARM RACECOURSE BILL**

**Hon. R. J. GIBBS** (Bundamba— Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (4.35 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

“That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to consolidate and amend the law for the management and development of Eagle Farm racecourse, and for related purposes.”

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. R. J. GIBBS** (Bundamba— Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing) (4.36 p.m.): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The Eagle Farm racecourse is held by trustees in trust for the members of the Queensland Turf Club. The land has been

used for racing since 1875, and is an integral part of the racing industry, both through its use as a racecourse, and as a training facility which provides valuable economic benefits to Queensland. The Government wishes to protect this asset in the long-term and to ensure that any development work that is carried out on the racecourse is carried out in a responsible manner.

In order to ensure that this occurs, it has become necessary to clarify the roles of the trustees of Eagle Farm racecourse and the Queensland Turf Club with respect to that part of the trust land that is occupied by the club and used as a racecourse. The roles also need clarifying to ensure that they meet the current modern requirements of accountability and public scrutiny. The roles of the trustees and the club were previously stated in the Eagle Farm Racecourse Act of 1955. In 1955, race meetings numbered a dozen or so annually. In 1993, there will be approximately 48 race meetings at Eagle Farm racecourse, and the venue is also used as a training facility in conjunction with Doomben racecourse.

More than 1 000 horses use these facilities on a daily basis and form an important part of the infrastructure of the racing industry in Queensland. With the increased usage and importance of the venue has come the need to review the roles of both the trustees and the club to ensure that the modern requirements are reflected. This Bill clearly states the role of the relevant parties. The Queensland Turf Club will be responsible for operating the venue as a racecourse and a training facility.

The club's occupancy of the racecourse part of the trust land will be formally recognised. The trustees' role is to protect the asset in the long term by ensuring that the development carried out by the club is undertaken in terms of a strategic plan for the use of the venue rather than on an ad hoc basis. The trustees' approval will be required for development work to be carried out. Development work is that work which involves structural alteration to the facility. The club will be responsible for regular maintenance work on the facility. To avoid any future conflicts of interest, a member of the management committee of the club is excluded from appointment as a trustee of Eagle Farm racecourse.

The Bill vests the trust property in the official name of the trustees of Eagle Farm racecourse. The Bill also provides that the trustees are a statutory body for the purposes

of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977. This will ensure that the trustees will be audited. The trustees will continue to be responsible for financial arrangements by way of borrowing secured against the asset or grants or loans from the Racing Development Fund. This Bill reflects the requirements of the Government and the public in the context of a modern racing industry.

Debate, on motion of Mr Perrett, adjourned.

## MEAT INDUSTRY BILL

### Second Reading

Debate resumed from 4 October (see p. 4806).

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego) (4.40 p.m.): The Meat Industry Bill 1993 is a very interesting Bill, and I am certainly pleased to speak to it today. It replaces and repeals the Meat Industry Act of 1965. Basically, I have no problem with this Bill, and I endorse the remarks that have been made by the shadow Minister in relation to it. I suppose when reviews of legislation are undertaken people must come up with changes and, in many cases, they are timely changes. Unfortunately, it does the Minister no credit to blame the National Party for the previous system. I think that it worked reasonably well. This legislation will also be the subject of criticism down the track, as things progress.

**Mr Casey:** What are you talking about? What did I blame the National Party for?

**Mr HOBBS:** What I am saying—and I will refer to it if the Minister would like—is that it takes the professionalism out of the legislation. The Minister says that the old models of the National Party were ineffective and resulted in major decay in the regulatory framework of many primary industries in Queensland. He also says that the introduction of this legislation is in stark contrast to the lack of accountability in the meat industry under the National Party, and so forth. Maybe in the Minister's view that is right, but down the track similar words will be spoken about this legislation. It is not a vote of confidence. In fact, this Bill has been drafted purely for the benefit of the industry. It has the connotation of a political document. I would prefer it to be a professional document for the betterment of the industry.

**Mr Casey:** It's not for my benefit.

**Mr HOBBS:** That may be so, but I still make that point.

**Mr Casey:** Why don't you just get on with the Bill?

**Mr HOBBS:** I will, but I wanted to make those particular points at the outset. These days, thanks to fax machines, televisions and so on, we have better communication between Government and retailers for regulatory purposes, and better reporting. I believe that the new accreditation system will be quite good. In fact, it is not new. I suppose the Government is claiming credit for implementing that system, but it had already been done by the previous Government.

The meat industry, which was previously administered by one body, that is, the LMAQ, will now be administered by four bodies, that is, the Queensland Livestock and Meat Industry Policy Council, the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority, the Queensland Abattoir Corporation and the Meat Industry Tribunal. That may be fine. I am involved in the wool industry, which went through a process of change similar to this. That industry was administered by two bodies. It was then decided to restructure the industry and have it administered by four bodies. That proved to be a disaster, and now it is once again administered by two bodies. I hope that this restructuring of the meat industry will be successful—I believe that it will be—and I hope that there are no administrative problems or power struggles between the various regulatory bodies. After all, we need to have the confidence of the buyers and the confidence of the whole industry.

As I mentioned before, the thrust of the Bill is acceptable. While it is a loosely worded piece of legislation, it is okay if practical common sense is used in its interpretation and application. However, I do express concern on behalf of some butchers who may not see any benefits in this legislation. I guess whenever any legislative changes are made regarding any industry, there are winners and losers. We can only hope that the producers, the retailers and the consumers are all winners. Producers can win from an increase in the volume of sales and the quality of their products. Retailers and small business can benefit from value-adding and diversifying their operations. The consumer can also benefit from improved access to quality meat.

If there is any clear winner in this legislation, I believe that it is small business. Small businesses—butcher shops, corner stores and other medium-sized retail outlets—compete with large shopping complexes which presently have the ability to sell fresh meat

through any number of chain stores, even though they may have only one butcher shop.

**Mr Casey:** Do you think you might be able to convince a few of your colleagues of that?

**Mr HOBBS:** Let me finish what I am saying. That system gives large supermarkets a distinct advantage over other small business. This legislation will even things out. A reduction in red tape and further regulation of small business should flow from this legislation. I believe it is up to the Minister and the four regulatory bodies that are being established to make sure that that happens. Presently, a corner store that wishes to set up a class 3 butcher shop would find it very expensive with the necessity for dual inspections under the Meat Industry Act and the Health Act. In future, corner stores will not have two sets of hygiene standards. There will be one minimum hygiene standard. Accreditation will not be needed. This will allow corner stores in this State to operate in a manner similar to such stores in New South Wales, Victoria and the ACT. I point out that New South Wales has had a similar system for about 85 years. If businesses are able to demonstrate that they have been disadvantaged by this legislation, their concerns should be addressed compassionately.

As I mentioned earlier, whenever major changes are made to any industry, there may be winners and losers. If there are losers, it may be because of a deficiency in the actual legislation. The Minister has a duty to minimise the impact on the people involved in the industry. Opposition members have brought to the attention of this House some problems with the legislation. Those concerns have been expressed to the Opposition by various sectors in the community. The first one that I would like to raise relates to the policy council and its composition. Of particular concern is the fact that the Minister might appoint himself as chairman of that council. Another matter of concern was the selection of members for appointment to the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority and the exclusion of representatives of livestock producers. These issues have been mentioned in detail by other members, so I will not go into them. I simply raise the concerns, and I hope that the Minister will address them in his reply.

Another important aspect of this legislation is the fact that no distinction is drawn between meat for human consumption and pet meat. For quite some time there has

been a need to support the kangaroo meat industry. I have been very supportive of it for a number of years. This legislation clarifies the issue. I believe that it is well overdue. I believe that there is a market for kangaroo meat. We have an export market and a domestic market, particularly in the restaurant and health food outlets, and certainly among those Queenslanders who choose to buy that meat. There is an export market; we just have to find it. Not much research seems to have been carried out into the Asian market, particularly China. I congratulate the shadow Minister on the work that he has been doing in researching overseas markets for kangaroo meat. I certainly hope that, at the end of the day, some benefits do flow from that work.

Local communities stand to benefit greatly from this legislation. There are a lot of kangaroo shooters in my electorate of Warrego. Many communities, families and, certainly, professional shooters, rely on the kangaroo meat industry. This may strengthen the market base. Many small towns have service works, which are a great employer of the locals. This will help to put a bit of stability back into those local communities. Our meatworks in Australia are not very efficient when one compares them with the meatworks in, say, New Zealand. The production of fresh meat in New Zealand is three times cheaper than it is in Australia. America is probably half as cheap again. Until we become more efficient, we are not going to be able to compete on world markets.

The shadow Minister and I toured the San Cor Meatworks in Adelaide. That was certainly a very interesting experiment. It was losing money hand over fist. It did not know what to do or what its next move would be. The meatworks underwent radical restructuring and made some award changes. It was able to turn its production around. If I recall the figures correctly, the meatworks increased its cattle kill from about 500 to 700 or 800. It increased its sheep kill from about 1 000 to 1 500 and its pig kill from 700 to 1 400. That put its books back in the black and it was able to improve its financial position. It is now in quite a strong position. It will certainly seek to improve that production further.

Although I believe that we in Queensland are reasonably efficient, more work remains to be done. A country such as New Zealand, as close as it is to us, is putting its products on our markets at a price lower than our cost of production. Until we can compete with New Zealand, our producers will slowly go out the back door. We must do a lot more work on improving the efficiency of our meatworks. I

hope that those bodies set out in the Bill, which may have a fresh approach, will consider that. I am not saying that what was done in the past was wrong. I am saying that it is time that changes were made and that we should look very seriously at doing the best we can to try to improve our production methods. I support the aim of the Bill. If it is handled correctly and interpreted properly, benefits will flow through to all Queenslanders.

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South) (4.53 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to join the debate on the Meat Industry Bill 1993. I recognise the importance of the beef industry, particularly in the area of Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. It is a very important industry in terms of employment and particularly in terms of attracting export income not just to Queensland generally but particularly to the Toowoomba region. Within Toowoomba and on the downs, we have a number of very significant beef enterprises, such as the Toowoomba saleyards at Harristown, which are regarded as the biggest saleyards for the sale of commercial cattle in Australia. The Harristown saleyards took over that position from the Newmarket yards in Melbourne some years ago. Every week, the three major agents sell there, with three major sales each week.

That in itself creates an enormous amount of employment not only for the workers in the saleyards, including the clerks and so forth, but also for the trucking industry. Toowoomba has become a major transport terminal. The beef industry has contributed greatly to that. On that point, I will diverge slightly. The pulling up of rail lines would have had a significant impact on Toowoomba. Many road trains come into the city. They must come in through the western suburbs to the saleyards. That is the final point at which road trains can journey east. Many Quilpie cattle would have been coming through the western suburbs of Toowoomba on road trains rather than by rail through to Oakey or down to Tancred.

We also have four major abattoirs in Toowoomba and the surrounding areas slaughtering for the export and domestic trade. The other thing that the meat industry brings to Toowoomba is manufacturing industries. We have an enormous amount of welding works producing yards, crushers, trucking equipment and farm machinery. We have had an enormous expansion of feedlots. Toowoomba is probably the feedlot capital of Australia, with major feedlots of up to 28 000 or 30 000 head. We have had the development of small opportunity feedlots on

some of the grain farms, and also the development of some new feedlots utilising the very latest in technology, environmental and hygiene developments. Toowoomba has also become a major centre for the export of live cattle. It has always been a centre for studs, and now we have the development of embryo and AI centres. The other important aspect of the beef industry is the health aspect. Recently, we have seen ads on TV showing the importance of meat for protein, particularly in the provision of iron.

One of the concerns for the beef industry in recent years has been the dwindling consumption of red meat. It is down to some 35 kilograms per head per year. That has been partly because of the aggressive and the excellent marketing of those people representing the poultry industry and the pork industry, but particularly the poultry industry. One of the advantages that the poultry industry has had is that it has been able to sell poultry products at virtually every outlet—be it takeaway outlets, specialised hot chicken outlets or as frozen chickens in corner stores.

There is no doubt that one of the thrusts of the Bill is to extend the opportunities for the marketing of red meat. I know that, in that regard, the legislation has the support of all of the producer organisations. It makes sense. No matter how one argues about places where shopping is available 24 hours and where it is not, the more outlets there are, the more people walk past the product, the greater the potential to increase sales. Another aspect of that will be the fact that considerable concern has been expressed amongst small shopkeepers in recent years about the threat to their livelihood from the big supermarket chains. They have always resisted the push from those chains to have seven days a week trading. The only advantage that the small stores have is their convenience aspect: the fact that they are able to open seven days a week as a mum and dad operation and the fact that they can open at 6 in the morning and stay open till late at night. It is that convenience and those extra hours that give them the opportunity to find a market niche.

One of the things that those stores have never been able to do is to sell fresh meat. The Bill gives them the opportunity to do that. At the same time, the Bill will mean a serious loss of income for some butchers. In common with many other members of Parliament, I have had representations from butchers in my electorate. This debate is the time to give voice to those genuine concerns of butchers, particularly the smaller butchers—the family

operations. Many of those butchers—most of them, I would say—bought their butcher shops under existing legislation, existing regulations and existing arrangements. They would have paid a certain amount of money based on the capital value of their butcher shop, the trade that it had and the potential that it had for increased trade. Now, with a stroke of the legislative pen, we could reduce much of that potential.

Some butchers see an opportunity to increase their market share. Some butchers see an opportunity to garner around them perhaps 8 or 10 of their local corner stores and try to work in an agency-type arrangement so that they prepare the prepackaged meat, sell it to those corner stores, which rotate the stocks every two or three days so that it remains fresh and the meat that is not sold comes back to the butcher shop to be reprocessed. One must recognise that those butcher shops will probably have to take a smaller margin for that meat, because they are selling to someone who must onsell. Also, those butcher shops will probably sell to someone who will take part of their own market share and take some of the people who may have come to their shops.

In some ways, the butcher shops have the potential to expand their market, but they will make an enormous extra amount of work for themselves. I cite the example of a stand-alone butcher shop that is not in a little strip shopping centre. A stand-alone shop might see a mini-supermarket a half a mile or so up the road as another potential store through which to sell extra meat. However, some people will go to that mini-supermarket on the weekend when they buy their newspapers and buy the meat that perhaps they would have bought from the little stand-alone butcher shop down the road, so he has effectively lost some of his customers.

**Mr Casey** interjected.

**Mr HORAN:** Butcher shops can open every day of the week, if they want to. However, they do not.

**Mr Casey:** They don't want to, either.

**Mr HORAN:** Some of them do, where they are in a strip supermarket near a fruit barn or a newsagency, which ensures a reasonable flow through of people. I know that some shops in my electorate do that. The first point for the Minister to consider is the effect on the business of butcher shops. Most owners have paid in the vicinity of \$150,000 for a butcher shop. Often times, it is a family business. They must now reassess the value

of their business, their mode of operation and whether they spend the money—and I believe that it is in the order of about \$15,000—to install the equipment so that they can prepackage meat. They then have to develop a marketing and selling arrangement for their shop in the local area or further afield. They perhaps have to consider the way in which they will transport their product. They have to consider their own staffing. A single operator of a butcher shop obviously cannot jump in the car in the middle of the day to deliver meat to other shops.

These butchers fear—and I think that this will occur—that major operators will specialise in providing prepackaged meat. The larger operators that have sufficient throughput will be able to undertake portion control. No doubt the corner stores will want to sell only certain cuts, probably just steaks, chops and sausages; fairly simple lines. It will be essential that some portion control be available to those corner stores so that they can sell all of their products. There will be a trend for large operators to specialise in providing prepackaged meat, and that will disadvantage some butchers.

Another issue of concern is quality control. Most butchers have told me that over the years they have undergone the most torrid inspections by the DPI. They have had to meet incredible standards of cleanliness under those inspections. A points system has been applied. It has cost butchers an enormous amount of money to purchase the equipment so that they can comply with those standards. Now they see other operators being able to sell meat products with a very minimum outlay on refrigeration and being subjected to a very minimum quality control and inspection procedure.

Reference has been made to the potential of this Bill to increase the sale of red meat. However, it is important to consider that quality will be of the essence. Meat has always relied upon quality and taste as its attraction. It is essential that the product not be downgraded in any way. We must ensure that there can be no complaint from consumers about a lesser quality product being supplied by corner stores compared with the product supplied by butcher shops.

Another concern of butchers is mutual recognition and hygiene standards in New South Wales. Historically, Queensland butchers have been subjected to the most stringent of inspection standards. They have to use stainless steel or synthetic-type blocks and have clean floors. However, in New South

Wales, butchers still use wooden blocks and have sawdust on the floor. Because of mutual recognition, the potential exists for the New South Wales products to come over the border into Queensland shops. That may have an effect on quality, which is a very important consideration.

I would like to hear the Minister's comments on those issues, and what assistance his department can give to butcher shops over the next four years in the transition period. The provisions of this legislation will present problems for some butcher shops. No doubt exists that some butcher shops stand at risk of losing capital value of their shop or losing potential sales. We should provide some form of assistance to the butcher shops at risk.

The main provision of this Bill is the formation of four bodies to replace the single body that existed previously. Those bodies are the Queensland Livestock and Meat Industry Policy Council, to formulate policy for the meat industry; an administrative body which will be called the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority; the Queensland Abattoir Corporation, which will run the public abattoirs; and the Meat Industry Tribunal, which acts as a review body.

The other major provision of this Bill is the accreditation system, which will replace the previous system of licences, permits and registration. Again, that has been a concern of the butchers. They have had to go through a rigorous inspection system to keep their licences, and that will now change to a system of virtual self-accreditation and a degree of honesty in maintaining quality assurance.

The third major provision of this Bill is quality control. That is the issue of particular concern to the butchers. They have maintained a certain standard for years at great expense, and they want to see quality maintained right down the line—from the abattoirs to the butcher shops and from those operators preparing prepackaged meat to whichever stores decide to take up the option of selling fresh meat.

Our shadow Minister has announced that he will be moving two amendments to clause 19, which deals with the chairman of the policy council being the Minister or the Minister's representative. We will be moving an amendment to that clause.

**An Opposition member:** Opposing it.

**Mr HORAN:** Sorry; we will be opposing that clause. We will also be opposing clause 32 (4) (c).

This Bill provides a great deal of potential for the meat industry. It provides some opportunities but, at the same time, it will necessitate some very painful decisions and will present some great difficulties for some sections of the retail butchery industry. That is the aspect of this Bill that causes us the most concern, and it is one which certainly needs to be addressed very carefully by the Minister.

**Mrs McCAULEY** (Callide) (5.07 p.m.): This legislation has caused me to think back to the butcher shops of my childhood. At the risk of showing my age, I can remember when butcher shops had sawdust floors.

**Mr Stoneman:** They still do in New South Wales. Did you know that?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Is that right? That is very hygienic! I can remember going into a butcher shop and asking my mother the meaning of the sign that read "No expectorating". I remember being told that she would tell me outside. I remember spelling out that word to myself and trying to work out what on earth it could possibly mean. I remember the wooden blocks that butchers used. The butchers used to give me a cheerio and maybe a bacon bone to chew on, if I was very good. I really enjoyed butcher shops when I was a child. They were a place of great delight.

Today's butcher shops are different. They are obviously more hygienic. From my point of view, as a person who is in charge of preparing meals, I find them very helpful. They have wonderful meat that is prepared and ready to be cooked and needs only to have vegetables added. Butcher shops now sell products such as pastrami and marinated spare ribs. In the last 30 years, they have certainly come a long way. Recently, a young apprentice butcher from my area travelled to Japan. In that country, butchers do not offer such innovative products, and that young man took great delight in showing them how to prepare meat to make it easier for the housewife. The Japanese were very taken with that idea. He enjoyed his time over there, and his visit was mutually beneficial.

My butcher—and I do not always go to him because we butcher our own meat on our property—tells me that he has to be a psychologist, a ladies' man and Mr Personality all in one. I tell him that I just want good meat and his thumb off the scales. He tells me that the women who deal at his shop expect him to be all of those things. He tries to be all of those things, and he runs a very good business.

Sadly, I feel that the days of the stand-alone butcher shops in larger areas are numbered. This legislation will probably spell the demise of some of them. I have to say that the days of the stand-alone butcher shop have long gone in my area. I do not have one left in my home town. The butcher shops in my electorate are either in supermarkets or right next to the busy corner stores so that they operate in conjunction with those stores. Quite honestly, as a shopper—and although I am married to a sensitive new age man, I have not yet convinced him to do our grocery shopping—I want to do one-stop shopping. I do not want to have to go here for my groceries, there for my bread and somewhere else for my meat. I want to be able to do it all together, get it over and done with and go home.

**Mr Stoneman:** To the new age guy.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Exactly. One of these days, he will learn to do the shopping.

As a beef producer, I want to see red meat as readily available as white meat is. I am not only a beef producer myself but I also represent a large number of producers. Over many years, I have attended carcass competitions such as the national feedback trials that are held each year. I have also gone into cold-rooms and looked very carefully at the carcasses to gauge the amount of eye muscle and the fat depth, and to read the sheets that tell one the average daily weight gains.

As a beef producer, I am interested in all of those things because they mean money in my pocket if we can get it right. It is very pleasing that beef producers are striving so hard for excellence in their product. They are not just bringing the cows in from the back paddock after they have been out there for a few years, thinking that they are fat enough and sending them off. Most beef producers are looking carefully at what they produce and how they can better it to meet the demands of the market. That is most important.

A few years ago, we suffered a setback when our daughter married a vegetarian. To us as meat producers, that was something different to come to grips with. It was interesting that on the last occasion on which he was at our place and we had cattle in our yards, he went down to help. We were thinking that he was getting more along the track to eating beef. However, a bullock that was ready to go to market broke its shoulder and had to be destroyed. It was a rather messy business. Unfortunately, I think that our son-in-law will remain a vegetarian forever.

Yesterday, I was rather intrigued to hear the member for Caboolture bemoaning the fact that he could not buy meat at the weekend in his area. For many years, Biloela has had a seven-day-a-week butcher shop. On a Sunday morning, if I decide that I have time to have a barbecue lunch, I can call into the butcher shop on my way home from church, buy the meat and invite friends for a barbecue.

**Mr J. H. Sullivan:** There is one in Caboolture. There is not one on Bribie Island, where my home is. Twenty-five kilometres to buy a couple of chops is a bit of an excessive use of petrol.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** The honourable member is right. That means that Biloela is far in advance of Bribie Island. I would not have thought that that would be so. This arrangement is very convenient for people like us who are a bit hit and miss with their shopping and do not decide that they have time to have a barbecue with their friends until Sunday morning when they wake up. In the past, they could not have the barbecue if they did not have the meat on hand. Having that seven-day-a-week butcher shop is handy for people like me who are not particularly organised when it comes to things like that.

The Minister spoke about the four bodies that are going to replace the single body. Normally I would not agree with bodies such as the Meat Industry Tribunal, the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority, the Queensland Abattoir Corporation and the Queensland Livestock and Meat Industry Policy Council being set up. However, in this case, I believe that they will work well together. I am pleased that the producer bodies such as the UGA, the Cattlemen's Union and others will be nominated to represent their organisations on that major body. However, I was a bit disquieted when I heard the Minister say, "I must emphasise, however, that these two members"—that is on the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority—"will sit on the authority for their particular knowledge and experience, not as representatives of the nominating body." It made me think of the representatives of the UGA and the CU who are on the Minister's Tick Advisory Committee. They obviously do not represent their producer bodies. It seems to me that the whole question of ticks is defined not by which organisation people belong to—

**Mr Casey:** They were nominated by their bodies, and I accepted the bodies' nominations.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I know. However, they are representing the area from which they come, be it a clean area or a tick area.

**Mr Casey:** They are not a management advisory group; they're an advisory group.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I know they are. I have the same concerns as the member for Western Downs, who mentioned last night about the abridged minutes coming from the Tick Advisory Committee. People throughout the Taroom and South Burnett areas have raised concerns with me about the people on the committee and what they are looking at. They are certainly not representative of the CU and the UGA; they represent the people who come from the tick areas and not the people who come from the clean areas. That is a bit unfortunate.

