

**THURSDAY, 17 FEBRUARY 1994**

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

### PETITION

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petition—

#### Abortion Law

From **Mrs Gamin** (278 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will not move to change legislation regarding abortion and will not allow abortion on demand.

Petition received.

### MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

#### Listening Devices

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts) (10.01 a.m.), by leave: At the end of January this year, I gave an undertaking to table in the House a register of listening devices applied for by State agencies and approved by the court. This register shows categorically that listening devices are not widely used by Queensland authorities and are used only to fight major, serious crime. Listening devices are to be distinguished from phone taps. Listening devices record only what is said in a room; they do not record incoming telephone calls and the conversation between both parties.

Honourable members should also note that, unlike all other States, there is no Queensland legislation allowing for telephone interception by State law enforcement agencies. Listening devices are granted only in cases of serious, major crime on the basis of extensive affidavit material to support the application. In 1993, the CJC applied for nine listening devices and then short extensions to each of those applications. The police applied for 11 devices, and then short extensions for two of those. That is a total of 20 listening devices for all of 1993, and all were used for the sole purpose of fighting serious or organised crime. Those 11 police applications have resulted in 74 charges so far, with more expected. The nine CJC applications concerned six operations, which have resulted in 57 charges so far. The remaining operations are still current. The types of charges that have resulted from evidence obtained by listening devices have included murder, official

misconduct, drug trafficking, perjury, extortion and counterfeit operations.

In laying this first register on the table of the House, I also add that both the Director of Prosecutions and the CJC have given an undertaking to now supply this information in their annual reports.

### PRIVILEGE

#### Parliamentary Security Staff

**Mr GRICE** (Broadwater) (10.04 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. My matter of privilege relates to the security of our parliamentary precinct, and all who work in it. Members may or may not be aware that parliamentary security staff have been given an ultimatum that either they accept a reduction of \$70 per fortnight in their wages, or they face the sack.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That is not a matter of privilege.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I rise to a point of order. May I suggest that, if it reflects on and affects the security of members in this place, the member should be given the opportunity to explain this matter further.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Today, there will be a meeting of the Parliamentary Service Commission, which is represented by all parties. That is the proper forum in which to discuss matters about security staffing and award conditions for security. It is not a matter of privilege, and I will not debate the matter further.

**Mr BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (10.06 a.m.): I move—  
"That the member for Broadwater be further heard."

**Question** put; and the House divided—

**AYES**, 33—Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Cooper, Davidson, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Horan, Johnson, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Randell, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Turner, Veivers, Watson *Tellers:* Springborg, Laming

**NOES**, 49—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bennett, Bird, Braddy, Bredhauer, Budd, Burns, Campbell, Casey, Clark, Comben, D'Arcy, Davies, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Mackenroth, McElligott, McGrady, Milliner, Nunn, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Power, Purcell, Robertson, Robson, Rose, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Sullivan T. B., Szczerbanik, Vaughan, Warner, Welford, Wells *Tellers:* Pitt, Livingstone

Resolved in the **negative**.

## PRIVILEGE

### Parliamentary Security Staff

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (10.12 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. Mr Speaker, you indicated that the wage restructuring for the security staff of Parliament House would be discussed at the Parliamentary Service Commission meeting today. It is not on the agenda. Will you guarantee that we will discuss it?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! To save the time of the House, I will do that. If the honourable member wishes to discuss it today at the commission meeting, we will do that, but this restructuring is not a matter for the Parliament at the moment.

**Mr Mackenroth:** You might attend the meeting this time.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I have been there more than the honourable member has.

## OVERSEAS VISIT

### Report

**Mr RANDELL** (Mirani) (10.15 a.m.): For the information of the Parliament, I table a report on my overseas trip to Thailand, Singapore, England, France and Belgium in June/July 1993.

## QUESTION UPON NOTICE

### Cluster Policing

Mr SANTORO asked the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services—

"With reference to the cluster system of policing—

- (1) Will he provide examples of where the system has been implemented in other police jurisdictions?
- (2) Will he detail the success or otherwise of similar systems implemented in other jurisdictions, in Australia and overseas?"

**Mr BRADDY:** The concept of station clustering was basically conceived by the metropolitan north police regional staff following a series of resource studies which revealed deficiencies in Police Service delivery. The first of those major consultations occurred in 1986 under the previous Government, but, as usual, it just put it in the bottom drawer and forgot about it. In 1990, a further study was conducted. It was decided that, as a trial, cluster policing would be conducted, firstly, in the Torwood, Toowong, Kenmore and Indooroopilly regions. It was found to be extremely successful.

Some specific measures of the success of the police clustering trial included the fact that the mileage of police cars had increased by 70 per cent—so the cars were not idle.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BRADDY:** I can wait. In some cases, offenders were caught in the act of breaking and entering. This was because cars were able to respond from the nearest mobile patrol, rather than having to call out from a station. There has been a reduction of 20 per cent in reported crime. The trial was so successful—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BRADDY:** Just wait for it. The trial was so successful that it is now being extended to a further trial for the whole of the metropolitan north region. It is dovetailing very well with the Police Shopfront Program. I noticed that the member for Clayfield was kind enough to attend the opening of one at Toombul Shoppingtown. The two work in very well together. It has been so successful that police frequently receive commendation for it from the member for Indooroopilly. So I suggest to the member for Clayfield—

**Mr Santoro** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Clayfield under Standing Order 123A. He has asked for that.

**Mr BRADDY:** The honourable member should have a good chat to the member for Indooroopilly, because he is complaining that the program has not been extended to the whole of his electorate. He has been very complimentary about the program. This is another example of the Opposition knocking good police operational activity in an attempt to beat up the law and order issue.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Penalties and Sentences Act

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I direct a question to the Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. I refer him to the Attorney-General's rejection yesterday of criticism of his Government's cream-puff penalties and sentences legislation by Justice Shepherdson of the Supreme Court. I now refer to further criticism of his Government's soft penalties by another Supreme Court judge, Mr Justice Thomas. In sentencing the Mr Bigs of a Gold Coast based heroin trafficking network, Mr Justice Thomas said—

"I wonder whether sentences of the level imposed are sufficient to deter people from deliberate heroin trading when there is

the chance of obtaining fast and apparently easy money in this way."

I ask: how long do he and his Government intend to ignore senior members of the judiciary?

**Mr BRADY:** In relation to the latter part of the question—it is clear that there was no criticism whatever of the Government in that comment. The judge made a comment. I wonder whether—

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Leader of the Opposition under Standing Order 123A. The honourable member asked a question. I think that he should give the Minister the opportunity to answer.

**Mr BRADY:** He obviously made that comment about whether the amount of sentencing in any instance is enough when easy money is able to be made. That was not a criticism of the Government. In connection with one of those charges, the judge sentenced two people to 20 years' imprisonment. However, he granted a parole period of five years to the female defendant. The judge did not even take up the full period of the sentence before he recommended parole. The Government gave the judge no direction to do that. That was his decision, made after a consideration of the facts at the trial. The judge sentenced the female prisoner to 20 years and then recommended that, because she had pleaded guilty and cooperated with the authorities, she be granted a parole period of five years. He did not make a similar recommendation for the male prisoner.

That comment involves no criticism of the law. If a judge does not even use the full weight of the law to sentence people, how can it be claimed that he is criticising the Government? In that case, the judge did not criticise the Government. He stated that people risk big sentences if they engage in criminal activity. The Queensland Police Service and the Criminal Justice Commission have been working together to combat organised drug activity. That combined effort has been very successful. A considerable number of people, some of whom have already been dealt with by the courts, have been charged with drug offences. Members will have noted recent comments in the newspaper about the apprehension of some people involved in the Romanian heroin connection, which was a very large drug ring. Some of those operators are already in prison, and others are facing charges.

The police are doing their job. The court has the power to impose very severe sentences. However, if the court chooses, in the exercise of judicial discretion, to offer parole periods after a

relatively short time, the Government can do nothing about it. That is a matter for judicial discretion, particularly in a case in which a person has pleaded guilty.

### **Royal Brisbane Hospital, Staff Shortages**

**Mr BORBIDGE:** In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer him to the description by a nurse at the Royal Brisbane Hospital of conditions prevailing because of staff shortages in which it was stated—

"One of our patients crawled out of bed and died in the corridor and had to be dragged into the pan room. Our families cannot accept, and neither do we, that their loved ones can't get attended to. They have no second chance. God, are you out there?"

I ask the Minister: will he immediately give the operational areas, as opposed to the bureaucracy in his department, the resources necessary to overcome such tragic and avoidable situations?

**Mr HAYWARD:** I thank the honourable member for the question. That comment resulted from a Nurses Union survey conducted at the Royal Brisbane Hospital. The purpose of that survey was to ask nurses whether they thought enough nurses were employed at the hospital and whether they thought that they were paid enough. If members opposite were asked whether they thought they were paid enough and whether they thought they needed better conditions and more staff, I know—because I have seen the results of similar surveys conducted of them—that they would request more staff. If the Nurses Union asks its members whether they want more staff and whether they think they are paid enough, of course those members will ask for more.

It is a very serious issue that those types of surveys are conducted. I acknowledge very strongly that the rank-and-file nurses work very hard. However, in considering this general topic, it is important that we address some of the issues. Firstly, for six months I have been working to change the nurses' career structure. That restructure aims to remove nurses from administrative roles in which they are pushing paper all day to enable them to perform bedside roles. Let me inform the House that the officials of the Queensland Nurses Union have been opposing that restructuring tooth and nail. They have resisted, they have filibustered and they have done everything imaginable to prevent the restructuring of the nurses' career structure.

However, I am determined to see that process through.

I know that the rank-and-file nurses understand the basic facts. This Government has been able to deliver wage justice to Queensland nurses. When it was in Government, the Opposition did absolutely nothing to deliver wage justice to the nurses of this State. This Government brought the level of nurses' wages to a level comparable with the wages of nurses in the rest of Australia. In addition to that, this Government has increased the numbers of nurses employed in this State. There can be no argument about that, and everyone acknowledges that fact. The rank-and-file nurses must contrast those achievements to the efforts of members opposite when they were in Government. They offered no wage justice and no increases in numbers.

If nurses need to be convinced that this Government is fighting for their rights, they need only compare the efforts of this Government with those of Governments in other States. For example, nurses should consider the efforts of the Opposition's conservative mates in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia and Western Australia. Those Governments are not interested in nurses; they are interested only in sacking them.

This year, the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority has a record budget. It will work within that budget.

#### **Judgment of Mr Justice Shepherdson**

**Mr PITT:** In directing a question to the Attorney-General, I refer him to the judgment of Justice Shepherdson mentioned on the front page of this morning's *Courier-Mail*, and I ask: is the Government proposing to take any action in response to this judgment?

**Mr WELLS:** I have asked the Director of Prosecutions to examine this matter with a view to determining whether an appeal should be lodged. The advice of the Director of Prosecutions will be received in due course.

#### **Institute of Public Affairs, Assessment of State Budgets**

**Mr PITT:** I ask the Treasurer: is he aware that the economic think-tank, the Institute of Public Affairs, has completed its annual assessment of the 1993-94 Budgets handed down by the States and the Commonwealth? If so, could he inform the House how the IPA rates the Queensland Budget?

**Mr De LACY:** I am indeed aware of that assessment. I happen to be on the mailing list of the Institute of Public Affairs. I do not know why. I would have thought that it would be sending its publications only to the Opposition. It is fair to say that the IPA is not generally recognised as being supportive of Labor Governments. Nevertheless, I read its publications with some interest. I have formed the impression that, when the IPA examines the Queensland Budget position, it does so with some grudging admiration.

The IPA has performed its annual assessment of the State Budgets. I think it would be worth while to read some of the findings of that assessment to honourable members, because it is so different from the way in which the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Party carry on about the big-spending Government of Queensland.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** The assessment does mention the increase in spending. It states—

"Notwithstanding the increase in spending, Queensland will again produce the best bottom line of any Australian government in 1993-94, and that by a country mile. It will be the only government to achieve a surplus"——

**Mr Borbidge:** You're sprinting with cripples, that's why.

**Mr De LACY:** The report continues—

". . . and it will achieve a surplus (a negative NFR)"——

**Mr W. K. Goss:** Are you talking about question time?

**Mr De LACY:** The report continues—

". . . in the general government, public trading enterprise and consolidated sectors."

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the Leader of the Opposition and the Premier stop their discussion. I want to hear the Treasurer.

**Mr De LACY:** Mr Speaker, I recognise that you want to hear what I have to say, but I suspect that the Opposition does not want to hear it.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! This is the last time I am going to ask the Leader of the Opposition to stop interjecting. Honestly, I am in a very good mood today, but it is starting to change very quickly. I came in here feeling very well and it is unfortunate that some members might change my disposition very quickly.

**Mr De LACY:** I was talking about the surpluses in Queensland when the Opposition tried to divert the attention of other honourable members. Importantly, these surpluses will be achieved with very low levels of revenue growth, with total revenue expected to grow by 1.3 per cent in 1993-94, and full funding of superannuation liabilities.

Queensland is expected to continue to produce surpluses over the medium term and, as a result, is expected to have no debt by 1996. Queensland is, in fiscal terms, in a league of its own.

### **Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital**

**Mrs SHELDON:** In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer to reports this week that Cabinet has washed its hands of the future of Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital on the grounds that plenty of beds are available at nearby hospitals. The Minister may be unaware that in recent months there have been many occasions on which, because of bed shortages, patients of the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital have been taken from their beds and left in chairs all day. In one example, a woman in her 80s who had been called in for a colonoscopy was prepared for the procedure and then, suffering from diarrhoea, left in a chair next to the lift from 8 a.m. until 1.30 p.m.—

**Mr Hayward** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Obviously the Minister does not care about this, but he is not an 80-year-old woman. After waiting for that long period, she phoned a relative to take her home. Where was this bed surplus then?

**Mr HAYWARD:** I think the premise on which the question was based is fundamentally wrong. I made it very, very clear—and I will explain it again to the Opposition—how the arrangements with the Commonwealth for the suggested purchase of the hospital worked.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Mr Speaker, my question was regarding bed surpluses, not regarding the future of the repatriation hospital.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the Deputy Leader of the Coalition. She asked a question—and if she has a point of order, she may take it—but before the Minister had even said five words, there she was actually telling him what to say. That is just not acceptable.

**Mr HAYWARD:** The assertion was made by the Deputy Leader of the Coalition that the principal reason for the suggested sale was bed numbers. I will tell the Parliament what the principal reason was. The proposition put to us by the Commonwealth was a 10-year funding

arrangement. In the first five years of the funding arrangement, it would provide block funding, which we argued that with a bit of work we could probably make cost neutral. In the second five years, the Commonwealth did not propose a block funding arrangement, it proposed a system in simple terms based on the relative case mix of each treated veteran at the Greenslopes Repatriation Hospital. It was estimated by both the Commonwealth and Queensland Health that it would cost \$60m in the latter five years to run the Greenslopes Hospital. We estimated that, given a bit of luck, and again, a bit of push, we could probably get \$44m a year in case mix funding for the Greenslopes Hospital.

Let me make this point very clear, the main reason was quite simply: on every estimate—both on the Commonwealth's figures and on Queensland Health's figures—Queensland taxpayers would have been \$80m out of pocket over 10 years. That is the principal reason.

**Mrs Sheldon** interjected.

**Mr HAYWARD:** Certainly, the member is right. Very importantly, there are other reasons for the refusal, but when we talk about the issue, it should be understood that the principal reason it was knocked back was simply that it was not cost neutral. That position is accepted by all veterans organisations in Queensland. Contrary to what members of the Opposition may think, one thing that the veterans organisations made themselves very clear on, both to me and the Premier, was, principally, that they stood up for Queensland and they wanted to ensure that Queensland taxpayers were in fact treated correctly.

The second issue was certainly that of bed numbers. There is no doubt about that. We do have an oversupply of beds in the inner city area of Brisbane. The third issue, of course, is the much more complex issue of industrial relations. Many of the matters that were involved related to significant rationalisations and significant downsizing of the hospital. This was agreed to relative to proposals put forward by the Commonwealth. That is the principal reason why we will not take on the Greenslopes Hospital.

The issue is not simply about one case that was raised by the Deputy Leader of the Coalition. Principally, the issue is about treating patients. The matter in issue is no longer bed numbers. With changes in technology, the issue is now about availability of surgical theatres and specialist surgeons. This Government has a commitment to spend \$1.5 billion over the next 10 years—a record capital budget—to address

the problems caused by the neglect and the decay of the past.

**Mrs Sheldon** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Does the Deputy Leader of the Coalition think she could get on to the next question, please?

**Mrs Sheldon:** I was absolutely bemused by the answer to the first question, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

### **Building Services Authority**

**Mrs SHELDON:** My next question is to the Minister for Housing and Local Government. In light of this Government's appalling record with taxes on the business in this State, it was not surprising last year that some building contractors protested against rising fees and charges by delaying payment of their annual licence fee to the Building Services Authority. They are now wondering what tiny-minded notion of revenge is motivating the decision this year to penalise them by requiring that they pay their 1994-95 licence fee by the end of February. I ask: did the Minister authorise and does he approve of this vengeful requirement for certain contractors to pay fees a full four months before the year begins?

**Mr MACKENROTH:** The answer is: no, I did not authorise it. That is the responsibility of the Building Services Authority.

### **Poker Machines**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer to media reports throughout Queensland of the success of the introduction of poker machines. I ask: can the Treasurer provide the House with an update on how poker machine licensed clubs and hotels are performing?

**Mr De LACY:** I am pleased to do so. There are a couple of significant dates of which people should be aware. Last Friday, 11 February, was the second anniversary of the introduction of poker machines into Queensland. Tomorrow, at the Pine Rivers United Sports Club at Strathpine, the one-thousandth site will be commissioned. There will now be poker machines at 1 000 sites throughout Queensland. I think by any measure the introduction of poker machines in Queensland has been an outstanding success.

**Mr Gibbs** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** As the Minister for Sport, Tourism and Racing says, the Leader of the Opposition ought to apologise. I will just take members back to the time when we were

introducing poker machines. Members will remember all of the ravings of the Leader of the Opposition? Do members remember the knitting needle? There are now 15 000 poker machines in 1 000 sites throughout Queensland and we still have not seen anybody, armed with a knitting needle, attempting to blow up the whole system. We are still waiting. With the benefit of hindsight, one would have to say that the ravings of the Leader of the Opposition at that time were not well balanced.

The monthly turnover of poker machines in Queensland is now \$200m. Since the introduction of poker machines, the total turnover has been \$3.2 billion. There have been 2 000 new jobs created and there is almost \$300m in new development in the club industry. We introduced poker machines to throw out a life raft to the licensed club industry. That has worked and it is now a thriving industry in Queensland.

I shall now make a few comments about the Community Benefit Fund. It is interesting to see National Party people jumping on the bandwagon to support that campaign for the larger clubs to distribute all or part of the Community Benefit Fund themselves. I am interested in National Party people writing to me and their local media, saying, "We think that is what should happen. We should not let the Government distribute this right throughout Queensland."

**Mr Horan:** We know where you'll put it.

**Mr De LACY:** I heard that. I shall give the member for Toowoomba South some advice, because he was one of the people who wrote to me. A total of 77 clubs will be contributing to the Community Benefit Fund, and 55 of those clubs are situated in Labor electorates. I probably will not be popular among members on this side of the House when this information gets out. If the Government acceded to the Opposition's request to let those clubs distribute those funds in their own areas, the overwhelming majority of that funding would go into Labor electorates.

**Mr Bennett:** Resign!

**Mr De LACY:** I knew I was taking a risk by saying that. Based on the January turnover, in one year the top five clubs will be contributing something like \$2.7m—almost half of the clubs' contributions to the Community Benefit Fund. Those top five clubs are all located in Labor electorates. The Goss Government always does these things in an equitable—

**Mrs Sheldon:** They're distributed on the basis of need.

**Mr De LACY:** That is what I am saying. The Community Benefit Fund will be distributed

on the basis of need. If I acceded to representations from members of the National Party, the overwhelming majority of that funding would go into Labor Party electorates. We are not that type of Government; we are fair and equitable.

### Computer Games

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister for Consumer Affairs: what progress has been made towards controlling computer games on bulletin boards, and when can we expect to see legislation covering these matters?

**Mr BURNS:** The problem confronting Governments with computer games is that, with the rapid advances in technology and the volume of games being produced, it has been almost impossible for censorship officials to deal with the issue without a national policy. The other problem is that most of the adults cannot play the games, so they cannot find out what their kids are doing. I admit that I am one of those people, because I am computer illiterate when it comes to those games.

We cannot have inspectors sitting around and playing Nintendo games all day to find out whether one is going to rape, murder or pillage during the latter stages of a computer game. I cannot even get the bloke to swing on the rope to get across the first waterhole. My grandchildren always want to play against me at Christmas time, because I am an easy beat. How can I provide some parental responsibility if I cannot even play the game? I cannot be expected to have a team of officials sitting around and playing those games. We need some cooperation from the industry in relation to this matter, and we need a national policy.

On 4 November, Ministers responsible for censorship met in Sydney and discussed classification of computer and arcade games and future regulation of bulletin boards. The meeting agreed to introduce compulsory classification of computer games or images offered for sale, hire or arcade use against an agreed set of guidelines. There were two exceptions to classifications of software of this type. The first was the bulletin board systems, which the Commonwealth proposed would remain the responsibility of Telecom/Optus/Austel under Commonwealth telecommunications legislation. I shall come back to that in a minute. The other exception was business, accounting, professional, scientific and educational software, which would not be regulated unless it fell within the proposed restricted classification level. I can hardly understand how business or accounting

software would be R rated. Nevertheless, perhaps accountants work that way.

I stress again that the success of this proposal will depend upon the cooperation of industry. Because of the interactive nature of games and the use of many different forms of hardware to generate images, including IBM, Amiga and Apple Macintosh computers, Sega, Atari and Nintendo video machines, it is necessary to obtain maximum industry cooperation at the outset to ensure that any legislation proceeded with is effective, provides sufficient protection and guidance for the community whilst ensuring that there is sufficient consumer education for adults like me so that they can adequately protect the interests of their families.

It is proposed that industry representatives will be trained in the classification of computer-generated images. The industry will then be able to submit to the Commonwealth Censor proposed classification levels for computer software up to but not including the R level. In other words, any material which the industry classifies as falling below the R level could be classified on an interim basis subject to the approval of the Commonwealth Censor.

**Mrs Sheldon:** What about bulletin boards?

**Mr BURNS:** No, I am not talking about bulletin boards. I am talking about computer games and arcade games. R level or higher categories could only be classified by the Commonwealth Censor. The categories agreed to for the classification of computer games as classified by the Commonwealth Office of Film and Literature Classification are: G, recommended for all ages; GA, recommended for children eight years and over—and that is where the skills are, in those very young children; M: for mature audiences, recommended for persons 15 years and over; MA: restricted to those aged 15 years and over, not available in arcades; and R and X: restricted to those aged 18 years and over. State Ministers have not agreed to adopt all the categories, and it will remain up to each State to determine whether they wish to exclude any of these categories, such as R or X, from their legislation.

Since that meeting, the Commonwealth Censor placed advertisements in all major Australian papers seeking public submissions on the draft guidelines, which closed on Monday, 13 December 1993. The Commonwealth Minister indicated that he would endeavour to have amendments made to the ACT Classification of Publications Ordinance 1993 as soon as possible with a view to the States then having the option of passing complementary

legislation to ensure that computer games are classified in each of the States.

I turn to the issue of bulletin boards, which was mentioned by Mrs Sheldon. This issue was considered by the Australian Law Reform Commission. Ministers considered the report and agreed that, despite the technical and legal difficulties that bulletin boards remain totally unregulated by censorship legislation, a significant avoidance problem would arise. In other words, we have to do something. There has been a lot of publicity about the use of bulletin boards by pornographers.

**Mr FitzGerald:** This should have been a ministerial; you're taking up question time.

**Mr BURNS:** It should have been. I am sorry. I do apologise for that, but this is an important issue. This afternoon, I am attending a funeral on the Gold Coast, and I felt that I should try to get this information out at this time. The problem with bulletin boards is that one can connect by phone to America and download information from a bulletin board into a computer here. That is not something that an ordinary, average State censor can control. There is a problem there.

Section 85Z (e) of the Commonwealth Crime Act provides that a person shall not knowingly or recklessly use a telecommunication service supplied by a carrier in such a way as would be regarded by reasonable persons as being in all these circumstances offensive. The penalty is imprisonment for one year. This Government is considering that aspect in relation to bulletin boards.

The classification of computer games will be discussed at a meeting of censorship Ministers in Canberra tomorrow morning. This meeting will obviously discuss the results of the consultation process and seek national support for the classification of games. If agreement is reached, Queensland will act quickly to implement any legislative steps required. For the information of honourable members, I table a copy of the draft guidelines for the classification of computer games which were subject to public consultation through the advertising process in December.

### **Royal Brisbane Hospital, Health Funding**

**Mr HORAN:** In directing a question to the Minister for Health, I refer to the continuing crisis of funding for the Royal Brisbane Hospital which caused the loss of 100 clinical nurse positions last year, resulting in wards requiring 24 nurses being staffed with as few as 16 nurses; with many wards having beds unofficially closed due to staff shortages, and one-third of the surgical

ward capacity to be shut down immediately, and I ask: is the Minister prepared to redirect extra funding to this most basic need of that important Queensland hospital, or will he still allow nursing shortages and unofficial bed closures to continue?

**Mr HAYWARD:** This year's operating budget for the Royal Brisbane Hospital is a record. Members of the Opposition should be careful, although I suppose that they can engage in any sort of shroud waving for the Nurses Union or whatever else they may wish to take on. The reality is that, in simple terms, this year's budget for the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority will be an amount of \$453.5m of taxpayers' money. I repeat: \$453.5m. The Royal Brisbane Hospital represents the major cost centre within that region. The operating budget in 1992-93 was \$200.9m. This year, the budgeted figure has been increased to \$201.3m. The budget has in fact increased. That budget has to be used to provide the services that are so necessary.

This year, the Royal Brisbane Hospital will produce a record output of surgical procedures. There is no doubt about that. Members opposite are living in another time. The issue is not about bed numbers. The issue is about the availability of theatres and the availability of specialists and anaesthetists to perform the surgery. I will explain in a simple fashion what is happening. As all honourable members should know, after undergoing a major surgical procedure, people are spending much less time in bed, and the turnover of patients is a lot quicker. As I have said, this year the Royal Brisbane Hospital will produce a record output of surgical procedures. A record number of patients will be treated at that hospital. In that context, the Royal Brisbane Hospital will have a record budget.

Honourable members need only read the history of the Royal Brisbane Hospital. In a very important book, it is stated that since 1843, at approximately this time of year, elements at the Royal Brisbane Hospital have continually argued as loudly as they can that they need more money, that they need a larger budget. That has been happening since 1843. This year, on 27 January, they said that they were \$9m short. They only missed by one day the date of the previous year's claim. On 26 January last year, they said that they were \$9m short. Those elements, who are determined to disrupt and to generally interfere with the operations of what is an excellent hospital, could not even change the amount.

This is extremely important because, under the Medicare agreement, the State will receive

an award under Pool B on the basis of occupied bed days. That will be the measure of how successful the hospital system is in Queensland. If we receive the funding under Pool B—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The Minister is starting to debate the question.

**Mr HAYWARD:**—that is a clear demonstration of the success of the hospital.

#### **Director, Brisbane North Regional Health Authority**

**Mr HORAN:** In directing a second question to the Minister for Health, I remind him of a similar question that I asked 12 months ago about his recently sacked director. In view of the chaotic state of the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority, with consultancies proposing impractical dismantling of the Royal Brisbane Hospital, with the attempted bureaucratic takeover of the operational management of the four hospitals by that authority, the funding and bedside service crisis at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, the cutbacks in cardiac surgery at the Prince Charles Hospital and his apparent lack of knowledge of these events, I ask: does the Minister have full confidence in the ability and the current performance of the director of the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority?

**Mr HAYWARD:** Over the holiday break, the shadow Minister engaged in a cowardly attack on the director of the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority. I think that in a press conference he described him as a tool of Stalin. It was so outrageous that journalists at the press conference asked, "Mr Horan, do you know anything about Stalin? Do you know what you are talking about? Do you have any idea about what is going on?" He never had a clue. He just used a throw-away line.

When one talks about Dr Campbell, one is talking about a senior specialist and gastroenterologist who works in an extremely difficult environment for the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

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

**Mr HAYWARD:** In simple terms, Dr Campbell is doing an excellent job in very difficult circumstances.

#### **Stalking Laws**

**Mr DAVIES:** I ask the Attorney-General: is he aware of recent claims by the Leader of the Liberal Party to the effect that Queensland's

stalking laws are not working? Is he aware that the Leader of the Liberal Party has drawn to the attention of the public particular cases in which she claims that the laws are not working? Will the Attorney advise the House of the state of the law in respect of this matter?