**Mr Casey:** It's the responsibility of the industry body, surely?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Yes.

**Mr Casey:** I would like you to help to get some more interested in it.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I think that more will become interested, as long as they do not leave it too late. There is much disquiet at present, and that will no doubt gather steam.

I believe that the accreditation of the various premises which process meat, to ensure the wholesomeness and the species integrity of the meat, as the Minister said, is important. I would not like to think that I was eating something that was not what I thought it was. I would hate to be thinking that I was eating beef and it was really kangaroo.

**Mr Stoneman:** I think you would notice.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I advise the honourable member that I would never willingly or knowingly eat camel, buffalo, kangaroo, crocodile, venison or any of those types of meat.

**Mr Welford:** Why?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Because I am not venturesome in that way and I have no desire to know what crocodile tastes like. I will stick to beef, chicken and fish.

**Mr Horan:** You are not a yuppie?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** No.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Chair agrees with the honourable member.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I was rather disquieted to read that the Minister said that there is no distinction drawn in this Bill between meat for human consumption and meat for pet meat. I presume that, when various slaughterhouses

are licensed, they will be licensed to slaughter only kangaroos or only beef. There is a big distinction between meat for human consumption and pet meat. I hope that he elucidates that matter in his reply. I believe there is a big distinction. I do not necessarily want to eat the same meat that I feed to my animals, and I would hate to think that both were being processed in the one place.

On the whole, this legislation is welcome. I believe that the sale of red meat through corner stores will lead to an increase in the consumption of red meat. The recent advertisements advising women that the consumption of red meat contributes greatly to the iron intake that they need on a daily basis will lead to an increase in the consumption of red meat. That is important. I welcome this legislation and I am happy with it.

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (5.18 p.m.): I am very pleased to follow a red-blooded woman in this debate. In common with her, I must say that I am a traditionalist when it comes to eating meat. I am not into game meat. On the other hand, I recognise and believe that it is a forward step that people be given the opportunity—particularly visitors to Australia and more particularly to Queensland—to be able to sample some of the other meats. Recently, in Cairns, the shadow Minister, the member for Callide and I went to a restaurant which served crocodile meat. I inadvertently ate a crocodile sausage. I must say that I had only one bite of it. It definitely did not appeal to me. However, others at the restaurant were enjoying those sausages. That is fair enough. In common with the member for Callide, I am not particularly venturesome in that sense.

I endorse the remarks of the shadow Minister, who has put the Opposition case very well in respect of the Bill. However, I would like to reinforce a few concerns that I have and also to make a couple of points about the industry. I can claim, like the previous speaker, to have a fair understanding of the meat industry. Many members on this side have been part and parcel of the meat industry for many years. I have been involved in the industry for many years. Beef producers are really about one thing: producing a quality product and putting that quality product on as many plates as possible. Of course, they are about making a living, surviving and providing for their families but, at the end of the day, their survival and the benefits that they derive from their labours, which are very extensive, depend on their producing a quality product. That is the ultimate test.

Any mechanism that provides an opportunity for a producer to have additional outlets in order to gain additional sales and to provide additional opportunities for the sale of beef is to be commended. I have long believed that red meat has suffered because of the lack of capacity in some instances for it to be accessed on a broader base.

Last night, I spoke by telephone with Councillor Peter Black, the Chairman of the Dalrymple Shire. He was part of the original team that advised the Minister on some of the measures that we are now putting into effect. Peter and I were not speaking about matters related to this Bill. He shares some grandchildren with me. His son and my daughter are married, and they have produced some marvellous children. They are also producing beef during a pretty severe drought. Peter made the point that he was very proud of the work that the committee did and the fact that these measures are largely coming to fruition. He was delighted that, while I was speaking to him on the telephone, the shadow Minister was in the House speaking to the Bill and virtually endorsing the broad thrust and intent of this legislation with which he had so much to do originally. Peter Black epitomises a particular type of primary producer of whom we are seeing more and more. He is a base primary producer, because he produces beef for market. He also has a number of butcher shops. One might say that he has a foot in both camps. He has no concerns about the impact of this Bill on primary producers or butchers. I believe that that will generally be the case in the industry.

However, there are some problems. The member for Toowoomba South indicated some concerns within the butcher shop community. In common with most members, I have a considerable number of butcher shops in my electorate. They are located in towns in the lower Burdekin and in Townsville City. Originally, some concerns about this legislation were expressed by that community. I believe that butchers should be like most other small businessmen. They must be forward thinking. They must be prepared to change or get out of the industry. They must be prepared to adapt to the times. They cannot continue to live in a world that does not change. Although it is often difficult, we must all adapt. There will be some sad stories, just as there are every day of the week in every business. But we should try to accommodate all those people in the community who are involved. That includes everyone from the producer to the abattoir,

the butcher shop, the other outlets and, ultimately, the consumer.

Change is part of modern business. By way of interjection, I made the point to the member for Callide that, recently, I was in New South Wales. I walked into a butcher shop in my old home town in the central west of New South Wales. I had not been into that shop for many years. The fellow who served me was a fellow with whom I had played cricket many years ago. I could not believe that there was sawdust on the floor of that shop—exactly the same as the old butcher shops about which Mrs McCauley spoke. It even had a wooden block. It was exactly the butcher shop that Mrs McCauley, the member for Callide, and I knew when we were much younger. That evoked many memories.

I asked the butcher about that sawdust. He said that the only qualification was that a butcher must maintain that sawdust and wooden block in a hygienic manner. That reminded me of the story of the astronaut who once had lunch here. He was getting on in years. He said that one thing that the US space administration did was promise never to count; that if a person was fit enough, he or she was good enough to be an astronaut. The New South Wales legislation in respect to butcher shops says, "If it is clean enough, we do not mind what medium of cleanliness you use, as long as the consumer is happy and it meets the regulatory requirements." I was most surprised to find sawdust on the floor of that butcher shop. I did not think that butcher shops such as that still existed. There are certainly no butcher shops in Queensland like that.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is the second beeper that has gone off in the last half-hour. It is not quite good enough. I am not sure what I can do about it.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I do apologise, Mr Speaker. I switched it off earlier in the day, but I forgot that I had turned it back on.

I was talking about quality control and some of the relevant concerns that have been expressed in this Chamber. The butcher shop structure is very much the same as that of the dairy industry. The dairy industry and dairy farmers have the most stringent range of requirements in the production of milk—the steam processes, cleanliness and everything else. But once that milk is sold to the various outlets, it is effectively kept at the whim of the owner of the corner store or the commercial outlet. Therefore, the goodwill at the consumer level is really based upon the capacity of the last point of sale. Over the

years, the dairy industry has accommodated this situation. It has changed from bottles to cartons and adopted all sorts of marketing tools. Although this certainly involved some additional costs, the industry has managed to survive, and I believe that we are all better served because of it. I believe also that, in this instance, we will be better served by the principles and integrity of the intent of this Bill.

People do not seem to understand that meat is one of the most forgiving of all foods. Red meat is an amazing commodity. People are worried about whether or not it might be rancid or might go off. That is a lot of rot.

**Mr Welford:** That's a pun!

**Mr STONEMAN:** If the honourable member likes that joke, I am happy to take that interjection. One of the first things that one notices about meat that is off is its smell. Even if it passes that test, the smell wafts out when the meat is cooked. If it gets past those two tests—and usually it does not—the third test is the taste test.

**Mr Davidson:** Before all that, you can see it before you buy it.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Exactly. The point is that meat is incredibly forgiving. I have seen people eating meat after they have had to cut away virtually six inches of flesh to get to meat that was reasonable enough to eat. I have seen that on numerous occasions. In fact, in the mustering camps, in desperation I have virtually had to do the same thing myself. People do not get sick from eating red meat. I ask members if they know of anyone who has been poisoned by eating red meat that has gone off. Quite frankly, that does not happen. In many parts of Europe, red meat is hung until it is virtually rotten. In the good old days—not so long ago—we had cool safes that hung under the trees. In some of the highlands of New South Wales, a carcass is hung out all winter.

**Mr Vaughan:** What about feral pigs?

**Mr STONEMAN:** I am not into feral pigs. I have the same thoughts on them as does the member for Callide. I am not going to touch any of that stuff. The point that I am making is that meat is a particularly forgiving commodity. People do not get sick or poisoned from eating bad meat, because all those natural testing processes take place first. Increasingly, the requirement is that meat be aged. I have had a lot to do with those processes. Over the years, I have killed my own beef.

**Mr Welford:** This is an argument in favour of the Bill, isn't it?

**Mr STONEMAN:** That is right, although I have some concerns about it. I am speaking from experience, and I have no hesitation in saying that. The concerns about quality control at that level are baseless. Wherever one goes in this State one can talk to people who have had experience with meat in hot weather and meat that has been kept in suspicious circumstances. Red meat is not like fish, pork or ham. People can be trapped into eating some of those products when they are off. But there is not that problem with red meat. One can even be poisoned by eating the humble potato.

It is a fact of life that one can skim off the outside fur that grows on meat in coldrooms if it does not have a good cover of fat. One of the great support processes in the feedlot industry is that it puts an even coating of fat on the meat and it is able to be hung for two, three or more weeks. The fact of the matter is that the quality of the meat underneath does not deteriorate if it is kept at an even temperature, even though one might skim off a bit of the fat. In my experience, when we did not have beef that had a full cover of fat, one could cut off meat where the blackness had developed after it had been hanging in the coldroom for a few weeks, and have perfectly acceptable and hygienic meat underneath. As I say, meat is a particularly forgiving commodity. My colleague Mr Davidson said that meat is subject to a number of tests: people can see it, they can smell it, they can smell it again when it starts to cook and then they can taste it. After going through those test processes, I have yet to find anyone who has become ill from eating meat.

**Mr Lingard** interjected.

**Mr STONEMAN:** That is all right. I know that the member for Beaudesert has lived a pretty dainty life, but we beef producers have had to battle through pretty hard times.

The processes that are involved in the marketing chain of beef need to be recognised. As I said earlier, the production of beef is really about getting a high quality and increasingly better quality item on the consumer's plate. If the consumer is not happy, at the end of the day the beef producer is not going to make any money. We have to consider the chain of events, which involves the mustering and the selection of beef. The member for Callide talked about the increasing professionalism of beef producers in recognising the breeding strains of cattle and the types of cattle that are compatible with the landscape and the types of soil. However, the carriage of beef is also part of

the chain. Before coming into this House, and after I sold my beef property, I was inveigled by the then chairman of the meat authority, Bill Mahoney, into the introduction of live weight, wet curfew selling into this State. In fact, the current chairman of the meat Authority, Dr Wythes, was one of the people in the DPI in those days with whom I was involved. We discovered that an important component in producing good quality meat is the way in which the cattle were presented in the saleyard. If the cattle had less bruising and were not stressed, they provided good quality meat. My judgment always was that the best bullock to kill was the one that was lying under a tree chewing his cud, because he was not stirred up and unsettled. If he was shot where he lay, the result would be a perfect product. The same principle applies to abattoirs.

**Mr FitzGerald:** So you put it in the back of the neighbour's paddock.

**Mr STONEMAN:** That comment brings to mind a story that my father told years ago, and it is worth while telling it now. The neighbours were killing a beast. The next door neighbour heard about it and he called a stock inspector because he suspected that the neighbours were killing the wrong beast. The stock inspector went to the property and said, "Can we have a look at the hide?" The neighbour said "No, I am sorry." The stock inspector said, "Why not?" The neighbour said, "We always eat the hide first." I think that the member for Lockyer was alluding to a similar situation.

The fact of the matter is that the less stress that is applied to the animal during its carriage to the saleyard, the better the beef is going to be. If there is less bruising, the selvage, or the fat, is not trimmed, and it hangs better in the coldroom. There is less wastage and, at the end of the day, everyone makes more money.

In the few minutes that are available to me, I want to stress the importance of butchers, because I would not want anyone to think that I believe that butchers should sit back and cop it. They are an extremely important component of the beef industry, and they play an important part in the chain from the farm to the plate. The butcher is the public image of meat presentation. They are the people who are the experts at the cutting edge of sales. They are also the people who, in a saleyard, provide a competitive process that maintains a stable price structure, which is vital. I am not against big abattoir companies; we have to have them. Unfortunately, it is

such a tenuous operation that we are seeing changes to it. But a vital part of the primary industries chain is the maintenance of small butcher shops so that their owners can go to the saleyards, buy 4, 5, 10 or 15 bodies and provide a competitive base in making sure that all butchers put a quality product on the plate. Otherwise the big consumer outlets will gain the upper hand. I believe that that competition could be enhanced. It should be preserved in this Bill.

I am sure that, because butchers are survivors—they have had to be, as all small businesspeople have to be—they will be innovative and flexible. Otherwise they will not survive. When I first mooted the introduction of this type of Bill a long time ago to my local butcher at Giru, he was aghast at the suggestion. However, he thought about it and then said to me, "I have changed my mind. I am all for it now because I can see that it will improve my throughput and capacity to outlet beef." That is what this Bill is all about. There may be butchers in other areas of the State who are of a somewhat different opinion to the butchers in my area, and members have to speak for the areas that they represent and the experiences of butchers in those areas.

I say again that the butcher shop and the butchers themselves are integral to the whole process. Woe betide the industry, the consumer and the whole process if we ever have a situation in which the butcher is put at risk by legislation and, more particularly, regulation that screws butchers down to such an extent that they cannot continue to operate. If that occurs, the big companies will take over, we will not have the quality control and the consumer contact that the butcher provides, we will not have that extra competition in the saleyards and, most particularly, we will not have one of the best advocates one could ever have for the selling of red meat, the family corner butcher. He is the person who is at the front line, and is someone who we must make sure is not hurt.

Time expired.

**Mr QUINN** (Merrimac) (5.38 p.m.): At the outset, I acknowledge that the shadow Minister has outlined the Opposition's major concerns and opinions about the Meat Industry Bill. All I want to do is outline some of the concerns that the butchers in my electorate have conveyed to me since the discussion paper was produced by the Minister's department.

It is fair to say that the smaller suburban butchers see the introduction of the sale of prepacked fresh meat by general stores, small

corner shops and small supermarkets as another attack on their livelihood. I have been around to all of my butchers my electorate—and I have 10—and each of them has the same opinion about the Bill. For many of these butchers, business conditions are tough enough at present, and it is a constant battle to keep their doors open and staff fully employed, so they regard any action that may reduce their sales as a direct threat to their survival.

**Mr Casey:** You obviously have been telling them the wrong story.

**Mr QUINN:** No, I never said that I told them a story. I gave the discussion paper to them, I sent the Bill to them and I am outlining to the Minister their opinions. I have never expressed an opinion, and I am expressing the butchers' opinions to the Minister so that he can address those concerns in his reply.

As those butchers see it, the crux of the matter is a concern that in corner shops meat will not be stored under hygienic conditions, and that butchers, because of their investment in specialised plant and equipment, are being penalised unfairly. I believe that in Brisbane and provincial cities, we will not see small suburban butchers installing the necessary packaging equipment in order to supply fresh meat to their local corner shops or supermarkets. I think that if they are distributing to only half a dozen or so small shops in their areas, the investment required for such a small return simply will not justify that investment. Those shops that wish to sell fresh meat—the small corner shops—will be supplied by larger, better resourced butchers who are able to take advantage of the changes that this legislation will bring. They will be operating on a much larger scale than the small corner butchers. Many suburban butchers in small shopping centres based around a large supermarket currently without an in-house butchery may very well be the biggest losers under this legislation.

These small shopping centres invariably have one shop of each type—one butcher, one supermarket, one greengrocer, one bakery, etc. The introduction of fresh meat sales into the supermarket will naturally lead to a drop in turnover for the butcher. Even if he supplies the meat to the supermarket, he will not be able to sustain his profit level. It is a fallacy to suggest that allowing fresh meat sales in corner shops will increase consumption levels of red meat.

The consumer's decision on whether to purchase red meat is a health and lifestyle issue and not heavily dependent on universal

availability. In my electorate some butchers are open seven days a week, with late night shopping on Thursday evenings, so availability is not an important issue to consumers and butchers in my electorate. There is plenty of opportunity to shop seven days a week, and late night shopping. Changes in eating habits, evidenced by the increase in demand for fast food, such as McDonalds or prepared pre-frozen food such as TV dinners, have also led to a reduction of red meat sales through traditional outlets. Our eating habits show no sign of reverting to past practices. The fast food producers indicate that all predictions are that sales of fast food will continue to rise, thus adding to the woes of the retail butchers.

Under this legislation, administration costs are expected to rise, which will ultimately be reflected in the retail price of meat to consumers, especially in the smaller butcheries. The larger supermarket chains will be able to cut costs significantly under this legislation by moving towards a centralised meat processing arrangement, thus further disadvantaging the small suburban butchery.

It is for these reasons that I would urge the Minister to respond to the concerns I have raised and to give serious thought to accepting the amendments which will be proposed in the committee stage of the Bill. The amendments will give some balance to the legislation by requiring a shop selling prepackaged meat to be accredited as a hygienic retailer of fresh meat. This will do much to allay the concerns of butchers in my electorate.

**Mr JOHNSON (Gregory)** (5.42 p.m.): I will speak for only a short while on this Bill. I have certain reservations about it, and our shadow spokesman, the member for Barambah, has covered many aspects of this legislation. I will speak of the country butcher shops or the butcher shops in my electorate. That is what I want to address primarily tonight. The family butcher shop, the local butcher shop or the butcher shop in general has been a very important part of every district. I believe that, in this legislation, we are about protecting those butcher shops.

I have reservations about a lot of the supermarkets or corner stores that can sell meat. I know the criteria for butcher shops are very stringent. They have to meet criteria for health conditions, hygiene and what have you. It is absolutely paramount that these corner stores where these outlets will be available to the general public be subjected to the same type of inspection that butcher

shops are subjected to. I hope that that will be the case.

If there is a corner store around the back of town somewhere, or even in a big town, I hope inspectors will go out of their way to find that place and check that facility. As the member for Burdekin just made mention, the country butcher or the local butcher shop in the past has always provided that contact service with the consumer. That has been one part of the industry that we could see go out the back door with this legislation.

Country slaughter houses, in recent times, have been upgraded to meet with the Department of Primary Industries slaughter standards. I believe that butchers right throughout the length and breadth of this State have upheld the criteria that they have been subjected to by the Department of Primary Industries.

I am very fearful that, in the long term, this legislation might be detrimental to butchers in general. They are business people. I am speaking of the butchers in my electorate. It is absolutely paramount that they be allowed to continue and to practise their business dealings in the way that they have become accustomed to. I hope and trust that we will not see a demise of butcher shops in rural parts of the State and at the same time I hope that this will not be the start of the big bloke getting bigger and the small fellow falling by the way.

I will closely monitor the situation in my own electorate. I know that butchers in that area do have reservations. I will be checking the situation to make sure that they get treated fairly and squarely and that the people who do have outlets do have access to the facility for selling meat to the general public. I trust that they will be subjected to the same inspections.

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah) (5.46 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to rise to speak to the Meat Industry Bill. One reason is that my father was a professional butcher. He was the youngest high grade butcher in Victoria. No-one had got to that stage at an earlier age than he did, and he was very successful. It is a shame that he is not with us today. He would give me some advice as to what to say about this Bill. I have looked at it fairly closely and I have listened with interest to speakers on both sides.

Some interesting points have been put forward. I was particularly interested in the remarks of the member for Bundaberg when he was referring to the prices for meat. I did question him afterwards because I did not pick

up the vintage of those prices. He tells me it was 1918 and the price for meat was around 8c. I was not around in 1918, but in the fifties when I was in the shearing sheds we were paying six pence a pound, so there certainly had not been inflation. We enjoyed a special price——

**Mr Johnson:** It was still six pence a pound.

**Mr LAMING:** Still six pence a pound, the member for Gregory reminds me. I was in his electorate in the fifties. I do not know whether the honourable member was in his electorate——

**Mr Johnson:** I certainly was.

**Mr LAMING:** I acknowledge that interjection. It was a great place in and around Longreach where I worked.

To get back to the meat industry—we were able to select, from 15 000 or 20 000 sheep, the one that we would send to the kitchen. I have never enjoyed mutton as much as I did in the shearing shed. As a matter of fact, some of those western cooks were able to cook a leg of mutton that was more tender than the gravy.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr LAMING:** No, this is true. The Bill does recognise new trends in marketing, not only in the meat industry but also in various other industries. The world is changing rapidly and legislation has to be changed to keep pace. I believe it will open new opportunities for people in the meat industry, and butchers in particular. I know some butchers are already arranging their affairs in such a way that they will be able to take advantage of the Bill when it becomes law.

Some remarks have been made in the speeches before mine as to whether it will result in an increase in consumption. I heard the member for Merrimac suggest that it will not. I have heard others, particularly those from country electorates, say that it will result in increased consumption. Having been involved in marketing in various areas, I suggest that if something is more readily available it will usually sell more. I suggest also that there will be an incremental increase in red meat sales, although I do not think it will be very much. I do agree with the member for Merrimac that eating these days is social and it is cultural, and that people decide to eat red meat or white meat, or vegetarian, for reasons other than that it is easy to get.

**Mr Johnson:** It is the best meat you can get.

**Mr LAMING:** Of course it is. It is very good food and I do not let a day go by when I do not have some red meat.

The main objective of this Bill, according to my reading of the preamble, is wholesomeness. I believe that wholesomeness is a thoroughly good objective of a Bill that has anything to do with food, and we must consider, at all times when we are dealing with legislation concerning food, that it is the benefit of the customers which must be paramount. We must also consider the producers, the handlers, the people who work in the industry, and the butchers themselves. In this case, these products will be flowing into other outlets and they must be considered, too.

The main emphasis must be on benefit to customers. We must have an orderly market for all of our goods. The market for perishables must be even more orderly, because they do not have an indefinite shelf life. Even frozen meat has a life span. It is very important to have regulation—not overregulation, but enough for an orderly market for the benefit of customers.

Wholesomeness, of course, equals hygiene. That is the aspect about which Governments should be mainly concerned. Governments have certain responsibilities, one of which is health. With respect to food—health can be safeguarded by making sure that hygiene is adequately covered. Unfortunately, the Bill is not very specific on that. I have read through it a few times. I have also read the Minister's second-reading speech and the notes that go with it. I have some concerns. I assume that some of those aspects will be addressed in the regulations.

I have looked at the Food Act, and I do not believe that that Act is adequate to cover the extension of fresh meat into shops such as corner stores. I have some concern in that regard. We should ensure that the compass of the Bill goes right through not only to the processors but also to the customers. With respect to that, an amendment will be put forward in the Committee stage. I hope that the Minister considers that amendment in the spirit in which it is put forward. It deserves consideration to extend the cover of the Bill right through to the final outlet so that the customers have protection at the point at which the meat comes into their hands. It is the customers about which we should think most of all.

I have spoken to butchers in my electorate. They can see that times are changing, and they are quite prepared to

move with the changes. As I said, some butchers have already positioned themselves. Last weekend, one of the leading butchers in my electorate opened a brand-new shop only 100 metres from my electorate office. Although he is looking forward to changes in the industry—and I hope that he will be able to take advantage of them—he has some concerns. One is that the expectations that small butcher shops must meet and maintain in terms of equipment, hygiene and cleanliness should be extended to those people who will ultimately sell meat, sometimes in competition with the small butcher shops or with their colleagues and sometimes as an extension to their own businesses. It is within the realm and the role of Government to ensure that that happens with respect to both hygiene and cleanliness.

The other issue is service. One cannot beat the service that has traditionally been given by the family butcher. That service will not be available at the corner stores. It is certainly not available in the supermarkets. In modern society, one of the little things that we are losing is the ability to know the merchants in one's community by name and to get good advice. I urge the Minister to consider the amendment that will be moved at the Committee stage and perhaps give it his support. The small butcher shops, the family butcher shops, will face competition. They will feel the pinch. I know that "level playing field" is a much-used phrase. I do not think that it exists anywhere in the world.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr LAMING:** I am told by my colleague beside me that it is a pipedream. However, that concept could be taken into account in the Bill. The Government should make sure that those corner stores do not have an advantage that the small butcher shops do not enjoy. The small butcher shops provide employment in the regional areas. The departure of the small butcher shops will result in a shift in employment to the cities, where the central butchering places will be located, with only the shops in the regional areas. The employment aspect should be considered.

One other aspect of the small butcher shops is that they have always been a place where housewives in the older days, and, these days, husbands who do the shopping, could get very good advice on the cuts of meat, how to use them and how to cook them. If the small butcher shops ultimately go, that service will not be available at the corner stores. It certainly is not available at the supermarkets. If that service goes, the world

will be a sorrier place. I reiterate that the Minister should consider the amendment that will be put forward at the Committee stage. I will listen for the Minister's response to that.

Sitting suspended from 5.57 to 7.30 p.m.

**Hon. E. D. CASEY** (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (7.30 p.m.), in reply: Prior to the dinner adjournment, I was about to close what has been during my long experience in this place one of the most painful, tedious, boring and repetitious debates in which I have ever participated. I must draw attention to the fact that, initially, the speaking list went around and the members who wanted to contribute were noted. However, after that, not one, not two, but seven or eight additional speakers from the Opposition decided to place their names on the list. Perhaps those additional Opposition speakers were not here last night, but they said exactly the same——

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr CASEY:** It is irrelevant whether they put their names down yesterday or not. Those members said exactly the same thing as did the other Opposition speakers who contributed last night. Those additional speakers certainly did not make for an outstanding debate.

However, I pay tribute to the Opposition spokesperson for Primary Industries. He said it all on behalf of the Opposition. He indicated that, in the main, there is strong support for the Bill. Government members who contributed to the debate spoke about topics additional to those to which I referred when I introduced the Bill. The second Opposition speaker, Mr Connor, usually contributes nothing to the debates in this place, and he exceeded his usual effort last night.

As the debate wore on and we heard the repetitious comments about butcher shops and corner stores, we started to discover that there is great division in the Opposition over corner stores being able to sell packaged meat. Most Opposition speakers were very supportive of that proposal. They recognise that that flexibility is desired by the people of Queensland and by the industry, particularly the production side of the industry. The other people who desire that flexibility are most of the smart, sensible and progressive butchers, who see it as an opportunity to further extend their market for meat sales and to work in conjunction with corner stores. Everybody can see the benefits of that proposal, with the exception of most of the Liberal Party speakers.

I suggest that the National Party members of the so-called coalition ought to talk to the Liberals, who parade themselves as the great supporters of small business. If we adopt the course suggested by the Liberals, we will choke off many small businesses in this State. We will make progressive butchers suffer rather than giving them the opportunity to extend their influence in their suburb, in their little shopping boutiques or wherever they might be. The amendment that the Liberals intend to move would represent a heavier legislative burden on small businesspeople. We are moving away from that. A number of legislative amendments have been considered by this Parliament to move away from a licence for this and a licence for that, the meat police, the milk police, the egg police and whatever. We are making it much simpler for the customer and the businessperson to interact. We cannot, under any circumstances, support the amendment proposed by the Liberals. If there is a division on that amendment, we sincerely hope that the National Party will have enough sense to vote with the Government.

I want to make a few comments to save time and further repetition at the Committee stage. Some people see some great hidden mystery in the policy council for the meat industry, which is proposed under this legislation. A policy council has been working in the sugar industry for two years. A policy council has been working in the dairy industry for 18 months and in the grain industry for a similar period. There are proposals to establish policy councils for the egg and fishing industries. An interim policy council for the fishing industry is already being formulated. As soon as this legislation is passed, we will establish the meat industry policy council so that it will be able to make very quick determinations on policy issues and advise the Government on the regulations that have to be put in place if we want the Bill to be operative from 1 January next year.

Policy councils have been one of the great successes of the Goss Government. The member for Bundaberg gave us a good historical rundown of the progressive primary industry legislation that has been enacted in this State. There is no question that, in respect of primary industry legislation, this Government has already been as innovative as the Ryan and Theodore Governments in the late 1910s and early 1920s. One of the Ministers for Primary Industries of those Governments was a former member for Mackay, the late William Forgan Smith. I am proud to follow in his footsteps in another

Labor Government in another era to modernise the structure of our rural industries for the benefit not only of producers but also of all people.

That is why the policy council includes representatives from all sectors of industry—from the paddock to the plate—including the workers. Wherever those meat workers are located—in Wynnum, Ipswich, Mackay or Townsville—they live and work in those areas and contribute their skills to this great industry. Those workers are just as entitled to have input to the industry as are the producers on their properties, who have also committed all of their assets and lifestyles to contribute to the meat industry. No Labor Government worth its salt would set up a structure such as a policy council without giving workers the opportunity to have input.

I turn to the comments by several members opposite who criticised industry leaders not being allowed to participate as directors of the corporations that are to be set up under this legislation. There is a very simple philosophy behind that. Those people have to operate a commercial entity. We do not want people to be in a position in which they have to take decisions that compromise their own commercial operations. We do want people on those bodies who have experience and knowledge of the industry and who can contribute to those forums. Those elected representatives can advance the views of their constituent bodies around the policy council table. I had the greatest fight of all time with the sugar industry over the same issue. This was a die-in-a-ditch battle that they were going to fight. Now, Mr Bonnano and a number of other people in the sugar industry say that this was one of the best provisions of the new Sugar Industry Act. They are pleased that we did not allow industry leaders to be directors of those bodies.

I am mainly focusing on the points raised by the honourable member for Barambah. I thank him for outlining some of the concerns that are still held. I have touched on those matters. One thing of which I want to assure the honourable member is this: once the legislation is passed by this House, an enormous amount of hard work will still have to be done. I hope to set up the policy council as soon as possible so that it can contribute to setting up the regulatory framework, which will provide for the way in which meat products will be separated and ensure that a relevant quality assurance program applies to each category.

Last night, I indicated to the Opposition spokesman, and I indicate to him again publicly in this chamber, that I will consult with him on those regulations before we bring them into place so that he understands on behalf of the Opposition that there are no hidden agendas; that there is just sound, sensible legislative framework to cover all the various things that have to be done and set up by the regulations.

The old story has been repeated by several members opposite about a need to have on the council a representative of the consumer of meat. I hope that every member of that council is a consumer of meat. What we need, more than anything else, are people who understand the different sections of the industry. We argued about this matter when the dairy industry legislation was introduced. The Opposition knows full well the Government's intent in this matter. How do we pick a consumer? The person whom the dairy industry selected to represent consumers under that legislation was a director of one of Australia's leading dairy co-operatives, which was later based in Sydney. To have that person as a consumer was ridiculous.

I have answered a number of small matters that were brought forward either by way of interjection or in another fashion as we proceeded through the debate. Mention was made of the expenses of the tribunal. Members opposite were concerned that we will have four organisations. Previously, there was no tribunal. If the corner butcher is aggrieved by certain trading practices, he can appeal to the tribunal. There was no provision for that in the 1965 meat legislation. We are putting it in the Act so that everybody in the industry who is aggrieved can follow the matter through. We are not putting four bodies in the place of one, as somebody suggested. We already have five abattoir boards and the Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland. We are reducing the number of bodies to four, which will work very well.

Honourable members opposite were concerned at the way in which the abattoir board will be constituted. It will be totally free of political interference from the Government. The members will be selected in a proper selection process.

Those are the major points that required an explanation by me. However, I am happy to answer any questions at the Committee stage.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Hon. E. D. Casey (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7, as read, agreed to.

Clause 8—

**Mr CONNOR** (7.45 p.m.): I move the following amendment—

“At page 17, lines 10 to 11—

*omit proposed paragraph (b).”*

This clause deals with the meaning of meat processing. We propose to remove paragraph (6) (b), which limits to the shop door of a meat packaging factory the extent of the scrutiny of this Bill. In other words, once the product leaves the front door of the factory that prepackages it, it is no longer under the scrutiny of this Bill.

In the second-reading debate, I dealt with the matter in great detail, but I did not say that this Bill, quite rightly, has harsh penalties for people who do the wrong thing when processing meat. We are moving away from a regulatory approach to a code or a more self-regulatory approach, which I fully support. Because of that, the Bill needs to provide heavy penalties for breaches of its provisions. That is exactly what this Bill provides. However, the heavier penalties do not apply to the shops that are selling the prepackaged meat. They will only be liable to penalty under the Food Act and the Health Act when they are picked up by inspectors, and will be subject to only minor penalties. There will be temptation for operators not to refrigerate the meat as well as they could, or to extend the shelf life of the meat. Adequate penalties are not provided in those instances.

I believe that the Minister will be back in this place in the near future to amend this legislation to take those shops into consideration or, alternatively, to put something in the Food Act to deal with refrigeration of meat. I cannot find anything in the Food Act specifically relating to meat and I cannot find anything dealing with refrigeration. I know that the Food Act does not come under the Minister's responsibility, but it needs to be looked at. Unlike the member for Burdekin, I do not believe that people have nothing to fear from rotten meat.

I make it clear again that this amendment will not stop corner stores, or any store, from selling fresh prepackaged meat. All we are asking is that those stores come under the scrutiny of this Act and that the store be accredited. As a result of that, under the subordinate legislation, the authority will set

the standard of accreditation and the degree of scrutiny that it believes is necessary for a corner store. If the authority believes that nothing is required, that is fair enough. If the authority believes that all it needs is a particular type of fridge or a particular temperature in the fridge, that is fine. But we are saying that a level of scrutiny is required, because the existing legislation does not provide it.

I ask the Minister to show me any legislation which covers that area. This Bill exempts corner stores. What other legislation will specifically deal with the refrigeration of fresh meat, whether it be prepacked or not?

**Mr CASEY:** I will say it again—and I do not want to have to repeat myself: the whole system is reliant on giving the butcher the opportunity, in conjunction with his corner store, to have a further outlet that is available after hours or on weekends. Because the meat is packed and sealed in a butcher shop, it is packed and sealed in an accredited premises, and it goes from there to the corner store. It is a bit like the Coca-Cola cabinets in which sporting bodies and other organisations keep their cold drinks. The whole process is carried out under the auspices of the Food Act. If the temperature of a refrigerator in a corner store is not low enough—or whatever the member for Nerang regards as a problem—the proprietor of that store will suffer the consequences. Taking out those words—as proposed by the Opposition—would defeat the purpose of what we are trying to do in the corner stores and how we are trying to accredit them. That does not make sense.

**Mrs GAMIN:** We are not really talking about Coca-Cola cabinets. I believe that those hygiene provisions need to be more carefully considered. The Minister should be informed of the concerns from small suburban butchers about the provision which will allow the sale of prepacked meat from premises other than registered butcher shops. In planning to increase the number of outlets for red meat sales throughout Queensland, the Minister is basing this on a quality assurance program for the beef industry. It will be based on an accreditation program and a certification of butcher shops. But if this amendment is not accepted, although the sight of a butcher working away at a tree stump chopping block is now a rarity, it looks as though the traditional butcher may become as extinct as the home delivery baker or milkman.

**Mr Casey:** You do not really believe that, do you?

**Mrs GAMIN:** Of course I do. I helped to defeat a similar proposal when it was being considered by the former National Party Government. At that time, I was not satisfied that small butchers would be protected and that standards of hygiene would be maintained. I am still not satisfied on this point. Small butchers are concerned about the effects of such far-reaching changes, and not just on their livelihood. They also fear that the strict standard of hygiene that they are now forced to maintain will not be upheld, that refrigeration could possibly be inadequate and that use-by dates will not be followed.

If this amendment is not accepted, the new system will allow the sale of fresh meat from a wide variety of outlets. Research done by the CSIRO meat research laboratory showed that some general stores would have problems with temperature control and storage conditions that could allow the meat to deteriorate. A survey by the Brisbane City Council that was published in May this year indicated that some small business operators of fast food outlets are not aware of proper food handling and storage.

Having said that, there are certainly small supermarkets or large general stores that believe that they could cope with the necessary refrigeration and would welcome this legislation. Obviously, some butcher shops, looking ahead to the passing of this legislation, have positioned themselves to take advantage of the changes and have aligned themselves with a small supermarket or a large corner or suburban store. Other butcher shops will not be able to compete, and many of these will gradually take on more delicatessen lines in order to survive. But the simple fact remains that, of the 14 butcher shops in my electorate, many are struggling for a living, and some are only holding on because they are family concerns. This legislation will cause far-reaching changes and, in the next three or four years, will cause the family butcher shop to undergo further significant change in appearance and service to the public.

Frozen meat has been sold in corner stores for some years. Retail butchers can, if they wish, trade seven days a week, and some of them do. But the big packaging monopolies will gradually take over the whole process—from the breaking down of carcasses to the preparation and packaging of meats. The whole system of licensing or registering butcher shops will be abolished and replaced with a system of certification or accreditation based on quality assurance. I am not questioning this quality assurance, but

I am saying that the housewives of Queensland are very well served by their retail family butchers. They can choose their cuts carefully, and they can buy in specific quantities to suit their family needs. Most housewives will tell members that buying prepackaged meat is not an economy. Meat in convenience store fridges will probably finish up being a commercial failure because consumers will find that the variety of cuts is too limited and the quantities are unsuitable.

My major concern is the effect that this legislation will have on the viability of many small businesses, not just in my electorate but throughout Queensland. We will see the big operations take over. It will be the death of many small butchers who have provided excellent service to their patrons but will be very badly served by this section of the legislation.

**Mr CONNOR:** I am open to any suggestion in relation to this, because I might be wrong. The Minister has his advisers in the lobby. All I am asking is this: can the Minister please explain to me where the refrigeration of meat is covered in the Food Act, the Health Act or another piece of legislation?

**Mr CASEY:** It is very simple. As a perishable food, it is covered by the provisions of the food hygiene regulations of the Health Act.

**Mr CONNOR:** I went through that, but I could not find anything dealing with refrigeration and temperatures. Is it in schedules?

**Mr Casey:** It is under the regulations.

**Mr CONNOR:** It is under the regulations? In that case, I will accept the Minister's advice.

**Mrs GAMIN:** My real concern is that the hygiene provisions under which butcher shops operate are very severe and very strict. We have great comfort in the fact that they are operating properly. The Opposition is concerned that the inspections under the Health Act will not be nearly as rigorous or adequate as they are now. I know that the Health Act does not come within the Minister's portfolio, but that is the basic thrust of this amendment.

**Mr CASEY:** At the outset of this debate on the clauses, I indicated that I would save the discussion on this particular matter until later. But I realise that the honourable member for Burleigh was not in the Chamber during the major debate earlier today or yesterday. Consequently, she was very fortunate, because she missed all the tedious repetition in relation to this very subject.

Clause 8 of the Bill determines the end of the processing. The honourable member for Nerang wants to remove the designation in so far as it operates in corner stores, cabinets or wherever. It might not necessarily be a Coca-Cola refrigerator. Someone in a shop might install an open type of refrigerator like those in supermarkets.

Members have spoken about butcher shops that have chopping blocks and sawdust on the floor. When members go into supermarkets such as Coles or Woolworths, they will not even see a butcher. They will see people refilling the cabinets with prepackaged meat. That is the way that people like to shop these days. One cannot deny consumers their rights in that regard.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 8, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 11, as read, agreed to.

Clause 12—

**Mr PERRETT** (8 p.m.): I would like to raise some queries about the wholesomeness of meat. I commend the Minister for legislating in this particular Bill for the sale of game meats. However, I am a little concerned about the wholesomeness of field-shot animals. I indicated to the Minister that I would give him the opportunity to place on the record the regulations that will be applying to the kangaroo industry, because the kangaroo industry is one that I feel has much potential to bring in export dollars not only for western Queensland but also for the whole of Queensland. How wonderful it would be to develop a new industry for western Queensland, which is suffering horrendously from the rural recession and continuing drought.

Recently, I had the opportunity of going to China at the invitation of the mayor of Chung Yang city with a group of people from the Australasian Game Meat Company from Victoria. We were successful in negotiating a deal with a meat factory—that is what the Chinese call abattoirs—in that city to send over a container load of chilled kangaroo meat, which will initially come from Victoria. I believe that they are going to mince it up and put it in some form of sausage. They are very impressed by the fact that kangaroo meat is high-protein, low-cholesterol, red meat, which they believe is quite affordable. The Chinese apparently like that game taste, and they believe that kangaroo meat will be a real winner. It is hoped that that trial shipment of one container load will develop into quite an

export industry which will definitely help Queensland.

Of course, we are looking at other game meats. Who would have thought a few years ago that we would be farming such things as emu and crocodiles? I have a very successful emu farm in my own electorate at the Cherbourg Aboriginal community. The people in that community were given a one-off permit to take 300 birds from the wild, and they have developed an emu-farming industry. Crocodile farming has also become more popular. It is quite reasonable to expect that, in the medium term, we could be farming kangaroos. We already know that kangaroos are attracted to country that is improved by the provision of water. If it becomes a viable industry, what we are seeing now might be the foundations of a whole new industry for Queensland.

However, one point that concerns people who see kangaroo meat on menus in restaurants is that the kangaroos are shot and handled in a positive way. I believe that the animal has to be bled within a certain time of shooting; it has to be delivered to the processing works within a certain time; and that there are only particular cuts that are allowed to be used. I ask the Minister if he would care to place on the record, just to satisfy me and other members of this Committee, what is envisaged in that regard. As I pointed out during the second-reading debate, this legislation lacks many of the basics. To me, it is a bit like a house that is half built. We have the foundations and the framework, but we still do not know what the walls or the windows are going to look like, or what colour the roof is going to be.

The Minister offered to discuss fully the regulations with me when they were formulated, and I certainly appreciate that. However, I am wondering whether the Minister would place on the record the standard of wholesomeness of the field-shot animals.

**Mr CASEY:** I can assure the member that the rest of the building will be of architectural splendour in the framework of the regulations which we will set out. During the course of the debate, the honourable member for Mulgrave contributed considerably on this point in regard to kangaroo and other meats. The point is that until the passage of this legislation, we would not be able to consider exporting these meats from Queensland for human consumption on an accreditation basis. However, one could export these meats from New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria. We have not been able to do it in this

State because the previous legislation would not allow it. Under this legislation, we are allowing that to occur so that Queenslanders can be supplied with kangaroo meat from Queensland.

A number of people in this State are talking seriously to me and to members of my department about raising kangaroos as stock on a property. However, they are going to have to have pretty good fences. They want to go ahead with that proposal. What will simply happen is that people who are involved in the harvesting of kangaroos for the production of meat will have to be accredited also. They, and even the shooters, will have to undertake successfully a course set up by the authority and pass the necessary requirements on accreditation. They will be allowed to use only approved vehicles and equipment, and they will use QLMA tags. So those control measures will be set out in the regulations.

Clause 12, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 17, as read, agreed to.

Clause 18—

**Mr PERRETT** (8.07 p.m.): Clause 18 refers to the functions of the Queensland Livestock and Meat Industry Policy Council. Upon reading that clause, it appears to contain watchdog provisions for the role of the policy council. That is the correct role for the policy council. I believe that the policy council should be in place to set out the policy for the authority and the Queensland Abattoir Corporation. However, I am concerned because I do not see any provision for costs contained in that clause. Obviously, there will be costs involved with the policy council. What is the Minister proposing in that regard? Does he propose that those costs will come out of the budget allocated for that particular area, or does he believe that he can pick up the tab through the Department of Primary Industries?

**Mr CASEY:** The costs will operate—and, incidentally, costs are not contained in legislation—in exactly the same way as they do for the other policy councils. They will be met by the Department of Primary Industries. The other point that I make quite clearly—I made it previously and I have made it publicly to industry bodies and organisations—is that the policy council is an advisory body only to the Minister. It is the means by which the Minister and all sectors of the industry—as I called it previously, from the paddock to the plate—can have regular discourse on the matters moving ahead in the industry. It also relates to what is going to be needed for the Queensland Abattoir Corporation, but it is not

going to be an interfering body at all. It is not going to make determinations on a day-to-day basis. They are the functions and responsibilities of those two bodies, which will all be clearly spelt out in the Act.

Clause 18, as read, agreed to.

Clause 19—

**Mr PERRETT** (8.09 p.m.): This clause refers to the composition of the Queensland Livestock and Meat Industry Policy Council, and it is one of the clauses that concerns the Opposition greatly. We know that the Minister is continuing with the agenda—he has set it already with other policy councils—and that it is his desire to chair that policy council. The Opposition believes that those councils would be better served by an independent chairman. Obviously, the Minister could have some part in the appointment of that independent chairman, but the Opposition believes that, because of the way the Department of Primary Industries has been restructured, the Minister is a very busy man. The Opposition wonders how much attention the Minister can give to chairing all of those policy councils, which he is so doing.

The other point that concerns the Opposition is the make-up of the council itself. The Opposition knows that the Minister has argued the case to put an AMIEU representative on that particular body, but it cannot support the fact that there is no consumer representative on that body. I know that from time to time the Minister gives the tongue-in-cheek reply that all the members of policy councils are consumers.

I believe that without consumers, we do not have any use for an industry. The consumers in Queensland are a very important part of the local meat industry, whether it be beef, mutton, pork, chicken, or game meats. Without consumers, there is no industry. That is the reason we feel very strongly that there should be a consumer representative on that particular body.

I indicated in my speech during the second-reading debate that we would be opposing this clause on that basis. We hope that the Minister's desire to chair that body without a consumer representative will, for the sake of the industry, work out.

I put it on record that a coalition Government will change that provision. We have no desire to chair this particular policy council, or any other policy council, and, therefore, we are opposing this clause.

**Mr CASEY:** The honourable member wants to have an independent chairman on

the policy council and queries whether I should be the chairman. I can assure him I am very, very independent in the way in which I chair these policy councils—there is no question about it—and I will continue to do so.

How more direct can it be than for representatives of industry to talk to Government through the responsible Minister? That is the way in which policy councils are set up. That is the way in which we meet on a very regular basis.

For the sake of the members opposite who want to criticise the lack of a consumer representative, we have two representatives of the United Graziers Association, two members of the Cattlemen's Union, and members of the Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland, the Queensland Pork Producers Organisation, the Queensland Chicken Meat Council, the Queensland Meat Exporters Association, the Queensland Domestic Meatworks Industry Council, the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association, Meat and Allied Trades Federation of Australia, the Retailers Association of Queensland, the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union, the Australian Game Meat Producers Association, the Commonwealth Department of Primary Industries and Energy—because we are such a major export industry—and the Queensland Department of Primary Industries.

If we cannot get somebody as a consumer who has a steak now and again and knows what they are talking about, we will have to start eating our hats.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I would just like to take this up on behalf of the consumers. I note the mirth of people such as the member for Thuringowa. In fact, they are denigrating the consumers of this State. We have had this debate with the Minister before and I know that he will not accept it, but the fact of the matter is—and I have been a member of the United Graziers Association—that beef production in this State is, at the end of the day, about the quality of the product that is produced in the paddock and the end product that gets on to the plate of the consumer.

I go back to the United Graziers Association, the Cattlemen's Union, and all the other bodies that have to represent the interests of their members, put the views of their members at conferences, and protect their vested interests. Sure, they are consumers—we are all consumers—but the fact of the matter is that in this situation they do not have a specific charter to represent the end consumer.

I would agree with those who interjected from this side. The fact of the matter is that it is important that the interests of the consumer—Mr and Mrs Stringbag, whatever you like—are represented and referred back from the plate to the paddock, whose interests are represented by the United Graziers Association.

I pay a tribute to the industry spokesmen, to the meat industry people, and to the people who work in the abattoirs, but the fact of the matter is that it is from the little calf in the paddock to the end plate that we are really talking about. The plate is not recognised in this legislation, as the member for Barambah has indicated on a couple of occasions. I think that is a tragedy. We hear the Minister for Rural Communities—and one has to laugh occasionally about it—talk about the battler. What we are really talking about is the average person; the person who goes into the shop and buys their bit of steak, buys their few chops or their sausages or whatever it might be.

There are valid consumer organisations. The member for Springwood, the Minister for Heritage, has been a great advocate of consumers' rights over the years. She has talked about the need to recognise the consumer, but where is she in this debate? She is now saying that the consumer does not count.