**Mr WELLS:** Since the stalking laws were introduced, 20 cases have been brought throughout Queensland. That is in the 11 weeks approximately since those laws were introduced. That is hardly the hallmark of laws that are not working. The Leader of the Liberal Party has failed to work out that when we introduced the stalking laws, we did not repeal the Criminal Code, we did not repeal the domestic violence legislation, we did not repeal the Vagrants, Gaming, and Other Offences Act. All the rest of the laws remain intact. These are additional remedies. That is why the Leader of the Liberal Party got it wrong last week. She got it wrong! The case that was raised by her last week was a case that, prior to her raising it, was being dealt with under the domestic violence legislation. Despite her denials, it was being dealt with by the police. When she raised that case, it was being dealt with under the domestic violence legislation.

The Leader of the Liberal Party is going around the State dudding people. She is muscling in on the misery of people and offering them a videotape instead of a remedy. This is something to which the honourable member is sensitive.

Yesterday afternoon, I had the pleasure of appearing on the Carolyn Tucker radio program with the Leader of the Liberal Party. In the course of that program she said, "I am not endeavouring to score cheap political points." I ask honourable members: would they accept a plea of not guilty from that woman? What is remarkable is not that she pleaded not guilty but that at no stage during that 10-minute segment had I accused her of trying to score cheap political points. There speaks the voice of a guilty conscience. The Leader of the Liberal Party knows—as does every member of this House—that she is guilty of dudding people, and very soon the people of Queensland will know that she is guilty of dudding people.

#### **Curriculum Material**

**Mr DAVIES:** In directing a question to the Minister for Education, I refer to statements made to the media yesterday by the member for Merrimac, and I ask: was Mr Quinn correct when he said that schools must now pay up to \$200 each to equip new teachers with curriculum material?

**Mr COMBEN:** I thank the honourable member for the question and welcome the opportunity to put the record straight. Mr Quinn is nothing if he is not consistent. He got it wrong before; he got it wrong yesterday; and, no doubt, he will get it wrong again in the future.

Despite his background in education and the department's efforts to brief him on a number of occasions, Mr Quinn still fails to get it right in terms of education. Yesterday, he said that under the Labor Government new schools receive free curriculum material, while established schools must pay up to \$200 each per teacher. That is incorrect. The system today is exactly the same system as that which was in place when members opposite were in Government. The Education Department supplies sets of curriculum material as required to each school, and any teacher who wishes to obtain additional copies for personal use may do so and, presumably, pay for it. Nothing has changed in that respect—and certainly nothing has changed as far as the member for Merrimac is concerned.

Yesterday, Mr Quinn was handing out report cards. However, if he cared to look at his own report card, he would see that he has again failed to do his homework. He repeats his mistakes and is in need of special attention. In short, Mr Quinn is the classroom clown. I have to be disappointed when I see a teacher sitting opposite me from whom we barely hear but, when we do, what he says is wrong. Mr Quinn will not accept briefings from the department. It is a fairly sad day for education.

#### **Sale of Government-owned CBD Properties**

**Mr LINGARD:** In directing a question to the Minister for Administrative Services, I draw attention to his statement that the sale of eight Government-owned CBD properties is an opportunity to capitalise on the upturn in the central residential market. I contrast the Minister's statement to those of the Minister for Lands, who this week released property valuations that show a substantial drop in CBD values of 10.5 per cent. I ask: does the Minister agree that the fire sale of CBD real estate is, in fact, prompted by the desperate need of his Government to raid another hollow log and raise easy money to fill cash reserves in consolidated revenue?

**Mr MILLINER:** I welcome the question, because it indicates how out of touch the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is. If he had taken the time to look at those valuations, as I understand it they are up to 30 June 1993, and

are therefore about 12 months old. There has been a significant upturn in property movements in the inner city. One has only to look at the number of unit developments in the inner city that have been announced recently by developers. The sale of those unit developments has been outstandingly successful.

The properties in question that have been placed on the market are surplus to the Government's requirements. They are no longer needed, and it is only right and proper that they should be disposed of.

#### **Australian Friesian Sahiwal Cattle**

**Mr LINGARD:** In directing my second question to the Minister for Primary Industries, I refer him to his Government's decision in favour of the Victorian-based firm RAB Australia as the successful tenderer for the purchase of the Australian Friesian Sahiwal herd project. In view of the fact that RAB Australia has now sought a three-month extension to complete the deal, I ask: firstly, as the company was trading on a cash-only basis in its dealings with his department, what checks were made as to its financial capability to honour the tender offer? Secondly, are negotiations currently under way to change the basis of the deal to assist RAB? Thirdly, as the Minister overturned a unanimous recommendation from his department's tender assessment committee which was in favour of a Queensland-based tender, is not his bungle now costing Queensland taxpayers an extra half a million dollars in holding costs, as well as lost jobs?

**Mr CASEY:** A former leader of the groups sitting opposite me often used to refer in this House to the habit of flogging a dead horse. In this case, the honourable member for Beaudesert and several of his colleagues appear to be into the old dead horse with a knife and fork. At the moment, that is all they are doing with their public pronouncements over the sale of something that the Queensland Government was given as a legacy of the previous National Party Government of this State.

First and foremost, let me state, and state quite clearly so that honourable members really know the situation, that the AFS cattle project in Queensland went on for something like 30 years. It was costing the taxpayers of this State something like \$1.5m to \$2m a year. Because the commercial dairy industry in this State was not interested in the program, the Goss Government made the decision that it should be passed to commercial interests, if they believed

that it would be viable for the export market, or whatever.

It is not the task of a State Government to engage in the trading of cattle. It is not the Government's task to breed and sell cattle; its task is to carry out research work and development. There are almost 200 000 dairy cattle in Queensland. Although according to members opposite the AFS cattle program was supposedly so successful, there were only 30 AFS cattle in commercial herds in Queensland. It was supposed to be a special tropical breed, yet none of those cattle were located in the tropical areas of this State. Graziers in the tropical areas of this State are not the least bit interested in them.

The decision was taken by this Government to divest itself of this project so that the taxpayers of Queensland could achieve some return and the research money that was being wasted on it could be spent elsewhere within the industry. That was the reason behind the divestment.

As for some of the furrphies that are still being spread by the member for Beaudesert, the member for Barambah and a few other members about a three months' extension—it is a normal practice, and the lead documents contained provisions in which the length of time could be negotiated to allow checks to be made of the herd prior to finalisation of the sale.

Opposition members have been talking about 50 jobs related to this project. There are 23 full-time officers employed at Wacol on this project. Those officers are still employed. They will have the opportunity of either going to across to the company or staying with the department. There will be no job losses as a result of this activity.

The Opposition is flogging a dead horse. All the things that are occurring are the same as what occurs in normal commercial practice. I feel sure that some other members who have properties and cattle herds follow the same practices.

### **Queensland Ambulance Service**

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I ask the Deputy Premier and Minister for Emergency Services: what progress has Queensland Emergency Services made in the provision of coronary care equipment in ambulances and the training of ambulance officers in its use?

**Mr BURNS:** I thank the honourable member for the question. He was a member of the Fire Service prior to entering this Parliament, and he knows the value of the heart-start

machines, or the Packer whackers, as they are known since Mr Packer gave so many of them to the New South Wales ambulance service after it saved his life.

People tend to be critical of the Ambulance Service because it is slow, or for other reasons. However, from time to time, we ought to look at the number of lives that are being saved by it. For example, last weekend, in a rural town doctors were saying to me that people are now arriving at hospitals in a better condition, and more are able to be saved than ever before because of the training of the ambulance officers in the use of the defibrillators, or the heart-start machines, as I like to call them.

I draw members' attention to two cases that would give them a good feeling about the Ambulance Service. We should have a good feeling about our ambulance officers because they work very hard. My former deputy director, Mal Grierson, was at Palm Beach with his brother-in-law, who is 47 years old, and who dropped dead of a heart attack. Mr Grierson carried his brother-in-law to a doctor's surgery, the ambulance arrived, hit him with the Packer whackers and stabilised him. That man has now returned to Perth. He asked Mal Grierson, "What can I do to help?" He donated \$50,000 toward the purchase of more defibrillators.

On 5 January this year, I was in Bundaberg speaking to ambulance officers when they received a call. They left me to attend to a young 17-year old boy who had been electrocuted. The report stated that upon arrival of the QAS officers, the patient was found to be in cardiac arrest, and clinically dead. The officer, using a defibrillator, countershocked the patient three times, and managed his condition according to QAS protocols. The patient responded to treatment and was transferred to the Bundaberg Hospital. He spent six days in hospital, and has since been discharged. He has visited the Bundaberg station and expressed his appreciation to one of the attending officers for saving his life.

The Queensland Ambulance Service has gone from fewer than 70 defibrillators at the commencement of the QAS to 397 defibrillators—one in every first-response ambulance. That means that if a person has a heart attack and the ambulance can get to him or her in time—and that is a matter of calling immediately and other things—that person has a great chance of being taken to the hospital alive and in a condition in which doctors can save his or her live. That type of work, and the donations that we have received from various groups, ought to be applauded. Instead of knocking the service all the time, it is time that people

recognised all the good things that are happening in the Ambulance Service.

### Two-up Driving

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I ask the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development: can he inform the House of any plans by the Queensland Government to endorse the practice of two-up driving for coach and truck operators?

**Mr HAMILL:** There has long been debate in the road transport industry in Queensland regarding the practice of two-up driving for heavy vehicles, particularly motor coaches. It has certainly been the policy of this Government and, indeed, it was the policy of its predecessors, to oppose two-up driving in this State.

For the information of members who are unaware of exactly what is the two-up mode, I point out that it is that mode of operation of heavy vehicles where there are two drivers present in the vehicle who take it in turns to be in control of the vehicle.

Last Friday, the inaugural meeting of the Australian Transport Council took place in Melbourne, at which the National Road Transport Commission brought forward a series of recommendations regarding permissible driving hours for interstate coach operations. In that context, one of the key issues being debated was that of two-up driving. My repeated assertion—and I will say it again today—is that two-up driving contributes to a greater risk of fatigue with respect to the operation of heavy vehicles.

There are plenty of examples of drivers being disturbed during the time that they do not spend at the wheel, and therefore they do not get the full quantum of rest that they would be expected to under that mode of operation. Currently, in Queensland it is permissible for drivers of heavy vehicles to drive for 12 hours and to take appropriate rest periods after five hours behind the wheel. It was interesting that the National Road Transport Commission's recommendations adopted that standard across the nation in relation to heavy vehicle operations.

The commission also recommended—partly, I guess, in recognition of those of us who have been arguing that two-up contributes to fatigue—that two-up driving be permitted for interstate coach operations, but that the quantum of driving hours be reduced when the two-up mode was being adopted; that is, 11 hours and not 12 hours, with the same time

periods for a break. I voted against that proposition. I indicated that, when the vote is taken in the ministerial council proper, I will again vote against the proposition.

The industry itself is divided on the issue. A survey of drivers found that there was quite a polarisation of views as to whether the two-up mode was the safer or whether staged driving was safer. I do know for a fact that, even though we have consistently opposed two-up driving in Queensland, interstate operators have used the two-up practice to drive from, say, Melbourne to Brisbane. At the border, they ensure that the driving logbook hours are in order for one driver to purport a single stage driver operation. I know that for a fact because, a few weeks ago, one of my staff members was travelling from Melbourne on a coach. As the passengers were wondering why the coach had come to a halt on the southern side of the Queensland/New South Wales border, an announcement was made over the PA system to the effect that, "They have some funny rules in Queensland. We are making sure that we get our logbooks in order before we proceed on to Brisbane." Those sorts of abuses are occurring.

I believe that there is merit in having a uniform and enforceable regime with respect to driving hours across Australia. Although I do not like two-up driving, I do believe that, if the ministerial council and all of the Liberal and National party members who have supported it for many years in the past reach a general consensus—if there is a vote in favour—I will recommend uniformity to the Queensland Government.

### Sale of Electricity by Sugar Mills to QEC

**Mr BREDHAUER:** In directing a question to the Minister for Minerals and Energy, I refer to media reports in recent times about sugar mills selling power to the QEC, and I ask: can the Minister inform the House of any developments in this area?

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the member for the question, as it allows me to inform the House of yet another success story of this Government. Just over a year ago, I approved new guidelines for the price to be paid to small private companies that could generate power which could be fed into the Queensland electricity grid. This allowed the sugar mills to deal directly with the local electricity boards in arranging for the purchase of the mills' excess power produced by burning bagasse, the waste product of the mills.

In many mills, this bagasse was simply being burned off. The only result was pollution. The Queensland electricity industry has worked

actively with the sugar mills and with their peak bodies to come up with the best arrangements so that the mills are able to provide electricity throughout the season and not just during the crushing periods. I am pleased to inform the House that eight mills have indicated a commitment to these new arrangements, and more will follow.

I contrast this, and these sensible arrangements, to the Opposition's ridiculous and continued calls for public money to be simply handed over to private individuals with unproven proposals. What we have achieved here is a win/win situation with cheaper power for Queenslanders, more money for the mills and greater environmental advantage by using waste products to produce power.

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

### **INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS REFORM BILL 1994**

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (11.18 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Industrial Relations Act 1990 to further promote workplace reforms and protect workers' entitlements, and for other purposes."

Motion agreed to.

#### **First Reading**

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

#### **Second Reading**

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (11.19 a.m.): I move—

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

Since the days of T. J. Ryan, successive Queensland Labor Governments have striven to protect the basic rights of workers, to resolve industrial disputes peacefully and to promote productivity in Queensland workplaces. This Bill stands proudly in that tradition. The Bill continues the industrial relations legislative reform that has been a hallmark of both terms of the Goss Government.

In 1990, the Honourable Nev Warburton introduced the Industrial Relations Act. This created an environment in which industrial

relations processes could be carried out without the confrontationist attitudes of the past. This Bill has the central characteristics of its predecessors in that it provides key protections and improvements for individual employees in the context of labour market reform. It unashamedly takes up provisions of the Commonwealth Industrial Relations Reform Act, namely, minimum entitlements for employees, the promotion of bargaining and the facilitation of agreements with a fair and equitable award system as a safety net.

An important thrust of the Bill is demonstrated by a proposed new object of helping to prevent and eliminate discrimination generally and in particular on the ground of family responsibilities. It is also proposed that the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission will be required in performing its functions to take into account the principles embodied in ILO Convention 156—Workers with Family Responsibilities, particularly to prevent discrimination against workers with family responsibilities and to help those workers to reconcile their employment and family responsibilities. These proposals are apposite and significant contributions to the International Year of the Family.

Employers can benefit greatly by being sensitive to workers with family responsibilities through improved worker commitment and reduced staff turnover. It is proposed that all Queensland employees, regardless of whether or not they are covered by an award, have access to minimum conditions of employment for wages, equal pay for work of equal value, protection in the event of dismissal and 12 months parental and adoption leave. These minimum conditions are in accord with various international conventions. This is a real opportunity for this Parliament to acknowledge the importance of international obligations as our economy becomes increasingly internationalised.

Labour market reform through enterprise bargaining is necessary if we are to ensure that the Queensland and Australian economies are productive and competitive and provide satisfying and secure employment. An important innovation is the introduction of a new enterprise bargaining instrument—the enterprise flexibility agreement. This will be a vehicle to bring the benefits of enterprise bargaining to non-unionised enterprises. There is now an opportunity for employers—particularly those in small and medium-sized businesses—to reach an agreement with their employees and bring it to the commission for approval. Those with the knowledge of the enterprise will be better able to

customise a formal agreement which best meets the production requirements of the business and at the same time meets the needs of the workers and protects them.

In 1992, I introduced amendments which encouraged and facilitated enterprise bargaining by way of certified agreements. They also made a significant contribution to the ongoing rationalisation of union coverage. Provisions were also included that improved the conditions of individual employees. The success of those amendments is evidenced by the progress that has been made with enterprise bargaining in Queensland.

In November 1993, Queensland passed the milestone of 100 approved agreements. As at 1 February 1994, there were 155 approved enterprise bargaining agreements under State legislation covering more than 45 000 workers. In just three months there has been a 55 per cent increase. The Queensland agreements cover a wide range of industries and include a diversity of productivity initiatives and improvements tailored to the needs of the individual business.

More and more Queensland employers are realising that any activity or arrangement that has an impact on the productivity, management or operation of a business can be included in an enterprise bargaining agreement. A departmental survey of the enterprise bargaining agreements approved up to 1 February 1994 shows about 50 per cent of all agreements changed work time patterns—such as averaging working hours—to increase efficiency. Many of the agreements contain a stated commitment to reduce inefficient work practices. For example, almost 50 per cent seek to develop measures to reduce demarcation. Sixty per cent of the agreements contain a commitment to increase the skill levels of the work force, which shows that many employers are recognising the importance of training and development as a means of improving productivity and efficiency. The agreements reflect an increasing recognition of the importance of a consultative, co-operative approach to effective industrial relations in workplaces.

I turn now to the key proposals. The Bill has the following principal elements—

- the award safety net and minimum entitlements;
- promoting bargaining and facilitating agreements;
- the immunity period;
- small industrial organisations;
- employee benefits;

improvements to institutional arrangements; and recognition of Federal amalgamation ballots.

#### The Award Safety Net and Minimum Entitlements

The Bill addresses the need to have a relevant, up to date and consistent framework of awards to serve as a safety net for those employees who are unable to access enterprise bargaining and to be a benchmark for enterprise bargaining.

The Industrial Relations Commission will be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that awards serve the purpose that protects the lower paid both in an economic sense and also that workplaces are free of discrimination. Awards need to be free of unnecessary and obsolete provisions. To this end, awards will be reviewed every three years.

The commission is given responsibility to ensure secure, relevant and consistent wages and conditions of employment. While the emphasis is on a consistent framework of minimum award rates, provision is made for paid rates awards to continue and be maintained in areas where employees have customarily had access to them. However, if the integrity of such awards is not maintained, they will be cancelled or varied appropriately. The Government expects that many employees presently covered by paid rates awards will progressively move to comprehensive certified agreements.

There is a positive encouragement to the commission to insert enterprise flexibility clauses in awards. These provide a process for agreements to be reached in individual enterprises to vary award conditions to the mutual benefit of the employer and employees. Employees are protected since approval by the commission requires it to be satisfied that they are not disadvantaged. These clauses have a great potential to encourage small business to take a quick and uncomplicated way to amend a particular award provision that is not appropriate. I encourage employers and employees to use these provisions to the maximum extent.

As one of the minimum entitlement provisions resting on the international conventions, it is proposed that employees or an industrial organisation representing them will be able to seek from the commission an order setting minimum wages for a specific group. Also reflecting an international responsibility under a ratified ILO Convention is the provision that the commission will be able to make orders to ensure that remuneration, including over-award

payments, for work of equal value does not discriminate on the basis of sex.

The existing provisions in the Act providing for reinstatement and re-employment are being repealed and will be replaced with nationally consistent provisions that reflect the ILO Convention No. 158—Termination of Employment. These are similar to current provisions of the Industrial Relations Act with two changes—the cap on compensation is removed and the onus has been placed on the employer.

Besides the previous prohibition on harsh and unjust dismissals grounds, it is now unlawful to dismiss an employee on the basis of discriminatory grounds such as family responsibilities and other grounds as specified in the Anti-Discrimination Act. When termination for economic, technological or structural reasons has been determined, involving 15 or more employees, the commission will be able to make orders and begin consultative processes. There will be a statutory notification of such dismissals to the Commonwealth Employment Service. These changes broadly reflect the 1987 Declaration of Policy by the Industrial Commission on Termination of Employment, Introduction of Changes, Redundancy. This has since then become a standard in many awards.

It is also proposed that all employees, award and non-award, will be entitled to 12 months unpaid parental leave which can be shared between the parents. Regulations will provide for adoption leave on a similar basis. Both these entitlements are already provided for in commission orders. The major outcome of these proposals is that they will now be minimum entitlements for all employees.

It is proposed that the commission will be required to encourage the establishment and use of industry consultative councils. These will provide a mechanism for the industrial parties in an industry to work together for reform.

#### Promoting Bargaining and Facilitating Agreements

A major objective of the Bill is to encourage and facilitate the increasing use of enterprise bargaining. This is done in two ways: by enhancing the current provisions providing for certified agreements and by the introducing of a new instrument—enterprise flexibility agreements. It is proposed to vary the provisions for certified agreements to allow relevant unions who are not parties to be heard at the certification hearing, and for there to be consultation with all employees during the negotiation stage rather than just with union members. Parties will also be able to include in a certified agreement a provision to enable them

to vary it in the manner set out in the agreement. This is to encourage the making of longer-term agreements.

Enterprise flexibility agreements are being introduced to provide the non-union sector with access to enterprise bargaining in a way that provides maximum flexibility but with appropriate safeguards for the employees. It is proposed to provide this by use of the "no-disadvantage" test which has proved its worth with certified agreements. The essence of this is that the agreements must not disadvantage employees' terms and conditions of employment considered as a whole. If the enterprise is not bound by an award, a certified agreement must nominate an award that will serve as a benchmark for the test.

The "no-disadvantage" test has been an important innovation. Applying as it does to the overall package of employee entitlements, it allows for a wide range of variations to award conditions. It also allows for agreed reductions if these are not against the public interest, for example, as part of a strategy for dealing with a short-term business crisis and revival. However, as has been consistently stressed, the provision is intended to protect well-established and accepted standards which apply across the community; standards such as maternity leave, hours of work, parental leave, minimum rates of pay, termination change and redundancy provisions and superannuation.

Enterprise flexibility agreements will have to run for a specific period but may provide for amendment within the agreement. An employer will be able to make an agreement with his or her employees and take it to the commission for approval and for implementation. If one or more of the employees is a member of a relevant union, the union must be given the opportunity to be part of the agreement. When the agreement goes to the commission for approval, all relevant unions will be given the opportunity to be heard, but there is no power of veto. Employees under these agreements are given an additional safeguard to those under a certified agreement since the commission will be able to refuse approval on public interest grounds because of exceptional circumstances. This protection is reinforced by the requirement that the majority of employees must consent to the agreement.

The commission will be able to conciliate in regard to agreements. It will also be able to make orders to require a party to take action consistent with bargaining in good faith. The Bill provides guidance on what constitutes good faith. Once made, enterprise flexibility agreements operate

in a similar manner to certified agreements, a process that has proved to be effective.

#### Immunity Period

The Bill proposes a right for employers and employees to take industrial action during the negotiation of certified agreements with a concomitant recognition of the distinction between the interests stage of negotiation and the rights stage during the operation of the agreement. Industrial action, strikes and lockouts which take place during a bargaining period for a certified agreement will be immune from sanctions. This will not extend to action involving personal injury, wilful or reckless destruction of, or damage to, property, or the unlawful taking, keeping or use of property.

Specified notices have to be given to obtain an immunity-free bargaining period. The commission will be able to terminate this if it considers a party is not bargaining in good faith or if it is of the opinion that the industrial action is threatening to endanger the safety, health or welfare of the public or to cause significant damage to the economy. Provision is also made that an employer must not dismiss an employee for engaging in industrial action.

This provision and the immune bargaining period flow from obligations under international conventions that have been ratified by Australia. The immune bargaining period is a recognised concept in many developed countries. It is important in ensuring a certain and coherent bargaining framework.

#### Small Industrial Organisations

To accord with International Labour Organisation requirements, it is proposed that the current minimum membership of 1 000 for unions will be reduced to 100. In special circumstances the commission will be able to allow continued registration of unions with fewer members.

#### Employee Benefits

Amendments are proposed that will widen access to long service leave for casual employees.

#### Improvements to Institutional Arrangements

Amendments are proposed to the current arrangements for enforcement of orders. The automatic process is discontinued. Parties now have to seek orders and the party seeking the order is then responsible for prosecuting it. It is also proposed to provide that, if an order purports to cover individuals, then the individuals are named and due process undertaken to inform them.

#### Recognition of Federal Amalgamation Ballots

Many amalgamations that occur within the State jurisdiction are clear equivalents of those that have already occurred federally. However, the current legislation still requires a ballot to be held for the State proposal. This is a time consuming and costly exercise, particularly for the Governments which finance these.

It is proposed that the commission, subject to stringent tests being met, will be able to recognise the Federal ballot and grant an exemption from a ballot for the State-based amalgamation. This proposal has great potential to speed up amalgamations in Queensland.

#### Conclusion

The Bill's provisions will accelerate the labour market reform that is now an established part of the industrial relations agenda. This will support productive economic growth that will generate satisfying and well-paid jobs. Wider options for workplace bargaining are now available. The Government has done its part in providing the institutional framework. It is now up to the industrial parties to take advantage of the opportunity. Enterprise bargaining is a key aspect of micro-economic reform.

The Bill is also important for the proposals that integrate equal employment issues into the obligations of all those with responsibilities under the Act. Another important feature is the continued commitment to match Commonwealth and State legislation, thereby facilitating consistency in the enterprise bargaining process.

This Bill reflects the need to think globally and act locally. It recognises our international human rights obligations. It also gives a framework for local enterprise bargaining in Queensland workplaces.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Santoro, adjourned.

## **SUGAR INDUSTRY AMENDMENT BILL 1994**

### **Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 9 November 1993 (see p. 5473).

**Mr PERRETT** (Barambah) (11.37 a.m.): In rising to speak to this Sugar Industry Amendment Bill, I take the opportunity to say a few things about the sugar industry. This Bill is designed not so much to tidy up a few problems within the industry but to do a couple of things requested by the industry. This Bill aims to bring the Act into shape, because there are a few problems with it, too.

In 1993, the sugar industry did gain some ground. It is very pleasing to note the growing industry confidence that has been evidenced quite recently by the sale of 11 farms for approximately \$5.39m in the Burdekin River Irrigation Scheme. I think that highlights the confidence that is now starting to surface in the industry.

In 1993, farmers saw some fairly erratic seasonal conditions; unseasonably dry conditions followed by unseasonably wet conditions. Despite all of that, there was a harvest of approximately 30 million tonnes of cane, which was up about two and a half million tonnes on the previous year. Raw sugar production remained close to 4 million tonnes.

I suppose one of the things that has injected some confidence into the industry is the fact that we have seen the world price of sugar increase somewhat. Earlier in 1993, it increased to about US13c per pound. Of course, it did not stay at that level, it settled back to around the 10c to 10.5c per pound mark. The No. 1 Pool returned to in the vicinity of \$340 to \$350 per tonne for raw sugar, an increase of 13.2 per cent on the final 1992 price.

Queensland continued to export large amounts of sugar—approximately 3.4 million tonnes—to its traditional customers in Japan, Canada and east Asia. I am told that this year there will be approximately 12 countries receiving Queensland sugar. This tonnage represents about 85 per cent of our total sugar production. With demand for Australian sugar remaining strong, it could be anticipated that production of up to 4.5 million tonnes could be placed in the immediate future without a great deal of stress.

World consumption is expected to exceed production by approximately two million tonnes for the second successive year. Consumption continues to rise by about 1.5 per cent annually. To date, production shortfalls have been met from stocks and, therefore, there has been little carry-through to increase world prices. We have also seen output declining in Thailand and Africa due to drought, and in Cuba as a result of the curtailment of harvesting and milling operations brought about by shortages of fuel and spare parts. That is fairly significant, because at least Australia has been able to continue to produce good quantities of high-quality sugar. With recent rains, the basis of a good crop has been established in most areas for 1994. This year, production could be expected to exceed 30 million tonnes of cane, which could produce as much as 4.3 million tonnes of sugar. Of course, we have a long way to go this year, and weather conditions will determine that outcome.

The international outlook is strong. Plans for major refineries in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are likely to result in Australia exporting increasing quantities of sugar to that region in 1995. These developing markets are making up for some of the concern that exists about the US market. US policies are tending to become more supportive of their own domestic producers, thus limiting our access to US markets and continuing to significantly distort world trade.

Growers and millers have been examining the industry's productive capacity as recommended by the sugar industry task force. Three-year plans have been developed in each mill area to take into account land availability, transport infrastructure and milling capacity. Further examinations have been undertaken by the Queensland Sugar Corporation in relation to storage and handling facilities and market opportunities. The assignment system remains central to the successful management of the industry, and its retention is critical. However, expansion will not be prevented where productive capacity, handling and markets are available. The area assigned to cane growing has increased by over 30 per cent since 1988. The long-term outlook would confirm the view that production in excess of 5 million tonnes of raw sugar, which would come from approximately 37 million tonnes of sugarcane, will be possible within seven years, or by the turn of the century.

**Mr Casey:** What you're saying is that we've done a good job with the sugar industry.

**Mr PERRETT:** What I am saying is that there is still more to do. One should never rest on one's laurels. The recent delivery of the sugar industry infrastructure package, which arose as a result of pre-election undertakings, will largely be directed to non-expanding cane-growing areas. The Opposition certainly played a big part in getting some sort of a deal for the sugar industry. Without the Opposition putting pressure on the Federal Labor Government prior to last year's Federal election, I do not think that the sugar industry would have been looked after as well as it was. The intention of the infrastructure package has been to improve productivity of existing areas and, therefore, to improve growth prospects more equitably within the industry.

The primary function of this amendment Bill is the differential between No. 1 Pool and No. 2 Pool, the differential being that No. 1 and No. 2 Pools declined from 12 per cent to 10 per cent in the 1993 season and will decline further to 8 per cent and then to 6 per cent by 1995. The figure will remain at 6 per cent until the Sugar Industry Act is reviewed that year. That is a fairly

significant part of the Bill that members are debating.