I pay tribute to the value of much of this Bill. I think that the Minister would have to agree with that, as would the people who helped and supported him in bringing it to fruition. What I am saying is that he needs to also recognise that, at the end of the day, the consumer is everybody and is represented by valid organisations that should be on this policy committee.

I totally support the member for Barambah. He is spot on when he says that there will be an election in two years and a bit at the absolute maximum—I think the Government will go early because it is in trouble. When the member for Barambah becomes a Minister, I will have great pleasure in supporting him from the Treasury benches in the amendment that we will move to give the consumers of this State a bit of a go because they are the people who are missing out. I think there is a tremendous amount of good in this Bill, but it is just a pity that the Minister has demeaned it by not acknowledging the force of the arguments that we are putting.

**Mr PERRETT:** I guess the Minister remembers the PAC, the Pastoral Advisory

Council, which was a tremendous tool in advising Ministers for Primary Industries on matters that concerned rural industry. That council fell apart because the Minister did not have time to attend meetings.

It amazes me that he had no time to attend meetings for a very worthwhile and credible body made up of rural industry leaders right around Queensland that were the full bottle on just about any primary industry matter. They were experts in their field. What a tremendous opportunity this Minister let slip through his fingers because he did not have time to attend meetings. They never met, yet he has time to chair these policy councils.

It amazes me that we have three departments, Primary Industries, Water Resources and Forestry, all combined into one department. It is getting bigger and bigger and the Minister is getting more and more work to do. We just wonder what the real Labor agenda is for primary industries in this State. I think it rates very lowly. We heard Pat Weller from Griffith University speaking to the Queensland Farmers Federation conference, which the Minister opened this week, saying that the Labor Party can live without rural Queensland. I certainly think that when one sees legislation like this that indicates just exactly what is in the melting pot. Further on in the legislation, the same criteria apply to the Abattoir Corporation. I will not go through the same arguments again. I say now that the Opposition is not in favour of that clause, either. The Opposition has no alternative to opposing the clause.

**Mr HOBBS:** The position of Chairman of the Queensland Livestock and Meat Industry Policy Council is obviously very important. The person in charge of that would need to be forward thinking and innovative and have an in-depth knowledge of the industry and marketing expertise. Can the Minister tell us whether he considers himself to be such a person?

**Mr STONEMAN:** The member for Barambah has reminded me of one of the members of the Pastoral Advisory Committee, who shall remain nameless in this debate because I know the Government's attitude in respect of retribution. One day, I met him at the airport. He said, "I have been on the Pastoral Advisory Committee and worked with seven Ministers. One of the things that most impressed me over the years was that I felt that I never wasted my time in coming to the meetings. I was listened to. I had an input and I believed that I was doing something for the

industry. For the first time in all of those years, I feel as though I am wasting my time because the Minister treats the committee with absolute disdain." With some of the good that the Minister has done in the Bill—

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr Nuttall** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The Committee will come to order. The member for Crows Nest and the member for Sandgate will come to order.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I hope that I had time out during that exchange. When the Minister puts himself into the legislation, having exhibited a disdain for such a committee which worked so well over the years and which did so much for the industry, he makes a mockery of such committees and organisations. After years and years of service at great costs to themselves, those people are thrown onto the scrap heap. I support the member for Barambah in this instance. That the Minister could be the chairman of the committee makes a mockery of that committee.

Quite frankly, as Pat Weller said, the Minister, along with the rest of the Government members, has an absolute contempt for the primary producers of this State simply because he feels that he does not need them. People do not judge whether a person is Labor, Liberal or the man in the moon. They judge on performance. Their judgment is that the Minister, in respect of his consultative processes, has failed and that this Government is failing. That is why we are seeing the change in the polls. It is a great disappointment to me that much of the good of the Bill has been demeaned by this clause.

**Mr CASEY:** There are a few comments to which I ought to reply. I remind this Committee, particularly members of the Opposition, of the way in which selections were made by them when they were in Government. They would write to the organisations, such as those organisations that I have listed tonight that would participate in the policy council of the meat industry in Queensland, and say, "Send a list of three names of people and we will pick the one whom we want." Who got up? Stewie the Stooge, on every occasion! He would get around, lick the boots and do exactly what the Government wanted. He would follow exactly the Government's intent.

**Mr Stoneman** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order!

The member for Burdekin will cease interjecting.

**Mr CASEY:** The member for Burdekin was one of those former Ministers who did those sorts of things. The Government is giving organisations the opportunity to send a person along. We are not saying that organisations can send along only the person that the Government wants. Talking of persons who have expressed interest in the old Pastoral Advisory Committee—Mr Stoneman should ask whoever that person is who thought that he was demeaned, and it must have been some time ago that he expressed those feelings, why he did not resign, why he did not back out. I will tell the honourable member why. That person and a number of others wanted to participate in the committee just for the nice trip to Brisbane every now and again. That is the reason why they served on the committee.

The Pastoral Advisory Committee represented only one group in the beef industry. The committees that the Government is putting in place represent the chain right through the industry—the people who are interested in the industry and in the income it provides not only for the pastoralists but also for the transport operators, for the railway workers, for the meatworkers, for the people in the insurance houses and commerce houses in Brisbane, for the wharfies, for the exporters, for the shippers, for the retailers, for the wholesalers and for everybody else along the chain—the whole box and dice. They all have a role to play in this industry. They are therefore included.

My final point relates to something that was mentioned earlier by the honourable member for Burdekin in the debate when he said that nobody could be harmed by meat, that people could get rotten meat and eat so-called bad meat. I remind him that, in January this year in the United States, Ecoli-infected meat in one incident killed three people and put 400 in hospital.

**Mr STONEMAN:** The Minister has taken me totally out of context, and he knows that. I said that meat is the most forgiving commodity of all. That is what I said. It is, and the Minister knows it.

**Mr Cooper:** They don't know.

**Mr STONEMAN:** They do not know it. That is the problem. They have no understanding.

**Mr Casey** interjected.

**Mr STONEMAN:** The Honourable Minister

who interjects should pull on his Willoughby spurs—

**Mr Cooper:** Trip through R. M. Williams.

**Mr STONEMAN:** He can put the R. M. Williams on. But it will not wear any more. The people have woken up. They know that the Minister is a fake. The important thing to understand is that the Minister is casting aspersions on members of the Pastoral Advisory Committee. That committee was to advise the Minister about matters relating to the pastoral industry. There was no point in other people, such as unionists, being members of that committee. It was about the specifics of the pastoral industry as it related to the production of beef and wool in this State. It was not about all of the other things that were happening.

That person whom the Minister is trying to denigrate said that the committee was able to bring matters before the Minister, before the department and before the Government to make sure that the Minister was aware of what was happening in the industry and was aware of the concerns and the problems at the coalface of the industry. The committee was able to make sure that the Minister of the day knew and understood those things. That was always a prime part of that operation.

This Minister has chucked that out. He has said that the Government is not interested in it. He did not even attend the meetings. Sometimes, apparently, he used to float past and say, "Hello." He denigrates the input that those people had by saying that they wanted a free trip to Brisbane in an aeroplane. For God's sake, those people probably had many problems on their own properties. They were giving their time and energy to the whole industry. The industry notes loudly and clearly that this Minister treated with contempt not only the Pastoral Advisory Committee but also the industry. That is a sad reflection on the attitude of the Government.

As the member for Barambah said, that reflection has been recognised by Pat Weller. On the day that the Minister attended that meeting, he said, "The Goss Government does not need the pastoral industry; it does not need rural Queensland; and you can all go jump in the lake." That is basically what the Minister said. It is sad that he made that comment during the debate on a Bill that has so much capacity to do good things for the industry.

**Mr HOBBS:** I endorse the words of the member for Burdekin. I make one further very important point. It is a question that I raised but that the Minister did not answer earlier. I

ask the Minister: does he wish to be chairman of the policy council? What qualifications does he have to lead that council?

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The question is—

**Mr Cooper** interjected.

**Mr Stoneman** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I warn the member for Crows Nest and the member for Burdekin under Standing Order 123A. The Chairman of the Committee was speaking, and I do not like being interrupted.

**Mr HOBBS:** I raise another very valid point. This will be one of the most important policy bodies for Queensland's largest rural industry. The Minister will appoint someone as chairman, and obviously he wants that position to be held by himself. Ultimately, the Minister may not hold that position; it might be held by somebody else. It is well known throughout the length and breadth of Queensland that the Labor Party does not have many people who have a great depth of knowledge of the rural industry. That is a simple fact. What will happen? As I said, this will be one of the most important policy bodies for the largest rural industry in Queensland. The Minister may appoint to that position somebody who does not have the relevant qualifications. I ask the Minister again: should the Minister of the day, just because he holds that position, lead that policy council?

**Question**—That clause 19 as read stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 44**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bennett, Bird, Braddy, Budd, Burns, Casey, Clark, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Fenlon, Foley, Gibbs, Hayward, Hollis, Mackenroth, McElligott, McGrady, Milliner, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Power, Purcell, Pyke, Robertson, Robson, Rose, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Sullivan T. B., Szczerbanik, Vaughan, Warner, Welford, Wells, Woodgate *Tellers:* Pitt, Livingstone

**NOES, 31**—Beanland, Connor, Cooper, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Randell, Rowell, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Turner, Veivers, Watson *Tellers:* Springborg, Laming

Resolved in the affirmative.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind honourable members that, for all future divisions on this Bill, the bells will be rung for two minutes' duration.

Clauses 20 to 29, as read, agreed to.

Clause 30—

**Mr PERRETT** (8.40 p.m.): Clause 30 relates to membership of the authority. Once again, we note that there is no consumer representative on that body. My query relates to clause 30 (6) which states—

“An appointment of the chairperson must state whether the chairperson is also to be the Authority's chief executive officer.”

I find that a little bit extraordinary. The Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority will represent the livestock interests of Queensland—and they are very extensive interests. We know that the livestock industry is the most diversified industry in the State. As I mentioned in my second-reading speech, the intensive livestock industries have tremendous value-adding capacity and also create employment for many people. However, this clause seems to indicate that an industry the size of our livestock industry is not worth a full-time chairperson and a full-time chief executive officer. I ask the Minister to clarify what is meant by the words, “an appointment . . . must state whether the chairperson is also to be the Authority's chief executive officer”.

**Mr CASEY:** We must take into account that the legislation is structured as it is because that circumstance exists, and there will be a transition period. The Government has flexibility in the matter.

**Mr STONEMAN:** Clearly, the clause identifies almost all the people who justifiably should be recognised on the authority. However, I refer back to the old days when there was a representative who was able to speak wholly and solely on behalf of the end users—the people eating the meat. There is no such recognition in this clause. Obviously there will be a meat processor, a union representative, a representative of the UGA and the Cattlemen's Union and so on, but consumers are ignored totally. I cannot understand why the Minister or the Government would do that. The Government has ignored the consumers, and we are all consumers. It is all very well to use the hackneyed phrase, “We are all consumers.” Quite frankly, it does not wear because of that anomaly.

Clause 30, as read, agreed to.

Clause 31, as read, agreed to.

Clause 32—

**Mr PERRETT** (8.44 p.m.): This clause relates to the selection of members for appointment. Subclause 4 (c) states that the

following persons are not eligible to be on the authority—

“A chairperson, deputy chairperson or chief executive officer (regardless of the title by which the person is known) of an organisation representing livestock producers or persons engaged in meat processing.”

That concerns the Opposition greatly. It is an area in which we have a lot of difficulty. We know well that in any producer organisation it is usually the people with the most knowledge of the industry who rise to the top. Recently, we debated the Dairy Industry Bill, so the Minister should know that the cream always rises to the top. However, he has completely neglected that theory by barring the people with the most expertise from serving on the authority.

This is Queensland's supreme authority looking after the livestock industries of this State, yet the people who are the pick of the crop and who have the expertise are barred from serving on it. If honourable members consider people of the calibre of Larry Acton, Kerry Martin and Hazel Marland, who represent the cattle industry, they will realise that there must be other able people representing other organisations who are barred from being represented on the authority.

The Minister might say that those organisations can put forward nominations. I do not know whether he has in mind that it would be jobs for the boys—whether after they have served their time as leaders of their organisation they receive a pat on the back and are put out to pasture by being nominated onto the meat authority. I hope that is not the case. The leaders of those organisations are the ones who are in touch with the many problems that the industry encounters from time to time. A new challenge arises almost every day.

The Minister is debarring those people from representing the industries that have elected them to those positions. I feel very disappointed about that. I cannot understand that the industry organisations have accepted the proposition. I imagine that there has been some sort of trade-off. The Minister has certainly dug his heels in on this matter. If there were not some sort of interference, it would be almost automatic that those organisations have representation on that authority. The Opposition is very disappointed about the matter and will be opposing the clause.

**Mr CASEY:** I will be brief because I feel that there is more important business to be dealt with. I have previously explained the position clearly. Honourable members opposite have seen the intent of the legislation in previous legislation.

I am, however, obliged to refer to a couple of points that were made by the member for Barambah, who spoke of the terrible things that the Government might do in allocating jobs for the boys. I need not remind members opposite—but I would like my own colleagues to know—that, when we came to Government, the chairperson of the Livestock and Meat Authority in Queensland was none other than the State treasurer of the National Party of Queensland.

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The member for Western Downs is not at a football match. The Committee will be treated with respect. I have already warned two members of the Committee under Standing Order 123A. I am about to start warning a few others.

**Mr STONEMAN:** The Minister has gone beyond the bounds of propriety in talking about individuals. Perhaps he could mention the failed candidate for Flinders, Mr Robertson, who is on the railway authority. What about the failed member for Keppel, Mr Schwarten? The Minister must be careful when he throws that sort of mud. The National Party always selected Queenslanders to head up the departments. This Government is riddled with Mexicans from failed administrations in the south who do not know which way the railways run or how the departments run. They are academics and failures from the south who have come up here.

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Cunningham will cease interjecting.

**Mr Elliott** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I warn the member for Cunningham under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr STONEMAN:** These people are coming up here and advising the Government, which knows little better, about wrecking our economy. The Minister should be extremely careful about making those sorts of accusations. The person whom the Minister is trying to denigrate, namely, the chairman of the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority, was the general manager of Queensland's

very own pastoral house, Queensland Primary Producers. Recently, the Premier was upbraiding companies for not putting Queenslanders on a particular board.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! The member for Southport will cease interjecting.

**Mr STONEMAN:** This Government is taking on board people who do not live in this State, have no understanding of this State and no connection with this State other than that they are Labor Party cronies. This Minister is trying to denigrate someone who was born in Longreach, lived his whole life in Queensland and gave his all for the pastoral house of which he was the general manager. Who else would be better suited to be the chairman of the Livestock and Meat Authority? Failed Labor candidates are filling jobs right across this State. And this Minister has the hide to talk about cronies!

I shall make a speech on this subject at a later date, because it would need to be made in 50 parts. I could not fit everything that I would like to say into one 20-minute speech. It would take me about three days to talk about the way in which the Labor Party in this State has denigrated people who have served this State so well, and has brought in people from other States who have no understanding or interest in this State other than being here amongst their Labor cronies and serving the party of the day.

**Mr HOBBS:** The Minister's comment about the chairman of the LMAQ was uncalled for. It was four years before the Minister woke up to the position that that fellow held, and the Minister was very happy with the work that he was doing. This Minister left millions of dollars lying around in the cupboard. This is the Minister about whom the worst report was written by any Auditor-General in Queensland's history. He is now trying to tell us that we are wrong.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I remind honourable members that this clause is about the selection for appointment to the Queensland Livestock and Meat Authority, not about other boards or issues raised in other debates. Members will confine their remarks to this clause. Members of the Committee are getting out of control. I have already had to warn three members under Standing Order 123A. Members on both sides of the Chamber will respect the decorum of the Committee.

**Mr HOBBS:** This issue is very important. The Minister raised this issue.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I warn the member for Southport under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr HOBBS:** Members are talking about appointments to committees. The Minister raised a point about the previous chairman of the LMAQ.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! I have already warned the member for Southport under Standing Order 123A. I warn him again under Standing Order 123A and ask him to leave the Chamber. I will not have reflections cast upon the rulings of the Chair.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I rise to a point of order.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is no point of order. I have asked the member to leave the Chamber.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I did not make a reflection on the Chair.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN:** Order! There is no point of order. I have warned the member for Southport under Standing Order 123A, and I have asked him to leave the Chamber. I call the member for Warrego.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Southport withdrew from the Chamber.*

**Mr HOBBS:** The simple facts of the matter are that the Minister has raised an issue that members were not debating. He started this, and that goes to the crux of the problem. The Minister must understand that people who know the industry—whether it be a rural industry, small business or whatever—are generally people who have spent some time in that particular industry. Quite frankly, the Minister is excluding the best brains and expertise that this country can provide. Why on earth would the Minister do that? Surely, there must be an option to select them if that is the Minister's wish. Why exclude them?

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is true, but why do we have to exclude them? It is a bit like having a football team and having two of the best players sitting on the sideline. The Olympic Games will be held in Sydney in the year 2000. Why on earth would we have 5 or 10 of our best athletes sitting on the sideline or carrying the oranges? People with the necessary expertise—people who have been there and done that—should not be excluded.

As to the chairman of the LMAQ—the Minister has really brought home to us the philosophy behind the way in which he wants to structure this legislation. It is in our best interests to look after the whole industry. We must do the best that we can for that industry. Unless we can open up those appointments, that will not happen.

**Mr CASEY:** There is only one thing that I want to reply to in relation to this matter. It was perhaps prompted by the comments of the member for Burdekin, who cast great aspersions on our Government because we have brought people from across the border to do certain things for this State. The member said that we should not do that. I remind members that the honourable member for Burdekin was born in Wellington in New South Wales. He is a cockroach.

**Mr STONEMAN:** And proud of it! But I have seen the light, and I am now a maroon—and proud of that, too. I was elected by the people of my electorate to represent them in this Chamber. It does not matter where I was born. The fact of the matter is that I did not come here at the invitation of a Government with an agenda. What the member for Warrego said is spot-on. This Government is selective. I can think of one particular member of the rural community whom the Labor Party is quite happy to trot out every time it needs a bit of what it calls credibility in assessing things such as the closure of railway lines. It is okay for the head of a particular organisation to give the Labor Party credibility on those occasions.

As the member for Warrego said, the Government does not have to accept the advice of those people, but at least it could use their expertise and representative focus. But no, the Government does not want that. In the case of rail closures, it suited the Minister to drag in someone to speak for the whole of the State. What is the difference between the policy of advising on the closure of rail lines and excluding the head of an organisation in a situation such as this? What is the difference between that circumstance, in which we have a quasi rubber-stamp organisation trying to back and fill and give the Government some credibility when it talks about closing railway lines, and what this Government is seeking to do by excluding those people under this clause?

**Question**—That clause 32 as read stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided—

**AYES, 47**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bennett, Bird, Braddy, Briskey, Budd, Burns, Campbell, Casey,

Clark, Comben, D'Arcy, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Fenlon, Foley, Gibbs, Hayward, Hollis, Mackenroth, McElligott, McGrady, Milliner, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Power, Purcell, Pyke, Robertson, Robson, Rose, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Sullivan T. B., Szczerbanik, Vaughan, Warner, Welford, Wells, Woodgate *Tellers:* Pitt, Livingstone

**NOES, 30**—Beanland, Connor, Cooper, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Randell, Rowell, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Turner, Watson *Tellers:* Springborg, Laming

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

Clause 33—

**Mr PERRETT** (9.05 p.m.): Clause 33 (3) states—

“The Governor in Council may remove a member from office if the member—

(a) engages in misbehaviour; or

...

(c) is incompetent.”

I find it pretty extraordinary that those sorts of wishy-washy clauses should be written into such important legislation. What actually defines “misbehaviour”? If somebody has one or two drinks at a Christmas party or the like and makes a bit of a galah of himself, does that constitute misbehaviour?

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Mr Bredhauer): Order! Would members in the Chamber who wish to have conversations please have them outside?

**Mr PERRETT:** Thank you, Mr Temporary Chairman. I think that this clause is pretty open-ended. I ask the Minister to define what he would envisage as “misbehaviour”, because obviously he will have to remove these members of the meat authority from their positions. Also, what would he regard as “incompetence”?

**Mr CASEY:** The terms mean exactly what they say—matters of misbehaviour or matters of incompetence. In fact, “misbehaviour” was clearly spelt out in the 1965 Act under which the previous Government operated for a long time. I feel quite sure that if members opposite knew that a member of an authority was misbehaving, or was seen to be incompetent, they would want that conduct to be stopped very promptly.

Clause 33, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 34 to 36, as read, agreed to.

Clause 37—

**Mr PERRETT** (9.07 p.m.): Clause 37 (1) (a) relates to the disclosure of interests.

Clause 37 (2) refers to "nature of the interest". I wonder what the Minister has in mind in regard to that clause.

**Mr CASEY:** I think that this clause spells out quite clearly why, under the previous Government, we had Ministers who got into severe trouble in one way or another. If there is a misunderstanding in regard to pecuniary interests, or if people are looking after themselves through their office and are making additional profit, surely that speaks for itself. If I have to spell it out, I will do so. Quite simply, if a member of an authority, for instance, is a beef producer, and there are matters before that particular authority relating to cattle in general, there is no reason why he cannot speak, act and be a member of an authority and not have to declare his pecuniary interests. However, if there is a specific problem that relates to his property, his own assets or activities, then surely he must declare his pecuniary interests and leave the room.

Clause 37, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 38 to 125, as read, agreed to.

Clause 126—

**Mr PERRETT** (9.09 p.m.): Once again, I seek the clarification of a clause. Clause 126 (3) states—

"If the Tribunal is formed by 2 members, the decision of the chairperson is to be the decision of the Tribunal if there is a disagreement."

I find that subclause a little extraordinary. If there is a disagreement with a tribunal of two people, and if the chairman has the casting vote, what is the use of having a tribunal? Cannot the chairman determine the dispute and save having that tribunal?

**Mr CASEY:** The tribunal sets up a fair and democratic way by which matters can be judged. However, it often happens that when people who are selected from an industry represent completely opposite points of view, there may be times when they reach a stalemate. Rather than having that occur, the chairman can make the decision and matters can move on.

This subclause sets up a democratic system. When I took over responsibility for the Department of Primary Industries, I discovered that the Chicken Meat Authority had its own tribunal and that there was a silly section in the legislation that required the representatives of both sides of the story to be present to form a quorum.

What has simply happened is that every time the chicken meat processors wanted to put pressure on the producers, they would stay away from the tribunal meeting. In that way nobody could get a hearing. It saves the problem where there might be stalemate.

Clause 126, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 127 to 135, as read, agreed to.

Clause 136—

**Mr PERRETT** (9.11 p.m.): Clause 136 (2) (c) relates to the functions and powers of the Abattoir Corporation. We are talking about one of the functions as to trade in livestock meat and other meat processing products.

In subclause (3), we see that the Abattoir Corporation may trade in livestock and meat only with the Minister's written approval. I just wonder if the Minister can explain the reason why they have to go to him to get written approval to trade in what I would regard as a fairly normal procedure?

**Mr CASEY:** The honourable member for Western Downs gave a very good summation of some aspects of this during his speech in the second-reading debate. The members of the previous Government, if they went back into the history of that provision, would see, know and understand where, on so many occasions, various manipulative people within the meat trade deliberately caused problems to the public abattoirs and service abattoirs in Queensland.

It was during the debate this afternoon that I indicated to the member for Western Downs correctly that we had to get that throughput—

**Mr Littleproud:** Last night.

**Mr CASEY:** Last night. It was during his speech that he said that it was necessary to get that throughput. If there are manipulative practices going on, the only way in which they can be overcome is for the power and authority to be there for the abattoirs to trade in beef cattle or in livestock in order to make sure that that throughput is able to be achieved.

I recognise that this is a very sensitive point. I recognise as well, and so does the Government, that it is a major policy that has to be determined. When those powers have been put in place, the Minister would then give the direction if it became necessary.