Tariffs have always been a bone of contention and the subject of much discussion. Following the removal of the embargo in 1989, the tariff has been gradually reduced to \$55 per tonne, which is applied to approximately 600 000 tonnes of Queensland production. Because of the developing country preference, the effective tariff is reduced to \$40 per tonne, which provides a benefit to Queensland growers of about \$16m. I believe that is a fairly significant benefit to the industry. The industry would be suffering even worse than it has done in recent years if it were not for that protection.

Recently, the Minister gave an assurance on behalf of the Federal Government that the tariff would remain. I am not too sure how he can do that, because we all know that people in Canberra seem to think differently from the way we do in Queensland. Growers do not trust the economic rationalists in Canberra. It was pleasing to see the Minister giving that assurance, but I hope that he can dissuade his colleagues in Canberra if ever they think about removing that tariff in the future.

The division of sugar moneys is another area of contention within the industry. It has been brought about because growers are now receiving a significantly smaller percentage of their share of those sugar moneys than they were previously.

**Mr Campbell:** Why?

**Mr PERRETT:** The current formula has been in operation for over 70 years and has not been reviewed since 1973. The current method of distributing proceeds was based on the premise that growers should receive about 66 and two-thirds per cent of revenue from the sale of raw sugar, and millers approximately 33 and one-third per cent. There has been a significant decline in the growers' share of proceeds over the past 20 years. This has been brought about by technical improvements in mill capacities, a decline in sugar content and flaws in the construction of the formula which tend to disadvantage growers. The proportion of income received by growers has declined to approximately 63 per cent on average over the past 10 years. The year 1993, which was a low c.c.s. year, will see growers' share of income drop to about 62 per cent. Even in very high c.c.s. areas, growers' share of proceeds has been in the order of 64 per cent over the past 10 years. Members can understand why growers are battling to get a review of the division of sugar moneys.

The key to the success of the Queensland raw sugar industry continues to lie with its regulatory structure, which provides for acquisition of all sugar production and the sale of that production through a single desk, namely, the Queensland Sugar Corporation. I know that the sugar industry is the envy of many other agricultural industries because it has a single seller. The continued operation of a single-desk seller allows the industry to maximise its profits for raw sugar producers and allows efficiency of scale in storage, handling and marketing operations.

The Opposition is supporting this amendment Bill. As I mentioned previously, the primary thrust of this Bill is with the differential between No. 1 and No. 2 Pools. I believe that the change has been canvassed well within the industry and the general community. It has the support of the industry. Secondly, at the request of the Queensland Sugar Corporation, a minor change is being made to the guidelines concerning sugar quality. I am told that the change will allow the corporation to make standards which will detail the bonus and penalty arrangements agreed to between the corporation and the millers, enabling this key component of the buyer/seller relationship to remain confidential. I believe that is an area that certainly needs attention. The Opposition has no problem with that.

The Bill also contains a provision which will clarify the extent to which local awards may allow for the gathering of information in regard to a future crushing season. Once again, the Opposition has no problem with that. I have also noted that the Minister is taking the opportunity to tidy up some other problems in the Sugar Industry Act. In his second-reading speech he stated—

"The opportunity is also taken in this Bill to adjust some matters relating to sugar quality and to remove some spent transitional provisions, to rectify a number of minor drafting errors and to adjust the Act in accordance with some recent changes to drafting practice, including those arising from amendments to the Acts Interpretation Act."

It is probably wise for the Minister to modernise the Act while he has the opportunity. The Opposition gives its support in that regard.

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave) (11.51 a.m.): It is pleasing to see that the Opposition spokesman recognises that the sugar industry in this country, and particularly in Queensland, is in a state of stability and there is great confidence in the industry now. Quite rightly, he pointed out that the world price has improved in the last

couple of years, and that adds to grower confidence. The member also pointed out that problems are being experienced by our major competitors overseas. Sadly, he failed to give due recognition to the real reason for the new period of stability and growing confidence in this industry, that is, the Sugar Industry Act, the way this Government has handled sugar matters and the way the Minister has put his shoulder to the wheel.

When the Act was introduced in 1991, members of the Opposition were cynical. They went around the countryside encouraging people to oppose it. The legislation was going to be another terrible socialist plot that would undo what was, in their eyes, a very well-run industry. What happened was that the growers, the millers and all those associated with the sugar industry in this State realised that the Acts, as they were, were not delivering the sort of progressive and coordinated approach to the growing, marketing and sale of sugar that the 1990s would require. The fact that the Acts did not provide for the creation of dispute resolution systems allowed the millers and growers to be at each others' throats. Opposing groups of growers would fight it out over various areas. Members opposite were quite comfortable with the cooperative millers and the proprietary millers being at war constantly. The 1991 Act brought all of those things together, clarified the situation, and provided mechanisms whereby the industry could, for the first time, speak with one voice. The policy council was the start of that, and the Sugar Corporation is the pinnacle of the reorganisation.

It is interesting to note that this major primary industry—probably our major primary industry—has attracted so much attention from the Opposition that we have only one person in the Chamber from the Opposition other than the Opposition spokesman who has any deep knowledge of the sugar industry. I refer to the member for Hinchinbrook. I congratulate him on being present. It will be very interesting to hear what the member has to say. No doubt he will feel let down that his colleagues are not showing the interest in this industry that they should.

This amendment to the Act will clear up some things that were left undone when the Sugar Industry Act was introduced in 1991. It will clarify a few matters that have arisen since its introduction. The most important aspect has already been alluded to by the Opposition spokesman, that is, the inequities inherent in the old system of the No. 1 and No. 2 Pools—the differential in the payments. May I be so bold as to say that that original system was set up nicely to assist the older growers, the established

growers, the "agristocracy" of this State, to stay in their privileged position. That can no longer be the case. The industry is now faced with a situation in which the average age of farmers is, I think, 56 or 59.

**Mr Springborg:** Fifty-seven.

**Mr PITT:** It is 57 years of age. I am corrected by the Opposition Whip. The industry needs new blood, and this particular amendment will assist in that regard. It will give some incentive to new growers and it will encourage people to come into the industry.

The other point to note in that respect is that the 12 per cent net value for No. 1 Pool over the No. 2 Pool which currently exists will be phased out over the next few years. It drops to 10 per cent for last year; it will drop to 8 per cent this year; and it will drop down to 6 per cent in the 1995-96 crushing season. That will remain in place until the Act is overhauled. I am very confident that this amendment will assist the industry as a whole. It will bring new players into the game, which is very much needed in a dynamic industry that is now under much better statutory regulation than previously.

The second aspect of the amendment relates to the quality of sugar. Nothing can be more important in any primary product than quality. Quality is the hallmark by which Australia can sell its produce overseas—at times, against fierce competition.

The amendment included in this Bill will allow the corporation itself to set standards that will deal with the bonus and penalty arrangements. The amendment restores the policy that existed under the 1915 Sugar Acquisition Act. Under that policy, the Minister's standards set out the penalties and bonus arrangements. The players in the game have realised that this is no longer the case, and a return to a similar situation has been recommended by the policy council. Of course, the mill-owners and the corporation itself realise the benefits of such a move. It will no doubt protect commercial confidentiality, and that is important. Most importantly, the corporation will still be accountable. Its standards will have to have the approval of the Minister and they will have to be presented to the mill-owners before they can take effect.

The third of the major amendments in this Bill refers to the local awards. They will allow the gathering of information in regard to future crushing seasons to be presented as part of evidence. There is an insertion in the Act by virtue of this Bill of a provision to make it clear that an award may provide for information to be given concerning an earlier crushing season or the

next crushing season and allow it to apply by reference to information supplied under the award for an earlier crushing season. It is pretty important that this be clarified, and I think that the industry will also welcome that amendment.

For the reasons that I outlined earlier, the Queensland sugar industry is doing very well. May I say that the Goss Government has, in many ways, turned the corner with sugar. For many years, it was considered that a Labor Government could not handle a major primary industry such as that—that it could not deal with the major players concerned. That has proven to be a total furphy. One need only consider the heavy investment that the Government has made, and continues to make, in the Burdekin River irrigation area, which is the State's premier ongoing irrigation project.

As was alluded to by the Opposition spokesman, auction sales of new farm blocks have brought record prices. This demonstrates the great confidence in the sugar industry in our rural communities. The State Government's expenditure on the Burdekin river irrigation area has been running at \$20m per annum. This is in addition to the initial outlay by the Commonwealth for a dam in the order of \$130m. The recent auction sale is an historic landmark for the sugar industry and, in particular, the Burdekin River irrigation area. In February this year, the 100th new farm was offered at auction and taken up. Eleven farms were sold for a total of \$5,387,000. That was \$2,237,000 above the reserve price. If that is not evidence of confidence, what is?

The auction results are more good news for the sugar industry which, as I said earlier, faces a very bright future. That future has been brightened considerably more by the implementation of the sugar infrastructure package between the State and the Federal Governments. One of the highlights of the auction in the Burdekin area was that five young farmers have bought blocks. Earlier, I mentioned bringing young people back into the industry, and that is borne out by the interest shown by those young people. That should be applauded by Government and Opposition alike. More releases are planned for 1994, and probably by about the middle of this year we will see a further auction taking place. Of the 100 farms sold, 75 have been sold to local Burdekin buyers, 19 to intrastate buyers and six to interstate buyers.

The Government is committed to continue funding the Burdekin River irrigation development. Recently, the Minister announced that \$800,000 has been approved to hire plant to be used in a number of projects in the area. The most significant work to be carried out will be the construction of the final section of the

Houghton main channel on the northern side of the Bruce Highway. Those members who are familiar with the area would know that the completed channel will be able to supply enough water to cover approximately 1 000 hectares of existing farms which, until this time, have faced severe ground water shortages. The channel has also brought water to newly developed land, some of which is still to be sold and subsequently developed.

Recent changes to farm auctions, brought about by the Goss Government, such as attaching cane assignments to the blocks and reducing the early repayments through easy-start terms and rate concessions provided by the Burdekin Shire Council, have all helped to make farms more attractive. This is a typical example of the industry, the Federal Government, the State Government and the local council working together for the betterment of the economy of that community.

Last November, State Cabinet authorised the construction of the Kelsey Creek irrigation scheme. That project will cost \$9.3m and will supply water from the Peter Faust Dam at Proserpine. No doubt, that project will boost the reliability of water in that area. Also on the Government's agenda of work being done to assist the industry, this financial year it has allocated \$2.7m to the Bureau of Sugar Experimentation Stations for research. That amount represents a trebling of its annual budget before this Government came to power.

By 1994, we will have a 3.6 per cent expansion in the sugar industry, which will cover 16 000 hectares of new or additional assignments. The Government is expanding the industry at the right time, so that Australia can take advantage of the great worldwide demand for sugar and the inability of its major competitors to take up the slack. Obviously, it is a good thing for the Government to be expanding the sugar industry. Actually, over the last five years, the industry has expanded by 33 per cent, and there is every confidence among those who are involved in the sugar industry that Australia will become the world's leading exporter. Australia not only is the best grower of the product and has the most efficient sugar farming industry but also will reach the new height of being able to claim proudly that it is the greatest exporter of sugar in the world.

In my view, the only great disappointment that has occurred over the last 12 months has been the ridiculous decision by the Trade Practices Commission to reject the proposed joint venture of Mackay Refined Sugars and CSR to produce and export white sugar. Anyone who has any nous at all would know that that is where

the real money lies. We can grow a quality product forever and a day and ship it away as raw sugar. However, why should we sit here and watch other people elsewhere in the world cream the icing off the top of the cake while we are left behind, having done all the hard work?

**Mr Casey:** Mr Pitt, 40 per cent of the world's sugar is traded in white now—as white sugar—and we are the only major producing country that is not involved in that.

**Mr PITT:** As the Minister said, that is correct. I dare say that if the Act of 1991 had not been able to sort out the mess that the industry was in, we would not be in a position to move down that path, as we are now. As I said, this important value-adding exercise is needed in a market in which the percentage received for the refined product over raw sugar is growing rapidly, and I hope that the Minister continues his good work in trying to overturn the TPC at some stage. I have no doubt that the Opposition will support us in that endeavour.

The new sugar infrastructure package included an announcement in November of 12 projects throughout the State, which will be a great boost to the industry, to jobs and, ultimately, to exports. The effects of that program on Queensland will be that it will provide 1 900 jobs during the construction stage of the various projects, and there will be direct benefits to one-third of Queensland's sugar producers and the mills that they supply. That will result in the improved sustainability of production for 80 000 hectares of existing cane land and the production of an additional 1.5 million tonnes of cane per annum—compared with the 30 million tonnes that are produced currently—generating an estimated \$60m per annum in export sales. That is a major step forward for the industry, and it is possible only because all the players are pulling in the one direction.

I turn now to my own area. The Russell/Mulgrave water management project has been approved. That project is designed to improve water management, mainly through drainage projects on cane land in the Russell and Mulgrave River valleys. The project is sponsored by the Babinda and Mulgrave canegrowers, Babinda Sugar Limited and the Mulgrave Central Mill Limited. The total cost of that project will be \$1.6m, and the recommended public funding of \$1.07m of that amount will be phased in between 1993-94 and 1996-97. The recommended additional funding is conditional upon the project's sponsors providing one-third of the project's capital costs and, importantly, the formation of a water board to undertake the water management works. Again, this Government is allowing local people

to make decisions about their industry in their own area.

Also, in far-north Queensland, we have the Murray Valley infrastructure/Riversdale water management project, which is a project to improve water management, mainly through drainage-related work, and also to provide assistance for cane transport infrastructure, that is, cane railways in parts of the Murray Valley and Riversdale areas. That project is sponsored by the Tully canegrowers and Tully Sugar Limited which will build the cane railways, and a water board is proposed to be responsible for water management works. The conditions require that the project's sponsors contribute one-third of the cost of water management works and provide two-thirds of the cane's railways cost. The total value of that project is \$8.15m and, of that amount, \$4.6m will be funded through a package that will be phased in between 1993-94 and 1996-97.

We also have in far-north Queensland the Herbert existing cane area water management project and the water management expansion project. Once again, those projects are aimed towards improving water management—mainly drainage—on the present and potential cane lands in the Herbert River valley. It is sponsored by the Herbert River district canegrowers and the CSR Herbert River Mills Group. Upon the advice of a review panel, those proposed projects have been expanded to cover other existing areas of cleared land—of course, preferably cane land. There will be a significant planning design component in this project, and it will be a major undertaking in the area. The project will cost \$5.82m, and \$3.88m of that amount will come out of the package itself. Again, funding is conditional upon the formation of a water board, which must cover the entire area.

As the time allotted to me is running out, I would like to mention quite briefly an area in the Minister's electorate and the electorate of the member for Whitsunday, who also shows a great interest in sugar issues. I refer to the Teemburra Dam, which is located approximately 65 kilometres west of Mackay. The construction of that dam at Teemburra Creek is a viable option to provide up to 41 000 megalitres of water a year, which is a significant amount during this time of drought. Although the drought situation is improving, we must plan for the future, and projects such as the Teemburra Dam project are the types of projects in which we should be investing, instead of waiting for recurrent drought conditions to occur. The estimated cost of this project is \$60m over a seven-year period. The returns from exports of raw sugar and bagasse pulp, generated by the provision of

water from the dam and the Pioneer Valley system, are estimated to be \$51.3m annually. If we are thinking about building for the future, that is not a bad return in the long term. The project consists of a main dam, two saddle dams along the eastern rim of Teemburra Creek to contain the storage, a pump station and pipeline infrastructure. A diversion conduit that will go to Cattle Creek is in the planning stage, and there is provision for a hydro-electric power station to supply minor local needs in the future. The main structure will be a concrete-faced rock fill dam, 55 metres in height and 330 metres across the valley at crest level, with an estimated capacity of 137 600 megalitres. It will be of a slightly larger capacity than the existing Eungella Dam in the same area.

The dam and diversion works to Cattle Creek should be completed in four years, with reticulation works to farms coming progressively on line from the dam completion until the seventh year. I am pleased to support this Bill, which provides amendments which will be of value to the sugar industry. I must commend the Minister for the work he is doing in this area. The Opposition should finally throw in the towel, admit defeat and accept the fact that the sugar industry in this State is now at last in good hands.

**Mr ROWELL** (Hinchinbrook) (12.10 p.m.): It is a pleasure to join in the debate on the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill 1993. Many industries have contributed to the development of Queensland, but none more than the sugar industry. Not only has this billion dollar export industry assisted with our present chronic balance of payments but it is also the lifeblood of many towns on the Queensland coastal strip.

For the most part, the industry is about 100 years old. During that period, until 1960, it was an industry that presented an opportunity for many people. People from war-torn Mediterranean countries had a chance to make a new life for themselves. Boatloads migrated to Australia during that period. I would like to acknowledge the harsh conditions that they and many other Australians had to tolerate when planting and harvesting the crop by hand.

After a long history of unsuccessful attempts to introduce mechanical harvesting, and faced with expansion in 1964, the industry had no option but to make mechanical harvesting work. During the last 30 years, we have seen the evolution of a machine attached to the side of a tractor to the highly specialised piece of equipment we have today. This was mostly due to the ingenuity of people, very few of whom had any engineering qualifications. They developed machinery with the ability to deliver cane to the tramway system in a manner

that raised industry productivity in the order of 20-fold over the days of manual harvesting. Without this innovation, the sugar industry would have stagnated, as the work force required to cope with industry expansions was no longer available.

These amendments to the Sugar Industry Act are about change. There has been resistance within the industry to accept change, because most of the proposals have been put forward by gurus who have not had dirt under their fingernails. Deregulation is a classic example. There are interests working overtime to do away with acquisition, which would enable large conglomerates to dominate the industry. Our Federal Government is assisting a major multinational consortium to pressure grower owned milling operations in north Queensland into yielding to a ridiculous offer for mills. Those mills that have succeeded in building up their viability are vulnerable to predatory paper-shuffling operations.

The Foreign Investment Review Board did not bat an eyelid when approving the Tate and Lyle application. The biggest player in world sugar sweeteners is using heavyweight tactics on two of the most efficient grower/miller operations in north Queensland. Before the 1989 election, this Labor Government ran a campaign bucketing the National Party for seeking venture capital not available in Australia. The mills about which I speak are Tully and South Johnstone. They are being harassed by Bundaberg Sugar, a subsidiary of Tate and Lyle, which has assets of about \$1.3 billion. The offer of \$87m for both mills is a joke, considering the total crushing capacity of 2.6 million tonnes annually and the money invested in the operation. If the bid is successful, Bundaberg Sugar will own 25 per cent of Queensland's sugar milling capacity. Then there is the promise of a \$13m upgrade. Growers supplying the Mourilyan and Babinda mills have told me that something similar was proposed when those mills were taken over by Bundaberg Sugar. But, as yet, the promise has not been fulfilled.

This dominating force is trying to attract the interests of shareholders by using every point of law available. It is hoping, by dangling a carrot in front of the growers, that sufficient numbers will weaken to force the takeover. Although many growers would be able to pay off some of their debt with the proceeds from their shares, I have not spoken to anybody who is prepared to sacrifice the future for a few pieces of silver. Sugar North Ltd is reported to have said that the takeover is contrary to the national interest and would lead to \$8m in dividends and cash leaving the country annually.

The mills have an abundance of crushing capacity. That capacity was required last season, particularly in the case of Tully where a month was lost during the start of the 1993 season due to wet weather. The future for these mills is bright. There is adequate land for expansion, especially in the case of Tully—and we are aware of some of the things being done through the infrastructure package. Also, South Johnstone is prepared to take cane from the tablelands.

The siege that they are now under via the takeover bid may act as a catalyst to unite the two operations into a stronger consortium, which could allow for greater efficiencies. If Tate and Lyle was successful, it would have 1 million tonnes of Queensland sugar under its control. With its worldwide marketing network, it may be reluctant to sell the crop through the Queensland Sugar Corporation which uses CSR as its agent. It is likely that it would push for doing away with acquisition. All of the crazy ideas of the economic rationalists would be trotted out again. For example, if the growers do not want to sell their sugarcane to the mill at their doorstep, they can take their 5 000 tonnes—which would be the crop for an average sized farm—at about \$25 per tonne and transport it to the neighbouring mill, which could be 100 kilometres away.

One of the amendments contained in this legislation is for the difference between the No. 1 and the No. 2 Pool to be adjusted prior to the period defined in the Sugar Act, which was passed by Government majority in 1991. I am given to understand that the necessity arose because of the promises made to the industry by the Federal and State Governments prior to the Federal election in March 1993. Both Governments recognise the sugar industry's ability to earn export income, a commodity of which Australia is badly in need. Another factor was the thought that the sugar electorates in Queensland might be a determining factor in the result of the Federal election. So a couple of sweeteners were conceded to the sugar industry: no short-term reduction in tariffs; and a \$40m infrastructure package for the Queensland industry. I believe this was watered down to \$38m, as New South Wales felt that it was entitled to \$2m. The irony was that the Australian electors returned a Government that presided over the worst terms of trade in our history by successfully leading electors up the garden path.

The desired impact for the Labor Party on the sugar electorates backfired, with the loss of the Federal seats of Kennedy and Hinkler to the National Party and the retention of the marginal seat of Dawson. But it would seem that the package is to be implemented in a convoluted

form. One of the effects of the accelerated expansion of the industry, particularly on new growers whose cane is paid for at No. 2 Pool rates, is the difference paid to growers for cane produced for the No. 2 Pool. No. 2 Pool cane is paid for at a rate of 12 per cent lower than peak sugar.

The industry determined that, rather than continuing on with the previous pooling system, it would place all sales of sugar—whether via domestic sales, long-term contracts or whatever arrangements—under one umbrella. In recognition of those growers who had contributed to the industry infrastructure by constructing wharves and sugar terminals, and enhancing the reputation of the industry in the world arena, the former peak system was preserved by maintaining a 12 per cent premium on No. 1 Pool sugar sales. The existing facilities have a sufficient capacity, despite a substantial increase in throughput due to expansions. The additional cost to the industry for this additional capacity has been negligible. Over the last two years for new growers with a debt structure the price received for sugar would be below the cost of production.

The legislation will bring about a reduction in the variation of the two pools from 12 per cent to 6 per cent by 1996 when, under the terms of the Act, a review will take place. It depends on the individual grower's situation as to the degree of the effect felt. A landlocked grower on a small farm will become less viable, and a new grower supplying exclusively to No. 2 Pool will receive a greater share of the sugar proceeds. There will be a minimum effect on those growers who are producing nearly equal amounts for both pools.

The \$40m Federal/State package for the sugar industry, which is to be spent over a number of years, is insignificant compared with the foreign aid handouts to other countries of nearly \$1.4 billion last year. Thailand exports a similar amount of sugar to that exported by the Queensland industry. Last year, a \$40m foreign aid package was given to Thailand. If Thai sugar were imported into Australia, it would receive a developing country preference of \$15 per tonne over the imports of other countries. The \$800m Better Cities Program delivered by the Federal Government and the dubious allocation of \$30m worth of sports grants must have helped Labor in the last Federal election. Certainly, the \$40m package to the sugar industry will yield a higher return than pork-barrelling and the questionable use of the public purse at a time when we desperately need to get the country going again.

The cumulative loss of income to the Australian industry as a result of the tariff cuts can

be put at \$127m. The Australian domestic market consumes 800 000 tonnes of sugar, of which 200 000 tonnes is supplied by New South Wales. The reduction of tariffs in 1991 by the Federal Government cost Queensland farmers \$23m. In 1992, growers and millers lost \$36m. At the end of the 1993 season, Queensland will have lost a total of \$95.4m. It will be a long time before the industry will see a net benefit from the GATT agreement that was hailed as such a success.

When comparing the losses caused by tariff cuts with the infrastructure package, the deal could be described only as three steps backward and one step forward when the expenditure is realised. Sugar is one of the few industries that could be described as going gang busters, despite the hobbles placed on it by the reduction in tariffs. As I mentioned earlier, the crop harvested in 1993 was a record 30.1 million tonnes of cane. This year, with the way the crop is developing, the industry could become the leading exporter of raw sugar in the world.

Approximately 16 per cent of sugar produced in the world is traded relatively freely. This year, the Queensland industry will sell in the vicinity of 3.4 million tonnes to other countries. World prices are sitting at about US10.5c per pound, which is US1c per pound higher than last year, representing an increased return of \$220m to the industry. ABARE is anticipating a return of \$1.5 billion for the 1993-94 crop, but the Australian/US dollar exchange rate has increased from close to 65c for a fair part of 1993 to its current value of 71c. The downward trend of the Australian dollar from 70c in 1992-93 added value to exports, but it had the downside of increasing farm inputs to 3.7 per cent above the rate of inflation.

World sugar consumption has been estimated at just over 114 million tonnes annually, with production at 113 million tonnes. This year, stocks are expected to decline by 2 million tonnes to 35.4 million tonnes. Last year also saw a deficit of 1.35 million tonnes. As was mentioned earlier in this debate, world growth in consumption is forecast at 2 per cent per year. The major markets for Queensland sugar are Japan, Canada, Malaysia and South Korea. Those countries purchase about 500 000 tonnes of our sugar annually. There may be variations to that figure, but that is the rule of thumb. In the past few years, China, Singapore and the United States of America have purchased less than 200 000 tonnes of our sugar. The USSR, with varying requirements, has been a valued customer. In 1991, Russia purchased 320 000 tonnes of sugar from Queensland.

Without knowing what is involved in the Minister's standard for the quality of raw sugar, it can only be presumed that problems that occur at times in the milling operation can have an effect on quality. Those problems can be exacerbated by seasonal conditions, especially when harvesting is carried out during wet weather. If we are to maintain our reputation, it is essential that a strict quality standard be applied. The Queensland industry has a good reputation as a reliable supplier of good quality sugar. Although the details of sales are confidential, it is understood that there is often a premium on our sugar over world market price. I believe that that factor is vitally important. The Minister seems to find that amusing. I do not know what he is laughing about.

It is interesting to see Mackay Sugar entering the refined or white sugar industry. It is difficult to understand the reasons given by the Trade Practices Commission for its rejection of the proposed amalgamation of CSR with Mackay Sugar and E. D. & F. Mann. The merger would have brought together a consortium of experienced refiners to not only supply the domestic market but also value add our raw product. ABARE has assessed that there is a potential for 300 000 tonnes of raw sugar to be replaced by white sugar export, providing to the industry another form of commodity. In its earlier stages, the venture may well require the support of the domestic market, as last year there was a temporary worldwide reduction in the prices paid for white sugar. The average world price was only US12.4c a pound, which reduced the premium paid for white sugar over raw to about 2.8c a pound, compared with the five-year average of US3.8c a pound.

Although CSR has a refinery at New Farm and other places in Australia, it appears from reports that greater efficiencies could be obtained from the joint venture. During this debate, other members have referred to that matter. I am fully supportive of any steps that can be taken to ensure that that venture goes ahead. Even though the intention was to have a capacity of more than 50 per cent of the market share in Australia, with the venture's intention to export it may well be that in time this capacity would be increased to meet the export opportunities available.

The New South Wales industry's refinery at Manildra provides competition, as would imports, if the domestic price demanded by the consortium was out of step with the going rate. There is a check and balance in the system. Certainly, there is a need for advance information to be provided to the chairman of the local board. The arranging of harvesting groups prior to the

harvesting season needs to be in place months before the season starts, as conditions of group size, siding capacity and rotations have to be decided to avoid problems during the crushing.

The division of sugar moneys has not been resolved. I understand that extensive negotiations are presently under way. Since the formula was evolved in 1949, there has been a substantial change in the industry. Basically, the industry falls into two categories: proprietary mills and grower owned and operated cooperative mills. Although those who manage the grower-owned cooperatives may have to prove to their growers that they are competent in the running of the operation, in the final analysis the benefits of a successful operation revert to the shareholders—the growers.

The division of sugar moneys does not have the same impact on the grower-operated mills as it does on the proprietary mills. The proprietary operation, in common with any other company, is answerable to those who have an expectation that the mill will give them a good return on their investment. The capacity of the mills and season length is viewed in a different light by proprietary mills and cooperative-type operations. When the formula was devised, there was an intention that, because of the assets involved in the growing side of the industry as against the milling operation, there should be a two-thirds/one-third split in the proceeds. To provide incentive for the miller, a formula was devised to maximise extraction of sugar from the cane delivered to the mill.

As the shadow Minister said, it would seem that, at the time, the incentive known as the "coefficient of work" did not envisage the advance in technology that would enable the milling operation to extract the levels now being achieved. The incentive to extract the maximum sugar has increased substantially the millers' share of the industry cake. Growers' incentives were to produce a crop of cane—

Time expired.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Before calling the member for Bundaberg, I remind the House of Standing Order 141 and ask that members keep their remarks relevant to the amendments.

**Mr CAMPBELL** (Bundaberg) (12.30 p.m.): It was with interest, dismay and disbelief that I listened to some of the comments and allegations made by the member for Hinchinbrook about Tate and Lyle. I say that because they just reflected the shroud-waving of the Federal member for Kennedy, Mr Katter, a former member in this place. The comments that were made are outrageous, false and baseless.