I sincerely hope we do not have to do this. I hope that under the Abattoirs Corporation our service abattoirs in Queensland are operated in a very sensible way and are not subjected to any

manipulative practices at all. Should it be necessary, the power is there, the ability is there, although I believe it would be used only as a major policy weapon as a result of a discussion that has taken place in policy council meetings.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I want to make clear my stance during the debate yesterday. I was responding to some comments made by the member for Bundaberg, who mentioned that one of the powers given would be for the service works management to go out and buy cattle.

I acknowledge that there are and have been problems from time to time in keeping the service works out of financial problems. I did signal then and I will signal now that I have some concerns and I am not totally convinced that what the Minister is proposing will work. I need more clarification on it. I just want to make it clear that I was not being totally supportive. I realise that we have problems in making sure that they remain financial.

**Mr PERRETT:** I have just one more question to the Minister. Are the meat processors entirely happy with this clause?

**Mr CASEY:** The honourable member would have to go and ask the meat processors about that.

**Mr PERRETT:** Yes. I would have thought that in negotiating this legislation the Minister should have been out there talking to the processors, as he obviously has done, and also with all the other groups that have a vested interest in this legislation. I expect that he knows the answer and can give it to me here tonight.

Clause 136, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 137 to 141, as read, agreed to.

Clause 142—

**Mr PERRETT** (9.17 p.m.): Clause 142 relates to the composition of the Abattoir Corporation. In subclause (2), once again we see that the chief executive officer is to be appointed on the nomination of the Abattoir Corporation. I think that this clause appears to be somewhat in conflict with clause 143 (1) or 143 (3). I would like the Minister to explain that to me.

**Mr CASEY:** It is quite a simple explanation, actually. Section 14 of the Constitution Act 1967 says that the appointment of any public officer holder has to be by the Governor in Council. It is a public abattoir corporation.

If we wanted to take out that provision, because of alteration of the Constitution Act

by the Bjelke-Petersen Government in 1987, there would have to be a referendum. I hardly think it is necessary that we go to a referendum to appoint the chief executive officer of the Abattoir Corporation.

Clause 142, as read, agreed to.

Clauses 143 to 184, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

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

## STOCK AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Debate resumed from 11 May (see p. 2606).

**Mr PERRETT** (Barambah) (9.20 p.m.): In the past couple of days, the Minister and I seem to have been working overtime. I note that we will debate the Estimates for the Department of Primary Industries tomorrow. When it is all over, the Minister and I should have a drink together and soothe our throats.

The Government has promoted the legislation as a move forward in freeing primary industry from regulation. Everyone on this side of the House is in favour of reducing the impact of regulations on producers and everyone else involved in primary production. I do not know of one farmer who does not hate the endless paperwork that keeps him away from productive endeavour. It is also true that the Labor Government has done more than any other to increase the regulatory burden on farmers and anyone else involved in business. There is nothing that farmers dislike more than having to sit down at night, after a hard day's work in the field, to do paperwork, particularly if it is imposed on them by some form of Government regulation.

If these changes end up bringing real benefits to rural industry, we welcome them. The Opposition will not oppose the passage of the legislation, but I want to put on record the Opposition's misgivings about some aspects of it. Changes to the permit system for moving stock are long overdue, and we recognise that fact. Stock owners and their representative organisations have been talking about freeing up the system and have been blaming previous Governments for overregulation of stock movements in Queensland. Let me hasten to say that regulation was necessary for disease control purposes. We have all

heard of BTEC and the success of that program.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! There are too many conversations in the room.

**Mr PERRETT:** BTEC was an initiative of the former National Party Government and was a cooperative and lengthy program to rid Queensland of the dreaded cattle diseases of brucellosis and tuberculosis. That scheme cost the beef and dairy industries and the Government vast amounts of money but was necessary to maintain our extensive export markets, particularly for beef, as well as to provide a healthy and wholesome product for Australian consumers.

Some form of regulation of stock movements was vital to the success of BTEC and also for the control and spread of cattle ticks. I will say more about that later. But there were problems for producers. Often, they might have wanted to truck stock 5 miles or 10 miles up the road but had to drive 50 miles, 60 miles or even further to pick up the permit. If no stock inspector was around, it might have been necessary to go to the local police station for a permit. That was another positive initiative of past Governments—to allow police to issue permits in the absence of a stock inspector. However, there was a lot of inconvenience. The latter system of concessional permits and property waybills helped to solve some of the problems, but it was not the whole answer. The permits only covered movements between the home property and designated points such as saleyards, abattoirs or properties under the same ownership.

On the face of it, the proposals in this Bill are a big advance. The producer groups have studied them and offered general support. However, that support is qualified in some quarters by fears related to stock stealing. The stock inspector is basically removed from the process. We acknowledge the wish of the department that stock inspectors be relieved of a paperwork burden, and that is necessary as their numbers continue to decline. The individual workload is already too great, as stock inspectors are becoming an endangered species themselves under this Minister's policies. It is one of the real tragedies of this Labor Government that there are no longer enough stockies to perform a range of vital functions, particularly in respect of disease control. We have seen that highlighted again recently with the outbreak of anthrax in central Queensland.

For most stock movements in future, the stock inspector will have no oversight function and will handle no paperwork. Most of the time, documentation will consist of a duplicate waybill, with the copies held by the sender and the receiver of the stock. In most cases, that will probably work well. However, a great many producers think that it plays right into the hands of those involved in stealing cattle. The new system will take most of the risk out of thieves moving stolen cattle.

Stock thieves know as well as anyone else that an effective Stock Squad is a thing of the past in Queensland. This Labor Government dispersed much of the expertise that it inherited and refuses to listen to pleas for an effective effort in that area. Stock theft is often just another responsibility for hard-pressed local police throughout the State. They must do the best they can without specialised training or equipment. They are unsure about their jurisdiction when, for example, they suspect that stock have been taken into another police region. Stock policing is regionalised, but stock stealing is not. We need a return to the days when experienced police in a specialist squad had the run of the State in chasing down a serious problem for the cattle industry.

The Government will boast that it has reduced numbers in the Stock Squad by only one, to 24. What it will not talk about is the ban on overtime for police in the Stock Squad. Police can be close to pinching a cattle thief but must give up the chase because overtime is banned. I know that some police do work in their own time, but as a society we cannot expect them to do that all the time. The simple fact is that the Government, with a city agenda, could not care less about stock theft. It could not give a fig about losses by farmers and graziers. After all, most Labor people agree with the description that Tom Burns hung on country people before his publicity-driven new job of "Goss's Ambassador to the Bush". He called producers, "The National Party's cowboy cronies", and that is how the Labor Party really looks on the farmers and the graziers of this State.

The Labor Government simply refuses to believe that there is a problem worth solving. There is a problem. The legislation has the potential to make it worse because there will be less chance of tracing stolen stock. In 1991-92, there were 308 reported stock offences. Only 116 were cleaned up, and I would venture to say that the result was rarely satisfactory to the victims of the theft, but I will get to that shortly. I believe that, last year,

there was action on about 450 cases, but that would be the tip of the iceberg.

If the Government wants to free up regulation—and we agree with that—it should also take proper action on the consequences. In this case, there is a real possibility that the consequences will include making life easier for the stock thieves. I can imagine cattle duffers rubbing their hands in glee at the thought of the Bill becoming law and getting their grubby hands on their very own permit book. It will be made so easy for them. Just imagine—and one does not have to be very smart to do so—how a duffer could steal stock, take them to the property of an accomplice where they could be cross-branded with the brand of that property. Then they could be pastured in the back paddock out of sight until the brand heals, and then they could be transported to market, quoting only the new cross-brand. All of this would be legal in the eyes of the unsuspecting. With so few stock inspectors these days and an underresourced Stock Squad, more often than not they would probably get away with it.

I ask the Minister to seek increased action by the Government against that activity. It makes good sense to make up for the loophole by making life impossible for those who exploit it. As I have said, there should be extra police resources, but that is only the start. Victims are constantly outraged by the attitude that the courts take to stock theft, and so are the police who have worked so hard to bring those people to court. It must be totally demoralising for the police to see those people walk away laughing. They see thieves given a tap on the wrist. Thieves are sometimes ordered to make restitution. They are sometimes fined. They sometimes have a conviction recorded against their names—but only sometimes. Rarely are they sent to gaol. Of course, there is every temptation to reoffend because they know that they can front as a cleanskin with no criminal record to be taken into account if they face sentencing.

I have heard suggestions—and I agree with them—that stock theft cases should be heard by a special magistrate or judge with particular expertise in those matters. I believe that the Government should legislate for stiffer sentences in stock theft cases. Stock thieves must be treated as the unprincipled criminals that they are. If that takes a lead from the Government, so be it. I also believe that any fines resulting from stock theft convictions ought to be increased and added to the funding for a properly resourced Stock Squad. The same squad could also be the recipient of equipment used by stock thieves in the course

of their crimes. If we are to reduce one element of risk to stock thieves, I believe that we should increase others. If that were done, I would have no problem at all with this element of the legislation.

Earlier in my speech, I indicated that I would say something about the control and spread of cattle ticks in relation to stock movements across the tick line. It is pleasing that the Bill maintains the status quo in that regard. We all know the huge cost burden that ticks impose upon the Queensland beef and dairy industries. We know, too, that the tick line runs almost diagonally across Queensland from north west to south east, east of that line being the tick-infested area of the State. We also know of the ongoing battle over past years to prevent the spread of ticks further west. So it is extremely important that the Minister ensure that the Department of Primary Industries is funded sufficiently to provide adequate clearing dips and enough stock inspectors at strategic crossing points to police the countless number of movements across that line.

The Minister has expressed a desire to rid that area of Queensland south of the Townsville-Mount Isa railway line of cattle ticks. If he can achieve that, the cattle industry will erect a statue of him and will probably position it next to one of those other old bulls at the entrance to Australia's beef capital—Rockhampton. In fact, I will personally organise the erection of that monument, and I know that every cattleman will salute it each time he drives past.

**Mrs McCauley** interjected.

**Mr PERRETT:** Even my colleague the member for Callide will salute it. But even the Minister will recognise the difficulties of that task. Success would mean nothing short of a miraculous breakthrough in tick eradication technology. It is important that we have proper policing of tick movements across that line.

In that regard, I take this opportunity to warn the Minister about any relaxation of the law in any way. At present, a proposal is being floated to allow tick-infested cattle to cross that line and travel through tick-free or clean country on their way to slaughter. Last night, my colleague the member for Western Downs referred to that proposal. However, there are two sides to that argument. The supporters will talk about the chemical residue problems that can result from constant dipping for tick control, the danger to consumers' health and the possible loss of export markets. The opponents will talk of the spread of ticks and

ramifications for the Queensland cattle industry as a whole.

New South Wales has some very stringent rules—and justifiably so—in regard to the movement of Queensland cattle into that State. The Opposition believes that there should be no relaxation in any way of current rules. There is no way that we should risk our current relationship with New South Wales. If that State closed the border gates to Queensland cattle, it would deprive our producers of a valuable store market and reduce prices significantly—\$30 to \$40 a head, I believe. It would also deprive our producers of a means of survival in times of drought. Right now, there are thousands of Queensland cattle on agistment in New South Wales. I think it is very silly to put at risk that market and that source of fodder supply for our cattle in times of drought. The Minister has a tiger by the tail on this one. If he allows ticky cattle to travel through clean areas, I can assure him that many producers in the tick-free area will not be at all receptive to the idea and will become very angry.

I turn now to the deregulation of the artificial breeding industry. It is no secret in the industry what is behind the repeal of the Artificial Breeding of Stock Act 1979. It is to facilitate the move by the private operation Victorian Artificial Breeders into the Queensland dairy cattle breeding market. In July, the Minister issued a media release laying the groundwork for the move by the Government out of its responsibilities to the dairy industry in particular. As I understand it, the plan is for Victorian Artificial Breeders to obtain the semen stocks and goodwill of the present Department of Primary Industries Artificial Breeding Centre at Wacol. A service to the dairy industry would then be centred on Victorian Artificial Breeders' Victorian operation.

The Opposition will not automatically oppose privatisation of any service currently provided by the Government. However, we will always seek real assurances that privatisation will not be against the best interests of Queenslanders. For instance, will Queensland dairy farmers have access to the semen from the best bulls, or will they have to take second place to Victorians?

The Wacol centre was set up by the coalition Government to fill a very real need, particularly in the dairy industry. Over the years, it has provided a cost-effective and reliable service to the industry as it has worked to increase productivity to the present very high levels. Staff have developed very high

levels of expertise, and it would be a tragedy if that expertise were to be lost in any amalgamation.

The AI centre at Wacol has played an integral part in the huge productivity gains made by the dairy industry in Australia, and particularly in Queensland. Honourable members might be interested to know that the centre provides well over one-quarter of the market for AI in the Australian dairy industry. That market amounts to more than a million doses a year, and is growing steadily. The potential for further growth can be seen in the fact that more than two-thirds of the dairy heifers calved each year result from artificial insemination. No wonder Victorian Artificial Breeders are hot to trot and get their hands on the Queensland operation.

It is not surprising, when we consider the beneficial effects on milk production which have flowed largely from AI and the companion program of herd recording, that we see a move by privateers into this lucrative market. Forty years ago, production from recorded cows in Queensland was only 1 209 litres per year compared with 2 281 from Victorian stock. In 1990, however, the average Queensland production per cow had risen to 4 076 litres—only 56 litres behind the Victorian average for annual production.

AI has been a boon in finding the right genetics for Queensland's subtropical conditions, and also in producing higher-protein milk. Although AI and other activities undertaken at Wacol are not solely responsible for high productivity, they do play an absolutely vital role. Dairy producers have access to the semen from the very best of sires—bulls of proven performance and pedigree to which they otherwise would not have had access or could not have afforded.

The dairy industry is very proud of its record, and so it should be, because it has made great gains in terms of production and efficiency. Much of the success can be attributed directly to the Wacol Artificial Breeding Centre. It is a centre of which the Queensland livestock breeding industry has been very proud. When the Minister replies to this debate, I would like him to address a number of questions. Most importantly, I want assurances from the Minister that the State's dairymen will not suffer in any way from the changes that this amendment makes possible. Will all the current services provided by the Wacol centre be maintained? How will the Minister ensure that the same effort will be made to maintain excellent services such as the bull teams and the custom-frozen embryo

services? Will services maintain the speed and reliability provided by the staff at Wacol? I remind the Minister that the artificial breeding services provided by Wacol have been very closely integrated with the herd recording system, which is so important to the dairy industry. What will happen if Victorian Artificial Breeders is handed a stranglehold on the industry?

I turn now to the AFS program. The AFS, of course, is a breed of cattle derived from crossing Friesians and Sahiwals. Of course, the name "AFS" is derived from Australian Friesian Sahiwal.

**Mr Stoneman:** Dr Des Dowling was the prime motivator at Rainsby in north Queensland. Do you realise that? He did a great deal of work.

**Mr PERRETT:** I take on board the comment of my colleague the member for Burdekin.

I was really taken aback when I saw in a recent edition of the *Dairy Farmer* newspaper what amounted to a "for sale" sign for the AFS project. In fact, I cut out that article, photocopied it and wrote the words "for sale" at the top of it. In effect, that is what the article says. It stated—

"Offers have been invited by the Department of Primary Industries for its Australian Friesian Sahiwal (AFS) project.

The assets up for offer include AFS semen, AFS embryos, livestock including purebred AFS breeding stock, the AFS Appendix 3 heifers, the Sahiwal breeding herd and all AFS livestock, a milk entitlement and agricultural equipment."

Further on, the article states that Mr Roly Nieper—

**Mr CASEY:** I rise to a point of order. Madam Deputy Speaker, I draw your attention to the fact that this Bill was presented to the House on 11 May of this year—some six months before the advertisement to which the member now refers. That advertisement has nothing to do with this legislation.

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

**Mr PERRETT:** I was taken aback, because the article stated that Mr Nieper of the DPI said that 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific, American and African regions have now introduced AFS stock. Those regions constitute major dairy industry growth areas. I am very saddened to see the department shedding that breed, because I felt that it had a great possibility to earn many export dollars

for Australia. We all recognise the ability of Australians in the livestock breeding industry. It appears that, no matter what we do, we seem to be able to improve performance and production. When we look back at the history of our other Australian breed, the Australian Illawarra Shorthorn, and the success that it has experienced over the years, we live in hope that some day this breed will be able to match its performance in the tropical areas. We know that British bred dairy cattle, cattle which have been traditionally bred for the cooler or temperate climates, do not always produce as well in the tropical climates.

The Minister has put the "for sale" sign up. Even though this legislation was introduced into this House some months ago, it is being debated tonight, and it is relevant that I indicate my sadness to see this particular breed go. It has been 30 years in its developmental program and we are now seeing the end of it. I believe that there is a Fijian buyer. The Minister might be able to elaborate on what response has been received to that "for sale" notice that appeared in the *Australian Dairy Farmer* newspaper. I have heard that a Fijian buyer was coming to make an inspection.

**Mr Casey:** I will only be talking about things relevant to the Bill.

**Mr PERRETT:** I take the opportunity to put it on the record. The Minister will have to reveal all. We know that he does not like maintaining research programs. We know that he has got rid of most of the experienced staff. We know also that there are more to go. This Minister will go down in history as the Minister who wrecked the Department of Primary Industries. Actions such as these indicate how he is going about it.

**Mr Stoneman:** Shame!

**Mr PERRETT:** It is a shame that those types of things happen. Some honourable members will be aware that Wacol provides important services to the pork industry in Queensland, especially through boar testing and performance recording. That activity has to a certain extent lived off the cattle side of things, and there must be real concerns about the effects on the pork industry of closing Wacol.

If the Wacol facility is closed to many of the other excellent programs that are taking place, it would not surprise me if, next week, we saw a similar advertisement in the newspaper putting all the pork research up for sale. This money hungry Minister—I know that he has been starved for funding for his department, and I will have the opportunity to

talk about that in his Estimates tomorrow—seems to be grabbing at every dollar that he can. We just have to wonder about the future of the pork industry.

**Mr Stoneman:** Do you realise that in 1972 the member for Burdekin became an accredited artificial inseminator at Wacol and that is all going to be lost?

**Mr PERRETT:** I congratulate my honourable colleague.

Some honourable members will be aware of the report commissioned by the Government into the whole Wacol structure. That report was commissioned in the wake of the report on the DPI by the Public Sector Management Commission. Given the utter failure of most of the PSMC's activities, I believe that we should be very careful of the recommendations in the Wacol report. I do not want to go into too much detail, but there are a lot of worrying recommendations in that report. There are contradictions on pork research. On the one hand, there is confirmation of a community service obligation and, on the other, a call for the virtual privatisation of that research. There is a call to abandon research into goat breeding.

I am also very concerned at the recommendation for total cost recovery on tick fever work. That research and extension is absolutely vital to the cattle industry in Queensland. The vaccines produced are vital to our beef industry, and the Government would do a great disservice to producers by imposing the full cost on them. Labor would do well to remember that a successful beef industry able to compete effectively on domestic and world markets provides real benefits to the whole of the State economy. We talked about that during the debate on the legislation that we have just finished dealing with in this Chamber.

The recommendations in that report are most worrying. However, I want to return to the Minister's plans to privatise the artificial breeding services to the dairy industry. Any monopoly trader has the ability, if he wishes, to manipulate the market that he dominates. I believe that the Government has a real responsibility to protect the people whom it helps to expose to market domination. I would like some proper assurances that Queensland dairy farmers and pork producers will not lose out of this repeal.

I realise that some industry leaders are right behind the change, and they may have good reason to be. For that reason, we will not oppose the passage of this repealing legislation. However, I remind the House of

the failure of two recent attempts by the Minister to interfere with basic commodities. Inept meddling with the bread industry has worked against the best interests of the consuming public and the smaller family owned baking industry. Not far into deregulation, we already have consumers paying a lot more for bread, and being denied as much choice of product as they once enjoyed. The small bakers, of course, have been largely swallowed up by the big three. Big business has been the outright winner. That puts the lie to Labor's stated commitment to the little battler. We hope that that will not happen in the artificial breeding industry, forcing undue cost onto the users of that industry.

Unfortunately, we are seeing the same thing happen in the milk distribution sector. We have seen vast increases in milk prices. In some of the more isolated towns, prices have gone through the roof. Some people receive no deliveries at all. Recently, I encountered an old lady at Goomeri in my electorate who did not have transport to the shop to buy fresh milk. She is resorting to using powdered milk. That is an instance of what can happen as a result of deregulation.

I remind the House of my comments about monopoly control of milk distribution and the Minister's response when the House debated the Dairy Industry Bill on 20 May this year. I warned of the dangers that financial power would be used to dominate the vendor licence auctions. The Minister passed the whole thing off as a joke. I recall that he mentioned B-doubles delivering milk around Nerang and Mackay. We now know the results of those auctions. There are some very angry and disappointed people who relied on the Minister's assurances. Significant segments of the distribution system are now in monopoly hands. The Minister failed to deliver on those assurances. Perhaps that was his intention all along. For the sake of Queensland's great livestock industries, let us hope that the same thing does not happen in this instance.

**Mr PITT (Mulgrave) (9.48 p.m.):** It is with great pleasure that I rise to speak to another piece of legislation brought before the House which will be of great benefit to primary industries in Queensland. The Bill has two parts. The first part deals with the movement of stock, and controlling that movement of stock to prevent diseases in herds. The second part of the Bill, on which I will concentrate, basically deregulates the artificial breeding industry and, in so doing, repeals the Artificial Breeding of Stock Act 1979. The result of that is that there will be increased

competition for that service. The privately owned artificial breeding centres no doubt will develop in due course, and that competition will be of benefit to the industry, helping Queensland maintain the high standards that it has already set through such establishments as the one at Wacol.

The legislation will allow the cattle industry to acquire some degree of control over the genetics program. This probably resulted from a PSMC recommendation that was made in a report delivered in 1992 entitled "Wacol Review". The Department of Primary Industries will continue to play a role. It will provide support for genetic herd improvement through the usual research process and its extension services. However, I think everyone understands that it is now time for the industry to take control of the other side of the operation, that is, the commercial side. The ownership of superior dairy genetics and the delivery of artificial breeding services to the industry in Queensland will be moved into industry hands to ensure that there is continuing livestock improvement at an internationally competitive rate. It is very important to talk about being competitive when it comes to this sort of thing.

A lot of the product that is coming into this country is inferior. Although it may be cheaper, it is also inferior. If we are to maintain the necessary edge, we must ensure that the material produced in this State, and the process itself, are of the highest quality. This legislation also ensures that dairy farmers in Queensland and, indeed, in other States of Australia who value very highly the genetics at Wacol can be assured of continuity of the program and the sales and service quality that has already been developed.

The Australian Dairy Farmers Federation has supported the development of a cooperatively owned artificial breeding service. It should be noted that, over the past decade, dairying genetics in this State have contributed 40 per cent of the industry's productivity improvement. That is a significant boost to the industry. I am sure that this legislation will ensure that the excellent contribution that has been made by genetics in Queensland will continue.

I refer to the editorial in the *Queensland Dairyfarmer* on 18 October 1992. Under the heading "Cooperation is essential", it stated—

"The Queensland dairy industry needs to involve itself more heavily in the ownership and future direction of Australia's dairy-bull breeding sector.

Artificial breeding centres, including Queensland's own Wacol AB Centre, are in trouble in the face of increasing pressure from imported dairy semen.

Feelings within the dairy semen-supply industry are that instead of competing with each other for market share, the three remaining Australian centres—Wacol, VAB and Riverina—should be working together to compete against semen imports.

Of the current 800,000 doses of dairy bull semen sold in Australia, more than 300,000 doses (32pc) are now imported."

Therein lies the problem. If we are not careful, the quantity of those imports will grow. The only way to combat that is to beat our competition, not by excluding that competition but by ensuring that the home product is of a superior quality.

In February this year, an article in the *Queensland Dairyfarmer* stated—

"State president Pat Rowley said the QDO saw the need for the supply of Australian dairy semen to be rationalised."

Mr Rowley was also quoted as saying—

"Wacol's future is presently under review, and it appears it will be winding down as a dairy breeding centre."

That is not what will happen. If that centre falls into industry hands, it can be enhanced. As a result, it can continue to play a significant role in the Australian industry. Mr Rowley said also—

"Unless we as farmers help to hold the Australian dairy genetics industry in good shape, it will be quickly knocked out by importers.