The member just needs to look at the history of Bundaberg and also the history of what is now the largest sugar and sweetener company in the world.

What is even more interesting is that since the Labor Government has come to power—and I refer to the Minister's second-reading speech—at a time when we have had one of the most serious droughts in the history of Queensland and continuing relatively low prices, the industry has expanded, progressed and invested. This shows that the industry has confidence.

This is one of the key areas that this Labor Government can be proud of. Under the National Party Government, we saw years of stagnation and years of cronyism in the sugar industry. Under the previous Government the sugar industry did not expand, did not progress and did not invest. This Government can be proud of the work it has done for the sugar industry.

**Mr Rowell:** What a load of rubbish!

**Mr CAMPBELL:** For example, for the information of the honourable member for Hinchinbrook, I point out that there was not one new refinery built in the 30 years that the National Party was in power—not one. What happened when the Labor Party came to power? It was able to free up the sugar industry. Queensland now has a new refinery in Mackay. Not only do we have that, we also have expansions to the sugar refinery in Bundaberg. There is now extra investment by that company that the old Bundaberg Sugar was not prepared to make because it did not have the opportunity. The restructuring of the sugar industry has allowed that investment to take place.

Not only have we seen investment in new aspects of the sugar industry, that is, in refining; we are also seeing—

**Mr Bennett:** Runs on the board!

**Mr CAMPBELL:** They are runs on the board for the sugar industry under the Labor Government. We have seen industry expansions in the Burdekin and other areas. In some of those areas, the Opposition has done everything in its power to disrupt those expansions. The outrageous things that were said about the auctions of those farms have proven to be false. People have been prepared to invest to help expand the industry.

It is also interesting that not only are the growing and milling sectors of the sugar industry expanding, so too are those other industries that supply services to the sugar industry. Other industries are also showing confidence. An example is the firm Austoft. An article in today's

*News Mail* carries the heading, "Austoft Doubles Sales Target". The largest sugarcane machinery manufacturer in the world has now doubled its estimates of domestic orders to \$17m this year. That is a good sign—for that company and for employment prospects in Bundaberg. That article stated—

"This result reflects a strengthening of confidence in the Australian sugar industry, underpinned by a record crop in 1993, sustained world raw sugar prices in the US10c per pound range and continuing low interest rates."

In actual fact, the chairman of Bundaberg Canegrowers has said—

"I am very confident about the future for sugar and there is some indication the industry will be more stable in future years."

That is a good reflection on the overall management within the sugar industry. That situation has occurred with the restructuring package that has been provided and that has come about due to the differential between the No. 1 and No. 2 Pools being reduced gradually to 6 per cent. The differential in the pooling system meant that the sugar industry in Bundaberg was to lose funds to other areas of the sugar industry. I know that this was recognised within the sugar restructuring package formulated by the Federal and Queensland Governments.

For example, one of the key aspects of the sugar restructuring package is the Walla Weir that was to underpin the irrigation system in Bundaberg. That project involves the construction of a weir which will significantly improve the reliability of the irrigation water supply for much of the Bundaberg area. The project is sponsored by the Bundaberg and Isis Canegrowers, Isis Central Mill Company Limited and Bundaberg Sugar Company Limited. There will be a total cost of \$14.25m, of which public funding from the sugar restructuring package will be a total of \$9.49m. That money will be spent over a period of three years. A total of \$8.49m of that amount is expected to be spent in the financial year 1994-95.

Another aspect of the restructuring package is the Avondale irrigation scheme. That is a small irrigation reticulation scheme which will benefit 10 growers in the Avondale area near Bundaberg. The project sponsors are the Fairymead canegrowers and the Fairymead Sugar Company, a subsidiary of Bundaberg Sugar, which is now a Tate and Lyle company. The total cost is \$2.3m, of which public funding from the package will be \$1.35m. The fact is that Tate and Lyle, since it has now come to be part

of the Australian sugar industry, has shown a responsible attitude and approach to the industry. I have found it very hard to accept the shroud-waving that has been put forward by members of the Opposition. I believe that they will soon live to regret it.

I mentioned Austoft and how that company had participated in the expansion of the sugar industry. Another company showing good growth is a company named Bonel Bros. Also, the Bundaberg Foundry, another subsidiary of Tate and Lyle, is showing good growth. It now exports 50 per cent of its sugar production. In other words, we would not have those jobs in Bundaberg if we did not have a chance to export. Those jobs would simply not be there. They were not there when the National Party was in Government.

The Australian sugar industry is now expanding overseas. That is something that the insular and inwardly looking members of the National Party have to come to grips with. Unless we are prepared to expand and enter into joint ventures overseas, our industry will decline. Tate and Lyle has realised that, and it has become part of this growing industry. Unless we become part of the world industry, we will encounter difficulties. China is one of the fastest expanding and largest markets in the world. The industry will not survive if it does not become a partner in joint ventures in China. That is the way we are going to survive in the future.

The outrageous statements that were made by the member for Kennedy in the Federal House of Representatives on 14 December need to be refuted. They were scandalous, outrageous and false. The remarks about the performance of Tate and Lyle since it has been in Australia are nowhere near the truth. His comments that the performance of six sugar mills have "deteriorated markedly to the extent where the mills have been subject to continuous breakdowns and delays" are just not true. Mr Katter went on further to say—

". . . the performance of all Tate and Lyle mills in Australia has deteriorated significantly since that company took over Bundaberg Sugar."

That also is untrue. Honourable members know the truth. The facts are that in 1993 Bundaberg Sugar milled and crushed a record crop. If this is one of the organisations that is supposedly deteriorating and breaking down, why is it that it can mill record crops? Last year, a record 5.33 million tonnes of cane was crushed, compared with 5.19 million tonnes the previous year. The prospects look even higher for this year.

The fact is that if the mills were not working, they would not be crushing. We must remember that there have been problems in the industry. For example, it was a very wet year. In the 90 crushing days to the end of December, the Moreton mill had crushed a normal crop of 460 000 tonnes of cane. The crop was estimated at 630 000 tonnes of cane. The problem was that the growers could not cut the cane. Before they can mill it, they have to be able to cut it. They could not get onto their farms to cut it. Bundaberg growers and the cane harvester company sent down from Bundaberg full-track harvesters to help out that mill.

I remember what the former National Party member for Mulgrave, Mr Menzell, said when the Babinda mill was not going very well. Although it was the poorest performing mill in Queensland, according to Mr Menzell it was everybody else's fault—not that of mill management. Now, Opposition members claim that it is mill management's fault for everything. That is outrageous.

Mr Katter also said that there had been a reduction in the application of normal safety procedures. It was outrageous to say that, under the Workplace Health and Safety Act, the mills had reduced the level of safety. During the crushing period from July to December 1990, the number of lost-time accidents was 24. For the same period to the end of December 1993, the number of lost-time accidents was 11. In every year, the number of lost-time accidents decreased. In the slack period between January and June in 1990, the number of lost-time accidents was 12. In 1993, that figure had reduced to seven. How can these outrageous statements about a lack of safety be made when all the facts show a better safety record than previously?

**Mr Bredhauer:** Because Katter has a very casual regard for the truth.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** I am told by the honourable member for Cook that Mr Katter has a very casual attitude towards the truth. In actual fact, safety policy documents have been developed, health and safety officer training has occurred and there has been a general improvement in the health and safety standards of the mills.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member for Kennedy's name has been mentioned—Bob Katter. That remark represents a slur on that man's name, and I ask that it be withdrawn.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** The member for Hinchinbrook and other members of the National Party always get stuck into the Government's provision of overseas aid. I shall cite an example of what happened when the National Party was in power and overseas aid was given to New Guinea. Australian expertise and money were used to develop the Ramu sugar plantation. Do honourable members know who provided all the salaries? That money was not going to Australian companies. With our money, the National Party bought German Class harvesters, but they had to be replaced by Austoft harvesters because it was found that by using our technology, which was the best in the world, harvesting costs decreased by 50 per cent. Some people were sent to New Guinea to do consultancy work. I do not mind that, but I believe that we should be getting the benefits of that overseas aid through joint venture.

Let us look at what the National Party did in 1987 under the Sugar Milling Rationalization (Far Northern Region) Act Amendment Act when it intended to allow Babinda to take over some of the CSR area, including the Goondi mill. In the *Queensland Government Gazette* on Saturday, 14 June, the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board made a statement about what the National Party Government was doing and about how it restructured mills. The chairman of that board said—

"I say 'unfortunate' because Babinda has, among other things, been plagued by low productivity and high costs. In terms of sugar per hectare, it has been consistently the worst producer in the State and its debt position compares unfavourably with all other mills."

I believe that reflects on the managerial experience of some former members of the National Party.

The economist member of the Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, who spoke about the closure of the Goondi mill, stated—

"Notwithstanding revisions of the future Babinda cash flow estimates presented by both Messrs Edwell and Langdon in line with updated versions of the government's proposed assistance package, the indications are that not only does the cash flow position deteriorate in the latter years of the five year projections but the debt position at the end of the period shows little or no improvement."

In other words, the National Party was prepared to have Government packages to make things worse.

The chairman stated further—

"The final submission by the Crown with the most optimistic sugar price scenario shows essentially the same trends. Thus, in spite of the substantial injection of government support and regardless of the Crown's optimistic price scenario, the inescapable conclusion is that the future of Babinda mill is at best very shaky."

He stated further—

"If benefit-cost appraisal techniques had been applied, then it would have been apparent that the least attractive proposition was to inject funds into Babinda as proposed by the Crown. In my view this assessment reinforces the case against Babinda."

After that money was contributed by the taxpayers of Queensland under the hand of the National Party, guess who picked it up and guess who kept Babinda going? The Bundaberg Sugar Company! Those growers have not been happier; the mill has not performed better. Yet Opposition members are still prepared to make outrageous statements about Tate and Lyle and other companies.

The National Party regarded Tate and Lyle—the largest sweetener company in the world—as a mediocre organisation. Mr Katter stated—

"It is quite apparent that, whilst Tate and Lyle executives may be experts in other areas of the sugar world, their expertise and management and ability to operate raw sugar mills is grossly deficient."

It is interesting to note that, last season, those mills were able to crush a record crop. Yet members opposite would have us believe that those mills were inefficient. When Tate and Lyle moved to Bundaberg, I was concerned. I would have preferred to see the mills in the hands of the sugar industry. But that company is now part of the Australian sugar industry. We should be using the company's expertise so that our industry can expand into the rest of the world. We should be using the supply, service and technology industries that support our sugar industry to make profits not only in Australia but also overseas so that the industry will progress and expand further in the interests of the Queensland and Australian economies and the Australian sugar industry.

**Mr RANDELL** (Mirani) (12.49 p.m.): With my practical knowledge of the sugar industry, it is a pleasure to speak to this Bill. I had no intention of speaking to it. However, the member for Mulgrave made the statement that very few members on this side of the House would be speaking to this Bill. I point out to him that a

gentlemen's agreement was entered into before today to the effect that we would limit the number of Opposition speakers so that the Bill could pass through the House. Members on this side of the House adhered to that agreement, but now we are being challenged. No doubt Government members would have told the press that members on this side of the House have no knowledge of the industry or interest in it. I apologise to the Minister for speaking to this Bill, because I said that I would not, but I shall take only a few minutes.

It was great to hear the member for Mulgrave waxing lyrical about how the members of the Opposition are not doing anything. He is not even in the House! Where is he? He spoke about a great industry that required so much to prop it up—and he is not even in here. I listened quite intently to his speech. I hope he is watching the debate on his television monitor. His speech was purely academic. It contained not one bit of practicality. It was mostly taken from textbooks and Government journals—

**Mr Springborg:** And the Minister's press release.

**Mr RANDELL:** Yes, and the Minister's press releases; that is right. He certainly showed his lack of practical knowledge of the industry.

He and the member for Bundaberg had the hide to attack the member for Hinchinbrook, who is probably the person in this House with the most knowledge of practical farming in the sugar industry. He knows the facets of the cane growing industry from the time a farmer puts the plant in the ground to the time it is sent to the mill and is then sold by the corporation. That is an example of the practical experience that is on the Opposition benches. I am a farmer and I know a little bit about what is involved. I know the hardships of the sugar industry and what is happening in that industry.

I congratulate the Minister. I have told him previously that I thought the amendments were needed. I have spoken to members of the industry and they have no problems with these amendments. They look okay to me on the surface. In the past, I have been critical of the Minister for some legislation that he has introduced because I thought it would have a disastrous effect on the industry. I do not go back on that.

It is great to have expansion. It is great to grow more sugar. As the member for Mulgrave said, it is great to be the biggest exporter of sugar in the world. The member for Bundaberg waxed lyrical about what the Government is doing and the great things that are happening in the industry. However, the bottom line is that if

the producers do not get a fair return there will be no producers left and this great industry will collapse. Every member in this Chamber knows that the industry is balanced—

**Mr Bredhauer:** Talk about the amendments.

**Mr RANDELL:** What did your people do?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! The member for Mirani will address his remarks through the Chair.

**Mr RANDELL:** Those on other side of the House went right around the world with their remarks. They did not say one thing about the Bill.

The industry is balanced on a knife edge and the key factor is the world market price. If we do not get a fair world market price, this industry will collapse dramatically. It would be a major calamity for the sugar industry, particularly in Queensland.

Recently, in the Outlook conference in Canberra I noticed that ABARE—that great pool of economic wankers, as the Deputy Premier calls them—predicted a bright future for the sugar industry. I can remember when years ago a bright future was predicted for the industry and the world market price went down to 3c a pound!

**Mr Springborg:** They said that about the wool industry.

**Mr RANDELL:** As my colleague said, they said that about the wool industry, too. If we had trusted the economists' advice, today many farmers would be carrying their swags in the unemployment queues. I remember Christine Papadopolous visiting Mackay, urging the farmers to expand, expand, expand. At that time there was not a market for the sugar. Someone asked her, "What will happen if the markets are not there, and we cannot sell the sugar?" Her answer was, "I see no problem. Just grow it and leave it in the field for next year." She was not worried that the farmers may need a little income to carry them on for 12 months. She is an example of the economic wankers of the world who are telling us what to do.

I believe that ABARE should be disbanded. I think a lot of people would agree with me. The money that is given to that body should be given to industry to do its own research on world market prices. Perhaps even the Minister's department could be given the money to do that work. In the past, ABARE has been a dismal failure. I think the member for Mulgrave would agree with me, even though he would not say so. He is nodding his head. I think it is about time that group was put out to pasture and their pristine jobs chucked out the window.

I turn now to the critical developments in the matter of the division of sugar moneys. The Minister knows that the talks have broken down. I know that behind the scenes he will make sure that those talks resume.

**Mr Casey:** It is not correct to say that they have broken down, let me assure you of that.

**Mr RANDELL:** Mr Desmarchelier has told me that they have walked away from it.

**Mr Casey:** I'm telling you right here and right now that they haven't broken down.

**Mr RANDELL:** I would like to sincerely thank the Minister for the work that he has done to get them back together again. Over the years the growers have been disadvantaged by the division of sugar moneys. It was 66 per cent to the growers and 33 per cent to the millers. Now it is down to 60 per cent or 61 per cent to the growers; the millers have progressively improved their position at the expense of the growers. It is essential that those talks are successful. I intended to seek an assurance from the Minister that he would make sure that those talks resume. I am pleased to have received his assurance. Nobody will win if this matter has to go to court. If it goes to court, it will cost millers and growers vast amounts of money to fight one another when they could be settling it by frank and open discussions. I know that the member for Whitsunday is supporting me in that, and it is very rarely that she supports me.

**Mr J. H. Sullivan:** She will have a drink with you when you retire—to make sure you are going.

**Mr RANDELL:** If ever I retire, it will be voluntarily. In answer to that interjection I will say that at the next election the honourable member will go out involuntarily because I understand that the people in his electorate are highly dissatisfied with his performance. He is never in his electorate. They are asking him what he is doing, because he never speaks in the House. He knows nothing about sugar.

**Mr J. H. Sullivan:** You said something derogatory about economists earlier. We can now apply that to you.

**Mr RANDELL:** If the honourable member is an economist, all I can say is: if the hat fits, wear it. I have not changed my position on economists. The economists of this nation have got us into the mess that we are in. I keep returning to the fact that Mr Tom Burns, the Deputy Premier, calls them economic wankers. I must admit that a couple of them are all right but, mostly, they are doing a great disservice to this country.

I will briefly discuss Mackay Sugar and its initiative to construct a sugar refinery. I congratulate it on that. I find it incomprehensible that a company such as CSR decided to merge with Mackay Sugar only to be find that the Trade Practices Commission will not allow it to do so. CSR started down the track before receiving approval to merge with Mackay Sugar. Why did it not obtain approval before it started that project? For heaven's sake, I understand that there \$90m is at stake in Mackay. I think that the Minister has done the best he can behind the scenes to try to get that going again. It is essential that the venture by Mackay Sugar is successful. I give it my total support. A company such as CSR, which has all the experts in the world—it probably also has economic wankers—went ahead on this project, yet it had not received approval from the Trade Practices Commission to start the venture.

This Bill contains 103 amendments. I have gone through them fairly closely. I know that the member for Hinchinbrook has done the same. There will probably be a few questions asked at the Committee stage. Overall, the Bill looks okay to me. The amendments are well worth while. I give them my support.

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (12.59 p.m.): It is not often that I have the opportunity to support the Minister. The expansion of the sugar industry into my electorate has all been based on No. 1 Pool prices. Except for a couple of years the No. 1 Pool was short of sugar and so my farmers in the Atherton Tablelands region actually received No. 1 Pool prices. However, they are No. 2 Pool growers. Therefore, I am very pleased indeed to see that the differential between the pools is to be reduced from 12 per cent to 6 per cent over a period of years.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr GILMORE:** As I was saying before lunch, I am pleased with the philosophy of this legislation in that it allows for a change in the differential between No. 1 Pool and No. 2 Pool sugar. This change is important and, one might say, fundamental to the further development of the sugar industry on the Atherton Tablelands. There are a number of very good reasons for that. Distance is probably the most limiting factor against the development of the sugar industry in the tablelands. Over the last couple of years, we have been fortunate to be operating on No. 1 Pool prices, and the distance involved and the cost of transportation of sugar has been negated somewhat by the extra 12 per cent return that has been available to farmers in my electorate. However, as the industry expands, quite clearly the farmers in my electorate will be limited to No. 2 Pool access and they will not have the extra money to pay for freight, regardless of whether

that freight is go to the Mossman central mill, which has expanded its activities into the tablelands region, or to one of the other two mills that are currently contemplating such a move.

Currently, the sugarcane in my area is grown on farmland that was used for rice production. It is irrigated land, and because it is land that has only recently been used for sugar production, we are obtaining quite considerably more tonnages from that land compared with the tonnages from coastal land. However, we are also getting two to two and a half points of c.c.s. average higher than the mill average. Consequently, the extra money that is earned from the higher tonnages and the access to the No. 1 Pool over the last couple of years has made some headway towards covering the cost of the transportation of the sugar from the farms at Mareeba to the Cassowary interchange, and I am rather pleased about that.

I want to canvas some of the other likely changes to the sugar industry in the tablelands region that will occur because of this change in the differential between No. 1 Pool and No. 2 Pool. As I said, the area in my electorate that is growing sugar was either rice land—and, of course, those rice farmers have gone out of business—or land that is open specifically for sugar production. It is all irrigated land. Other areas of land are becoming available, such as land that was used for tobacco farming. Over the next several years, tobacco farmers are likely to go out of tobacco production. Unfortunately, the vast majority of that land is unsuitable for sugar production for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the nature of the land, which erodes easily. Generally speaking, it is metamorphic sand. In areas near Dimbulah, there is 40 feet of sand. If that land is disturbed during the wet season, or if it is flood irrigated, extensive erosion can occur very quickly. That is another limiting factor. Another limiting factor is the rolling nature of the countryside. The best of the tobacco land is in undulating areas—to say the least—such as Paddy's Green. Of course, the problem of erosion is exacerbated because of the rolling nature of that country.

A further factor that limits the possibility of tobacco-growing lands to be turned into sugarcane production is that, in the 1950s and the 1960s, when the Tinaroo irrigation scheme was set up, farms were cut up deliberately to allow each farmer 80 acres of viable soil. Some of the farms have an area of 200 acres, but there are only 80 acres of arable land on those farms. Of course, the Minister would admit readily that an 80-acre farm set down to sugar would not be viable in the short term, and certainly not in the long term. Because of the monoculture nature of

the farms, land has to be set aside for rotation purposes, disease control and general land management. So a tobacco farmer on rolling sandy soil, who had to go to overhead irrigation because he simply could not use flood irrigation, would not be able to take advantage of the future possible prosperity of the sugar industry, notwithstanding this change to No. 2 Pool pricing, because of the dreadful expenses incurred in overhead irrigation and the cost of the water.

So we are facing quite a dilemma. Unfortunately, a number of statements have been made in recent times that have led the press and other people, particularly people in the south-east corner who are unaware of the topography and nature of the area, to believe that if the need for tobacco disappears, then a tobacco farmer can simply step over the fence and go into sugar production. Of course, that is untrue. It leaves an unfortunate impression in the minds of the people in southern areas when the tobacco farmers say, "We cannot go into sugar growing." The community at large has been told already that it is expected that tobacco farmers can go into sugar production.

Very large areas of land in my electorate, some 25 000 hectares, have been identified as suitable for sugar production. However, there are a couple of problems with that, too. Some of those problems will be resolved or, at least, partly resolved because of this legislation. However, the cost of transport is always going to be a major limiting factor until we install a full-scale sugar mill on the Atherton Tablelands. It is my view that the Minister and his department should be moving very quickly to encourage the industry in that regard. Although we are looking at vast expansion of the sugar industry in Queensland—and recently, the Minister quoted the figure of 85 000 hectares of land that will be put into the sugar industry over the next several years; I stand to be corrected on that, but I am sure that that is the figure that he used—some of that land could be associated with the Atherton Tablelands. To make that a properly viable industry in the long term, the tablelands must have its own crushing facility so that we are able to gain full access to the viability of the industry without having to worry about the extreme freight costs associated with growing cane on the tablelands.

The reason for those freight costs are simple, and I have spoken about them before in Parliament. They are to do with, initially, the failure of Queensland Rail to understand that there is a community service obligation in the business of running the railways. Currently, the member for Mulgrave is the chairman of a

committee that is considering the future viability of the railways and possible future rail closures in the tablelands area, particularly those areas west of Mareeba. For the first 100 kilometres, that railway line goes through the middle of the cane lands and the potential cane lands of far-north Queensland. It is absolutely appalling to me that this Government would choose quite deliberately to have about 12 000 or 15 000 single vehicle movements on the road each year—

**Mr Beattie:** It is not deliberate.

**Mr GILMORE:** Of course it is deliberate. If one takes into consideration the expansion of the three mills, then it is a decision that a rational person would not be able to understand. To suggest that the already overloaded roads of the Atherton Tablelands should be available to an expanding sugar industry that would place extra pressure on those roads is quite ludicrous. There is a rail system ready to service the expansion of the sugar industry until such time as we can get our own sugar mill and crushing facility. I wanted to raise that point again because it is absolutely imperative that the Minister understands the situation. As we develop, and develop we must, we will have to have access to a sugar mill and, in the interim, a sensible rail freight system. The infrastructure is there already. In fact, if one puts sugar on a train at Tolga, one would have to ride the brakes all the way to the Mulgrave mill. It does not take any locomotive power to get sugar to the bottom of the hill. To replace about 300 train movements with road transport would take 12 000 semitrailer movements. That is not a particularly sensible way to approach the business of an expanding industry.

I wish to discuss the sugar industry in the Atherton Tablelands, the effect that this legislation will have on the pricing structure, the farm gate price and the future profitability of farmers. Recently I was doing some research for a paper that I was preparing for the Minister. It was in respect of the price of water in Queensland. I felt compelled to examine the sugar industry, as well as other cropping industries, to see what the likely viable alternatives were and also to see how these crops fit into the cost of water equation under the current regime. When I made some graphic comparisons of the data, I discovered that the real price of sugarcane—and these figures were provided to me by the Mossman Central Mill—expressed in 1983 values has reduced by some 25 per cent in 10 years.

One cannot accurately predict the likely outcome of these negotiations. What one can accurately predict—and I think that this is

reflected by history—is that, as the wheel turns in respect of the viability of the sugar industry worldwide, other countries, particularly European countries with access to sugar beet production, will come into production very quickly. They will do so because of the short growth period of sugar beet and its high c.c.s. production.

I have visited sugar producing farms in Idaho. We can see very quickly how they could influence the world supply of raw and refined sugar. So it is unlikely that the general downward trend of real prices for sugarcane, which we have seen in the last 10 years, will be reversed in the near future. Certainly, some of our farmers have managed to survive. Some farmers in the Tablelands region think that going into sugar is a wonderful alternative. It is a wonderful alternative because it is a profitable solution when compared with the other alternatives which have proven to be unprofitable.

Some of the farmers in my electorate are facing very difficult economic times. They are turning to the sugar alternative. They are saying, "If we can get into that, if we can be funded for our first planting and harvest, we might start to see profitability and a decent cash flow from our farms." I feel very strongly for these people because, to a degree, they have been let down by the Australian people and by governments, as many of their organised marketing structures have been taken away. So they are moving into sugar, and they are hoping that they will benefit from the change between the two pool prices. I am sure that, as new farmers with a fresh outlook and a vigorous attitude, they will become very efficient and effective sugarcane growers. If we can maintain the tonnes per hectare of cut and if we can maintain over the long period the c.c.s. that we are beginning to expect from irrigated sugar in the Atherton Tablelands region, those farmers will ultimately become an important part of the Queensland sugar industry and will bring back some prosperity to the Atherton Tablelands. I am looking forward to that, because it is very important.

We must never lose sight of the fact that we have had downward trends in real terms over the last 10 years in sugarcane pricing. It is absolutely imperative that the Minister and his department do not lose sight of that in their planning processes. It is fundamental to the issues that we are taking about today. The movement towards taking away the differential between the No. 1 Pool and the No. 2 Pool prices is a very important part of that. I exhort the Minister to go even further in the foreseeable future and dispose of the No. 2 Pool altogether.

That is the one thing that might stand between him and a successful long-term expansion of the sugar industry in this State if he is planning to take full advantage of the opportunities being made available to the sugar industry—that is, niche markets and so on. He should not expect it to be a bonanza. He should not expect the sugar industry to carry extra costs imposed by the Government—the cost of water, research levies, or other things that Governments might, from time to time, feel compelled to apply to the industry.

With those few words, I record in the Parliament, on behalf of the farmers in my electorate, that I am pleased that the Government has moved in this direction. I believe it is an important step towards establishing a proper and fully viable sugar industry in the Tablelands. The next step will be a sugar mill.

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (2.45 p.m.): I join in this debate this afternoon to add to the sentiments of my colleagues, and to support the thrust of the Sugar Industry Amendment Bill. The most important element, from my perspective, is the change in the pool differential. It is one element that has created a great deal of emotion over the years within the industry. There was a time—and I think the Minister would acknowledge this—when such a suggestion would have been met with absolute shock/horror and would have precipitated marches on the Parliament. I think there is an understanding that we need to recognise the trends of markets and the need to reduce the differential. As my colleague the member for Tablelands said, ultimately we need to do away with the No. 2 Pool.

We need to recognise the problems and the concerns faced by those farmers, particularly in landlocked areas, whose capital investment was the in the pool system—the No. 1 Pool and their assignment. That action has had to be massaged by the industry itself and by the Government, of course. That massaging cannot be, and could not be, done overnight. I recall the time when I first came into this House as the member representing the Burdekin, which at that stage had not commenced on its current expansion. In the northern areas of the State, around Babinda, Innisfail and Mulgrave—those areas that are generally landlocked—there was always the major concern that the Burdekin farmers and their irrigation scheme would be a great cancerous monster that would eat out the viable heart of the rest of the industry. I know the Minister would have been well aware of that.

I have always said that no expansion should take place at the expense of another area. I do

not believe that that is happening, but I do believe that we need to recognise the very real concerns of those people whose total investment is in the No. 1 Pool. For many years, the security of the assignment system was their very lifeblood. With the progress of time, the understanding has developed that our position in the world market—long-term contracts and all of those factors that were part and parcel of the sugar industry—is diminishing. With New South Wales effectively locking away the domestic market and the access that the broader industry had to the domestic market, things had to change, and these changes are being supported.

As the member representing the area that would most benefit by this change in differential, it gives me considerable pleasure to be able to support the amendment with the knowledge that there is not necessarily a major concern, in the original terms, about not being able to benefit. I had a lot of contact with farmers from the northern areas when some of these changes were first being negotiated and talked about. An enormous amount of concern was expressed.

In relation to the expansion of the Burdekin, I make the point that, following our record crop last year, we are probably looking at the same situation again. However, the rains have been a bit late. In reality, they have not been very substantial at all. We need a big wet season to fill the underground aquifer and to fill the Burdekin Falls Dam. That has not happened yet. The Water Resources people tell me that, had the Burdekin irrigation scheme been fully developed last year, the water allocation from the Burdekin Falls Dam would have been totally exhausted. Whilst it is gratifying in a sense that there has been no over-designing, that highlights the intensity of the drought. While a great deal of emphasis was placed on some of the more tragic events inland, nevertheless half of the Burdekin Shire has been drought declared for more than two years. It is still in that state.

Operators in all sectors of primary production in the Burdekin region have expressed concern that, unless a decent wet season occurs this year, the ability of the district to produce sugar will be diminished. At my property, the water situation has become very bad. We have been carting drinking water and washing water. People whose livelihoods depend on any form of primary production cannot cart water for irrigation. Although the Burdekin region is blessed with that capacity, it is totally dependent on decent wet seasons to fill the underground aquifer in the lower Burdekin.

Many farmers are concerned about the manner in which charges for water are

determined. The uncertainty about water charges is always at the back of a farmer's mind. For all sorts of reasons, the exact figures never seem to be available. In my view, until the Government comes clean about the methodology of setting water charges and the processes involved in the management of that resource, there will be discontent within the industry. There is always the fear that something is being held back. The unknown is frightening to all of us.

I raise that issue particularly with respect to the pioneering farmers moving to the Burdekin area. We are all delighted that the farms in the region are selling well. Excellent prices have been obtained since the properties closer to the existing infrastructure—the towns, the mills, the highways and so on—have been offered for sale. Obviously, there had to be a process of evolution with the properties that were made available. The most attractive areas could not be offered for sale first.

One factor that must be noted by this Parliament and the people of Queensland is that, by and large, the properties being developed in the region are being taken up by farmers who are already established there. The vast majority of those farms have been purchased by locals who are adding to their existing operations. Those farmers are not purchasing that property simply to enlarge their operations. The member for Tablelands referred to the problems of continuing a viable operation. Of course, in many cases, family requirements make it necessary.

Although the price for sugarcane is relatively good, it is still not the best that could be obtained. The costs facing a sugarcane farmer are enormous. When farmers are facing such enormous costs, they start to focus on the major items of outlay, such as water and fertilisers. They have been advised to scrutinise their business operations, and they do so. However, one unknown factor is always the charges for water. There is always a blank there. That is a matter causing much anxiety, particularly for pioneering farmers, who by and large are No. 2 Pool growers. Those farmers will benefit from the reduction in the differential between the No. 1 and No. 2 Pools. That reduction will give them a greater capacity to expand their operations.

I hope that the reduction in the differential between the two pools will encourage farmers from other areas to move to the Burdekin region. To date, only a few interstate operators have purchased the property that is available in the region. One family from the Mackay area has purchased a large plot of land and has moved to the Burdekin region. However, as I said, by and

large the vast majority of those properties have been purchased by local farmers.

**Mr Casey:** That's so we can keep an eye on you.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I suppose that could be the reason. I would not dare to suggest that those people are trying to escape from the local member, but I am sure——

**Mr Casey:** Their local member is Jimmy Randell.

**Mr STONEMAN:** He would be looking after them wonderfully well. He would be doing a marvellous job. A couple of small problems have to be rectified in that area, and then everything will be okay. However, I do not wish to deal with that topic.

I am concerned about the new farmers moving to the Burdekin region. They face enormous development costs. They are moving to a plot of land that has to be cleared of trees and roots and then levelled, which is an enormous task. They are facing a major outlay. I am aware that some of the changes that have been made to the purchasing structure have assisted those people. However, young people who are moving to the area from further afield will not have a home, a shed or machinery. They are moving to a block of land that is bare save for an electric light pole, for which they must pay dearly, even if they do not require a power supply. I question that decision. It was made in the time of the National Party Government, so I am not blaming this Government for it in any way, shape or form. The point is that the new residents have an enormous task to overcome.

Farmers who are established in the area are able to utilise the machinery that they already have. Quite often, established farmers have a surplus of machinery. They buy several farms and transport the equipment from one farm to the other. That makes life so much easier. I believe that everyone would like to see more new farmers moving to the area. However, they face an uphill battle to survive. Again, I make the point that they are pioneers. Who can predict the problems that will beset those people in the future?

As the Minister is aware, on the Home Hill side of the Burdekin River, in the Leichhardt area, there is a problem with rising salt, drainage and so on. That is a major problem that must be overcome. Other problems could emerge in the future. We need to recognise that the new farmers will need a certain degree of flexibility to enable them to overcome the troughs that will inevitably occur. I believe that, presently, that flexibility does not exist.

When considering the increased opportunities for expansion of the sugar industry, particularly in my area, the other factor that needs to be recognised is the role that harvesting contractors play in the industry. There is a tendency to look at the sugar industry as farmers and millers. Of course, they form a major component of the industry. However, within the overall structure of the industry, harvesting contractors play a very important role. Those contractors face enormous outlays. These days, a harvester costs hundreds of thousands of dollars. Harvesters require an enormous amount of maintenance, and they lie idle for six months of the year.

Harvesting contractors have absolutely no security. That is an issue of concern throughout the industry. It is probably not as well publicised as many other issues, but it is certainly of concern to those who depend on that seasonal work for their livelihood—the operators of haul-out machinery, the harvester drivers and so on. Increasingly, harvesting contractors are approaching me to talk about the concerns that they hold for their future security. I realise that, in a largely free enterprise system, that is the luck of the draw.

That brings me to another issue in the saga, if you like, of the sugar industry; one that I believe is a black component of the industry. I refer to the agreement between the canegrowers, the unions and the millers. I have yet to find a greater contravention of basic human rights in the workplace than that agreement. In this modern day and age, it is inconceivable that a sweetheart deal was struck between the canegrowers, the millers and the unions to the exclusion of the individuals who are affected by the requirement that there be a virtually closed-shop operation. Bob Boscacci is one of the senior union representatives in the area. He has been a friend of mine for years and years. I make no bones about it: I will fight this——

**Mr Beattie:** Don't admit he's a friend. You'll ruin his reputation.

**Mr STONEMAN:** No. I know Bob's wife. That's particularly well. She is a lovely lady. Over the years, I have had a lot of contact with that couple—not so much now as I once did. I have expressed these same concerns to the farmers, millers, harvester operators and the union. I have told them that I believe that deal was outrageous. The union has a right to go out and get members—I have no problem with that. The farmers have a right to employ whom they wish and the contractors need men and they have a right to employ whom they wish, but I do not believe they have the right to determine by an

agreement between one another that there will be a closed-shop union arrangement. That is an outrage.

This agreement is enforced by the union writing to the various mill suppliers saying, "We know that you have four farmers who have not yet signed up all of their men. Sign them up by a certain date or we will black ban your cane." That is outrageous. I know that, when we start to talk about industrial affairs in this House, we will be seeing a further watering down of this legislation. That will add to the shame.

I say to the Minister that if he wants to do something decent for the sugar industry and the people who are part and parcel of it—that is, the battler who is trying to keep body and soul together, the farmer and the miller—he will allow some degree of freedom of choice. I know the Minister will not do that because it would mean spending an enormous amount of extra money and no work for the AWU. It also means more money for the coffers of the ALP. The AWU—the Premier's faction—is a supporter of the ALP, so that money is money for jam.

There are farmers and millers out there collecting this fee virtually at the point of a gun. Many farmers are saying to me with absolute sincerity, "I know there is this agreement, but we did not know how deep it was, and we will not force our men to buy the ticket. We will buy the ticket for them because they should not be forced to pay the \$114 for no service."

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Briskey): Order! I would remind the honourable member to return to the Bill before the House. I have been very lenient.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I take note of your ruling, Mr Deputy Speaker. However, with all due respect, the Bill is about the viability of growers and the impact of the differential between the two pools flowing through to that area. I just point out that the expansion of the industry is dependent on all of these factors. One of the reasons why this component is so important is that it allows the industry to continue to expand. It cannot expand if it is faced with these other constraints.

I will say that I have made the point to the farmers, without equivocation, that I will fight to the bitter end to have that freedom of choice returned to them. I do not care if that means I lose every vote in the sugar industry; a principle is a principle.

I guess I do not have a great deal more to say, except to note a couple of things about the expansion of the mills themselves. I say again that they are an important component of the financial arrangements within the industry. A

major part of the expansion of the Burdekin is the capacity of the mills to crush the increased cane that is going to come through as a result of the growth in the No. 2 Pool. The Minister would probably have the figures at his fingertips. A vast majority of the expansion cane—in fact, almost all of it—is in the No. 2 Pool. That will have an enormous impact. The mills are playing a significant part.

For instance, this year, CSR is putting more than \$60m into the Invicta mill, which is adjacent to where I live in Giru. That mill is having a significant effect on industry, the workplace and the jobs that are available. At the moment, the Invicta mill looks as though a bomb has hit it. However, by the time all of the work being carried out on it stops, it will be one of the largest mills, if not the largest mill, in the southern hemisphere. In one year, the sum of \$60m has been put towards the expansion of that mill, and another \$50m will be spent on other infrastructure and so on. That is an enormous investment.

In conclusion, it is important that all of these components mesh together and are supported by these realistic amendments. The Government needs to recognise that whatever it does in one sector of the sugar industry impacts right across that industry and also the community, either directly or indirectly. It impacts enormously on the economy of this State, right from Mossman to the border. The sugar industry is so vital to our coastal communities that it cannot be ignored. I support the propositions contained in the Bill.

**Hon. E. D. CASEY** (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) (3.05 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members who have spoken in this debate for their contributions. Every time I get the opportunity, I remind people that not only is the sugar industry the most important and biggest agricultural industry in this State but also the manufacture of raw sugar from sugarcane is the biggest secondary industry in this State. It is the economic fabric of the entire coastline of Queensland, from Beenleigh right through to Mossman and the towns and the communities contained therein. It is the economic lifeblood of so many large commerce houses in this State, and it is controlled from Brisbane, the State's capital.

This State has a big dependence upon the sugar industry. The great thing that has come out of today's debate is the news that the Opposition now supports the 1991 Sugar Industry Act.

**Mr Hamill:** They are slow learners.

**Mr CASEY:** They certainly are slow learners, but they have learnt the good way.

**Mr Hamill:** By bitter experience?

**Mr CASEY:** No, by dollars in the pocket—that is how they have learnt. They now know that the Goss Government's 1991 Sugar Industry Act has brought great economic revival to the coastal communities of Queensland.

**Mr Hamill:** How sweet it is!

**Mr CASEY:** It has brought great revival to all industries in those areas. This revival has even passed on to other industries. The expansion of the sugar industry has meant that the construction industry of this State is now really booming, as well. Although it has taken almost three and a half years, it was sweet music to my ears to hear members of the National Party praising the Goss Government's sugar industry legislation. The legislation has been good, it has been effective, and, as I said, it has certainly brought about an economic revival. The figures that Mr De Lacy gave in the House this morning showed clearly that Queensland is leading the economic revival of Australia. I would claim that that is a result of what we as a Government have done for the sugar industry. It is certainly the industry that is leading that revival.

The major reason for these amendments is to restructure the pooling arrangements. That was also part of the agreement resulting in the sugar industry infrastructure package negotiated between me, the then Federal Minister for Primary Industries, Mr Crean, and the sugar industry itself. That has also been a great boost to this State and will continue to be over the next four years, because that is the period of construction of the work that is being undertaken. That is the period of input of additional Federal funding that would not otherwise be coming to this State. All this comes about because we have been prepared to roll with the punches, so to speak, with the changes within the industry, and to revise that pooling arrangement in an important and correct direction.

One of the other major amendments to the Act recognises the fact that there is a need for flexibility in our marketing arrangements and the way in which we structure those through the Queensland Sugar Corporation, the successor of the old Sugar Board. It is very important that we make sure that those arrangements are in place and that we have flexibility in regard to penalties and, indeed, bonuses in relation to the quality of sugar that is produced by the different mills in this State.

One of the great selling points of the Queensland sugar industry is its quality production. Late last year, during my visit to the European community, people in Brussels remarked on this very point. They said that the great thing about the Queensland sugar industry

was the quality of the sugar that it produces. We also have bonus or special sale provisions, and we can get higher prices for our sugar. That has also strengthened our flexibility to move with the times.

The other thing that has been a great success and has also strengthened and given flexibility is the arrangements that can be made in the local board areas between millers and growers in their own area, in their own region and in their own way. That is very important to the sugar industry. It has meant great savings to industry organisations and both growers and millers, because they do not have to go to the trouble of holding annual hearings of the former Central Sugar Cane Prices Board, which were just a bleating ground for the top QCs and barristers of this State. Now they only have the CJC on which to rely. Those hearings have disappeared, and there is no longer that expenditure. Now, people who know and understand their own conditions can sort out their problems in their own areas. That is where the finality of the division of sugar moneys will be determined.

This issue was mentioned by several members. Talks have not broken down. I gave Mr Randell, the member for Mirani, the assurance that talks about the division of sugar moneys have not broken down. Talks are still continuing about the methodology and processes that will be put in place. That will be determined at a Statewide level and finalised at a local level so that everyone has an opportunity for input into what will happen.

The final provisions of the Bill involve modernisation of the structure and the correction of some slight errors that might have been made in the printing of the Bill. We did rush it through because we wanted to get things moving as we needed it in place for the second half of 1991. Already, we have been able to modernise the Bill, and those transitional arrangements can be omitted because they are no longer needed. There has been a transition from some of the former industry Acts, some of which dated back to 1915. Some of them were unchanged since the 1890s. Under the new sugar industry legislation—the consolidated Act—the industry has prospered. The intent of the industry has gone well, and all the people connected with it—the growers, the millers and the employees in the sugar industry—have benefited from that.

Perhaps the only sour note of this debate was some of the comments made by the member for Burdekin, who sounded as though he wants to be a scab canecutter and a scab shearer. One can point to no other industry in

this State that has a better record of industrial relations than the sugar industry. It has an outstanding record of good industrial relations because millers, growers and union representatives have always been prepared to sit down with each other and talk things through with one major aim, namely, the financial viability of the sugar industry. They have worked out some of the conditions of harvesting, including continuous harvesting, which is an important tool for the sugar industry, and created expansion within the industry. They will continue to do that. We do not need the Stonemans of this world to come along and try to interrupt such a good system that has been in place for a long time. I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Hon. E. D. Casey (Mackay—Minister for Primary Industries) in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 5, as read, agreed to.

Schedule—

**Mr ROWELL** (3.14 p.m.): I want to raise one issue pertaining to proposed section 2.22 (2) (f) as it relates to raw sugar. The present Act states clearly that the miller delivers raw sugar to the corporation.

**Mr CASEY:** I rise to a point of order. The member is referring to clause 2.2, which has already been put and passed by the Committee.

**The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN** (Ms Power): It is also in the Schedule.

**Mr ROWELL:** We are talking about the Schedule. I seek some explanation for the omission of raw sugar. I do not know any other way that sugar mills throughout Queensland deliver sugar other than in a raw form. Could the Minister give me some idea of why that has been omitted?

**Mr CASEY:** This refers to the definition given in relation to the way in which sugar is sold and marketed. It really relates only to terminology in relation to the recommendation of the Sugar Corporation.

**Mr Rowell:** No other purpose?

**Mr CASEY:** No, there is no other purpose. I would like to comment on one point that Mr Rowell made. During further negotiations that will recommence next year in relation to reviewing the Act, there will be other changes. During discussion of the 1991 Bill and its introduction, I pointed out clearly that this Government was working towards trying to get a white sugar industry established in Queensland.

I am very pleased that that has been one of the success stories of our negotiations.

During his speech, the member for Hinchinbrook stated that the Mackay Sugar Cooperative, with E. D. & F. Mann, is moving towards this. The negotiations for that started during a discussion that I had almost three years ago with representatives of the sugar corporation in the boardroom of E. D. and F. Mann in Singapore. There will be a lot of changes in that regard in the next piece of legislation. People are showing more and more interest in this.

The honourable member would be aware of moves in his electorate by the Bundaberg Sugar Company to expand its crushing ability and refining capacity in Queensland. Other companies are talking about moving into the white sugar trade in this State. A total of 40 per cent of world sugar currently traded is traded as white sugar. We are not in that particular game at present in Australia, but we will definitely have to move into it. As we do, changes will be made. I have been talking about this issue in the House for 15 years or more. At the moment, there is nothing sinister about it or the way in which the word "raw" has been omitted from the legislation. It is just the way in which it has to be restructured.

**Mr ROWELL:** Raw sugar was always sold to the corporation; the corporation then resold it to the refinery; and the refinery then exported it or used it for the domestic market. That was why I raised this matter. I wanted to ensure that there was no intention whatsoever on the part of the Government to short-circuit that in the short term.

Schedule, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

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

## TRANSPORT PLANNING AND COORDINATION BILL 1994

### Second Reading

Debate resumed from 18 November 1993 (see p. 5978).

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory) (3.21 p.m.): On 18 November 1993, the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill was introduced into the House. Unfortunately, it was not dealt with before Christmas. No doubt, plenty of other members from both sides of the House will join in this debate, because this issue is of great interest to both sides of the House.

There has never been a greater need for a planned and coordinated approach to Queensland's transport system. Therefore, I support the intention of the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill of 1993. However, I would like to make a number of points, the first of which relates to the cheap shots and poor logic contained in the Minister's second-reading speech.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** If honourable members will listen, I will tell them what they were. The Minister said that the single Ministry of Transport provides the basis for an integrated approach to transport which sharply contrasts with the patchwork of inefficiency, duplication and fragmentation of the previous Government. That is simply untrue.

The Minister was referring, of course, to the previous Government's preferred operation of the three portfolios of Railways, Main Roads and Harbours and Marine. Such was the importance that the National Party attached to transport in Queensland that it assigned three portfolios to the function and, moreover, entrusted the portfolios to senior rather than junior Cabinet Ministers.

**Mr Hamill:** That was never the case in Harbours and Marine.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The National Party had a Minister representing Harbours and Marine.

**Mr Hamill:** Never a senior Minister.

**Mr JOHNSON:** He was a Minister who held other portfolios. It was a senior Minister, if the Minister wants to look at it that way. I can assure the Minister that it was very important—

**Mr Hamill:** He always sat down the other end of the table from the Premier.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I am not worried about where he sat. The Minister sits half way along the front bench, but a lot of people do not call him a senior Minister—even though he should act as one. There is no doubt that from time to time people even wonder why he is in the Ministry.

There are certain benefits to be gained from centralisation, whereas there are others to be gained from decentralisation. As for the Minister's suggestion that all one needs to do is amalgamate several smaller portfolios and the resultant giant bureaucracy will automatically remove duplication, increase efficiency and promote co-operation—that is absolutely not true. What a fantastic imagination the Minister has! If only it was that simple!

Even more optimistic is this passage that appears at the end of his second-reading speech—

"No longer are transport projects determined by whose gate is at the end of the road. This legislation will help ensure that those days never return."

What a distorted view! As if one could address issues of favouritism, pork-barrelling and the like with a stroke of the legislative pen. I say to the Minister: that is true. I could quote examples of cronyism on both sides of the House—but that would only lead to a degenerate exhibition of "Your fellow was worse than our fellow" name-calling across the Chamber, of which I will not be a part. Suffice to say no amount of legislative ink will ever legislate for good character or honesty.

Now that I have dealt with the two cheap shots in the Minister's second-reading speech, I will move on to the substance of the Bill. The Opposition is concerned that the Minister will not have complete control of this portfolio. The Opposition is concerned that once the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill is put in place, this portfolio will be Treasury-driven. I trust that the Minister in charge of this mega-department will ensure that that does not happen.

The Minister has presented the House with a framework for further legislation—a framework, if you like, for the implementation of the department's strategic plans. This is a good idea. The Opposition supports the planning of public projects to ensure the best value for limited public funds. More funds would be available, but there more important places within the spending structure of this Government than Transport, Health, Education, and Police Services. I return to the subject of law and order. As we noted in question time this week, that issue is not very important to this Government.

No matter which party is in Government, accountability is absolutely paramount. We must get our priorities right. It is paramount that those projects—regardless of where they are located—receive the attention that they deserve. Developing strategic plans and then building a framework of legislation to underpin the plans is a sound direction to follow—not before time, however, as the Government has been in office for just over four years. It is ironic that the single Ministry/Transport Department idea, which is the central plank of the Bill, should reveal its very inadequacies in the Bill that empowers its strategic plans. The message is that the wheels of big bureaucracy grind very slowly. It has taken nearly four years for this strategic plan to emerge.

The corporate plans have not been the achievement that they have been claimed to be. Queensland Rail still suffers from gross inefficiencies—and I will cite some examples from a recent report on rail operations. As

Queensland Rail attempted to close rail lines to central, south-western and northern Queensland, public pressure forced an inquiry by a rail task force. The aspect that had rural Queenslanders up in arms was that the Queensland Government said that it expected to lose \$115 million in grants at the mid-year Premiers Conference and that rural Queensland was going to pay the penalty. Mr Goss was going to ask rural Queensland to endure a disproportionate share of that loss in cuts to railway services, further compounding problems confronting country people.

Many problems exist in Queensland Rail. I could talk about that subject for hours. No doubt the Minister would not want to hear what I had to say, although he is aware of a lot of them. A lot of planning still needs to be done. I know that the Government has a lot of restructuring in mind. It has to get it right. I will give one example to illustrate that Queensland Rail is not working. The Q-Link system in this State is an absolute disaster. It is a total failure in country areas, where there is duplication. There is no denying that. The Minister knows that as well as I do. He cannot hide from it. Just before Christmas, in Winton, one businessman ordered two motor bikes for delivery via the rail service. They did not come on a wagon; they came in the cold car. What do the people of Winton have? They have cold motor bikes and hot ice-cream—thanks to the foresight and vision of this Government in not getting Q-Link right. That is one of the many problems confronting Queensland Rail because the Government's planning has not been done properly and it does not consult with the people in the field. It is about time it got its consultation program working. It has not worked to date.

I want to refer to the Kelty report. No doubt, the Minister has read the Kelty report, which states—

"Australia's rail system, illustrated in map 10, falls well behind those of many other developed countries. There are four essential issues to be tackled:

...

- The withdrawal of rail services and the impact of this on rural communities."

The report goes on to state—

"Rail closures in the Regions

Changes in transport infrastructure and services have had a significant impact on many regions. Rail services in many non-metropolitan areas have closed down. The Taskforce believes this trend will continue as roads are improved and fast train services are introduced."

None of those factors are applicable under this Government. The report goes on to state—

"Governments should recognise the concern felt in many regions about transport cut backs. There should be full consultation . . ."

The Kelty report says, "There should be full consultation." Has the Minister taken that on board? He is not interested. The report states further—

". . . with affected communities well in advance of any future closures."

When I say "full consultation", I refer to local government, which has not had the courtesy extended to it that it should. They are the people who are out in the field and who understand full well the problems. I believe that this Bill that we are debating, the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill, has a great deal to do with local government. I urge the Minister for Transport and the Minister for Local Government to pay particular attention to the needs and the wants of local authorities. The Kelty report states further in its recommendations—

"The Taskforce has been told of the impact on local communities of the closure of rail services in some regions. The Taskforce recommends full consultation with affected communities well in advance of any future closures."

I could go for an hour quoting from the Kelty report. The report makes heaps of references to transport, and I will touch on it more when we debate the Transport Infrastructure Bill, because it is important that the people of Queensland know full well some of the findings of that report.

However, the task force trade union representative, Mr Trevor Campbell, recommended an inquiry into QR management practices. That inquiry was to find out, for example, why traffic had not been accepted when it should have been, why it was rejecting business when it was available, and the poor marketing of branch lines.

I know for a fact that the day that the task force came to Yaraka, the Minister and the leader of the task force, the Honourable the Deputy Premier, Mr Tom Burns, was present. At that meeting, I suggested that Queensland Rail has to put more people in the field in a managerial capacity to find customers so that it can make lines viable not only in the central west but also in the south and the north and, once again, make Queensland Rail the great enterprise that it was. I understand that Queensland Rail has called for applications to fill this position in the central west. I congratulate the task force, or the Minister's

department, on its foresight in making that proposal a reality.

The task force came up with a variety of areas in which QR could lift its act with respect to customer service. Examples included the scheduling of branch line operations to aid cost recovery, the training of first line managers, that is, station masters, in the marketing of QR's services, and appointing private business people as sales agents to sell QR services in rural areas. This is a great concept.

**Mr Hamill:** Do you support that?

**Mr JOHNSON:** I do support that.

**Mr Hamill:** I am pleased to hear that.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I said that at Yaraka that day, and I will place it on record now so that it appears in *Hansard*. I have supported that all along. It has been one of my concepts.

**Mr Hamill:** I think that there is going to be such a proposal at Cunnamulla.

**Mr JOHNSON:** However, the point that I want to make—

**Mr Hamill:** I am pleased that you are supporting that.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I support anything which will promote Queensland Rail, which will make it a more efficient and better service and which, at the same time, will look after its employees. This morning in this House, we saw—

**Mr Hamill:** I acknowledge your sincerity.

**Mr JOHNSON:** This morning in this House, we saw this Government selling out the workers of this State. One of the members of the Opposition tried to stand up and bat for the people who work within this place. Yet Government members turned their backs and walked away from it. The Opposition is going to look after the workers of this State. I assure Government members that they have sold out the workers of this State, and I am going to remind them that Queensland Rail employees, under a conservative Government, will not suffer the way that they have suffered for four years under this Labor administration. I can assure them of that.

As I said, the task force came up with a great variety of ideas. I pay tribute to one man who has done a tremendous amount of work in trying to recapture the patronage of Queensland Rail. That man has had years of experience in the private sector, and he is now employed in Queensland Rail. He is now recapturing much of that stock transportation patronage that was lost by Queensland Rail. Mr Cliff Cammack was appointed some time ago as Queensland Rail's

livestock manager. We need more people of that type.

**Mr Hamill:** I agree with you, and your mates in Quilpie were bagging him.

**Mr JOHNSON:** My what?

**Mr Hamill:** Your mates in Quilpie were bagging him.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I did not bag him.

**Mr Hamill:** I am pleased that you are standing up—

**Mr JOHNSON:** I never bagged him.

**Mr Hamill:** I said your mates did. I am pleased that you are standing up for him, because I think that he is a good bloke.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I know who is bagging him, and I can assure the Minister that they are not my mates. It is a case of sour grapes. The Minister knows the foundation of that argument as well as I do.

**Mr Hamill:** It was totally spurious, wasn't it?

**Mr JOHNSON:** It was serious stuff.

**Mr Hamill:** It was spurious.

**Mr JOHNSON:** It was, absolutely. However, I am saying that the Minister knows that I was not a part of that.

**Mr Hamill:** I know.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The Minister knows that I was not a part of that, and I will place that on the record here and now.

**Mr Hamill** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** And I will continue to do so.

**Mr Hamill:** QR is doing a good job.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The Minister needs more of these people in the field if Queensland Rail is to run as a profitable and essential business.

**Mr Hamill:** Thank you, comrade.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The Minister should not call me "comrade". I am no comrade of the Minister. I return to my speech. The task force recommended that the inquiry be held, with the terms of reference sorted out between the Government, the union and industry representatives. We understand, however, that no inquiry is going to take place. Queensland Rail seems a little sensitive to criticism of its middle management. Perhaps I should say that QR middle management is a little sensitive to criticism of QR middle management. Instead, the Minister has given the task force a reply to the effect that it was set up to recommend changes in work practices, that the task force has done that, and that he will consider its input. When a task force set up by the Minister's own

Government makes a recommendation, why has the Minister not acted upon it? Was the inquiry not a good inquiry? I doubt if Mr Burns would think so. After all, he chaired that inquiry. The Opposition was not invited to participate in the task force, although the Public Transport Union was invited to do so.

**Mr Hamill:** That is not so. You were all invited, and some of you turned up.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The Minister should let me finish.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Briskey):** Order! The Honourable the Minister will cease interjecting.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your protection. The Minister should listen to what I have to say. I was invited to attend those meetings held in my region, and I thank the Minister for that. I had input into those meetings, and I know that the Minister took on board some of what I had to say. I know that he has acted on some of the things that I said. I am saying that it is paramount that we have healthy, constructive dialogue and that we try to get this planning and coordination right in Queensland Rail.

I have no criticism of the Public Transport Union. It is a highly responsible union. That union is quite rightly concerned about the wellbeing of rail transport employees and the economic wellbeing of the communities in which its members live. Every member of this Parliament should be concerned about that. We do not want to see a sell-out of those people. They are doing it hard now, and we have to get it right for them. However, I would have thought that the opinions of the elected representatives of the people of rural Queensland would have counted for something, too. Some of us had an input; a damn lot of us did not. The powers of that task force should have been more wide ranging so that it could have had more input into Government. I hope and trust that the efforts of that task force will not be thrown away forever and a day. It was not only the wellbeing of the railways at issue but also that of the other industries throughout this State. The industry leaders, Government members and unions which made up that task force came up with a very good result, in more ways than one.

Certain references are made to coordination with Federal and local government bodies. However, there is not nearly enough coordination to support the needs of Queensland. The record of this Government with respect to its coordination with local government is poor. Passenger transport systems in Brisbane come under a wide variety

of uncoordinated levels of Government which, in many cases, duplicate services and continue to lose money at a remarkable rate. No effort is made to coordinate Brisbane City Council transport services with rail systems, and no effort at all is made to use the Brisbane River as a transport route. That is in contrast to Sydney, for example, where ferry travel is a long established means of transport to and from work in that city. The same could be done in Brisbane. That great river could be utilised to meet the transport needs of our city. Apart from the city council cross-river ferry services, neither level of Government has sought to exploit the river as a passenger route.