One-third of the semen sold in Australia today is imported and a lot of it is rubbish; except for a top few bulls it does not match the cheaper Australian semen for quality and price."

Mr Rowley said—

"As a group of farmers who have benefited greatly from improved genetics in recent years, we don't want to lose ground."

I fully endorse those comments. This piece of legislation is all about maintaining our competitive edge and putting the industry into the hands of the people who have the most to gain from it—the people who have the greatest interest in the industry.

Artificial breeding services began in Queensland in the 1950s. Recently, services have been operating from four different locations. As I said before, the Wacol A.B. Centre produces, stores and distributes semen from dairy cattle, beef cattle and pigs. It is the base for the development of new technologies in artificial breeding. The centre has long been Australia's leading semen exporter. An artificial breeding export centre at Ormiston, which supplies semen for countries that have special health requirements, performs a valuable role. The artificial breeding centre at Biloela was established to meet the growing demand for beef cattle semen in central Queensland. Our beef herd is bringing to this State much-needed export dollars. It seems to be in good condition. Recently, there was an anthrax scare. We must be careful to protect our important resource, namely, the quality of our stock.

Other services available from the Wacol herd improvement laboratories include a customer collection service. Its main activities are the processing of semen collected on farms by private vets. The centre at Wacol has been recognised as Australia's leading semen exporter. This puts Queensland in an excellent position. It has enhanced our worldwide reputation as a source of reliable herd-improving sires, particularly in tropically adapted breeds, which the member for Barambah mentioned. We must guard jealously that hard-earned reputation.

As I pointed out, the industry recognises the need to modernise the legislative framework to keep up with and enhance the new technological developments in artificial breeding and the livestock industry. That is what has been happening in this State in the past two or three years. Industries themselves, in conjunction with a sympathetic Government, have been putting into place new structures, programs and processes that are taking those industries into the next century. Moves in other States create a sense of urgency for Queensland. We have seen some partial deregulation nationally, and the adoption of more uniform standards and controls has taken place. Queensland must not just maintain its competitiveness, it must forge ahead to set industry and trade benchmarks. This piece of legislation will assist in that respect.

In order to maintain our credibility nationally and internationally, it is essential that we in Queensland conform with minimum health standards ratified by the animal health committee. Each piece of legislation introduced into this House by this Minister

stresses very heavily the quality assurance side of the process itself. Importantly, the new legislation is aimed at striking a balance between maximising our genetic advancements and market penetration while maintaining sufficient protection for interstate users of these services. Our continuing emphasis will remain on quality which, as I said, has been a hallmark of the Government.

Through the deregulation of Queensland's artificial breeding industry, the genetic progress of our base stock will be enhanced. The competition that will arise from the introduction of private enterprise genetic breeding programs will assist in that respect. I understand that the export of bovine semen from Queensland was worth \$1.5m in 1991-92. With an average growth rate of 150 per cent over the past four years, it is obvious that there is great potential for Queensland to cash in on that particular process. At this stage, Queensland accounts for 57 per cent of Australia's total bovine semen exports. It is an excellent market share, but there is no reason why, with greater industry input, we cannot improve it.

These amendments, which will enhance beef productivity and the use of artificial breeding technologies in Queensland, have been welcomed by the industry. It is important to maintain export and interstate accreditation schemes to ensure that that quality is maintained. Already, a number of private operators have shown interest in and become involved in developing centres to take advantage of these changes. They have read the winds of change. They should be encouraged by Government and other participants in the industry.

This amendment Bill does not mean that the industry will simply have to work harder; it is a matter of industry in Queensland working smarter. The end result will be more dollars in the back pockets of beef producers in this State. The Bill deserves the support of all members who have a genuine interest in the development of Queensland's livestock industry.

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (9.59 p.m.): At the outset, I state that I support the legislation in so far as it resolves a longstanding problem that has been evident in my electorate, particularly in respect of the movement of bobby calves. The amendment to this legislation is long overdue. I am pleased that it has finally come into the House. The movement of bobby calves in my electorate has been a matter of grave concern to dairy farmers in the industry simply because the old

permit system was inadequate and inappropriate. Bobby calves can be put in a pen of 5, 10 or 15. In the past, depending on the day and the calf run operator, who might have a contract with one, two, three or five butchers and might be delivering them to different venues, it was almost impossible to get an appropriate arrangement with the permit, because the farmer was usually not there when the calf run operator arrived. It was for that reason that, in the past, there has been a set of local rules which were clearly not in accordance with the law, but it functioned reasonably well with goodwill on all sides. It continued to function well until, unfortunately, there was a breakdown in the system which led to the strict enforcement of the official rules. From that time on, more and more conflict occurred between the Minister's department and my constituents.

There have been major problems with the administration of the permits system in my electorate. I want to place on record the difficulties that we have had, the reasons for them and my disgust at some of the things that have happened to some of my farmer constituents. Recently, four of my farmer constituents were prosecuted by the department in respect of permit issues. I would like to canvass the circumstances of those prosecutions and have them placed on the record of the Parliament.

The first one arose out of a situation in which a farmer, having come into some serious conflict with the local stock inspector over a period, in an act of frustration drew a pig on his permit and wrote on the bottom, "The stock inspector is a pig." He then signed it and handed it in. He was, therefore, charged with defacing an official document. I have to inform the House that I believe that that type of charge is something one would have expected to be made during the time of Oliver Cromwell and the Roundheads. I certainly would not have expected it to occur in 1993 in Australia and, more particularly, in Queensland. Of course, the charge stuck because it was a legitimate charge under the law. Although some uncomplimentary things were said about the charge by the magistrate, he certainly had to fine the offender.

The second charge arose out of defacing an official document. Another of my farmer constituents, in a fit of frustration with the officer in question wrote on the document, "The stock is inspector is a bastard." He then signed it and handed it in. Let me say that the farmers to whom I have referred were correct on both counts. The fact of the matter is that

that farmer was also charged, prosecuted and found guilty.

The third case involved a calf-run operator who had an arrangement with the stock inspector for the local rules to continue until such time as appropriate arrangements could be made. That personal arrangement was to last for some weeks. In the interim, my constituent continued to go about his business and was ultimately prosecuted for failure to provide appropriate documentation. It was inappropriate for that officer to do that.

The fourth case is one which requires a little more explanation. It was thrown out of court ultimately, and it reflected very poorly on the department, the officer involved and the Stock Squad. I would just like to explain what occurred. One of my constituents, a farmer of longstanding and good repute in the community, was a member of the Friesian club on the Atherton Tablelands—a very proud and competent club. People who are proud of their animals and proud of the work that they do are members of that club, which occasionally holds in-club shows at the Malanda showground. My constituent had recently purchased from Victoria a number of Friesian cows which he determined to show at this Friesian club. Late one afternoon, he attended the DPI office in Malanda and he spoke with the regional stock inspector, the local stock inspector and the regional veterinary officer. The regional veterinary officer indicated that he was refusing to offer a permit to this person for this purpose because he believed that there was insufficient documentation in respect of EBL tests for the stock which had come from Victoria. My farmer constituent went back home, got the documentation, spoke to the agent and the person from whom he purchased the cattle in Victoria, and went back to Malanda to produce the required documentation. Regrettably, he returned to the office after 5 o'clock in the afternoon and both officers had departed for the day. He could not find them, so he went to the Malanda Police Station to have a permit issued on the basis of the information that he had provided. The police station at that time was unmanned.

He then went to the Yungaburra Police Station which was, in fact, the police station which normally served his property, and there was nothing wrong with that. The police officer, having viewed the documents, was satisfied that the permit was in order, and he issued the permit. The next morning at daylight, my constituent took his cattle to the Malanda showground for the Friesian Cattle Club show. He took the trouble to quarantine

his cattle personally at the showground to ensure that there were no problems. The club had its show, and he took his stock home. Nothing more was heard of it until he was summonsed by the Stock Squad for providing misleading information to a police officer, that being the officer at Yungaburra, in order to obtain a permit.

In this case, it was alleged to have been an illegal permit. When the case went to the Magistrates Court, the magistrate was particularly critical of the administration of the department, and he threw out the charges, simply because EBL is not, and has not been, a notifiable disease in respect of permits. The farmer did his utmost to obtain an appropriate permit; there were no problems with TB or brucellosis; and the policeman at Yungaburra was quite properly convinced that the permit was in order, so the farmer was found not guilty.

As the people who provide government to the people of Queensland, it is important that we try very hard to provide appropriately for our people and not persecute them to the point where they simply can no longer not express their frustration. It is my belief that the Minister should have taken some pre-emptive action earlier than he did. Of course, the Minister is au fait with this matter because I have contacted him about it, and he was kind enough to respond. I suggest that he was somewhat concerned about the actions of his officers.

This legislation also has one unintended consequence which probably has not come to the attention of the Minister. In a previous debate in this place, I raised the subject of the need for dairy creeps in the tablelands area to allow dairy herds to cross from one side of main roads to the other without conflict between them and moving vehicles. That problem has not been resolved, so dairy cattle still have to cross those roads. In the past, insurance companies have accepted a stock movement permit as a demonstration of the legitimacy of the stock movement and, therefore, stock killed on the side of the road and which were insured were paid for by the insurance companies.

Under this legislation, there is no longer the need for permits unless farmers are taking stock to a quarantine area for disease control. So we have a situation in which there will no longer be permits issued for the movement of stock from one side of the road to the other. Therefore, a conundrum exists for those dairy farmers who do not have access to creeps, have to shift their stock across roads and do

not have access to a permit. They have a problem demonstrating the legitimacy of the stock movement and, therefore, being paid by their insurance company for stock killed should they come into conflict with a semitrailer or any other motor vehicle. I wanted particularly to bring that to the Minister's attention so that he might consider it and possibly do something about it. It is a very important issue in my electorate because many of my dairy farmers are taking their cattle across roads on a regular basis and there is going to be more conflict between them and moving motor vehicles, particularly heavy vehicles, and possibly humans in the tablelands region.

Having said those things, I congratulate the Minister on that part of the legislation that changes the need for permits so that the actual occupier of the land does not have to fill out the waybill. The owner of the cattle can do that, that is, the calf run operator, provided he buys the calves. I think that is an excellent move, and it will certainly take much of the heat, if not all of the heat, out of the business of moving bobby calves in the Atherton Tableland region.

**Mr LIVINGSTONE** (Ipswich West) (10.10 p.m.): I rise in support of the Stock Amendment Bill 1993. It reflects two major policy initiatives in terms of self-regulation in the livestock industries. The first relates to the documentation and procedures associated with the regulatory control of livestock movements to prevent the spread of stock diseases.

This amendment Bill represents the most significant rationalisation of livestock disease control measures in Queensland in 80 years. The freeing up has come about after widespread consultation and support from industry, and is a direct result of the successful eradication of three major stock diseases, brucellosis, tuberculosis and pleuropneumonia.

The Minister should be congratulated on his involvement in such a comprehensive consultation program, something this industry has not always been used to in the past.

**Mr Perrett:** Oh, rubbish!

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I can understand the members opposite being sensitive. One of the reasons our Minister is well respected in the bush is he has not employed party hacks. All the people have been employed on a—

**Mr Perrett:** What have you been drinking?

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** The member for Barambah actually reminds me of an artificially

inseminated cow. He knows something weird and wonderful is happening to him, but he has not been able to work out how it all happened.

The overall objective of this new system is to dramatically reduce the regulatory burden involved in moving livestock. The Bill removes the need for a permit for 90 per cent of stock movements, and replaces the existing stock waybills with a more effective waybill system.

In 1992, over half a million head of cattle passed through the clearing dips in Queensland, and this year that number has doubled as a result of the drought, and this in no way accounts for the number of stock that are moved throughout Queensland.

In the six months to June, 700 000 head of cattle crossed the border into New South Wales alone. That does not include stock moved into the Northern Territory and Western Australia. In future, owners intending to move livestock will now require stock permits only when there are significant disease implications, such as moving stock from a cattle tick infected area to a tick free area. In the vast majority of situations, producers, stock agents and livestock carriers will be able to move livestock without any requirement to contact a stock inspector for a stock permit. This will save both industry and Government time, money and resources while increasing efficiencies in stock movement throughout Queensland and demonstrates the Goss Government's commitment to letting primary producers get on with the business of operating efficiently in the market place.

This Goss Labor Government recognises that a strong primary industry sector is vital for the prosperity of Queensland, and the beef industry plays a very critical role in that prosperity. In 1992-93 alone, beef production was worth \$1.6 billion to this State. On the hoof we have 14 719 beef production enterprises, with a State herd estimated at 9.7 million head.

Beef produced in 1992-93 has been estimated at 747 000 tonnes with a further 7 100 tonnes of veal. This accounted for 16 per cent of Queensland's total exports. It should be noted that the average growth of beef exports over the past three years has been 12 per cent. Yearling sales have also been very good. Exports are estimated at 431 000 tonnes which, in dollar terms, is worth approximately one billion dollars to this State.

I spoke early of the vital role of a strong primary industry. From the figures I have just referred to, it can be seen what a vital

contribution the cattle industry makes to this state's economy.

The Goss Government recognises that contributions such as these are the mainstream of many of the State's regional and rural communities. With this in mind, the Government is determined to work with the industry to design policies that will ensure that rural industries achieve their full potential. I support the Bill.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Western Downs) (10.16 p.m.): I have three matters to raise during the debate on the Stock Amendment Bill. I note that the intent of the Bill has already been canvassed by various members.

First of all, I make the point that one of the ideas of having stock permits is to prevent stock stealing. I want to bring to the attention of the House one particular instance that was successfully dealt with by the courts, mainly because of the documentation that is necessary for the movement of stock. It occurred in the Dalby district, where a chap had sold what he knew to be a sound beast. He was amazed later on to receive documentation saying that it had been condemned because of a defect.

When I say that the beast had been condemned because of a defect, it can happen that a beast might have a broken limb or a lump under the skin or a cancerous eye. Beasts are sold at the owner's risk. It seems that because of the documentation that is available this bloke was able to trace who bought it and where it had gone. In fact, the person involved was brought before the courts and found guilty of falsifying documentation for the condemnation of stock. I think the game was that he would take a sound beast being sold at the owner's risk, but fill out false documentation saying that it was diseased and then take a quarter off of the beast for himself. It was a nice little bit of money on the side.

The story gets worse, however, because the chap who brought the charges believed there was more to it than that. The police continued the investigation. He was subsequently picked up by the Fraud Squad and found guilty of something like 10 cases of fraud, so many charges of uttering and found guilty of misappropriation of something like \$10,000 or \$12,000 worth of meat. At the meatworks, he was taking a few pounds off every carcass for himself and not crediting the full weight of the beast to the owner.

Members have already heard comments from some of my colleagues, including the member for Crows Nest, about the leniency

being extended by the courts and how people in the stock industry are worried about it. In this case, the bloke had already been found guilty of falsifying documentation. When he went before the court again, the magistrate was made aware of that. He was ordered to pay \$8,000 restitution, put on a good behaviour bond and no conviction recorded. It is worth pointing out to honourable members that this is a form of stock stealing that could become a real problem. It is important that the correct documentation for the movement of stock remains in place. I do not believe that this Bill puts it at a risk, and the fact that we can detect some bloke who has been using the system to his own advantage, not when the beef is on the hoof, but in fact when it goes through the processing stages, shows its worth.

Having put that on the record, I also want to put it on record that I have asked the Minister for Justice to have that case reviewed. He may have that case reviewed. I wrote to him about a month ago and, true to form, I have had no acknowledgment of the receipt of that letter. I hope that it will be dealt with.

The other reason for stock permits is disease control. That has already been mentioned by various members. We can talk about things like anthrax and foot-and-mouth disease, but I am interested mostly in the cattle tick. Yesterday, in the debate on the Meat Industry Bill, I spoke to the Minister about a letter I had written to him suggesting that he put some funds towards his election promise of moving the tick line up to the Mount Isa-Townsville line by the year 2000. I want to report to the House that today I received an answer from the Minister. I suggest to the member for Barambah that this is worth noting. The Minister has recognised our suggestion that resulted from our meeting with the graziers that we should start at the tick line and move west to the Great Dividing Range and up through the Taroom Shire and the Bauhinia Shire because there are lots of properties already in that area that, through the good work of the DPI and the property owners, are free of ticks. It would be easy to get good value for money by getting large areas of the country cleaned up. The Minister has written back saying that a pilot scheme will operate in the Taroom Shire this year, with 60 per cent of the funding coming from the DPI and 40 per cent coming from the industry. It is a step in the right direction. I acknowledge the decision that was made.

**Mr Perrett:** The best initiative to come from the Minister for a long time.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I note that. The member for Barambah, the shadow Minister for Primary Industries, spoke about the concerns of the people who rear stock in the tick-free area. I dwelt on the same issues when I spoke yesterday in the debate on the Meat Industry Bill.

I want to add a couple of things to that. People in the tick-free area are not the only ones who are concerned about the proposal to move the tick-infested cattle down to the meatworks in the clean country. It has also started to play on the minds of the people in the sheep industry. I am advised that, if people take from a tick-infested area sheep with more than two months' wool on them, those sheep must be dipped before they go into New South Wales. That poses a real problem for sheep breeders and the people buying and selling sheep interstate.

Worse still, I am told that the only Government dip on the border that can handle sheep is at Wallangarra. That is a long way away from the sheep country, out in the south west, where the member for Warrego would have a great interest. The ramifications of that proposal by the Tick Advisory Committee to move about 40 000 to 80 000 head of cattle per year to the meatworks in the clean country of Queensland are now flowing to the sheep industry with respect to sheep that have more than two months' wool on them. I understand that the United Graziers Association is now aware of the problems that that poses for the sheep industry. More pressure will be brought to bear. Something must be done about it.

It gives more credence to my argument that, the sooner we can push that tick line further north, at least to the Rockhampton-Longreach line, the sooner we will overcome the problem. It is only cattle up to the Rockhampton line that come to the meatworks in the south east. The rest will automatically go into Rockhampton, Bowen or Townsville. We do not have to clean up all of Queensland to overcome the problem that the Tick Advisory Committee is experiencing. If we clean up the land to the central line, we will be right.

The last thing that I want to speak about tonight is another story that needs to be clarified or dismissed by the Minister. I am informed by some people who are concerned about the same issue that, currently, the Tick Advisory Committee is undertaking an economic feasibility study into the worth of maintaining the tick line. The sorts of comments that automatically come to mind

from people who breed cattle in the tick-free area and also from my constituents are that there is too much to lose if we abandon the tick line. I know that it costs a fair bit of money to maintain that line every year, but the benefits are enormous for those of us in the clean parts of Queensland.

The member for Barambah talked about the value that is added to cattle moving into New South Wales from store sales in Roma if they already come from clean, tick-free country. It is about \$30 to \$40 per head, depending on the classification and size of the beast. Bearing in mind that \$80m worth of stock is sold every year through the Roma sale yards as store sales, and most of those are going to the southern States, when one adds \$30 to \$40 per beast, it works out to be an enormous amount of money. The Minister might indicate to the House whether that is on the agenda of the DPI or the Tick Advisory Committee. There is a fear in the community and a story going around. I notice that the Minister is nodding. I take it that that is the negative. It would be nice if the Minister would state that in his reply.

With those few comments, I note that the member for Barambah has indicated the stance of the Opposition. We support the Bill. Improvements will be made with regard to the ease of movement of stock. I wanted to signal the worth of the documentation for the movement of stock with regard to prosecutions for stock stealing, as in the case that I instanced. The other matter is that the ramifications of the proposal of the Tick Advisory Committee to move the cattle through the clean country now flow on to the sheep industry. It has wider ramifications than were first thought.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN** (Caboolture) (10.25 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I join the debate this evening to support the Stock Amendment Bill 1993. Before I come to that, I would like to say how sad I am tonight to have heard the words from the member for Tablelands a moment ago. We all recognise that public servants in this State are required by the people of this State to conscientiously carry out the responsibilities that we give them through legislation. That is what the people of Queensland require of their public servants. That is what we as a Government require of our public servants. It ought to be what the members of the Opposition require of the public servants in this State.

For Mr Gilmore to stand in this place and to condone—not only to condone but also to affirm—terms of abuse used by his

constituents directed towards public servants of this State who are carrying out their duties is nothing short of disgraceful. We must recognise that public servants are human beings and that they have frailties, foibles and human personalities, as do the farmers. Of course, Mr Gilmore would say that, in a clash position, the public servant is all wrong and the person on the land is an angel. Mr Gilmore, the member for Tablelands—

**Mr Bredhauer:** Try that with a policeman when you get pulled up and see how you go.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** Exactly. Perhaps he should do it. Mr Gilmore reaffirmed those statements. Those statements should not properly be directed at public servants. If those statements are to be made, they should, more properly, be directed at the politicians who give those public servants the Acts with which they work. In that case, it might have been more appropriate for those constituents of Mr Gilmore to have written, "The Minister is a pig" or, "The Minister is a bastard." If Mr Gilmore were to reach his golden hour on the ministerial benches, as he believes that he will, those epithets would undoubtedly be true. Until then, it is disgraceful that he should stand in this place and not only condone but also affirm those kinds of comments from his constituents directed at public servants. It is with great sadness that I take up that issue.

The Opposition spokesman, Mr Perrett, spoke about the fact that he believes—and he said it in the newspapers, also—that the new system could well lead to an increased incidence of stock stealing. He mentioned the cattle duffers getting hold of the waybill book. The reality of any system that we implement is that somebody will find a way to abuse it. From the experience of one of my constituents, which I will not relate, "It ain't too difficult to flog them under the current system, anyway, if one puts one's mind to it." This system is about disease control; it is not about theft. Theft comes under the Criminal Code, and prosecutors rely on the waybill descriptions in order to get prosecutions. I do not condone the leniency of a sentence because a judge or magistrate decides that the person is under stress, that he is in bad financial shape and he that has never been caught before. I believe that is a lunacy. Steps are being taken to amend that. Stock stealing, despite its folklore status in Australia, due to Harry Redford—

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** I disagree with what the honourable member says. The Australian

culture lionises the larrikin. Stock stealing has been one of those larrikin activities that have been lionised—the same as Ned Kelly. It is a failing in the Australian character.

**Mr Johnson:** Do you condone it?

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** No, I do not. I do not condone it. I believe that we should come down as hard as we can on those people. This system will assist. It will not make it harder; it will assist. Before the honourable member opens his trap, let me tell him that, for the first time, the waybill is required to contain the name of the owner. Previously, that was not specifically required. It is now required specifically. The date of movement—

**Mr Johnson:** Did you ever fill one out?

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** The honourable member should hold his horses. The date of movement must be stated on the waybill. That was not previously required. The tick status of the property of origin and destination is required to be noted. That was not previously done. That has more to do with health. The telephone number of the person in charge is required. Previously, the form required only his name. A more accurate description will be given. Previously, when people filled in the forms, they wrote, "cattle, male". Now they must write, "Hereford bulls". People who sign the waybill must state by what authority they are signing it.

All of those things will be used by prosecutors, who rely on waybills to identify stock in cases. It seems to me that, rather than making it more difficult to obtain a conviction, we are moving towards a situation in which we will get a conviction. Mr Perrett felt that the Stock Amendment Bill should contain everything that is required to look after the stealing aspect of stock. If we take that sort of logic to its nth degree—and the member for Barambah tried to do that, because he spoke about eggs, bread and milk in his speech—perhaps the State of Queensland should be governed by one Act. We could have one Act and one Minister to administer it.

**Mrs Sheldon:** We've got one act, and it's you.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** I take the interjection from the member for Caloundra, even though she was not in her correct seat. It needs to be placed on record that she regards me as a class act. I thank her for the singular honour that she gives me.

**Mrs Woodgate:** And a hard act to follow.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** I am a hard act to follow, but I have no doubt that the Opposition will try and will do so with some vigour. I have noticed that the member for Gregory has been taking notes, which is the way it should be. It is good that somebody is actually taking notes about what I am saying and will reply to my speech. That makes a nice change from people reading out prepared speeches.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You're filibustering. You haven't got anything to say.