If this Government's record with respect to coordination with local government is poor, its record with respect to coordination with the Federal Government is even worse. Nowhere is this more evident than with port authorities. Only the guiding hand of the Federal Government can bring the cost efficiency in State-controlled port authorities close to international standards. Under the cloak of revenue raising, the State port authorities have been used as milch cows by Governments more interested in revenue raising than in providing sound infrastructures to support overseas trade. The Brisbane Port Authority is a rare example of a progressive port authority. My comments are not so much directed at the Brisbane Port Authority as at the lack of coordinated transport planning at the Federal level.

The typical Australian port authority is an underutilised, feather-bedding monopoly. No efforts have been made to promote healthy competition between the ports. That is the reason why the Port of Brisbane was able to snag the important business of the Nissan motor company. Brisbane has contained costs at \$18,000 per ship visit compared with \$32,000 in Sydney. No wonder an astute operator can grab a significant market niche when the competition is so far behind! Why should this be? Why have Australian port authorities failed to support the export efforts of the nation? Why have they added so much to the cost of goods transported along our coastline?

Port costs are currently an outrageous 11.4 per cent of the total cost of coastal shipping. Privatisation may not be the key. Further evidence is required, and more research needs to be done, to ensure that this would not simply turn public monopolies into private monopolies with little improvement in service delivery. The solution rests with coordination between State and Federal Governments to provide efficient, low-cost infrastructures that stand behind port authorities to remove the geographical

monopoly that each port holds—something that is not to the benefit of our exports, might I add. Any State or commercial operation involved with port authorities must recognise the need for the Federal Government to provide a strategic role in ensuring that the ports and their facilities are broadly appropriate to the overall national transport function. We see little of this in the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill.

I will return to the coordination of transport—something with which I strongly agree and which I strongly support. It is interesting to note that in his second-reading speech the Minister referred to the fragmentation and duplication of transport in Queensland and to the patchwork of inefficiency. I would like to draw attention to the current failure of State and Federal Labor Governments to coordinate. They must have set the world record for the right hand not knowing what the left hand is doing. I will outline the current failure, and the ongoing failure, of Labor in this regard.

In the lead-up to the 1993 election, the Federal Government undertook to establish the National Transport Planning Task Force. The policy was launched by the Prime Minister in Sydney on 24 February, 1993, with the announcement being drawn from the caucus report presented by the former Land Transport Minister, the Honourable Bob Brown, and the now Minister for Transport and Communications, the Honourable Bob Collins, in mid-1992. The body known as the National Transport Planning Task Force was created following long and bitter complaints from transport clients, industry and overseas trading partners about the poor state of transport efficiency in Australia.

In his speech, the Minister said that reform in individual transport sectors was now sufficiently advanced to provide a foundation for a more integrated network. He was referring to the waterfront industry reform initiatives, the National Road Transport Commission and the National Rail Commission. The plan is to have a nationally coordinated and highly efficient transport system to serve us all well into the twenty-first century. I know that the Kelty report made reference to that. The terms and objectives were spelt out by the Prime Minister. However, they differed considerably from those of the Queensland Government and its definition of coordination.

We would do well to consider the vast discrepancy between the two ideas on coordination. The Federal Government sees coordination as taking account of the social and environmental impact of the transport system. In contrast, the State Government ideal takes no account of environmental considerations or, if it

does, they are not mentioned in this Bill. Social impacts are wholly ignored. In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that an objective was to ensure the best possible return on Government investment—the exact opposite of what is required for the support of rural and regional social structures in Queensland.

The Federal idea of coordination refers to adequacy and efficiency of intermodal links in the national transport system, transparent of State parochialism, with the national interest as the first priority. However, the State idea is that coordinated transport means giving effect to the Government's economic goal of *Queensland-Leading State*—a strange contrast. The Federal idea is that integrated transport reform should concentrate on and build upon the micro-economic reforms announced to have been achieved of late. The State idea has nothing to do with exploiting the benefits of micro-economic reform. It looks at State portfolio perspectives, State portfolio accountability and State portfolio strategic planning. There is no mention of how announced Federal micro-economic achievements will be capitalised upon.

All we hear is the customary boasting about what the State Government is doing. It is patting its own back and paddling its own canoe. The one point that both Governments seem to agree upon, though, is the need to "out-motherhood speak" the other on the issue, as well as the need to differentiate their offerings to the electorate as much as possible. They have clearly come to the correct conclusion that we can only squeeze a certain amount of electoral mileage from the topic of transport coordination. The mileage that one level of Government can gain means that there is less for the other. From what has occurred over the past four and a half years under this Government, that is fairly obvious. Therefore, we have the most uncoordinated mess of coordination policies, as each level of Government tries to impress upon the others the superiority of its ideals. Can honourable members imagine anything more ridiculous—uncoordinated policies on coordination! By definition, we need a united statement from local, State and Federal Governments to sort out this mess.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister referred to the removal of approximately 20 Acts from the 55 Acts that his portfolio currently administers. That may or may not contribute to efficiency in the portfolio. Let me remind the House that the mere tinkering with legislation will in itself do nothing to remove cost burdens to Government or industry and will not in itself lay one extra square metre of bitumen on the State

road network. Let there be no confusion here. The test of effectiveness will not be measured by the way in which the Minister tinkers with the legislation.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister referred also to removing inefficient, ineffective and redundant legislation. He went on to name a series of Acts that he will repeal over the next two years. The repeal of those Acts may be deemed desirable now. However, that is only because of the change in circumstances and the need for legislation to reflect present rather than past needs. As such, I support that measure, which is not necessary because of the ineffectiveness of those who brought down the original legislation all those years ago or because of the failure of past Governments to draft effective legislation. Highly competent administrators such as the late Russell Hinze, the long-serving Minister for Main Roads, brought in much of that legislation. It was highly relevant to the time when he was Minister.

Russ Hinze had his critics; he had his detractors. He was certainly a colourful man, but he was one of the most capable administrators to sit in this House. Make no mistake: the road systems of Queensland would be worse off today had it not been for the late Russell Hinze. I have perused back issues of *Hansard* to read the speeches made on both sides of the House when many of those Acts were debated in the 1960s and 1970s. In many cases, no substantial objections from the then Opposition were forthcoming. In other cases, the legislation being repealed was first introduced by a Labor Government in any event.

I turn now to the powers that are proposed under the Bill for Government owned corporations to acquire property. It is fundamentally incorrect for one private organisation to have powers regarding the acquisition of property denied to other private organisations. Therefore, I consider that the property acquisition powers proposed for transport-related Government owned corporations contained in this Bill are too wide and too powerful. Furthermore, if a Government seeks to acquire property for transport-related needs and the constituents of the region in question do not agree with the move, the Government that makes that decision should be responsible for the electoral unpopularity that results from its actions. It is not satisfactory for the Government to pass the blame to the chief executive of the transport corporation. As it presently stands, that is where the Bill places the responsibility.

I am not against private enterprise, but this is a clear example in which Government, acting

clearly and unequivocally as the Government and not as a semi-private interest, should enter the property market. I am saying that, if Government wants to acquire land for transport purposes, then it must have the guts to do it itself and not hide behind a semi-government body. It would be far better if the Government decided where it wanted property resumed, resumed the property and zoned it for road or rail construction only. The land could then be put up for tender among those private and public corporations interested in road or rail construction. The Government owned corporation would then need to tender, along with engineering companies and perhaps local authorities, as part and parcel of the contract for construction of the road or rail works.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! There is far too much audible conversation in the Chamber.

**Mr JOHNSON:** If the Government owned corporation has the sole right to compulsorily acquire property, that will effectively lock out private contractors for road and rail construction, as the land ownership is fundamental to the construction contract.

In summary, I support only those provisions of the Bill relating to coordination. I do not support the provision whereby Government owned corporations—which are, after all, private corporations—have rights of property resumption denied to other private bodies. I make the further comment that efforts to coordinate transport initiatives within a single level of government are doomed. There are few references in the Bill to suggest that State transport planners will need to recognise the initiatives of national and local government planners. However, the agendas of those bodies are so far apart and the parochialism so entrenched that I doubt whether it will ever come to pass.

I suggest to the Minister that the employees in the top echelons of his department should attempt to understand the manner in which the transport industry operates. Those officers should take a journey on a coal train, a long-distance bus or with an operator in the harbours and marine industry. In that way, they will gain first-hand knowledge of the problems with which those operators are confronted. This is not a laughing matter. I believe that I have raised a very important point.

If senior departmental officers acquaint themselves with the needs of transport operators in Queensland, the industry will operate more efficiently. The relevant officers in local government should be part of that exercise. After all, local government is one of the most

important tiers of government in this nation. I pray that it will be part of this State forever and a day.

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central) (3.58 p.m.): I was delighted that, at the end of Comrade Johnson's contribution, he acknowledged his support for the Bill. After listening to his contribution, I wondered what stand he was taking. The member did not acknowledge a number of facts, including the fact that this Government and members of this Government have made a significant contribution to transport issues. Recently, I read a copy of *Big Rig*. The honourable member for Greenslopes featured very prominently in the centrefold of that particular edition of that publication.

**Mr Hamill:** Sorry?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes, indeed.

**Mr Fenlon:** In the blue singlet.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Yes.

**Mr Ardill:** Is that why it's called *Big Rig*?

**Mr BEATTIE:** No, that is not why it is called *Big Rig*. The member for Greenslopes demonstrated his commitment to the heavy transport industry by riding on a number of the trucks featured in that particular issue of *Big Rig*.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** You want safer gas tanks, too, don't you?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Indeed I do. For the last 40 minutes, we heard more than enough gas from the honourable member for Gregory.

As members are aware, one of the most important transport issues is planning. In the past, this State has had a very sad track record in that field. That is why the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill, introduced by the Honourable the Minister, is so important. I am aware of the problems that my constituents have faced in recent years. The lack of past planning in road, rail—to a lesser extent—and general transport considerations has meant that we are now facing very tough decisions.

**Mr Littleproud:** Lifestyle changes, though.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I accept that, but it is more than that. I contend that, if futuristic planning had occurred, some of the problems now being encountered would not exist. I cite as an example the location of various roads. If members consider that in the inner suburbs I have a disproportionately high percentage of elderly people, they would realise the impact of the lack of planning decisions. Particularly now, the placement of roads has a disproportionately

greater impact than it would have had if some of this planning had been done 20 years ago.

I was reading the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning report titled, "Recent Population and Housing Trends in Queensland", which points out that in 1991 the life expectancy for a newborn child in Queensland was just over 74 years for males and slightly more than 80 years for females. This is a considerable improvement since 1971, when life expectancy was 67 years for males and over 75 years for females. The reason I make that point is that it highlights the growing percentage of elderly people not only in my electorate, but also in the rest of Brisbane. If we do not get planning right, the people who will suffer are the senior citizens in our community.

I will mention a couple of the other statistics. For example, that same report found that during the period 1986 to 1991, Queensland recorded an average of 30 300 residential dwelling commencements per annum, compared with a figure of 38 500 for 1991-1992 and a record figure of 44 900 for 1992-1993. If those statistics are not a strong case for planning, then nothing is. The growth that is taking place across the whole of the State, and particularly in the south-east corner, indicates that we need to get our planning right, otherwise the nightmare in the south-east corner that we are currently experiencing will continue in the future. Other statistics from the Department of Housing report show that during 1992-1993, Queensland's population grew by more than 82 000, or 2.7 per cent. That growth is more than two and a half times the national average and higher than that of any other State or territory.

The point I am trying to make is that we need to make certain that planning is undertaken. I think those statistics show why this Bill is so important. I am saddened that this planning did not take place 20 years ago, but, obviously, we need to look at the situation as it exists today.

Let me talk in specifics. In my electorate, I have transport problems and bottlenecks in the Valley, in the city, along Lutwyche Road and, to a lesser extent, along Kelvin Grove Road. Those transport problems have been largely brought about by a lack of long-term planning. The sort of heartache and hardship I have referred to before is now becoming more and more acute. When the Government undertakes the necessary changes, inevitably the local community will resent some of them. For example, the Transport Department—

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** It is happening across the city. A couple of years ago, the Transport Department widened Kelvin Grove Road. That work created a great deal of angst for me as the local member.

**Mr Littleproud:** Hale Street.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I will take that interjection. The Hale Street project is another illustration of exactly the sort of thing I am talking about. Indeed, at the moment the Brisbane City Council is widening another part of Kelvin Grove Road. As a result, the local alderman, David Hinchliffe, is going through some angst. Notwithstanding these past difficulties, the Transport Department is now looking toward some long-term solutions. A great deal of consideration has been given to the bottleneck in the Valley area, which obviously includes New Farm and Teneriffe, to which I referred. The Minister's department, in close consultation with the Brisbane City Council, has carried out a study in an attempt to sort out this problem. A number of alternatives were put forward. They included controlling and limiting traffic flow in the Valley, providing a low-cost western bypass using Ann and McLachlan Streets as a one-way couplet, or using the inner ring road link to Gilchrist Avenue.

**Mr Hamill:** That doesn't sound too bad.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take the Minister's interjection. He knows that is the most logical and constructive thing to do. I applaud the Minister for examining this alternative to alleviate traffic difficulties in the Spring Hill, Herston, Kelvin Grove and the Valley/Teneriffe area by providing a traffic flow that will use an inner ring road link to Gilchrist Avenue and through to Breakfast Creek. It will not affect one house, because it will go through some commercial/industrial areas. There has been widespread consultation with a range of people, including the RNA. In fact, the program which has been worked on is that that link to Breakfast Creek Road from Gilchrist Avenue should be completed after the Brisbane City Council has done some work over the next couple of years, or perhaps even sooner. It is up to the council, of course, to deal with the Gilchrist Avenue part of the program. The State Government is being supportive.

**Mr Hamill:** I think it will relieve some of that airport traffic on Kingsford Smith Drive, as well.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I am about to come to that. That is another problem when one looks at the ultimate destination of the traffic. We have all heard the recent debate about the end result of road development in the southern part of Brisbane. Inevitably, there has been pressure on certain roads in the northern suburbs, and the Main Roads Department has for some time had

an interest in a corridor that would provide an outlet for traffic to those suburbs and, indeed, a link to the airport. The only difficulty is that it goes through part of a suburb in my electorate. That is a matter of great concern to me. Indeed, if there had been correct planning in the past, the sorts of difficult decisions necessary now would not have had to be made because the changes would have occurred when population density was lower.

There is an ongoing consultation process to make sure that the impact on local residents is minimal and, as the Minister knows, I am strongly of the opinion and will advocate as strongly as I can the option that will best look after my local constituents. The sorts of difficulties with which I am faced as the member for Brisbane Central have been brought about by bad planning in the past. Unfortunately, in 1994 we are left to carry the baby. We are facing up to the difficult decisions, but it is not easy.

**Mr Littleproud:** Does the high density living policy counter that a bit, or does it complement it?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Really, it has nothing to do with high density and the honourable member knows it.

**Mr Littleproud:** It has to increase the number of people travelling on the streets, doesn't it?

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member can be half smart if he wants to. The only problem around here is a pretty low density and it is sitting in close proximity to the honourable member.

Let me deal with some other issues, because I believe it is important that we look at some alternatives. There have been suggestions from the Brisbane City Council about the provision of a light rail to serve the New Farm/Teneriffe area, which I applaud. I am a strong advocate of all those commitments to public transport, because that will reduce the pressure on the roads in the inner suburbs. I am one of those members who would be quite delighted if the capital works roads program was spent in someone else's electorate. I am not all that keen to have money spent on roads in my electorate, but when it comes to public transport, I am keen to have the money spent in my electorate. That is why I applaud the support of the Minister and his department for the Brisbane City Council light rail proposal.

I turn to other future transport requirements. We have all seen the development of South Bank in recent times. Now that goods traffic has been shifted from Roma Street, consideration is being given to what will happen to the goods yards. Also, we

have all seen the enormous changes that have taken place in the Valley and the rejuvenation of Chinatown. In my humble view, very careful consideration needs to be given to an integrated transport link between Roma Street, the Valley, the city and South Bank. That would be a very attractive transport facility not just for visitors but for residents. I know that at present the need is met partly by trains and partly by buses, but in terms of Brisbane's growth into the future I think we do need to look at other imaginative people-mover systems. The solution may well be the extension of a light rail system that links those areas, or it may be a monorail, but I think they are all attractive alternatives that would help put Brisbane on the map.

In speaking of rail in general terms, I have to put on public record my appreciation of the Minister's invitation to join him and the honourable member for Gregory on the first Spirit of the Outback train service that left Brisbane on 19 November last year. That shows, contrary to what the honourable member for Gregory was saying, a strong commitment by this Minister and this Government to public transport and the growth of rail services in Queensland. I acknowledge the congenial company of the honourable member for Gregory—all honourable members know that he is a decent human being and is good company. I acknowledge his part in making that inaugural trip the success that it was. That is another contribution that this Government has made to the improvement in rail.

**Mr Johnson:** A great trip it was, too.

**Mr BEATTIE:** It was indeed.

**Mr Johnson:** A great concept.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I take that interjection, it is a great concept. We need to have more concepts such as that to attract people to rail and to encourage people to use other forms of public transport. There needs to be a definite strategy to do that. When the National Party was in power, it closed a total of 58 rail lines. That is a very sad track record. We need to reverse that trend and make rail transport and other public transport more attractive.

I shall raise a couple of other issues that pertain particularly to my electorate. I refer to the metropolitan freight study that was undertaken recently by the Minister and the announcement just before Christmas of a metropolitan freight strategy which emerged from that study and which will provide better movement of freight to increase Brisbane's competitiveness while minimising some of the effects of heavy transport and its impositions on the community. That is a particular problem for my electorate. The

recommendations of that strategy included considerations on land use, planning, road freight, inter-modal efficiency, the environment, dedicated vehicle movement, pricing and so on. I believe that, in conjunction with the study in relation to the movement of dangerous goods, this will protect the people of Brisbane more than they have been protected in the past. I applaud the Minister's initiatives in that regard.

I turn to the specifics of the Bill. Together with the strategic initiatives contained within the Transport Infrastructure Bill and those proposed to be contained within the transport services legislation, the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill will provide, within the Government's overall strategic planning objectives for Queensland, the strategic framework for the planning and management of transport throughout the State. Central to this theme is the legislative obligation to develop a Transport Coordination Plan. I would have thought that was fundamental. Accountability and transparency will be provided through the structure of the Transport Coordination Plan. The three key elements of the plan are: a statement of the plan's objectives, criteria for determining allocation of resources, and performance indicators to measure the achievements of objectives.

The objectives of the Transport Coordination Plan will be attainable over a defined period and be clearly measurable. The result of achieving the objectives will be to contribute towards the Government's vision for an integrated, safe, efficient and accessible transport system. Hallelujah for that! It is long overdue. It is also fundamentally important, when looking at roads, to consider the notion that I have advocated in this House before, that is, the construction of a road to link up with the Logan toll road and to run on the other side of Mount Coot-tha to link up with the Pine Rivers area, so that heavy transport and other transport wanting to go from the south of the city could go around it in a loop to the north instead of going through the centre of the city, where my constituents live and, indeed, where many Brisbane people and visitors from intrastate and interstate enjoy the city.

While each successive Transport Coordination Plan will establish its own objectives, they will be consistent with the objectives established in the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill, that is, to enhance the economic development of our State and the quality of life of all Queenslanders. Criteria for funding priorities will detail the steps to be considered before an investment or activity is undertaken and include methods to compare

alternative investments and activities. These criteria will also determine the priority for investments and activities between and within all transport modes, including between the Department of Transport and the transport-related GOCs. In addition, the Transport Infrastructure Bill and the proposed transport services legislation will contain allocation criteria between transport infrastructure and service provision to achieve the best overall transport system for Queensland.

Performance indicators will reveal the extent to which the objectives of the Transport Coordination Plan are being achieved. To deliver transparency and accountability, the performance indicators will be monitored, recorded and reported. Each Transport Coordination Plan and reports on its effectiveness will be required to be laid before Parliament.

Integration and coordination of investment activity within and between transport modes means that decisions will be based on meeting common objectives in the most efficient way and taking into account the impacts—including the unintended impacts—of all the alternative approaches elsewhere in the transport system. Integration and coordination will be achieved by clearly stating the objectives, determining coordinated strategies to attain the objectives and establishing processes to identify and resolve conflicts.

Integration of decision making should increase the positive outcomes of transport investments and activities while reducing instances of waste. Coordination of activity and investment to achieve common objectives will ensure the greatest net benefits by appropriate scheduling of activity over time and in particular locations. The principal benefits of integration and coordination will result from the right activities being undertaken at the right time and place with the right mix of available infrastructure and services operating in the appropriate manner to meet identified needs. That is something we have not done in the past.

The Transport Coordination Plan will establish links with the already published *Queensland Transport Policy Direction Statement* and the *Department of Transport Corporate Plan*. The *Queensland Transport Policy Direction Statement* provides principles for policy development which outline in general terms how the Government will manage the transport system to ensure that appropriate infrastructure and services are provided. It will guide the manner in which actions resulting from the Transport Coordination Plan will be undertaken.

The principles of the *Queensland Transport Policy Direction Statement* will be incorporated in the Transport Coordination Plan as criteria applying to decision making. The principles will also apply to the *Department of Transport Corporate Plan*. The corporate plan will, in turn, effectively articulate the manner in which the Department of Transport will deliver the obligations of the Transport Coordination Plan through clearly identifying transport program outcomes and key strategies. Through the Transport Coordination Plan the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill will outline the type of transport system that the Government wishes to achieve. This will not prevent an operator acting or investing in a manner contrary to the agreed vision for the system. However, it would be difficult for such an operator to realise the full potential benefits of this investment while the Government's investments and initiatives are directed to an alternative goal.

If, for example, Government policy was to pursue the objectives of increasing the efficiency of freight carried per axle and reducing vehicle numbers and vehicle emissions, it would be difficult to understand how a trucking company could profit from an investment in a fleet of small, uneconomic trucks. The strategic planning process would not prevent the investment, but it would provide some direction for investments that may be more advantageous. That is a sensible way to go. If companies continue investments which could be regarded as being contrary to the agreed vision, the accuracy and applicability of the vision would have to be reconsidered.

This legislation provides yet another example of this Government's commitment to a fully integrated, efficient and effective transport system. It creates legislative obligations and accountabilities for the strategy, planning and management of transport. The Bill ensures that the development of the transport system is not done in isolation. The Bill provides focus for Government and private industry on the best way to ensure maximum economic and social return on financial and other resource investments in the State's transport system. That is the most sensible and logical way to go, so that at the end of the day we end up with a transport system that is not only efficiently and effectively run but is run in the best interests of commuters and the people of Queensland, and that is not simply operating in some degree of isolation and coming about in a haphazard way.

Time expired.

**Mrs McCAULEY** (Callide) (4.18 p.m.): This Bill establishes a legislative framework for the planning and management of transport

throughout the State. This includes transport by road, rail, air and water. However, for the Minister to boast—as he did in his second-reading speech—that he has developed an efficient, cost-effective and integrated transport system is stretching it a bit. Our roads have never been in worse disrepair. Our railways were threatened with closure—and for that matter they still are—and our ports are going to be ripped off of many millions of taxpayers' dollars in the name of corporatisation. I will talk about that later. The Minister is quite happy to see the demise of the Travelsafe Committee, the only parliamentary committee in this place which I believe is worth while. I am on the record as saying that—

**Mr Hamill:** Why do you say that?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Because that is what is going to happen. It is getting the chop, because we have to have all those other committees which this Government considers are of higher priority. The Minister, who has always acted as though the Travelsafe Committee was a Mickey Mouse committee, is going to sit back and let this happen. I challenge him to say that this Government is not going to let the Travelsafe Committee be abolished.

**Mr Hamill:** It is up to you.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** No, it is not up to me.

**Mr Hamill:** It is not my committee. It is a committee of the Parliament.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** If it is abolished, as is the plan, we will be the only Parliament in Australia that will not have such a committee.

**Mr Hamill:** It is up to the Parliament.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I believe that it is up to the Minister to say, "I value this committee. Its members do a great deal of good work, and I do not think it should be abolished." I believe that the Minister could do a bit of lobbying amongst the people who make the decisions. He is in the Cabinet; I am not. Believe me, it is not the PSC that will make the decision. The Chairman of the Travelsafe Committee, the member for Archerfield, Mr Ardill, has every right to be incensed about the Minister's lack of support in this matter.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** He does an excellent job and I am pleased to hear the honourable member acknowledge it. Obviously, totally useless committees such as the Public Works Committee are more important. After all, who cares if we are the only State in Australia without such a parliamentary committee.

**Mr Beattie:** What's this got to do with a transport Bill?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** It has a great deal to do with it. Is Mr Beattie on the Public Works Committee? Indeed he is.

**Mr Beattie:** It would be nice if you served on one and did some work for a change.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I would not boast about it if I were him. It is an absolutely hopeless committee.

The LGAQ—the Local Government Association of Queensland—endorses the objectives of this Bill but believes that social justice and environmental protection should have been specifically mentioned in the objectives. The LGAQ also welcomes the requirement that the Transport Coordination Plan must take into account the interests of local government. Whether or not the Government caters for those interests, or simply acknowledges them and then does what it wants anyway, remains to be seen. After all, the chief executive of Queensland Transport has extremely wide-ranging powers and can lock up land for possible future transport needs very easily; although, I certainly hope and pray that that does not happen.

A matter of concern to the LGAQ is the potential for the Transport Department to put pressure on a local government to refuse developmental approval on land which might be required for future transport purposes. It is important to remember that it has been recently confirmed by the Planning and Environment Court that a council has no power to refuse a development approval on grounds of that nature. It is most important that planning by Queensland Transport be as far reaching and accurate as possible.

I take this opportunity to bring an example to the Minister's attention. Although the area is not in my electorate—it is just outside it—the people who own this land are in my electorate. This problem has been a source of some concern for them. They are Roderick Edward Wilson and William Thomas Wilson who own Lot 2 on RP 67931 in the Parish of Booyal situated on the Bruce Highway near Wallville. They purchased this property in March/April last year and their solicitors did the usual application for information concerning Transport Department land requirements for road purposes. The reply they received stated—

"This department has no known requirements for the subject property . . ."

Surveyors from the department have recently carried out survey work on and over the Wilsons' property in relation to a proposal for a diversion of the Bruce highway right through their property to facilitate the construction of a new bridge over

the Burnett River. Of course, they are uncompromisingly objecting to any road proposed which affects their property. Their property is prime agricultural land. It has been used for growing feed crops all year round, including winter crops of barley and oats and summer crops of sorghum and corn. As their property is fully irrigated they propose to grow up to 30 acres of lucerne all year round. This proposed route for the road effectively bisects their property. Quite obviously, the disruption that would be caused by the proposed road would have an extremely adverse effect on their cropping operations and the irrigation system presently in place. These people are not happy. The advice that they originally received was that there were no known requirements. Now they find that, because of construction of a new Bruce Highway bridge over the Burnett River, their property may well be cut clean in two by that. That will cause them a lot of heartache and concern.

It is important that planning by Queensland Transport be as far reaching and accurate as possible. When I spoke to Don Stone in the Wide Bay district office, he advised me that the timing is uncertain for this—but it could be as early as six years off—and that the decision on a final alignment is some way off. That is not suitable for the Wilsons, who are left wondering what on earth the future holds for them. They cannot sell the property with this hanging over their heads. They bought the property secure in the knowledge that the Transport Department had no known requirements at that time. It must have had some known requirements. I believe that in the future this particular case may be cause for legal action by the Wilsons against the State Government because it has simply led them up a gum tree. That particular case shows how important it is that Queensland Transport planning be spot-on, far reaching and accurate and cause as little pain to people as possible.

The area of transport I will touch on is maritime transport and the greedy manner in which this present Government is moving in on port authorities.

**Mr Johnson:** It's a shemozzle.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** It is a disgrace. The threatened levy on the Gladstone Port Authority—similar to the levy imposed on the QEC through corporatisation—would divest the Gladstone Port Authority of more than \$9m each year to the State Government. This would quite possibly mean that the port authority will have to cease spending on community projects, for which it has been noted over many long years.

**Mr Johnson:** Where is the member for Gladstone now?

**Mrs McCAULEY:** It may mean that they will have to cut back on overseas trips for staff and authority members.

**Mr Bennett:** You wanted to privatise it.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** The member for Gladstone is a lightweight of the first order. He sits up there on the back bench on the Government side and his only impact is to laugh on cue when the Premier cracks a joke. He cannot even do that very well. I am disappointed in his attitude. He is not looking after the Gladstone Port Authority. He is taking it very lightly. He should be fighting like hell. He is a member of the Government; he can make a fuss. He should camp outside the Premier's door and say, "We are not going to wear this."

**Mr Johnson:** He is a member of the lightweight club.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** Unfortunately, he is a member of the lightweight club, and the Gladstone people deserve better. He is going to let them down. He is going to let this Government, of which he is a member, rip off the Gladstone Port Authority in the amount of some \$9m. That will impact very badly on the Gladstone community. Those people get a lot of help by way of facilities from the Gladstone Port Authority.