**Mr J. H. SULLIVAN:** Precisely, I am filibustering. As I indicated to Mrs McCauley, I wanted to use up about five minutes before making this point: I believe the Minister has brought a great amendment to this House. It will lessen the paperwork burden on the honest and decent farmers. It will not open the way for stock thieving. The Opposition has indicated that it will not oppose this Bill. If the Opposition believed sincerely that this Bill would open the way for stock thieving, I believe that it would have opposed it. It will not be easier to steal stock under this legislation, and the Opposition will support it. I, too, support the Bill.

**Mrs McCauley** (Callide) (10.33 p.m.): This Bill, by removing the need for a stock permit in 90 per cent of stock movements, as the Minister stated in his second-reading speech, means that it will be a lot easier for cattle thieves to move cattle quickly out of an area and to markets that are often far away from the scene of the crime. On 17 August this year at a meeting in Taroom, which had 100-plus people in attendance, the issue of stock stealing and the ridiculous penalties for that offence were canvassed very widely. That meeting was prompted by a stock stealing case in the Taroom area, which was heard in Toowoomba. The witnesses were not notified when the case was coming up, and a couple of the major players, one of whom was the owner of some of the stolen cattle, were simply told to keep a few weeks clear. Only one person, the wife of one of the graziers whose cattle were stolen, was given the actual date of the hearing.

The hearing was supposedly to be held on a Thursday. However, on the Wednesday—the day before—the offender pleaded guilty to the offences, was subsequently fined a fairly nominal amount and had no conviction recorded against him. Key witnesses did not even get the chance to appear before the magistrate. Consequently, he did not hear their side of the story and they in turn were refused a copy of the transcript of the proceedings. In a letter to one of the cattle

owners, the Deputy Premier, Tom Burns, stated—

“The Crown Prosecutor elected to drop the charges because he believed it would be difficult to gain convictions, the costs would be prohibitive and the final judgment would be little different because

the evidence relating to earlier alleged offences was in relation to old stock permit—considered to be insufficient

the owners of the stock had not previously been aware they were stolen

key witnesses were unable to attend the hearing

the costs to the Crown of adjourning the hearing and paying for witnesses to reattend would be high, and

the witness had no prior convictions.”

It is quite patently wrong for the Deputy Premier to say that the key witnesses were unable to attend the hearing. The key witnesses were ready and waiting, but were not told about the hearing until it was too late. It was physically impossible to travel from their property to Toowoomba with the short period of prior notice that they were given. When they did find out, they were given only a few hours' notice, and it just simply was not physically possible to get there in time. Key witnesses were dead keen to attend that hearing, but did not get the chance to do so and put their side of the story.

When the owner of the cattle complained about the leniency of the sentence, the Deputy Premier responded by saying in the letter—

“ . . . I understand that the Judge took into account the lack of previous convictions, a doctor's report concerning the defendant suffering stress, and the fact that the defendant had financial difficulties.”

For goodness' sake, everyone is stressed out there. They are all suffering financial difficulties, and they are all under stress. That is no excuse for stealing a neighbour's cattle.

This was backed up by a letter from the Justice Minister to me after he refused to launch an appeal against the lightness of the sentence. He said that Dr Chris Alroe from Rockhampton, a psychiatrist, testified on the offender's behalf, and he subsequently received a lighter sentence than he may otherwise have received.

People in the Taroom/Theodore area are understandably angry over that case, because the stealing offences were not a one-off event but apparently had been going on for many years. The agent who handled 330 head of cattle for the offender over the previous five years must also stand indicted for not paying closer attention to brands, and so must the one and only meatworks which was involved in dealing with the cattle sent in by the offender. In that 330 head, over five years, there were some 26 different brands. The agent was certainly slack.

This was not an isolated incident. A similar case occurred in the Gayndah area of my electorate. The owners of Santa Gertrudis property wrote to me—

**Mr Johnson:** Good cattle.

**Mrs McCauley:** Yes, if one likes them like that. The owners of that property stated in a letter to me—

“My husband and I were the victims of the crime discussed. Thirteen of our cattle were stolen, rebranded and sent to the meatworks.

The young man who did this was in a position of trust in a cottage on our property. He and accomplices stole these cattle at a time they knew we would be away from the property.

When confronted by the Stock Squad, he confessed to everything.

At the Gayndah Courthouse on June 28 there was no conviction recorded and no community service ordered. A condition of his probation is that he make restitution to the Court in six months of the amount he received from the meatworks for nine of the cattle. He was not ordered to sell anything he has purchased with the proceeds.

The Court made no decision about the other four animals sold to a local property owner . . . ”

The original owners have not been compensated for those stolen cattle and it also seems that the accomplices have not been charged. The woman goes on to make the point—

“ . . . we will be lucky to see the money for nine of our stolen cattle a year after the event and most probably paid for by Social Security cheques.”

Certainly, the people who are the victims of these crimes believe that the penalties are not severe enough and that the judiciary is not treating the matter as seriously as it should.

Certain motions were put to the meeting in Taroom to which I referred earlier. It was chaired by the Taroom Shire Chairman Bill Copeland and attended by so many interested people, including the Opposition spokesman, Mr Perrett, and me. Although I have given these resolutions to the Minister in writing, I want to go through them and mention them briefly, because they are very important. The first one was—

“That this meeting press the Government to have mandatory recording of convictions for stock theft where guilt is admitted or proven.”

That was passed unanimously. One policeman commented to me that, if no conviction is recorded and if a person moves from the Taroom area to the Rockhampton area and he is caught stock stealing again, when his record is examined he technically does not have a record. He is, quite literally, a cleanskin. If no conviction is recorded, even though he admits his guilt, he will always be a cleanskin. That is wrong. I believe it is important that there should be mandatory recording of convictions for stock theft so that offenders do have a record.

**Mr Casey:** You're really talking about the Criminal Code; you're not talking about the Stock Act.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Luckily, the relevant Minister is present in the Chamber, and that is fortunate. This is the Stock Act, and it is stock we are talking about.

The second resolution reads—

“That there be an immediate suspension of concessional permits for convicted persons (for a time limit as decreed by the judge).”

That was also passed unanimously because people felt that thieves should find it difficult to move stock easily. That is a concern held about the legislation being debated. A freeing-up of the permits will make it easy for thieves to move stolen stock.

The third resolution reads—

“That a person convicted of stock stealing have all equipment used in that offence confiscated.”

Although that resolution was not unanimous, it was nevertheless carried by the meeting. A person who is caught fishing illegally has his vehicle, his boat and all his fishing tackle taken from him. Why not apply that provision to stock stealing?

Another resolution was that plea bargaining or dropping of charges not be

entered into in cases concerning stock stealing without the agreement of the person from whom the stock was stolen. Again, that was unanimous, because the people who lose the cattle seem to have no rights at all, as the woman from Gayndah said in her letter.

The meeting felt strongly that there was a need for judges and magistrates to have competence in this particular area of theft, and that led to a motion that the meeting endorses the concept that producer groups liaise with the legal system on matters pertaining to the theft of stock. We believe that there is a need for education of the judiciary in this regard in that the stealing of a cow is not like the stealing of a television set, as I have said in this place once before. The cow will reproduce each year. Therefore, there is a loss of potential income for the farmer.

The next resolution was that more significant penalties be applied to people found guilty of stock stealing, which was the crux of the matter. That resolution was passed unanimously.

The Justice Minister, in his reply to my letter, stated—

“The law relating to the misuse of stealing of animals does not really require tightening as it appears as though both the offences created by the section and the punishments provided are more than adequate to deal with the evil of stock stealing.”

Therefore we must educate the judiciary to impose those punishments.

The other area of concern which the Minister mentioned in his second-reading speech concerns the movement of stock from tick-infected areas to clean or tick-free areas. Permits will still be required for such cattle movements, although I believe that there are moves afoot through some members of the Tick Control Advisory Committee which could well threaten those areas which, by a lot of diligent effort and vigilance, are tick-free areas. Rather than, as the Minister canvassed last year, an expansion of the tick-free area to the Mount Isa line, there could be a grave threat to the integrity of the existing tick-free area if the Minister takes the advice of the Tick Control Advisory Committee and allows ticky cattle to move through the clean areas without being dipped.

The member for Western Downs canvassed this issue in his speech just prior to mine, so I will simply address a few points from notes that I took at a meeting that was held at the Wandoan Golf Club on 21 May

concerning the movement of ticky cattle through clean areas to the meatworks. The meeting was attended by about 140 people and was chaired by Jim Tyrell, the vice-president of the South-East Graziers Association. Four members of the Tick Control Advisory Committee, Brian Littleproud and I were present.

Trevor Reed, the DPI member on the advisory committee, made it quite clear that the proposal to truck ticky cattle through clean areas without dipping did not come from the DPI but was being driven by the advisory committee. A series of questions were asked of the panel. The one question which did not receive an answer was: how many of the 600 000 cattle dipped in the past eight years had suffered any residue problems? That is the crux of the matter. I still have not received an answer to that question.

Even though committee member, Paul Wright, forcefully told the meeting that in his opinion the maintenance of the tick line is unsustainable if the industry is put at risk by a chemical residue problem, motions against supporting such a proposal were carried by a large majority. Obviously, that committee member is not representing the majority of the members of the Cattlemen's Union.

The final matter raised was why none of the industry representatives on the Tick Control Advisory Committee were from clean areas, and how that inequitable situation could be addressed. It would seem that this matter will be taken up with the Minister in an effort to have the situation changed. If the Tick Control Advisory Committee or a member of that committee is working on a report on the cost of maintenance of the tick-free area, I want to know about it, and I suspect that a lot of other people do also. If Paul Wright thinks that such action is in the best interests of the cattle industry in this State, I hope that the Minister will enlighten Mr Wright about that.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory) (10.45 p.m.): This is a draconian piece of legislation. That is why the Minister was hoping that he would beat me to the call. Some time ago, the Department of Primary Industries introduced to Queensland a permit system called concessional permits. At that time, I had reservations about the concessional permit system, the reason being that owners of cattle who had those permits in their possession could write out a permit at their leisure whenever a lift of livestock was to occur. The important thing about those concessional permits that was in favour of the authorities was that the destination of the animals,

whether to market or to the abattoirs, was itemised on the permits.

But the legislation before the House is taking us back in time. The member for Caboolture said that details on permits at this time do not have to be filled out in their entirety. I have news for him. He said that the owner of cattle does not have to put his name on the permit. He most definitely does. The honourable member said that the date does not have to be on the permit. It most definitely has to be. He said that the status, type, description and sex of the animals were not required; but that has to be included. I cannot see where the honourable member is coming from. Apparently he does not understand how to fill out a stock permit.

**Mr Perrett:** I bet that he hasn't filled out too many.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I bet that he has not filled out any. He went on to say that this proposal will lessen the paperwork and the chance of stock stealing. Tell me more! It might lessen the paperwork for stock inspectors, but I do not know that that will help them. They are bogged down in paperwork at the moment. The Government has introduced programs that have bogged down every department. It is a full time job filling out the paperwork.

The legislation will not lessen the chance of stock stealing; it will increase the chance of stock stealing. If somebody is going to lift cattle from an area that is completely divorced from any other area where those cattle might go, say from the south to the north of the State, a lift of 400 or 500 kilometres can be carried out by road overnight. That person can fill out the permit himself. Once the lift has been completed, the cattle can remain on that property for up to six or eight months. After that time, the cattle can be sold through a different set of saleyards to the ones in which they would normally be sold, or be taken straight to an abattoir to be slaughtered. Stock inspectors will not be on hand to police those shipments.

**Mr Perrett:** There are no inspectors left.

**Mr JOHNSON:** That is right. I will return to that in a moment. The police have had the matter taken out of their hands. Under the old system, when animals were transferred from one district to another, if there was no concessional permit, at least the stock inspector or the police knew that the shipment was taking place. If the lift was on, the police would hand the permits to the stock inspectors in the relevant district and they would know what the shipment was. With this legislation, there will be open slather. If all the would-be

Captain Starlights are not sharpening their spurs tonight, they certainly will have them ready tomorrow. By tomorrow, they will know about this legislation all around Queensland. I assure honourable members that dishonest people will take full advantage of the legislation.

Recently, I addressed this issue with a member of the Stock Squad in the central west. He was horrified to think that such a piece of legislation was coming before the House. When I explained to him the content of the legislation, he said that he thought that we were going back in time. That is exactly what we are doing.

**Mr Fenlon:** That is your explanation. He simply had a little bit of a problem with it.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I do not have a problem with it at all.

**Mr Fenlon:** Was it your explanation, or did he read it?

**Mr JOHNSON:** What does the member for Greenslopes know about this piece of legislation? He does not know too much about anything in this place. If I were him, I would shut up for a moment. By way of interjection, the member for Barambah said that Queensland has a lack of stock inspectors. The one real concern of people in the industry is the shortage of stock inspectors and experienced people who will check and police the movement of cattle that are being shipped to markets, abattoirs or wherever. But there will not be enough people in the field to control the illegal movement of cattle. With fewer inspectors, it will be easier for those who are not so truthful to take advantage of this legislation.

It will also be very easy to move cattle from ticky areas to clean areas. This legislation will create open slather for people to steal stock. If people take cattle overnight from ticky country to the south, nobody will know about it, especially if it takes place in a buffer zone. There is not a damn thing that we can do if people put a mob of cattle together, walk them through a buffer zone to a clean place and truck them away overnight. This is a very serious situation. The Stock Squad throughout the State is depleted. Stock inspection services are at their lowest ebb ever. This situation has been further aggravated by a piece of draconian legislation that will invite corruption and dishonesty into what has been an honest way to transport cattle to market or slaughter.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister said—

“Stock inspectors will be freed up from administrative work. They will also play a key role in monitoring compliance and checking the effectiveness of the new self-regulatory systems.”

Those stock inspectors will have a full-time job wondering where the cattle or sheep are going. This will mean extra work for stock inspectors and the Stock Squad, because the crooks in the industry will be running rampant.

**Hon. E. D. CASEY** (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (10.54 p.m.), in reply: I thank honourable members who contributed to this debate. Unfortunately, the debate got out of hand. It was counter to the old Bible story about the best wine being kept till last, because members got the worst in the last contribution.

**Mr FitzGerald:** You are on now!

**Mr CASEY:** The member should not laugh at his own jokes. It does not do him much good. It is pretty obvious that, if the member for Gregory did not have a copy of my second-reading speech, he would not have been able to make a contribution to this debate. He certainly did not base his contribution on the Bill. He indicated that he has not actually read the Bill.

The important aspect of this legislation is that it is wanted by industry. It was the industry's desire to free up the movement of cattle. For the benefit of those members who spoke to this Bill, I point out that the Stock Act relates mainly to the control of diseases and infections in cattle. A number of members referred to the tick eradication campaign that this Government is prepared to implement in this State. Sure, it is a bold and courageous measure, but it must be started. I think that the member for Western Downs indicated his support for it. Cattle ticks are costing the industry more than \$100m a year. This Government is determined to do something about that. It is easy to ridicule others—as some National Party members from various parts of the State have done—but the point is that people within the industry are determined to help this Government eradicate cattle ticks in Queensland. We must start somewhere.

Recently, I spoke with the Director-General of Livestock from Indonesia. It has taken that country 100 years to eradicate foot-and-mouth disease. Because that fellow completed the final eradication drive, he was awarded a medal by his country. At some stage, somebody in that country had a vision and was prepared to carry out that most important work. As a result, Australia now has

a tremendous buffer to prevent the spread of foot-and-mouth disease from the north. Australia does not have a problem with foot-and-mouth disease, and that buffer will ensure that it does not reach our shores.

Today, on behalf of the Government, I looked after the South African Ambassador at a luncheon. Of course, part of our discussion related to primary industries in South Africa generally. That country has awful problems with foot-and-mouth disease, brucellosis, tuberculosis and many other diseases that we do not have in this continent. When addressing problems within industries, it is important to have a determination. This Goss Government has that determination to continue with the tick eradication campaign. I am confident that we can do something about it.

Many members, particularly those opposite, spoke about stock squads, justice and the courts. Those things have nothing whatsoever to do with the Bill. I thank the honourable members for Mulgrave, Ipswich West and Caboolture. As they have moved around the State with me, looking at some of the problems and challenges that exist within the industry, those members of my committee obviously learned their lessons well.

Those are the major comments that I would like to make. The Bill is well supported by industry throughout Queensland. This Government is very proud of that. The honourable member for Tablelands might like to take the honourable member for Gregory in hand, because the member for Tablelands clearly said how well this Bill was going to be received by primary producers in his electorate because of the things that it will do for them.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Clauses 1 to 10, as read, agreed to.

Schedules 1 and 2, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

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

## REVENUE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL

### Second Reading

Debated resumed from 16 September (see p. 4448).

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11.01 p.m.): These revenue measures are the central plank in the Budget drawn up and delivered by the Keating of Queensland who, by the way, is not present at the moment. That is not Queensland's version of the world's greatest Treasurer but the northern equivalent of the man responsible for the diabolical mess causing chaos today in Canberra. In Canberra, Keating created a lemon of a Budget with his demands that necessitated the iniquitous rise in the cost of leaded petrol and the heavy burden placed on the struggling Queensland wine industry, among other measures. I see that the Treasurer is so uninterested in this Bill that he has the Minister for Primary Industries sitting in on his behalf. In Brisbane, our erstwhile Treasurer created his lemon in secret—

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** He is out for a minute, and you know it.

**Mrs SHELDON:** He has had all night to be ready the same as I. It includes an absurd new debits tax to slug Queenslanders almost as hard and as regularly as the Federal fuel tax.

**Mr Beattie:** Where were you?

**Mrs SHELDON:** Why do not Government members listen a little? Inspired in a twisted sort of way, the Treasurer went on to create another yoke for the coal and power industries and the industrial sector in general with his coal royalty that will act as a strong disincentive for local investment, employment and production that places the wine tax in the shade.

In Canberra, Keating created an omnibus Bill in an effort to ram his disgusting measures through Parliament in the most speedy and secretive way. In Brisbane, his northern admirer here followed suit once again and created this somewhat smarmy piece, again, of omnibus legislation to lump all his creative accounting measures into one money-grabbing unit. In common with the Keating of Canberra, our Treasurer has treated the need for public scrutiny of his handiwork with disdain. Tonight, he has jumped his Bill to the top of the list with the shortest possible notice. I am sure that his only regret is that the many-faceted tales of intrigue that were concocted to hide the ugly spots on the face of the Hyde creature began to fade before the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill reached centre stage.

The Treasurer says that the Government's proposed amendments are designed to ensure that anomalies and inequities of existing taxes are removed, and to ensure that concessions are provided only

where they can be justified according to need. May I add that that is bunkum. Over the past few weeks, the public of Queensland have heard more of the anomalies and inequities in the statements of the Treasurer than those he claims to have adequately addressed.

Queenslanders expect their Government to address, on their behalf, anomalies and inequities in taxes, but I suspect no-one in this State with more than three months' experience of the Goss Government would be naive enough to expect anomalies to be eradicated without paying more at the end of the day. Of course, in every case, the base of the tax will be broadened. This Government always removes inequity by penalising those who previously did not attract the tax rather than exempting those who are unfairly and adversely impacted by that tax.

The Treasurer says that one of the key measures of this Bill is the closure of an avenue of avoidance in payroll tax. As a result, from 1 January 1994, payroll tax will naturally be extended to apply to fringe benefits other than car park benefits. The Treasurer argues that the payment of remuneration in kind instead of cash is a direct attempt by employers and employees alike to minimise payroll taxable obligations, thus eroding the Government's revenue base. He implied that there is something immoral and unjust about business attempting to work within the law to maximise their own wellbeing and that, may I add, of their employees, and their ability to sustain economic activity and create long-term sustainable jobs to the benefit of all Queenslanders.

The Opposition in this House has a very different view of business, its place in society and the regressive impact on business of payroll tax. While the Government persecutes business and inflates payroll tax, the Opposition proposes measures to actually assist business and reduce regressive taxes where possible. In the current economic environment in our State, payroll tax is the single most regressive influence imposed by Government. Unlike other States whose economies were driven onto the rocks by failed Labor Governments, Queensland's problem is not mounting debt and financial insolvency; it is unemployment, and this tax, which has been expanded by our Labor Government, is a tax on jobs. It is nothing more nothing less than a massive disincentive to employment in this State. It is little wonder that the Australian Bureau of Statistics has documented a fall in employment in the Queensland private sector of 48 900 from

750 200 to 666 300 in the four years from December 1989 to December 1992.

Unlike the Labor Government, on behalf of the coalition I have acted to propose the obliteration of payroll tax in Queensland as a measure to boost business and employment in this Sunshine State. It is a fact that funds from—

**Mr De Lacy:** Why don't you abolish all the taxes while you are at it?

**Mrs SHELDON:** What a ridiculous comment from a Treasurer of this State. That is really even beneath him. It is a fact that funds from the \$753m sale of the Gladstone Power Station can be converted directly into long-term jobs through a phasing out of this iniquitous and inappropriate tax. Such a move would re-establish the business advantage Queensland once held through the elimination of death duties. This would be far more effective as a private enterprise alternative to the failed public sector job schemes of this Labor Government. Labor's knee-jerk knocking of the idea has come as no surprise. Personal attacks from the Premier are Labor's simplistic answer to the shortcomings in the 1993-94 Budget which ignores the crying need for new jobs in the private sector.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I really would not mind, seeing that it is now 11.10 at night when the Treasurer has finally sought to bring in this major revenue Bill, if I had some interjections from the Labor side of the House that I could at least take up—if there was some wit and some basis. Instead, I get the moronic utterings from the braying mob on the Government side of the House and I ask honourable members opposite not to mind if I do not take them up.

As I have said, our Treasurer has taken his admiration for Mr Keating too far. Unlike the Commonwealth or the other States, which are the victims of Labor's expenditure, Queensland does not need this desperate campaign to clean up its balance sheet. It does need urgent efforts to create long-term jobs. Unfortunately, the Government does not have the intestinal fortitude or vision necessary to tackle anything more substantial than Queensland's historically minuscule level of State debt. Queenslanders should not be saddled with a tax on jobs when there is clearly an alternative.

Once they are available, funds from the sale of the Gladstone power station could be used, and would be able to cut payroll tax in half as an intermediary step. I really despair

that it seems that the Goss Government cannot organise something as basic as an asset sale without placing the whole process in jeopardy by using the opportunity to find more tax revenue from the private sector. However, I will come to that later.

In the past three years, the Goss Government has increased bureaucratic salaries and administration by \$368.6m a year, but cumulative bureaucratic cuts of just \$277m a year for three years would be sufficient to pay for the final step, the complete removal of payroll tax. So to compensate for the \$832m-worth of payroll tax sucked out of Queensland businesses each year by Queensland Labor, \$753m from the power station sale could be set aside to cut payroll tax virtually in half for two years. In the meantime, savings could be identified within the bloated Labor bureaucracy sufficient to completely remove payroll tax in year three. The cuts to the bureaucracy would be offset to a large degree when public sector contributions to payroll tax and natural increases in revenue from other sources were taken into account.

Labor may be too proud to attack unemployment by following a coalition proposal, but as an alternative it could endeavour to stimulate business by cutting electricity prices.

**Mr Welford:** Ah!

**Mrs SHELDON:** I know that the member for Greenslopes does not want electricity prices to be cut at all. He would rather charge the poor old average working Queenslanders more for his power, and I believe that that is what is intended.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I apologise. I do not know how I could make that mistake. I must apologise to Mr Fenlon for that. I do not know how I could possibly get him confused with Mr Welford, that bucket tipper extraordinaire. The Welford Labor Party! What an insult to Mr Fenlon!

The Government had an opportunity to do something about long-term unemployment in this Budget, and it blew it. This Government actually increased payroll tax at a time when Queensland unemployment was climbing to record levels. But Labor's much-vaunted spending spree this year did not come about as a result of years of good management. It is merely the product of lucky management. This is the lucky Government. It inherited a full bank book and it has been carried along for

four years on the back of growth driven by the very factor that it blames for the jobs crisis—interstate migration.