**Mr Bennett:** That won't change.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** It will change.

**Mr Bennett:** It will not change.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** I promise the honourable that it will. They will not have the money available to spread around the largesse.

**Mr Bennett:** Come on. It will not change, and you know it. Just like law and order—you're scaremongering.

**Mrs McCAULEY:** The honourable member should talk to Dave Burns about it. Even he does not like the honourable member very much. I do not think this legislation will impede the presently good working relationship between Queensland Transport and local authorities, but only time will tell whether or not it is a better system.

**Mrs EDMOND** (Mount Coot-tha) (4.28 p.m.) It is no accident that since my election in 1989 I have been an active member of the legislative committee for the Minister for Transport. Transport and its close relative, traffic, have been probably the most constant of issues that affect my electorate. My political life was born trying to initiate rational debate on this very issue. In that role of urban guerilla, I advocated an integrated Transport Department bringing together all areas of transport—road, rail, sea and

air—to work together rather than competing for Government attention and funding to the detriment of all. I have heard Opposition members claim that this enlarged Ministry is too big and too complex for any one person to handle. I accept their honest acknowledgment of their individual limitations. In doing so I congratulate the current Minister for the enormous energy and ability that he has brought to this super-Ministry. I know that he and members of his staff have spent time experiencing the different modes of transport, as the member for Gregory suggested, as on occasion I have accompanied him.

This Bill further enables a smooth integration and coordination of the department by increased efficiencies and removing areas of duplication, generally enabling effective strategic planning and management of transport resources. In a State of growing population and increasing industrialisation, it is obvious that there is a need for considered planning, rather than allowing the "she'll be right mate" attitude to prevail.

To anyone living in the inner suburbs of Brisbane it is obvious that land use studies, transit corridors and infrastructure planning should have taken place before the fringe explosions of population at the western, southern, northern and bayside edges of Brisbane. That this was not done has caused major problems for those intervening suburbs, quite a few of which lie in my electorate. It is extremely difficult to impose a hierarchy of roads, for example, or new rail networks on existing residential areas. Politicians on both sides have recognised the cost of urban sprawl and the impact that this has on the inner suburbs. The Liberal council brought in its Z zoning and widespread middle-density B zoning. Much of this zoning has lain dormant during the quiet economic times but we now see much building and investment in these areas. Residents are concerned—and I understand their concern—at the changes to their residential areas, and the current Labor council is trying to enforce building guidelines to minimise the impact of these zonings that have been there for years and to keep the buildings in a sympathetic character with the existing older houses.

But we do need to counter proposals of Alderman Ward, who is running for the lord mayoral stakes, that we should put all residential areas on the fringe and therefore increase traffic incursion into these inner-city suburbs. Urban sprawl is the major contributor to traffic incursion, and it makes almost impossible a realistic public transport system that is also affordable. To say that we should put all of the growing suburbs on the city fringe will increase traffic incursion, and

the major reason for people leaving the inner-city area is traffic incursion. There needs to be careful consideration and forward planning, not politicking, to handle these major problems of modern urban life.

Criticism of increased urban housing density, which someone on the Opposition side of the House suggested, ignores the changing needs of society with smaller family units seeking smaller, maintenance-free housing. Many of the residents of the new townhouse developments in my electorate are actually long-term residents who do not want to move away from their family, doctors and friends when their circumstances change. They also want to be close to transport and infrastructure that is currently there rather than out in those deserts on the perimeter of our city.

A quick look back in time would show that, in the past, houses were occupied by much larger families than is the case today. As with all Government activities, there is increasing pressure on transport to deliver more for less, and it is therefore mandatory that Government comes forward with a better system and a strong commitment to manage the transport system in a more efficient manner. Integration of land use and transport planning is a case in point. Government needs to change the approach taken by both service suppliers and consumers of transport products, including infrastructure and services. Gone are the days when Government could carry out transport planning with a notional reference to future land use. The previous speaker touched on this point. In the past, Governments have failed to integrate transport considerations into urban and regional development planning as well as take appropriate consideration of environmental impacts, leading to criticism of transport infrastructure and services provided by the Government.

The linkages and cost to individuals and the community between housing choice, job location, mobility and accessibility, and environmental protection must be reflected in transport policies, strategies and actions in meaningful programs throughout the State. Transport needs to be an integral part of land use planning, as well as underpinning economic development rather than some tacked-on afterthought after the building has already been done.

It is envisaged that the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill will help to ensure economic vitality and improved livability with due regard for land use planning and the natural environment. Important transport objectives in achieving a harmonisation of regional,

subregional and urban planning include the following: economic efficiency, environmental protection and social equity. In association with local authorities, Government needs to carry out appropriate subregional planning in greater detail, including proposed transport programs implemented in the medium and longer terms.

The Transport Planning and Coordination Bill provides the framework for a strategic management and planning process to assist the Transport portfolio to deliver projects consistent with the Government's longer-term goals and regional development plans. Through the transport coordination plan not only will the development of the transport system need to have specific transport objectives which complement the land use strategies but also there will need to be proof that they satisfy economic development, environmental and social goals and, of course, the proposed mechanisms for their funding.

The public has legitimate expectations that the transport system supports regional development along with clean, efficient and productive cities, towns and major centres; that relative levels of access are generally improved; and that the regional, environmental and social concerns are constructively addressed. The Transport Planning and Coordination Bill reinforces and goes a long way to further meeting the State's expectations of ensured integrated transport planning.

This Bill, as I said, supports and facilitates significant changes in planning for transport and freight movement. We have seen planning strategies already being considered or implemented by the Department of Transport that I welcome. Following a study of the movement of dangerous goods through the city and the risks involved, new routes minimising the risks were negotiated with the transport industry. This system has been operating for over a year now, with very positive feedback from the operators. Vehicles carrying bulk dangerous goods are now restricted through Fortitude Valley, the central city and across the four inner-city bridges—the Grey Street Bridge, the Story Bridge, Victoria Bridge and the Captain Cook Bridge—except for the early hours from midnight to 6 a.m., the times of minimum traffic. Carriers of dangerous goods, except for local deliveries, are now being encouraged to use designated alternative routes such as the Gateway Arterial and bridges with toll concessions. The scheme is based on goodwill and good sense and cooperation between the State Government and the dangerous goods transportation industry.

While improving the safety of the transport of dangerous goods around Brisbane, it has also

reduced the impact of bulk dangerous goods traffic on suburban streets, quite noticeably so in my electorate, where the hilly, twisty terrain was completely unsuitable for the passage of these vehicles. It has not, however, reduced concern regarding poorly packed goods, especially quarry and building materials. I intend to take this up at a later date, because I am seriously concerned at the number of complaints and the seriousness of the complaints from motorcyclists, car drivers, passengers and pedestrians about loose material falling from uncovered trucks. I shall, as I said, speak about this in more detail at a later date.

Following extensive data collection and analysis of the movement of freight around and across the Brisbane metropolitan area, the Metropolitan Freight Study has identified and quantified a range of freight movement problems impeding commercial efficiency and the management of the external impacts on freight movement. This study also analyses the future growth of freight demands across all modes from a variety of predictable scenarios. A major outcome of the Metropolitan Freight Study, as a definite response to current problems and future freight needs, has been the Metropolitan Freight Strategy. This strategy will attempt to achieve better movement of freight to increase Brisbane's competitiveness while minimising the effects of heavy transport on the community. It includes recommendations on land use planning, road freight, intermodal efficiencies, the environment, dedicated vehicle movements and pricing. Data gathered on noise problem areas from community feedback in the metropolitan area has already led to projects to ameliorate noise effects on the Western Freeway—something that I strove for as a member for that area before the redistribution, and I welcome those moves. It has also had an impact on other areas around Brisbane.

One of the major needs in the west of Brisbane—and this is recognised by the Minister—is for a western ring-road that links Ipswich and the Darling Downs and other points to the west to the northern growth areas that have been identified of Caboolture, Strathpine and the north coast areas. Contrary to what was planned under the previous Government and the Brisbane City Council of that time, I would envisage that as being built, and I would ask the Minister to consider it. I know that he has no intention of putting it through built-up areas, but rather taking it well outside the urban area.

Residents in my area are well aware that the previous National Party State Government and the Liberal city council colluded to put this major ring-road freeway through the residential streets

where there was no room to ameliorate any of the impact of it. The Brisbane Traffic Study was an attempt by the Brisbane City Council of that time to plan transport and traffic movements through the city, but gave no consideration to residential amenity. I have not been made aware that the Brisbane Traffic Study is no longer considered the major source for traffic planning by the Liberal aldermen in this State.

I welcome this change of attitude by the Minister for Transport so that planning procedures do include considerations of economic efficiency, land usage and residential amenity. As the Opposition spokesman said, this Bill is welcome, needed and overdue. It has taken several years to prepare, but it is to the credit of the Minister and his staff that it has been introduced after four years and that we have not had to wait for 30 years. I support the Bill.

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah) (4.40 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to rise to speak to the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill. In his second-reading speech, the Minister for Transport said that for the first time Queensland's economic and social development is being supported by an efficient, cost-effective and integrated transport system. I would hope that this definition was from a public viewpoint and not necessarily from a bureaucratic one. The Minister stated that this reflects sharply on the patchwork of inefficiency, duplication and fragmentation that the Government inherited. This statement is, I suspect, in support of the amalgamation of the Departments of Transport, Main Roads and Harbours and Marine.

I can appreciate arguments in favour of the amalgamation of the Departments of Transport and Main Roads. I see some areas of duplication in those departments, as well as in the areas of transport and rail. These do need to be coordinated. However, I find it more difficult to see the relevance of Harbours and Marine being included. I fail to be convinced that this is a necessary adjunct to the superdepartment.

**Mr Hamill:** Ports?

**Mr LAMING:** Ports and harbours. I suspect that the department is too big. I will develop this argument a little further. The Minister might like to respond later. One of the problems with amalgamations is an overlapping between departments. This will always happen. But when we get too many departments in one superdepartment, I think we multiply the overlap. In the ports and harbours area in particular, we see an overlap with the operations of other departments—for example, the boating and fishing operations of the DPI. This overlaps in my area.

There is also an overlapping responsibility with the Department of Environment and Heritage. I refer to particular aspects of the canal regulations and the pollution of water by oil. There is also an overlap with water police activities, which are sometimes confused with boating and fisheries and harbour operations. Coast Guard services overlap also and DEVETIR's maritime school obviously has a big input into the harbours area. This department has become a bit too big. When problems associated with departments becoming too big arise, there is a movement back in the opposite direction. People say, "This is too big. We should become more efficient by splitting off specialist areas." I referred earlier to the canal regulations that are under DEH. We have had correspondence on this matter. The Minister might recall the matter of the prawn trawlers being moored in the canals in areas that do or do not have jetties. This is a problem because—

**Mr Hamill:** That was a deal which was done by the previous Government.

**Mr LAMING:** I will respond to that interjection. There was a deal, as the Minister called it, worked out between the various people concerned and the Government.

**Mr Hamill:** The previous Government.

**Mr LAMING:** It was in the previous Government. During the time that the Minister has been in Government, a gap has become evident between the canal regulations and the marine legislation whereby people can bring trawlers into the canals and moor them if there is not a jetty, which is perhaps a bit worse than if there were a jetty. We have had correspondence on this. I do believe that some of the Minister's officers and some offices of the DEH are trying to find a way to solve this problem. I hope that the Minister will lend his support to it. It is a potential problem to people in canal estates, not only on the north coast.

I refer to the Pollution of Waters by Oil Act. I appreciate the Minister's efforts to date in strengthening the penalties—and this happened last year—in this very important area. I wonder whether this, too, should be more in the area of the Department of Environment and Heritage. The Minister might like to respond to that when he sums up the debate. These were a couple of points that I thought I would raise in support of my suggestion that the department is a bit too big.

We are talking about the coordination of transport activities. The Minister also referred in his speech to the elimination of legislation—about 55 Acts being reduced to 20. One can only see this as being in the right

direction, as long as no responsibility is lost along the way. I am sure that the draftsmen will ensure that that does not occur. I wish to refer to the Urban Passenger Service Proprietors Assistance Act. I have not had the opportunity to look closely into this, but I imagine that this is the Act under which the subsidised transport operators operate throughout the State.

**Mr Hamill:** Some of them.

**Mr LAMING:** I understand that the services for public transport in Queensland need to be improved. The Minister will not mind me quoting him as saying that there are inefficiencies, that the level of services has not been what it should, and that public transport on the Sunshine Coast is poor. I do not think there is much disagreement from either side of the House that passenger transport services in this State need to be improved. But it is not easy.

I hope this problem can be worked through so that the public finishes up with better public transport, particularly in regional areas where the population is spread and it is difficult to get an efficient service that will fulfil the needs of the people and make it rewarding for the operator. This is something that has to be addressed. Maybe a transport operation has to be put in place in order to encourage people to use it. If people do not use it, the operator cannot afford to run it. I recognise that this is a difficult problem. It will have to be worked through. I hope that the interests of the people in the various provincial centres who hold these licences are looked after. Those licences were bought in good faith, and it would be a great tragedy if these people, through no fault of their own, were disadvantaged in an effort to try to improve public transport in general.

The Minister also spoke about the future needs of the business sector and the broader community. I would like to mention some of the shortcomings in rail transport. We have had correspondence on this issue, particularly in relation to a couple of matters concerning the north coast rail service and the four-hour gap in services from Brisbane to Nambour in the middle of the day. I will not go into all of the details. The Minister has had correspondence about that. The other matters include the three-hour gap in services from Nambour to Brisbane in the middle of the day; only one service a day between Nambour and stations north to Gympie and vice versa; and, of particular concern to people in the Nambour area and south, the fact that there is no morning commuter service into Nambour from stations south of it. People in what are called "the railway towns", would like to support the rail system, but they do not have a service that goes into the major area of Nambour where there are a

lot of employment opportunities. The Minister has kindly responded to that request. Population growth and passenger demand will dictate when those services are improved. It is reminiscent of the chicken-and-egg scenario. With all passenger transport services, if the service is not available, the people will not support it. If the people will not support it, the service cannot be improved. I suggest that the services should be put on, and then we should encourage people to use those services.

In previous correspondence with the Minister, I have referred to a rail service that I believe will be required on the Sunshine Coast in the future. I was very pleased to hear the member for Brisbane Central and the member for Mount Coot-tha refer to the need for planning. I want to mention the need to plan for a rail corridor to the populated region of the Sunshine Coast and beyond. I believe that the Caloundra City Council has set down a notional route from Beerwah to Caloundra. I believe that the planners should consider extending that route in the general area of the motorway and through to the soon to be extremely heavily populated areas of Mooloolaba, Buderim, Maroochydore, Kawana and perhaps on to Noosa. Now is the time to include such an extension in the planning process. Very few members would disagree that it would be a positive measure to plan that corridor now so that it can be put in place a few years hence.

Travelling by train is clean, fast and efficient. We should bear in mind that travelling by train reduces the congestion and pollution caused by motor cars. As well, it reduces the need to set aside space for car parking. That will be of benefit on the Sunshine Coast and particularly in Brisbane, because so many people work in Brisbane and more and more people are commuting to and from work. If people travel by train, it will negate the need for more roads to be constructed to service current and future vehicle movements. Quite often, the vehicles using our roads carry only one passenger.

If a rail corridor to the Sunshine Coast is constructed, commercial enterprises at both ends of the rail link will be boosted. If rail services are available, the tourism industry will also benefit, because many people will be encouraged to visit the coast on the weekend. A rail service to the Sunshine Coast would create employment not only for those involved in the construction phase but also for the additional railway workers who will, of necessity, be appointed.

Another factor in the equation is the new university, which will be opening in 1996. That facility should be serviced by a good system of

public transport within the Sunshine Coast and from places further afield. I believe that the railway corridor would form an important part of that public transport system. Is it costly? Of course it is costly. However, Australia was able to build extensive railway systems 100 years ago, and I fail to see why we cannot do that now. At this stage, we should be reserving a corridor. Even if we do not construct the link for 5 or 10 years, at least the land will have been set aside.

**Mr Ardill:** They will all scream about putting the corridor there.

**Mr LAMING:** I take that interjection. The plans should be in place before a large number of people move to the area. In that case, people will move to the area knowing that a corridor has been set aside, whether it is for a highway, a railway, a school or a hospital. I guarantee that far fewer problems will be created by adopting that approach than by trying to reserve such a corridor after an area has been established. We must also consider the huge cost of moving houses and commercial premises in order to install a rail link. I am sure that members who represent Brisbane-based electorates would appreciate the problems that are encountered when houses have to be moved to make way for roads.

I turn now to the proposed arterial road between Caloundra and Mooloolaba. I hope that the departmental officers who are present will make a note of my comments. Once again, that road requires planning. A couple of notional routes have been proposed. Early consideration of the siting of that arterial road is important. It is not just a matter of where the road should be located. Quite often, it is a matter of where the road should not be located. Obviously, the road has to service people at each end and along that route, but it also has to avoid inflicting environmental damage on the way past. I heard the member for Mount Coot-tha mention the environmental damage that can occur when roads are put through.

The proposed arterial route is in the general area of the Mooloolah River and the Mooloolah River National Park. I point out that the Mooloolah River National Park will soon be the only open space in the central Sunshine Coast. Development is occurring all around that park. It is very important that we do not plan to construct a road through the middle, over the top, or through a corner of that park. It would be a tragedy to affect its beauty. The people of the Sunshine Coast should not be denied access to an area such as that national park.

When one reads this legislation, it all sounds okay. The coordination of services to move people and goods around the State is the

main objective of the legislation. I noticed the parting shot in the Minister's speech, in which he stated—

"No longer are transport projects determined by whose gate is at the end of the road."

I can hardly resist responding that it perhaps now depends on whose electorate is at the end of the road. The House will recall the disgraceful episode involving a blatant broken election promise in which a toll booth was removed from one location on the Sunshine Motorway—where it would have affected a Labor member on the north of the Sunshine Coast—only to be plonked in a most inconvenient area in the middle of the coast for "former Premier Mike Ahern and his mates". That was a disgraceful act of spite. I believe that the Government regrets that action.

**Mr Stephan:** It didn't even save the Labor member from the area.

**Mr LAMING:** No, it did not save the Labor member. The general voter does not like broken promises, even if he or she becomes a beneficiary.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that this legislation is about—

". . . ensuring that all Queenslanders are getting maximum benefit from every dollar spent."

All members would agree with that principle. I believe that the advice on how that money is spent should be taken from the people in the affected areas and not necessarily just from the Treasury boffins. I appreciate the opportunity to contribute to the debate.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK (Albert) (4.57 p.m.):** I welcome the opportunity to participate in the debate on the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill. No other electorate will be impacted upon by this Bill more than the electorate of Albert. Last week, I attended a protest meeting. A sewerage treatment works is to be constructed in my electorate which, within 100 years, will cater for 600 000 people living in the area. That illustrates the growth expected in my electorate within 100 years.

As I said, this Bill will have a major impact on my electorate. The Gold Coast rail link will open in just under two years' time. The member for Nerang is present in the Chamber. I note that he no longer refers to that project as the "Gold Coast ghost train". The planning for the project has been in place for a long time. I make the point that this Government and this Minister have dedicated money to that project.

During the last election campaign, I received a few letters from National Party members complaining that the project was initiated by the National Party and that the Labor Government would not see it through. After I responded by saying, "We put up the money. We are doing it. We did not rip up the line in the first place", I did not hear back from those National Party members.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** In common with all of its phantom projects, all the National Party did was talk about it.

At present in my electorate, Milne Street in Beenleigh is causing some problems. The problem with Brisbane is that, over the years, suburbs have sprung up in the outer areas of the city. Initially, the residents in those outer suburbs were provided with only goat tracks for roads. Subsequently, a few more people moved to the area and residential streets were created. Eventually, because of the growth that has occurred in the outer region of Brisbane, those residential streets have become major thoroughfares. Such development has affected the people who live in Milne Street, Beenleigh. Until six months ago, their street was a quiet little cul-de-sac, but there had always been plans for a major ring-road. The Department of Transport has since spent a lot of money in the area, and it has become a major thoroughfare.

Heavy trucks are another cause for concern. A lot of gravel trucks with dog trailers proceed up and down that road at all hours of the night. People who live on major thoroughfares that are used by dog trailers know how noisy they can be, especially if one of them happens to be empty and it hits a few bumps. In that circumstance, the dog trailer keeps bouncing down the road for another couple of hundred metres. That noise is affecting the lives of those people and the amenity of the area.

A similar example is traffic on the Gold Coast. I remember that 20 years ago there was a plan for a western freeway to go down the back of the Gold Coast. I believe that the route was down Campbell Street. In that instance, a developer named Bruce Small went and saw his mates in the National Party and that project was wiped off the list. Mistakes have been made in the past. I do not believe that we should be making those same sorts of mistakes in the future.

Not long ago, my electorate was involved in a major project study—the eastern corridor project study. There was a loud outcry from people in my electorate. My response to those people was, "Look, we are going to have this

massive growth in the area and we need to do some planning for the future. Whatever kind of corridor is needed down through that region, I think we should put it in place." I agree with the member for Mooloolah that we need to put those corridors in place, whatever kind of project they may be. Even with improvements in technology, 10, 20, 30, or even 50 years down the track we will still need a corridor.

At Christmas time, when I was in Perth, I saw a corridor approximately 150 metres wide that ran from the city to the northern suburbs. I thought it was brilliant. The middle of the corridor contained a rail network and there were three lanes of freeway down each side. The railway station was actually built over the freeway and the railway line. Buses would come in from the suburbs and discharge passengers, who would move by escalator down to the station platform. It was an integrated transport system. There were bus bays and parking bays. It was a brilliant system. I commend the transport people in Western Australia for that idea.

I think those sorts of things should be considered in our long-term planning of the eastern corridor. I would like to see the corridor extended up to Cleveland so that there would be a route from the bayside suburbs to the Gold Coast. People wishing to travel from Cleveland to the Gold Coast will have to go to Park Ridge, get off the train and then come all the way back to Robina when the Gold Coast rail link is in place. I think we need to look at extending the corridor from Cleveland to join up somewhere such as Ormeau.

**Mr Ardill:** Or Staplyton, maybe?

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Or Staplyton. In the dispute over the eastern corridor over the last two years, I knew that whatever we did we were never going to please everyone. If we put the corridor through one area, one group of people would whinge; if we put it through another area, another group of people whinge. What this Government needs to say is, "We have to find the best possible route, and whatever decision is made, there will be winners and losers." We need to look to the future planning for the region. As I said, in another 100 years there will be 600 000 people in my electorate.

I would like to point out some inconsistencies I have noticed in this House. Yesterday, the member for Nerang gave notice of a motion complaining about the eastern corridor and the Government's intentions for that area. Later, the member for Southport said that we should be building the corridor. I do not know whether coalition members talk to each other. They keep displaying this "yes" and "no" type of attitude. One wants one thing, another wants

something else, and a week later they change their minds again.

In the past, concern has been expressed about the upgrading of the Pacific Highway to eight lanes. That may be what we need to do, but in the short-term we are looking at providing a corridor to the east of the Pacific Highway and, in the long term, upgrading the Pacific Highway to six lanes. That is causing me many problems in the short-term. I believe that 60 000 cars use that road every day. Most of that traffic is in the peak periods between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. On Sundays, the traffic peak is from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. The problem we are facing is that people travel to the coast over the two days of the weekend and they all want to be home at 6 o'clock on Sunday night. We need to educate people. We need to tell them to stagger their trips home. We need to educate some of them to either leave before 3 p.m. or to stay down on the Gold Coast and spend some money—go to a restaurant—and leave at 7 p.m. If I leave my home at 7 o'clock at night on a Sunday, it takes me 45 minutes to get to Brisbane—no problem. We need to educate people about ways to avoid the problems in peak periods.

Just before Christmas, articles in the *Courier-Mail* were calling for the Pacific Highway to be upgraded. I realise that there is a problem, which is that it is the only major road that heads to the Gold Coast. In the short-term, I think that the Gold Coast rail link will solve part of that problem.

This Government is committed to planning for the future. One great result of future planning is the eastern corridor. However, another problem is that if there is a major accident on the highway, everyone sits where they are because they do not know any alternative routes. Over the past 12 months, I have had discussions with the area manager, John Badies, and as a consequence he has had discussions with the Albert Shire Council. He has informed me that there will be a series of alternative route signs on the highway showing people how to get off the highway and out into the cane lands. At present, once people are on the highway, they just sit on it and will not move. We need to educate people that if there is a problem, there are alternate routes that can be used.

As I said before, on a Sunday afternoon, because I know the alternative routes, I can get to Beenleigh in half an hour. However, at the moment, if we were to send people out into the cane lands, they would get lost. We need to put up signs that will show them how to find their way home by alternative routes. That solution is being addressed in the short term.

A lot of money is being spent on roads in my electorate. Consideration is being given to

major interchanges on the Pacific Highway. This Government instigated that work when it first came to power. The Yawalpah Road interchange tenders will close shortly and work will start on that project in March or April. That is an 18-month project, the total cost of which is about \$14m. A few bridges and quite a length of road are involved in that development.

Another development that is going into my area is on Brisbane Road at Helensvale. That project will cost \$10m. It looks at providing a road over the rail line and over the eastern corridor route all in one go. That will be a four-lane bridge over the crab farm, which will provide a safe travel for people who wish to go to Southport along the old Brisbane road. I realise there are problems with the old crab farm bridge. A year ago, people were saying to me, "Why didn't you just fix up the crab farm bridge?" I do not think we should do that. I think what we need to do, in conjunction with the Gold Coast rail link, is to provide a bridge over that route. We should not waste money on short-term solutions. This Government is looking to the long term.

Another problem that I came across today is what to do when something is hampering the free flow of traffic along the highway. I think we should provide a list of telephone numbers on the back of registration stickers so that people can ring someone when there is a problem on the road. I was travelling along the highway, going back to my office today and came across a truck that had lost its load of bricks all over the highway just before the Rochedale exit on the South East Freeway. That event caused a traffic bank-up all the way back to Garden City. People were slowing down to dodge the bricks. If there was a series of phone numbers on the back of the registration sticker—maybe even a 008 number—people could ring a central office and have the problem solved. If people have mobile phones, they could ring from the roadside and have the problem fixed a lot sooner.

I got down the road to the Hyperdome and came across a work gang. I pulled over and I said to one of the men, "Look, there's a load of bricks over the road up there." He said, "Okay, I'll get a work gang up there." That solved that problem. If the road gang had not been there and if we had phone numbers on the back of our registration stickers, I could have used my mobile phone to ring the RACQ, the fire brigade, the ambulance or whoever else was needed at the time.

I will conclude by saying that I agree with this Bill. It will be of great benefit to my electorate. I support the Bill before the House.

**Mr ARDILL** (Archerfield) (5.10 p.m.): I congratulate the Transport Minister on the introduction of this Transport Planning and

Coordination Bill, which is the culmination of four years' work since the Labor Party came to power in Queensland to put some sense into the transport sector. I believe that this ranks with a number of other very important dates in Queensland's history: 1865, when the first railway was commenced; 1879, when local divisional boards were set up to build and maintain roads throughout Queensland; and 1921, when the Main Roads Board was formed to provide, for the first time, for motorised transport. Now, in the 1990s, the whole transport sector in Queensland is coming together. The Minister should be congratulated on this. It means that, for the first time, the integration of all transport planning and the implementation of plans will be possible.

From travelling around Queensland and discussing matters with transport officials, the Travelsafe Committee found that integration is working. There is now one department that covers roads, traffic matters and public transport. For the first time, there is a place where people can go to find out something about public transport. From asking questions at hearings, the committee found that officers of the department are well informed about all aspects of transport. That was certainly not the case when I entered public life 21 years ago.

I should like to mention the efforts of the Travelsafe Committee to improve road safety in this State. If the Travelsafe Committee is abolished under the new system of committees, it will be a sad day for Queensland. The committee, which I have the honour to chair, has been an integral part of the transport sector in Queensland and has achieved a great deal in providing a basis for public consultation and input from the general public on road safety matters. A recent report before that committee shows that there can be a massive improvement in road safety through education. That point has been pushed consistently. Yesterday, it was pleasing to receive a positive response from Minister Foley, who is in charge of the Employment and Training portfolios, that TAFE colleges would be able to do a great deal in training people in road safety matters.

That recent report before the Travelsafe Committee shows that driver training courses at Mount Cotton, which is controlled and promoted by the Transport Department, have resulted in a massive decrease in insurance claims among those people who have undertaken those road safety courses. As I have said all along, education is a very important part of the road safety equation.

Looking after road safety is also a great part of the transport sector and the Transport

Department. Road accidents cost more than the total petrol tax revenue from motorists and transport users in Australia. While health care soaks up a lot of the funds that are available from petrol tax revenue, I make a plea that more money be provided from Federal funds from road taxes for improvements to our roads. That is an urgent necessity. This Transport Planning and Coordination Bill will allow a greater coordination of planning for roads and will indicate even more clearly the need for greater Federal funding for roads in Queensland.

In this massive State, which has more people living in regions distant from the capital than does any other State, planning a road system to serve those people with incredible distances in between is a great challenge. An even greater challenge in the future will be to provide a transport service and transport infrastructure for the rapidly expanding Moreton region of south-east Queensland. That is going to be one of the greatest challenges that this Government will have to face in the next 10 years. Because of that massive escalation in population, planning that was done in the past for a transport system for that region is no longer relevant. Just as the planning for water resources in the Moreton region, which was done in the 1930s, was redundant before the Wolffdene dam could be built, transport planning has to be revised.

There are numerous corridors around Brisbane and the Moreton region which have been on maps for years, but previous Governments did nothing to make them public. In fact, they kept them hidden. The smart operators know where they are and can make land deals accordingly. But the public does not know where they are, and that is why a great number of protests are made every time a transportation corridor is announced. Those corridors should be investigated, updated and made public as soon as possible. You, Mr Deputy Speaker, and I have a great interest in that particular subject because of the need for road planning in our electorates and the fact that, every time a corridor is recommended, it generates a tremendous protest movement.

Every time a corridor is identified, the outcry that occurs relates to two things. First of all, many people have been persuaded to invest in those areas and build their homes there, and suddenly they find that, for a long time, road corridors have been planned in those areas. There is also the NIMBY syndrome. Many people do not want a corridor anywhere near them; they would rather have it pushed off onto somebody else. So there are two sides to the issue. That people have been kept in ignorance for decades of

these corridors that exist all around Brisbane and the Moreton region is a factor that we must accept and challenge. I believe that the public should be informed about these corridors and must realise that they are an essential part of civilised life.

Public transport is the most essential part of the transport sector of the future. It is a means of reducing the size and impact of those corridors. The railways of Queensland are a major part of public transport. There is no doubt that the railways of Queensland will be more important to this State than railways are to any other State, because railway systems have been dismantled throughout Australia. Other States have dismantled most of their rail systems and kept only the interstate corridors. In their ignorance, many planners, bureaucrats and politicians claim that eventually those corridors will pay their way. I do not believe that that will ever be the case. I do not believe that you can provide a proper public transport system and make it self-funding. Public transport is a part of Government activity that must be carried out at public expense because the alternative is to wipe out huge sections of cities, towns and countryside with massive road corridors. The destruction of railways that has occurred in other States must not be allowed to occur in Queensland.

However, rail provides only a part of the transport system. It also requires close coordination and planning of road vehicles to connect with transport services. Nowhere can this be more clearly demonstrated than on the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast railway line, as mentioned by the member for Albert, will not be a success unless it is properly coordinated with transport right to the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast line does not go to the Gold Coast; it is the Holm-Earle railway system to Ormeau, Nerang and Robina. That is not the Gold Coast. The corridor was set aside by the National Party, but it was not set aside to service the Gold Coast—the major generator of traffic. Unless we accept the challenge and provide closely coordinated transport from each of those rail interchanges and extend the line through to Coolangatta, it will never achieve its true potential.

I mention that in passing because this is a planning and coordination Bill for all means of transport in Queensland. That includes marine services. We have many marine services in Queensland. Some of them are good and some of them are not so good. There are many areas where there should be marine services such as Cooktown, but unfortunately, to the best of my knowledge, there are not any. It was cut out some time ago.

This is the planning and coordination Bill which will allow, for the first time, proper coordination of transport and proper planning for transport in the State of Queensland. I congratulate the Minister and the department for bringing forward this Bill.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (5.23 p.m.) In joining the debate on the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill, I repeat that the Opposition supports this piece of legislation. It believes it is very, very necessary. This debate gives me the opportunity to bring to the attention of the Minister some transport planning issues relating to parts of my electorate.

People are wondering about the future electrification of the railway line towards Toowoomba. That is a legitimate concern. Over the years, many real estate salesmen who have been selling land have waved their hands and pointed in a certain direction and said, "The electric train is down there. You know it will be up here in a few years' time." I understand that under the Auctioneers and Agents Act it is totally illegal to promise something that the Government has not made a commitment to. I can understand the salesmen doing that in their enthusiasm. Over the past year or two, a number of people have told me that they were virtually assured that the electric train would be coming through to Laidley. I have told them that I have not seen any plans for that.

**Mr Hamill:** Let me assure you, nor have I.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The Minister has just stated that he has not seen any plans. This Bill is all about long-term planning. I suggest to the Minister that sometime in his lifetime and certainly, I hope, in my lifetime, we will see an electric train service in Toowoomba. Toowoomba is a major inland city in Queensland. It will probably be the last major city to be connected to the electric trains. After the Gold Coast, Toowoomba would be the next major city.

I have some understanding of the cost of building railway lines and I understand some of the problems associated with constructing a new line up the Toowoomba range. I suggest that the present track could never take an electric train. It has 5-chain bends. It has a shifting shingle base and it is unsuitable for heavy loads. I understand that the economics are such that the cost of a new line cannot be justified unless there is a demand for freight. That freight would be coal. Problems are associated with bringing coal down the range because to get it to the port it would have to go through the suburbs of Brisbane. Those are major problems. If any coal does come off the downs for export, I imagine it would have to go to a port more northerly than Bundaberg.

**Mr Hamill:** Probably Gladstone.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** Yes, probably Gladstone. A map would show that that would be moving the coal towards its market, because not much coal goes south. The question is whether Toowoomba will ever be connected to Brisbane by electric train. It is unlikely that in the short-term freight will generate the demand necessary to justify building a line.

The population growth in southern Queensland would allow the Government, by a transport related initiative, to actually promote development in certain areas. The electric train to Rosewood created a tremendous demand by workers to live in that area and take advantage of the lower land prices.

**Mr Hamill:** It's been very successful.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** As the Minister said, it has been very successful. The demand has probably already exceeded expectations. That is very encouraging for the planners who were responsible for that railway line. I note that the member for Ipswich West is in the Chamber.

However, I suggest that the planning must go on to the next stage. People who live in the shires of Laidley and Gatton are asking why the electrified railway is not pushed further west. I suggest that the Government should consider the feasibility of pushing it through to Toowoomba. I suggest the Toowoomba railway station may well be situated at Withcott. Transport operators in Toowoomba have told me that Withcott is virtually a suburb of Toowoomba. In fact, one can get from the centre of Toowoomba to Withcott just as quickly as one can get from the centre of Toowoomba to the University of Southern Queensland or to the western suburbs of Toowoomba. It would eliminate the need to take a train up the range. I think it will be some years before the freight that will come down the range will justify the expenditure on a new, major route.

People at the University of Queensland campus at Gatton College are very interested in knowing what the long-term future of the transport planning is between Brisbane and that college. I know that the University of Queensland is considering a second major campus. A number of areas will be putting in bids to attract that second campus. The Minister has a particular interest in his home-town bid.

**Mr Hamill:** It is a very good bid.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I understand it is a very good bid. I am sure that there will be a lot in its favour. However, I am suggesting that, as the University of Queensland already has a campus at the Gatton College, it could well be in the interests of the university, and southern

Queensland generally, to seriously consider Gatton College as an alternative site. I understand that it has a lot in its favour, but I do not want to canvass those issues here. By the year 2000—when the second campus will be operating—we will want to know the future planning of the department. That is a few years away. I draw that to the attention of the Minister. The shires of Gatton, Esk and Laidley are combining to request a meeting with the Minister. I hope that we have a positive response to that request because they wish to discuss those issues.

Some passengers who used the rail motor services through to Helidon are concerned about the electrification of the railway line from Ipswich to Rosewood. I think the Minister would agree that in places those services were very poorly used. However, in the morning a fairly large number of people travelled from Laidley and used that rail motor service. That service no longer exists.

**Mr Hamill:** There is a bus service.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** In its wisdom, the department has provided the rail/bus service. It services quite well the area from Toowoomba right through to Rosewood. Gatton is serviced by seven buses in each direction per day. Laidley has a similar service. That bus service goes into Gatton College and services those towns along the road. Residents in that area have expressed concern to me that, as that bus is replacing a rail service and it is using some of the roads in Forest Hill and Laidley, a dust problem has been created. I suppose the Minister would say that that matter should be a shire responsibility, but I point out that all of those people used to travel upon that "iron" road. That service did not create any dust. Although those people are receiving a service, that dust is not welcome.

Another point that I want to make is that those people need bus shelters. Previously, whenever there was inclement weather—and we have not had any for a while—they could wait under the shelter sheds that the railways provided. Now, they have to stand out on the road.

The other point that I want to make is that there is a very small community at Calvert. I think that there are 18 homes there, but there could be more than that. That community was serviced by rail, but the people in that community now have to walk about one kilometre to the road to catch a bus. They object very strongly to the fact that, if they want to catch that bus, they have to stand out in the weather. I do not know how many people in the Calvert area use that service, but I know that they would like the bus to move

off the highway, which would take about two minutes, and come down to the old Calvert Railway Station area.

**Mr Hamill:** On the local road?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** On the local road. The residents want the bus to use the local road. It is a bitumen road.

**Mr Hamill:** What does the council say?

**Mr FITZGERALD:** It is before the Moreton Shire Council. I am sure that we can get the agreement of that council on this matter. The people in Calvert want the bus to travel for that extra two minutes to that road. I accept that the Minister would have to weigh up the length of that extra journey against the number of people who have been using the service, but I draw that matter to his attention.

I turn now to the bigger picture. At the other end of my electorate—and I know that Mr Deputy Speaker, being a neighbour, would have some interest in this area—is Greenbank, which is located in the Beaudesert Shire. It is one of the fastest-growing areas in the State. Recently, I spoke to a Beaudesert Shire councillor, who advised me that, in the last couple of months, approximately 4 500 subdivisions have been approved in that area. That is a phenomenal number of blocks. I believe that the majority of those blocks will be built on in the short term. The area has not been holding large stocks of subdivided land; it does not pay to do that. Sometimes, subdivisions occur in country areas and those blocks may take many years to sell. However, I believe that the subdivided blocks in the Greenbank area will be sold fairly quickly. I do not think that the people who will be buying those blocks will be long-term speculators; the blocks will be built on fairly quickly. That gives me some concern about the future planning of the major arterial roads in that area. I have spoken to departmental officers, and I know that planning is well under way. I understand that, within three to six months, there will be some lines drawn on maps for consideration. Those departmental officers have been talking to the local council.

I have some grave concerns about this matter because one of the boundaries of my electorate is what was formerly known as Logan Road, which, in turn, becomes the boundary of Logan City. That road, which is the boundary of Logan City, will have to be upgraded. I know that, recently, the Camira bypass in the Springfield area was opened by the Minister. I understand that the plan is to build a bypass that would take traffic from that area to the Cunningham Highway, south of Ipswich. Obviously, that road will have to go through that area.

**Mr Hamill:** It's a long time away.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** The Minister says that it is a long time away.

**Mr Hamill:** The Moreton Shire Council would like to have it tomorrow.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I agree that the Moreton Shire Council would like it tomorrow. However, I would like to know whether the lines are going to go in tomorrow. It is not imperative that the road be constructed tomorrow. However, it is important that the developers know exactly where the road and transmission power lines are going to go and, if the area goes ahead, the possible route of a railway line.

**Mr Livingstone:** You will know it in two months, I'm told.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I have been told that I will know within two months where the lines are. I thank my honourable colleague the member for Ipswich West for that information. The other arterial road that has been planned is the Mount Lindesay Highway connection to this road. I imagine that that road would be built from the Mount Lindesay Highway, through to Greenbank, and then to what was known as Logan Road—in some places it is called Goodna Road, depending upon which signpost one reads. These arterial routes have to be defined as soon as possible. The population in that area is increasing. The Beaudesert Shire has the plans for the proposed subdivisions, and it is planning for the areas in which the population will be located. In fact, in one area, 14 000 subdivisions are planned for some time in the future. Unless these arterial corridors are built, a lot of pain is going to be caused later on. There is nothing worse than bulldozing houses in a subdivision that was approved 15 or 20 years ago so that a major arterial road can be constructed. It is an indication of a lack of planning.

This Bill is all about planning, and that is why I support it. However, the sooner the lines are drawn on the maps, the better. There are already existing roads. The traffic flow studies are consistent with the gut feelings of the engineers, and things have worked out the way in which they thought they would. Therefore, I ask the Minister to make sure that planning continues in this area so that those country areas surrounding Brisbane are serviced well and that people do not suffer because of poor planning.

I know that the legislation contains a timetable for the planning, and it is a long-term measure. However, I will outline some of the problems that can occur with long-range planning. As part of the national highway construction, the Gatton-Grantham bypass was built. The planning for this bypass took place not

long after I became the member for Lockyer in the early 1980s. For many years, there was an intention to resume land for a bypass south of Gatton. I believed that it was intolerable that the department had served notice on landowners south of Gatton of the intention to resume when it was planning a road to the north of Gatton. I impressed upon the then Minister, the Honourable R. J. Hinze, that a decision had to be made. I pushed very strongly for the northern route. It was a more expensive route, but I thought that, in the long term, it was a better route. I said, "I do not care when you build the road, but you have to have the lines on the maps now so that you can go ahead and start."

Work was commenced on that road six years before it was opened. I believed that that was reasonable. However, a word of advice that I would give, having that experience in mind, is that it is all right to plan the road, but it is a waste of resources spending money on a road over a six-year period. Instead, the Government should procure the easement and then build the road when it wants to build it. Sometimes, the department wants to build a couple of kilometres of road a year. In the case of this road, the department did some clearing one year, then started work on the bypass, which was 20 kilometres long. After that, the department levelled the area for the road, and then another year or so later it spent more dollars on some other part of the project. Every year, the department had allocated an amount of money in its budget for the road, but it was six years from the time that the land was purchased before the first wheel turned over on that road. That was absolutely crazy.

**Mr Hamill:** Exactly.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** As the Minister says, it was absolutely crazy. I agree with him. I would much rather see, once the land was procured, not a cent spent until the department is ready to commence construction, with construction to be completed as soon as possible. The road should have wheels on it straight away, as did the Logan Motorway. That project took just over 12 months from the point of planning. The company started construction and within a short period had customers paying tolls. Compared with the time it took for the construction of the Gatton-Grantham bypass, it was a fairly short time. Not only that, it was a more expensive road, and it was a longer road. I am suggesting that the Minister spend the money and have it constructed within a 12-month period. I think that is a much better way to do things.

I just draw these matters to the attention of the Minister. The Opposition supports the legislation. I hope that, in due course, the

Minister will respond to some of the matters that I have raised.

**Hon. D. J. HAMILL** (Ipswich—Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development) (5.39 p.m.), in reply: I thank members on both sides of the House for their support for these measures, because they are important and they help to put a framework around the approach that this Government is taking to the provision of infrastructure. Honourable members should take on board that there is a kindred Bill on the notice paper, and that is the Transport Infrastructure Bill. It is part of a family of legislation that will provide the framework that will enable us to plan effectively for the future and enable us to cope with the enormous pressure that is taking place upon our infrastructure in Queensland today.

A number of members on both sides of the House spoke long and passionately about the need for infrastructure development in their areas, whether it be in the Ipswich-Toowoomba corridor, the Sunshine Coast area, or the Gold Coast corridor. I dare say that, if other members had chosen to speak on this legislation, we would have heard similar stories, whether it be about Cairns, Townsville or wherever. I was in Emerald last week, a town that is also experiencing pressure on its infrastructure because of a growth in population. I wish to compliment the councils and instrumentalities there for facing up to the considerable challenge of planning for the future.

It is easy to say that there must be planning for the future but, in reality, it is a very difficult process. Although the community may offer lip-service to the commitment to future planning, when future planning starts to impinge upon an individual's future plans for his or her patch of turf, tempers flare and lively debate ensues. There are quite a number of examples of that occurring. I say: so be it. My attitude is that, if we resile from the process of making provision for the future, we have abdicated our rights and we have failed in our duty to the community to make decisions with a vision for the future.

Some comments were made by the member for Mooloolah and the member for Gregory regarding the appropriateness or inappropriateness of certain portfolio arrangements. I was intrigued to hear the honourable member for Gregory saying that in the days of the former National Party Government transport issues were given more emphasis, because Ministers were sharing responsibility. I have made the point previously in the House and in a number of other venues that there is not much sense, nor was there much sense, in an arrangement of responsibility

which had, for example, the same Minister running the TAB as putting in roads, such as the honourable member for Lockyer mentioned. At the same time, that same Minister was running the Police Service as well. There was no coherence in that sort of portfolio arrangement. At that time, we used to joke about the old portfolio of Harbours and Marine and Water Resources.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Fresh and salt.

**Mr HAMILL:** I think it was Maritime Services—the fresh and salt water portfolio. The common element was H<sub>2</sub>O; one part was brackish and the other part was not.

**Mr FitzGerald:** They did not mix.

**Mr HAMILL:** Perhaps there was a bit of osmosis. There was not a lot of osmosis, though, in policy development in transport. That was the real problem. We had various sectoral interests in transport competing with each other. It was not always the case that those various sectoral interests took the trouble to talk to each other about what needed to be done. This is where the Transport Planning and Coordination Bill is important.

It is easy to set oneself up with a mission statement—for example, that we will build roads or railways—but there are many points where we need coordination. The classic example is that of the decision—a very correct decision—taken by a previous coalition Government to redevelop and relocate the Port of Brisbane to the mouth of the Brisbane River. The decision reflected the reality that larger vessels would find navigation of the Brisbane River difficult. There were also attendant costs in dredging. But here we are today, not quite 20 years after that decision, and only now are we getting into place—thanks to an initiative of this Government—a standard gauge rail link into that port.

**Mr FitzGerald:** That was One Nation. That was supposed to be done a couple of years ago.

**Mr HAMILL:** Quite the contrary, we as a Government initiated that project and were able to acquire some funding for it from the One Nation program. That money from the Commonwealth is being spent. The Brisbane Port Authority is investing in that project, as is Queensland Rail, which will be completed at the end of this year. It will be a significant boost in the interests of intermodal transportation coordination for the port.

Similarly, we will have to confront the problem that the existing road links into that port will not be adequate for its future development. This is a classic example of where coordination is necessary and where planning is essential to get the transport infrastructure right. Contrary to the

assertion of the honourable member for Gregory, this Bill is all about micro-economic reform. We do not have to say that this Bill is about micro-economic reform for the implication of this legislation to have great bearing on the continuing process of micro-economic reform in the community.

Getting the modal links right, getting the connections right, saves money for the community in terms of reduced transport costs. It saves money for the consumer in reducing the cost of commodities being transported and consumed in the community. It is absolutely vital for our export industries to ensure that the things that we produce can be sold competitively on world markets. This is all about micro-economic reform. It is all about getting the transport chain right, not only now but also for the future. It is also about the quality of life in the community.

The transport infrastructure that this Bill envisages is not simply there to service the economic development of the State but to provide an amenity for the community. A number of members spoke, for example, in relation to the need for the expansion of the rail network in south-east Queensland. I think the member for Mooloolah spoke about rail service levels on the Sunshine Coast. My colleague the member for Caboolture, Mr Jon Sullivan, has frequently made representations to me in relation to rail service levels for the communities north of Caboolture.

The Sunshine Coast Commuters Association, with whom I have had a long association back to the time when I was Opposition spokesman, has repeatedly made representations to me. Any responsible Minister would love to say, "Fine. Yes, we can do exactly what you want. We can do it now. No trouble." But the problem in that case, as is the case in so many other areas of transport infrastructure, planning and development, is that the solutions are not immediately available. There are long lead times in putting transport infrastructure in place. Part of that time is spent working out the corridors, the route to the destination.

I alluded earlier to the fact that that process can often generate a lot of heat in the community. People are very happy to enjoy the end product, but do not wish to endure the process by which that end product is achieved. Whether we are building the Logan Motorway, a new Burnett River bridge—as we are doing in Bundaberg—acquiring tilt trains to put us in the forefront of rail technology in Australia or acquiring the rolling stock necessary to service the Sunshine Coast, there are lead times involved. We placed an order with Walkers in

Maryborough for new rolling stock for Queensland Rail. That rolling stock will operate in that rapidly growing area of south-east Queensland.

Whilst EDI/Walkers has an international reputation as being a highly efficient and very reputable manufacturer of railway rolling stock, I cannot walk in and buy the stock off the shelf. There is no supermarket in Maryborough that allows me to choose particular carriages that can be running up and down the railway the next day. There are long lead times involved. We will be taking delivery shortly of some of the \$90m in rolling stock that we ordered a couple of years ago. It will add to our capacity to increase the level and frequency of services in the area. But, clearly, we have to make decisions years in advance of when we want these elements of infrastructure to be in place.

I noted that the honourable member for Gregory said that he was concerned that this legislation would somehow put it all into the hands of Treasury. Let me assure the member—and I believe that any of his colleagues who have served on the Treasury benches in the past will confirm this—that anyone who thinks that Treasury does not have a hand in the decisions about how, where and when infrastructure can be provided has another think coming. Of course Treasury plays a role in that process. Infrastructure is very expensive. Infrastructure has a great call upon the public funds. Obviously, the investment decisions that we make—such as whether we are able, as we have done this year, to spend \$727m in the development of the road network in the State, whether we are able to engage in a record massive upgrading program of our major rail trunk routes and whether we are able to progress the rail link south to Robina—all depend on the availability of funds. The same applies to a decision as to whether we are able to build Stage 2 of the Sunshine Motorway in the same way as the previous Government built the Logan Motorway and the Gateway Bridge. Clear financial decisions had to be taken about that investment in infrastructure. Apart from placing a toll on the infrastructure so that the community could have the advantage of using it earlier than it could otherwise be provided, the money would not have been there.

This Government has been prepared to make those decisions, to put the infrastructure in place and, dare I say it, wear a bit of public odium from those who do not seem to appreciate that we do not have a cargo cult. No-one is raining infrastructure upon us like manna from heaven. In fact, we all have to pay for it, whether we pay for it now or later. The big problem is, of course,

that everyone wants it now and never wants to pay for it at all. Therein lies one of the fundamental issues with which we have to deal on a daily basis.

As Minister for Transport, I believe that I have a responsibility to go for the infrastructure that we need so that we can accommodate the growth, the stresses and the strains of the future. If that means being prepared to take on community groups that are not so concerned about the future, so be it. But let us construct that infrastructure via a sensible process. Let us do it in the way outlined in legislation such as this.

As I said, these things do not occur overnight. It is all very well to have an idea and say, "Righto, we will have a new road that runs from the Beaudesert Shire through to Toowoomba." From the conception of that idea, we have to go through a process of ascertaining whether in fact there is a need for such a road and whether in fact it will be beneficial. I do not believe there is good sense in building something for the sheer enjoyment of building it, when there are plenty of other demands upon the very scarce public dollar. We consult with the community—

**Mr Johnson:** I support that.

**Mr HAMILL:** I know that the member supports that process. I think it is important that we are all committed to the process of consulting with the community. Unfortunately, of course, there are those in the community who believe that community consultation equals "you do as I say". That might be all right if there is only one group with one clear view. However, in any of these projects, there will be a plethora of groups, each with different perspectives according to their own vested or self-interest. The responsibility that we have is to sift and sort through that information, recognising what is in the best interests of the whole of the community, taking into consideration the points that impact upon those local communities and endeavouring to work our way through that in the interests of the overall good and the future interests of the community. That is exactly what we as a Government are doing.

From time to time, on a number of projects about which I receive frequent correspondence, I find also that people take the trouble to go out and protest in my name. However, I maintain that this is a worthwhile process. The acquisition of those corridors and those routes—even though we may not wish to build today—is invaluable for the future.

The member for Brisbane Central referred to the problems in his electorate, which is a

densely settled area in which no provision was made to cope with the movement of traffic through the central city area. We saw what happened on the south side of Brisbane 20 years ago, when a previous administration that was not so concerned about social and community impacts drove a freeway straight through densely populated areas without any consideration whatsoever for the quality of life of the people who were destined to live alongside it. No sound barriers and no protection were provided. Thankfully, as a community, we are becoming more sophisticated. Nowadays, we expect more of public authorities that are in the business of providing infrastructure. As Minister, I am certainly proud of the fact that, in the time of my administration of the Transport portfolio, we have broken new ground with our policies in relation to noise and providing environmental protection for communities living alongside important transport infrastructure.

The member for Mooloolah questioned the overlap of some departmental and portfolio responsibilities. Quite clearly, the prime function of the Department of Transport is the provision of transport infrastructure and services. I confirm for the honourable member that there have been areas in which one department's responsibilities overlap another department's responsibilities. One good example that the member cited was the Boating and Fisheries Patrol.

When it first came to office, this Government decided to give the responsibilities for the Boating and Fisheries Patrol to the Department of Primary Industries. Dare I say it, under the previous administration, the Boating and Fisheries Patrol was in the overlap area, if you like, between the old Harbours and Marine and the old Department of Primary Industries. The Department of Primary Industries had responsibility for fishing. The administration of the Boating and Fisheries Patrol was the responsibility of both departments. It related to two complementary marine activities. That sort of overlap always occurs.

The honourable member might be interested in this comment. From the perspective of the Department of Transport, our prime business is transport; achieving those links along the transport chain. For that reason, I see little reason why boat harbours that are there for recreational use need to be administered through the Transport portfolio. For example, in the Hervey Bay area—and the member for Hervey Bay has spoken with me on this subject on a number of occasions—it would make good sense to have local ownership over facilities which are locally focused and which have an

impact upon the decisions that are taken in terms of town planning and other local concerns.

Let me be very clear here. This is not about empire-building legislation. It is about legislation which is designed to a purpose, that is, the planning and development of transport infrastructure. I am the first to put up my hand to shed responsibilities that are not properly the main game of transport in this State.

I believe that this legislation makes a worthwhile contribution to our efforts to improve the infrastructure of Queensland. I believe that the sentiments expressed by members on both sides of the House are significant, in that they recognise that we have a large and difficult task ahead of us in coping with the enormous growth that we, as the growth State of Australia, are experiencing. I would much prefer to be in the position in which we find ourselves in Queensland. We are the growth State. We are planning for the expansion of our infrastructure to cope for the employment needs not only for future generations but also for those who are choosing to come here. On the other hand, in the rust-belt States, the decision is, "How are we going to use all the infrastructure that we have, which is no longer necessary because we are being depopulated?"

**Mr FitzGerald:** Failed Labor States.

**Mr HAMILL:** No; they are all conservative States, actually. I refer to all those conservative States down south. I am sure that that debate can ensue on another day.

Let me assure honourable members that, whether their concern is about the development of their rail networks, their road networks, their ports or the interface across those modes, this legislation is designed to cut away some of the problems to enable the necessary infrastructure to be in place in a timely fashion to the benefit of all of us.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Motion agreed to.

### Committee

Clauses 1 to 26, as read, agreed to.

Bill reported, without amendment.

### Third Reading

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

## PENALTIES AND SENTENCES AMENDMENT BILL 1994

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts) (6.02 p.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992."

Motion agreed to.

### First Reading

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

### Second Reading

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts) (6.03 p.m.): I move—

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

The objective of the Bill is to amend the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 so as to reduce the administrative burden and costs associated with the necessity to comply with the provisions of section 182 (b) (3) of the Act.

Section 182 (b) (3) of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992 became effective on 23 July 1993. This section requires that the proper officer, that is, the registrar of the court, must not issue a warrant under subsection (1) unless the officer has made the offender aware of the provisions of Division 2 Part 4.

On 22 December 1993 the director-general of my department brought to my attention his concern that the notice required under section 182 (b) (3) was not being given to the offender in compliance with that section. This would apply if there was to be a legal and technical interpretation of the words "aware of the provisions of Division 2 Part 4."

I immediately obtained opinions from both the Crown Solicitor and the Solicitor-General which said that the technical interpretation may well be that section 182 (b) (3) imposes a procedural requirement, in addition to the requirements imposed by section 56 (2), and requires that before a warrant may be issued for the non-payment of a monetary penalty, the proper officer must make the offender actually aware of the provisions of Division 2 of Part 4 of the Act.

The mere sending to the offender by post of the material referred to in section 56 (2) may not meet the requirements of section 182 (b) (3). I instructed my department to comply with the Act and that warrants issued after 23 July 1993

without having complied strictly with section 182 (b) (3) were to be withdrawn. Whilst that fulfils the administrative requirements for compliance with section 182 (b) (3), it imposes an onerous administrative burden.

Furthermore, it has since been brought to my attention that efficiency measures in the Queensland police force now ensure that after the warrants have been issued, all fine defaulters are posted a letter reminding them of their rights to apply for a fine option order, prior to the execution of such warrants. Indeed, Corrective Services practices ensure that fine defaulters are also advised of their rights to apply for a fine option order at the prison door.

My department does not believe that any of the warrants issued since 23 July 1993, which arguably did not comply with section 182 (b) (3), have been executed. However, to cover all exigencies, a savings clause has been inserted to the effect that no warrant is invalid because of non-compliance with the procedural section 182 (b) (3).

The amendment also ensures that section 56 (2) of the Act has been compiled with where an application for a fine option order and an advice informing the offender of the consequences of failing to apply for a fine option order have been given personally to the offender or posted to the offender's last known address.

I commend the Bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Beanland, adjourned.

The House adjourned at 6.06 p.m.