Through his outrageous and over-the-top funding for public sector ventures at any expense, the Treasurer has demonstrated an interesting point that will not be lost on Queenslanders. For his stated target of 43 600 jobs, the Treasurer can find and spend an incredible \$77,981 a job. Imagine how many more jobs would be created if that money went directly to employers through employment-linked initiatives such as the removal of payroll tax.

Queenslanders want positive proposals to address unemployment. They do not want a moribund Government that is obsessed with the problems of other Governments. If the Government removes the ability of a company to offer a competitive and financially attractive salary package, then it will be to the detriment of all concerned. Employers will not want to incur the administrative costs of structuring the package and, therefore, employees will not be able to receive the benefits of the package. The Government calls its payroll tax hike a move to protect the tax base. What about protecting business? What about protecting the ability of businesses to allocate their resources as they choose without undue interference in that decision by the Government? Instead of concentrating its efforts on measures that will suck money from the private sector in order to fund waste and extravagance in the public sector, how about at least allowing business to get on with business?

The Treasurer also stated that by protecting the payroll tax base through this measure, Queensland is better placed to maintain Australia's most competitive payroll tax regime. I have made it plain that I do not understand how an increase in payroll tax could possibly be perceived as a maintenance of a competitive tax regime. I have made it plain tonight that, in relation to payroll tax, Queensland is a long way from being the low-tax State that it could be. The Treasurer often tries to make favourable comparisons. However, regardless of any comparison, an increase in tax is an impediment on the ability of business to do business, and this costs jobs and adversely affects the welfare of the people of Queensland.

I move on from one of the low points of the Treasurer's Budget to one of the low points in the Government's sorry record of broken promises about accountability and openness. The Government's bank account

debits tax has become aptly known by its acronym, that is, the BAD tax. Cheque duty is to be abolished by this Government, but only because the use of cheques by the public has diminished. I am sure that the public can appreciate the Treasurer's quandary as he sat down to ponder this question. What is the point of a high-taxing Government like this one targeting an outmoded milch cow? I am sure that the Treasurer thought long and hard over many weeks while he was raiding the ATM on many occasions to buy himself many hot cups of very black coffee while he sought an answer. But there it was, as plain as the plastic card in his hand—the perfect way in which to hit thousands of Queenslanders with a 10c increase on every transaction. So whether it is Westpac's Advantage Saver, the Commonwealth's Streamline account, ANZ's Access account or the National's Flexi account, Queenslanders will now pay more every time they use their cards.

**Mr Nuttall:** That is not right.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Indeed, it is right. That has come from every bank in the State. How the hell would the member for Sandgate know? Every bank in this State has confirmed and verified exactly what I have said. All the Government is doing is broadening the impact of what was cheque stamp duty to every single transaction from just about any account. In the past, there was no cheque stamp duty on EFTPOS, no cheque stamp duty on cash debits, no cheque stamp duty on bank charges and no cheque stamp duty on payment orders. Yet these have all gone up 10c a transaction under this hike. The Government was hoping that no-one would notice. The shameful result of this tax by stealth is an extra financial burden for almost every Queensland.

If people use a plastic card attached to one of these common accounts to pay for groceries, petrol, school books or uniforms, or if they simply withdraw money from an EFTPOS facility, they will pay an extra 10c a transaction. In fact, every time the bank imposes its bank charges on the account, the transaction will be recognised by this greedy Government and a tax of 10c will be imposed each time. This is another blatant tax grab and it is definitely not revenue neutral, as the Treasurer has tried on many occasions to claim.

Finally, the Treasurer admitted on radio that this measure—this supposedly revenue neutral tax—would raise an extra \$2m, but if one asks any supermarket operator, one will be told that that figure will undoubtedly blow

out by the end of the year. Supermarket operators can vouch for the fact that the use of plastic cards by the public is growing at a spectacular rate. The operator of one large supermarket which has attached to it a variety store told me that from making up 4 per cent of transactions at his store a year ago, debit card use has skyrocketed and now comprises 30 per cent of his business. Another operator who runs a smaller grocery supermarket said that the upsurge in debit card use has led to that percentage of business in his store rising from 2 per cent to 25 per cent.

Against this background, the Treasurer tried manfully to mislead the people of Queensland, the media and the coalition through his vague Budget papers and conflicting comments. First of all, the Treasurer claimed that the debits tax increase merely replaced stamp duty on cheques, but there was never any stamp duty on EFTPOS transactions, payment orders or bank charges. His comments on ABC radio only further confused the issue.

The Treasurer's said—

"There are some transactions that come in that weren't previously taxed this 10 cents. It is true there are some transactions which will pay the 10 cents which didn't previously pay it. There's no new tax on transactions. It is revenue neutral."

In the course of five minutes, the Treasurer contradicted himself about five times. He tried to obfuscate and fudge this tax increase, which means an extra 10c cost to millions of EFTPOS, cheque, cash and other transactions.

This Government never hesitates to bag the banks for their charges, but now they are slapping a new increase in the debits tax on these charges, which the banks will be forced to collect. This increase would never have come to light if I had not written to ask for clarification of the increase in the debits tax. No doubt the Treasurer was hoping that the public would blame the banks for the higher charges that he has imposed.

**Mr De Lacy:** Hey, hey! It was in the Budget papers.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Read your own Budget papers and see where all this is spelt out.

**Mr De Lacy:** I can tell you.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Show me the page.

**Mr De Lacy:** Page 24 of Budget Paper No. 2.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I have read page 24 very well. Those little details just escaped him.

The Treasurer tried to hide this increase, but he was caught out. Even the *Courier-Mail* took note of the Treasurer's grudging admission. Yesterday's editorial in the *Courier-Mail* stated—

"Stamp Duty—not a tax in this Government's lexicon, by the way—has been removed from cheques. In its place is a transaction tax, announced in the State Budget, so Treasurer Keith De Lacy would like to be understood, by an enactment of the Fraser Government. Don't blame us, the line goes, blame the federal Liberals from an era now long gone. The effect of the Treasurer's readiness to benefit his revenue from this eventuality, however, is that Queenslanders will soon be paying a varying scale of charges for using plastic money. Since virtually everyone uses credit cards on accounts upon which cheques can be drawn—the Government's rationale for the charges—virtually everyone will be paying the State Government for discretionary spending. This is a state consumption tax by any other name."

Is it not a consumption tax; it is a services tax, is it not?

The Treasurer is trying to get it in under anything else. So from the Government and from the Treasurer, who really bagged the coalition's goods and services tax, we have a surreptitious services tax, but there is no corresponding benefit to taxpayers of Queensland. The editorial continued—

"Mr De Lacy takes pains to assert that it is not a new tax. The paying public might well take the opposite view."

I will bet the Treasurer that the paying public does take the opposite view, whatever justification the Treasurer might want to put on it.

**Mr De Lacy** interjected.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** That's an interjection worth taking. Take that interjection.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Oh, my God, it is not you again, is it? I thought that they had canned the honourable member somewhere and put him away in a dark room. I draw to the attention of the House another editorial in the *Courier-Mail*, on Tuesday of this week, in which it was stated—

"If it moves tax it, is no longer sensible politics."

I could not agree more, and I am sure that most Queenslanders could not agree more.

Another important change in cheque duties is the removal of the exemptions of the non-trading bank cheque transactions. Prior to the commencement of the deregulation of the Australian financial markets in accordance with the recommendations of the Campbell Committee report and the Martin Group, Australia had two primary categories of banks—trading banks and savings banks. Federal Government control of the operation of those institutions was so tight that it could control virtually all operations of the respective banks.

Importantly, that control extended to which types of accounts could be operated by which type of bank. Trading banks could operate trading accounts, which were designed to facilitate trading activity, that is, to encourage business activity. Those accounts were mostly cheque accounts. Savings banks could offer only savings accounts. Savings accounts were designed to encourage people to put money in the bank and leave it there. They were not permitted to offer a cheque facility on those accounts. When the legislation was first applied in respect to cheque duty, it was applied only to trading bank cheque accounts, as they were the only cheque accounts at that stage.

Since deregulation commenced in 1982-83, the distinction between trading banks and savings banks has been largely removed, as has the Federal Government's control of the banks' activities. That means that there are no longer the restrictions on the accounts that can be offered by banks, and hence savings accounts, etc., can now be transacted by cheque. Those cheque transactions were exempt from the duty, but, under this devious, tax-seeking Labor Government, they now most certainly will attract the debit tax. The Government says—

"The repeal of cheque duty would rationalise two taxes in the one area through the retention of the more significant and more modern tax."

What a simple, patronising excuse for a further broadening of the revenue base!

However, in common with the newspapers and the public, the banking and the non-banking financial institutions have not been conned by the Treasurer's fudging. They know that it is a major new cost for thousands of Queenslanders who have accounts with a cheque facility either with a bank, building society or credit union. The fact is that, every time people with an account that allows the

use of cheques, whether they utilise them or not, use their plastic card, they will pay this tax increase.

The list of speakers lining up against the Treasurer is really quite impressive. For example, Phillip Elliott, the Chief Executive of the Credit Union Association, said on ABC radio—

“This will broaden the base of the bank accounts debit tax. For hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders it would represent a massive additional taxing by the Queensland Government in relation to their transactions with financial institutions.”

David Thorpe, Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Association of Permanent Building Societies, stated—

“Building societies have not had to pay stamp duty on cheques. The increase of this state tax will have to either be borne by the building societies or passed on to the customer. Financial institutions must have accounts with banks, all funds go through banks, so it would in fact represent a double taxing. It would represent a proportional increase of great magnitude . . . And cause a great deal of anxiety for those on lower incomes and fixed incomes.”

Similarly, Paul O’Shea, of Financial Counselling Services, told ABC radio—

“Even though the bank accounts debit tax has been imposed before on cheques, it would not be imposed on cash withdrawals. He (Mr de Lacy) has not explained how it works on automatic payments and authorised payments.

Many of these combined accounts have operated with a cheque account facility. So what’s going to happen is a large number of payments, authorised withdrawals . . . which were hitherto not affected, are now going to be affected.”

The Treasurer used to be known for his ability to cloud and obscure an issue, and that is what he attempted but failed to do on this issue.

I now turn to some of the other provisions of the Bill, firstly, stamp duty. At a time when the only real economic growth in Queensland is coming from the housing sector and population growth, the Government has taken the shortsighted step of whacking new tax increases on the home buyer. The changes to stamp duty on homes introduced in this omnibus legislation mean that a growing number of Queenslanders will be forced to

pay more and more when they buy their homes in the future.

If a new home buyer’s first principal place of residence is valued at more than \$160,000, that home buyer will no longer qualify for the first home buyers concession on stamp duty. That is what the State Government has Queenslanders believe is the mansion tax. It is blatantly misleading and a slur on average Queensland home buyers. A \$160,000 home may be higher than the cost of an average home now, but it is still far below the amount needed to buy any sort of mansion. It is more a shack tax than a mansion tax. What about the future? That cut to concessions is not indexed and, in only a few short years, \$160,000 will be the cost of a very basic, below-average price home. The Government is not only ripping off current Queensland home buyers with that cut to concessions; it is ripping off a generation of Queensland home buyers to come.

The principal place of residence concession has been scrapped for homes worth over \$250,000—another cash grab by the State Government. In fact, the entire structure of the State Government stamp duty should be reviewed in the light of the exploding cost of homes in many areas of Queensland. Stamp duty thresholds should be raised instead of concessions being cut. Between 1988 and 1993, many house prices have doubled. The State Government has dragged in \$140m more in stamp duty in 1992-93 compared with 1991-92. That is \$86m more than Budget expectations. That represents a 141 per cent increase in the stamp duty bill on the average house in the past five years.

In 1988, for example, the average Gladstone house would have cost \$50,000, and the owner would have paid the State Government \$975 in stamp duty. However, in 1993, that same house would cost \$99,000, and the new owner would be hit with a \$2,350 stamp duty bill. That is a \$1,375 increase in the stamp duty bill levied by the State Government on that same house in just five years. So, as house prices rise with inflation and property booms, so does the Government’s tax take. That is the true story of the Treasurer’s bracket creep tax plan, which is costing Queenslanders millions more, while he pretends to be in favour of low taxes. Those are the hidden taxes to the average Queenslanders. Those are the taxes, like the debit tax increase, which the average Queenslanders does not know that he or she is paying.

That is the Treasurer's true deceit. That is the Treasurer's real plan. "No new taxes", he cries, while, all the time, hitting Queensland individuals and businesses with more and more taxes, taking more and more from their fast-diminishing pay packets—that is, if they are lucky enough to have one. If the State Government were being honest about low tax, it would increase the thresholds for stamp duty to take into account at least a percentage of the rise in house values. That is more than just an attack on the individual Queensland home buyer and house buyer; it is an attack on one of the only areas of the Queensland economy which are growing.

The population-driven housing market has largely weathered Labor's recession and, instead of encouragement, all the Treasurer can do is slap more taxes and charges on the industry. The Treasurer always resorts to bleeding an industry dry of taxes rather than offering incentives and assistance. Those changes to stamp duty are just another of the Treasurer's desperate attempts to suck in more funds for his blow-out spending on bureaucracy.

I know that the Treasurer always tries to portray me and the coalition as negative. No doubt, he is negative. In this case, I would like to offer small congratulations on his efforts in at least getting one thing right. On land tax, he has simplified the qualification requirements for land tax concessions. That was not a bad move, as they are now based on a land usage criteria. The removal of the difficult and cumbersome provisions under 11A and 11AA in the previous Act is a welcome move, and those who previously benefited under those concessions would almost certainly benefit through the new rebates.

However, unfortunately, that is just about where the good news on land tax ends. Previously, land tax was applied to the value of a property as calculated over a five-year average. This was originally introduced in response to the rapid valuation increases which were experienced in the 1980s as a result of the fluctuating property prices during the various booms. This averaging process eliminated the boom-and-bust cycle for land tax, which would have unfairly burdened landholders with huge tax increases one year, only to see their property values slump the next.

**Mr De Lacy:** That is not right.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Of course it is right. Has the Treasurer really listened to what I have said?

**Mr De Lacy:** You are talking about a five-year average.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I am talking about the history of land tax. The averaging process was phased out as annual valuations were progressively introduced from 1985 and, by 1989, all of Queensland was covered by annual valuations. The conservative Government, in a reasonable response to the possibility of large one-off increases in property values, included a provision where the maximum increase in the land tax payable was 50 per cent of the previous valuation, until the land tax component reached the value of the property as determined by the Valuer General. This meant that landowners were not sacrificed to the taxman just because their property went through a major upward fluctuation in value.

Although most property valuations now coincide with the Valuer General's valuations, there are significant parcels of land which would still benefit from the 50 per cent limitation. Significantly, these would be found in centres such as Cairns, the Treasurer's own electorate. Unfortunately, the Treasurer has once again seen some gold at the bottom of the garden, and immediately rushed in to get his hands on it, regardless of the cost to Queenslanders. The removal of the 50 per cent provision under this Act, via the repeal of the Land Tax Adjustment Act 1989, will mean significant financial hardship for many Queenslanders, both now and in the future.

The Treasurer has said that landowners adversely affected by the repeal this financial year will be offered interest-free payments by instalments, but I must emphasise the catch: only on their request. I doubt many landholders will hear us discussing the need for such an application to be made at 11.30 at night in this Chamber.

**Mr Beattie:** No, 11.33.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I thank the member for Brisbane Central. If the Treasurer was fair dinkum and was really concerned about the ramifications of these changes, he would be taking steps to properly inform landholders of this right, fleeting though it might be.

These changes will impact on many landowners. For example, if a person's land is rezoned from Rural to Residential A, the value will immediately rise—in most cases, significantly. This increase will now mean, with the repealing of the Land Tax Adjustment Act 1989, that Queensland landowners whose properties are rezoned could face massive land tax hikes.

What about those who have absolutely no control over their property values? What about those who own property at the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, Cairns or Logan City? These areas are growing extremely swiftly, and rapid residential development is occurring. They are the areas, along with others, which are often caught in the boom-and-bust cycle of the property market. Usually they have no control over these property fluctuations. Yet now, with this Treasurer holding out his hands for more and more tax dollars, they will be hit with massive land tax bill increases every time there is a boom cycle. Many will not be able to afford the bills, having lived in the same house for years without taking part in any property speculation or search for profits. Yet they will still be hit.

For example, in tourist areas such as the Gold and Sunshine Coasts and Cairns, a person can own a property at a certain value, only to have someone buy all the land around them and develop a top-class resort. This would significantly increase the value of that person's property without providing any real benefit to them. So, the land tax on that property will go through the roof, without any immediate financial gain to the owners, unless they sell up. This is a callous change to the Land Act, and it will hurt many Queensland property owners unnecessarily.

**Mr De Lacy:** That's rubbish—utter rubbish.

**Mrs SHELDON:** The Treasurer might explain in his reply why it is utter rubbish.

**Mr De Lacy:** I will.

**Mrs SHELDON:** It will be interesting to hear his explanation.

At the beginning of my speech, I referred to the most serious problem facing Queensland today—unemployment. Labor Government greed for tax revenue is creating increasing problems for a wide range of vital Queensland industries, problems that will only be exacerbated by measures such as the BAD tax and the Government's irresponsible treatment of payroll tax. For example, high taxes in this State have been revealed as a prime cause of falling private investment in Queensland tourism. As you would be aware, Mr Deputy Speaker, an authoritative study by chartered accountants Horwarth and Horwarth has laid bare the smothering extent of the Labor tax burden on tourism and hospitality. In this State, Labor taxes are the difference between viability and insolvency.

Headlines on the Gold Coast are screaming about a chronic shortage of tourist accommodation. The State Government has made hotel construction uneconomic. This information is taken from a very independent study; they are not my words. The Horwarth and Horwarth study showed that a new 300-bed Gold Coast hotel would have to pay almost \$18m in taxes over 10 years before it could return its first profit. Of that unacceptable tax load, 42.9 per cent would go straight into the burgeoning tax collection coffers of the State Government.

The study shows hotels have great capacity to create jobs, but they are being driven out of business by Labor. We cannot afford to so badly mistreat an industry that spends 38 per cent of its revenue on staff and related costs. The hotel industry will not find value in the Treasurer's move to protect the tax base by broadening payroll tax. They will find nothing but disincentive in such a proposal.

In the *Gold Coast Bulletin*, a director of construction consultants Rider Hunt, Alan Midwood, warned that room occupancy rates on the Gold Coast had climbed by 6 per cent in the past year to 69.4 per cent. Mr Midwood said that, although new hotels were needed urgently, there were none on the drawing board. I need not reiterate that my proposal to wipe out payroll tax within three years would be just the sort of stimulus needed by the hospitality industry in this State.

A vital point in my arguments about the regressive nature of the employment and investment policies and taxes of this Government was highlighted by the release this week of the ANZ job ad statistics for September. I have made significant proposals about vital changes in the tax structure of this State and I feel that my points and proposals are heavily underlined by the ANZ findings. Members should note that, unlike other measures, the ANZ series is not so readily affected by the Treasurer's favourite defence on unemployment, that being the hordes of Mexicans he sees coming across the State boundary to throw themselves onto our job queues. It should be remembered that this series is based on the number of job advertisements—which is a measure of the capacity of employers to offer work—rather than the ferocity with which others seek it. For that reason, I consider its findings an eloquent expression of the state of play in the Queensland economy.

The ANZ series found that—

The national average increase in job advertisements, seasonally adjusted, was 4 per cent in September.

The number of Queensland advertisements fell by 0.5 per cent. This is the worst performance of all States. Queensland was the only State to record negative growth.

Western Australia increased 9.6 per cent. Victoria increased 9 per cent.

The annual percentage change for Queensland was 5.6 per cent. This also was the worst performance of any State. Victoria increased by 31.3 per cent. Western Australia increased by 41.2 per cent.

Even on trend estimates, Queensland lags behind the rest of the country with just a 0.5 per cent increase in the series.

**Mr De Lacy:** Have you found something negative about Queensland? You've been searching.

**Mrs SHELDON:** The unfortunate statistics that I am citing are real figures which the Treasurer would rather not know about.

**Mr De Lacy:** Where do they get them from?

**Mrs SHELDON:** Is the Treasurer now saying that the ANZ job statistics are wrong? It is incredible—everyone is wrong but the Treasurer. All the independent bureaus, banks and bodies are wrong, but the Treasurer—the genius of this State—is always right.

Members would also be aware that today the Bureau of Statistics official unemployment statistics for Queensland were released. They demonstrated the paucity of Labor thought on the State's serious unemployment problem. A month ago, the Treasurer told ABC radio's Late Edition program that he "would re-work the Budget figures in the wake of the abysmal employment figures for August". In the same breath, he tried to play down those vital figures by declaring them a blip—an anomaly in the system. Later, I am sorry to say, the Treasurer withdrew the clear commitment he had given.

It is now clear that the August figure of 11.2 per cent, which showed that Australia's largest increase in unemployment occurred in this State, was not a blip, nor an anomaly. The Treasurer has been caught out again. Today, I called on the Treasurer to live up to his earlier promise and re-work the Government's rosy Budget estimates of activity to be created by an anticipated fall in unemployment this year. He should go further

and re-work this regressive revenue package to get his foot off the neck of Queensland industry. This year, the Treasurer is relying on growth in Queensland of 3.8 per cent and a fall in unemployment to 10.1 per cent.

The Treasurer himself forecast the drop in growth from 5.4 per cent last year, but I am now concerned that he did not anticipate entering October with 172 200 people in the Queensland job queues. The need for employment prospects to improve is an important part in the Treasurer's Budget forecast, but already we are a third of the way through the year and the stubborn trend toward increasing unemployment remains.

In recent weeks, the Queensland job market has featured all over the media, and the news has not been good. We have seen reported the loss of 400 jobs at the House of Jenyns, 104 jobs lost at MIM and another 64 at Queensland Nickel's mine. This is a trend that should be addressed and accounted for by the State Government, not merely wished away. If the Treasurer does not want to reconsider his forecasts, I am afraid he will have to sit by as his Budget forecasts slowly die the death of a dozen monthly cuts.

Is it not a shame to see the way that the Government continues on its determined campaign against the interests of private enterprise in this State when it claims to acknowledge the importance of the private sector as, and I quote the Treasurer, "the engine of sustainable growth". What hypocrisy!

The latest new tax slug to be unearthed, hidden away in this Budget, is the insidious item I referred to in my opening remarks when I sought the most obvious local equivalent to the Federal Labor Party's wine tax. Heavy new coal royalties in Queensland are yet another Labor threat to jobs and private investment in many of our largest resource ventures. But I am told tonight that this particular grab for dollars is hidden away from this revenue Bill under some other obscure piece of legislation. The revenue grab of the coal tax represents another failed cover-up by the No. 1 northern Keating groupie, the Treasurer. It is not acceptable for him to try to duck discussion of the coal tax by tucking it away, because it is clear that this tax has many serious ramifications for the future flow of revenue to this Government and the future prospects for private investment and jobs growth in our State.

In closing, I call on the Treasurer to make clear the timetable on which this matter will pass before the House so that members are

free to have their say on it. Tonight this Queensland version of a Keating omnibus Bill carries with it all the serious ramifications of Government changes to its central revenue raising taxes and charges. Like the chaos Keating's omnibus created in Canberra, tonight's debate is far from satisfactory. The major revenue raising initiatives of the Queensland Government are being rammed through the Parliament in the dead of night again. When I conclude, I suppose that the House will adjourn and we will not finish the Bill. I give my speech and we all go to bed—such is democracy! It is a result of the Leader of the House's interpretation of the word "democracy". He does not even know how to spell it, let alone what it means.

The effect of the Treasurer's decision to create a monster Bill for our consideration is to deny adequate debate and the opportunity for the Opposition to endorse various measures among the many that are presented. In keeping with the philosophies of open government, such a Bill should not appear. It is disappointing to see the dead hand of Paul Keating on the shoulder of Queensland businesses and job seekers, and now the hand of the Treasurer in their hip pockets.

Unfortunately, this omnibus Bill has been presented by the Treasurer to this House. We need the opportunity to discuss each of these major revenue Bills separately and in detail, so the Opposition has absolutely no alternative other than to vote against this Bill.

Debate, on motion of Mr Fenlon, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 11.46 p.m.