

## TUESDAY, 26 APRIL 1994

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

### PAPERS TABLED DURING RECESS

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members, I have to advise the House that papers were tabled during the recess in accordance with the details provided on the daily program circulated to members in the Chamber—

15 April 1994—

Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts—

Report on Gold Coast Motor Events Co—  
Indy Car Grand Prix

Report on the Standard of Preparation of  
Departmental Statements.

### PRIVILEGE

#### Minister for Minerals and Energy

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members, on Wednesday, 13 April, the Leader of the Opposition rose on a matter of privilege and asked me to determine whether there had been a breach of privilege by a Minister who accepts \$2,000 and does not declare it in his entry in the register of pecuniary interests. I undertook to give a ruling on this matter.

In his register of pecuniary interest, Mr McGrady revealed that he is a director of the Queensland Country Credit Union. This in itself demonstrates that he has not attempted to hide the fact that he does have an interest that could raise a potential conflict with his duty as a member and a Minister. His affirmative answer to question 15 of the register further clarifies this. So with respect to the first issue, that is, has Mr McGrady declared his pecuniary interest in this matter, the answer is, "Yes."

The second issue to be resolved is whether Mr McGrady was under an obligation to declare under question 12 any substantial income with respect to his directorship. Question 12 actually relates to substantial sources of income, not substantial amounts of income. So Mr McGrady could have answered this question, "Director of the Queensland Country Credit Union." However, if Mr McGrady did this, it would not add any information to that already declared.

A number of other members from both sides of the House have declared directorships and/or shares in companies but have not made declarations under question 12, nor do I believe there is any need for them to do so with respect

to those directorships or shares. Question 12 is designed to capture any other substantial source—I repeat, "source"—of income not already declared in the register.

I therefore rule that there has not been any breach of privilege by the Minister for Minerals and Energy in relation to his entry in the pecuniary interest register.

### PETITIONS

The Clerk announced the receipt of the following petitions—

#### Mosquito Breeding

From **Mr Burns** (3 170 signatories) praying that the ponded areas in Lytton/Wynnum Industrial Estate and Port of Brisbane land be filled or drained to eliminate the major health hazards created by mosquitoes breeding in these ponds.

#### Great Sandy Region, Closures

From **Mr Nunn** (67 signatories) praying that the Parliament of Queensland will ensure that road, track, beach and airstrip closures proposed in the Great Sandy Region Draft Management Plan be not implemented.

Petitions received.

### STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

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

Chiropractors and Osteopaths Act—

Chiropractors and Osteopaths Amendment  
By-law (No. 1) 1994, No. 134

Land Title Act—

Land Title Regulation 1994, No. 133

Proclamation—provisions of the Act that  
are not in force commence 24 April 1994,  
No. 132

Meat Industry Act—

Meat Industry Regulation 1994, No. 130

Nature Conservation Act—

Nature Conservation (Declaration of Nature  
Refuges) Regulation 1994, No. 135

Parliamentary Members' Salaries Act—

Parliamentary Members (Annual Rate of  
Salary) Order (No. 1) 1994

Transport Infrastructure Act—

Proclamation—provisions of the Act that  
are not in force, other than (i) sections 86  
and 87, (ii) Schedule 3, amendments to the

Harbours Act 1955, State Transport (People-Movers) Act 1989 and Urban Public Passenger Transport Act 1984, and (iii) Schedule 3, amendment 5 of the Transport Infrastructure (Roads) Act 1991, commence 15 April 1994, No. 128

Transport Planning and Coordination Act—

Proclamation—provisions of the Act that are not in force commence 15 April 1994, No. 129

Water Resources Act—

Water Resources (Shire of Wondai) Regulation 1994, No. 131.

## PAPERS

The following papers were laid on the table—

Minister for Primary Industries (Mr Casey)—

Queensland Pork Producers' Organisation—Annual Report for year ended 31 December 1993

Director of Marketing—Annual Report for 1992-93

Government response to Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts Report No. 26 entitled "Report on the Financial Management of the Department of Primary Industries".

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Report on Visit to Papua New Guinea

**Hon. G. N. SMITH** (Townsville—Minister for Lands) (10.05 a.m.), by leave: Earlier this year, I visited Papua New Guinea on behalf of the Queensland Government. I table a report on that trip.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Apprenticeship and Traineeship System

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (10.06 a.m.), by leave: I wish to inform honourable members on progress within the Queensland apprenticeship and traineeship system since the proclamation of the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Amendment Act in January of this year.

Firstly, a campaign strategy was put in place with a firm goal—6 500 new apprentices and trainees in the first six months of this year. If this is achieved, it will represent a 5 per cent increase on the same period last year. The campaign began with a series of information seminars around the State to inform employers of the changes. Seventeen of these seminars have

been conducted in Brisbane and regional centres.

Today, a further step has been taken with the commencement of a toll-free training hot line in Brisbane. By dialling 1800 065187, employers around the State will be able to obtain, for the cost of a local call, information and publications as well as arrange to have a field officer call out to discuss structured training with them. Further, I will be writing to potential employers—particularly those in growth industries—outlining the assistance provided to help them take on apprentices and trainees.

I am confident that Queensland employers will be far sighted enough to see that investment in training a young person today will pay off as they form the skills base Queensland needs to meet the economic challenges of the future.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

### Use of Government Aircraft

**Mrs SHELDON:** Before the Goss ALP Government was elected, the Premier ridiculed the previous Government's use of a Government aircraft. He promised the people of Queensland that he would not use such an aircraft. He promised the people of Queensland that "the boy from Inala" had no need for such conveniences. Clearly, he has been deceptive and blatantly dishonest.

I understand that the Premier will travel to the electorate of Mirani today. Clearly, domestic travel is available. Why can he not be honest and travel by domestic aircraft, as he promised the people of Queensland? Could the Premier please tell us why?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** There are a number of reasons why, but I think the most correct one is that I was wrong, and I said so.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I do not know what Opposition members are grumbling about; they are always saying I am wrong. The truth is that sometimes they are right and, as a consequence, sometimes I am wrong, but most of the time they are wrong and most of the time I am right. Opposition members complain when I say I am right; they complain when I say I am wrong. I was wrong about the jet—

**Mrs Sheldon:** Why aren't you going on domestic travel today?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Because long before the Mirani by-election came about, I accepted an invitation—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I accepted an invitation last year from the University of Central Queensland to open the Asian Studies Centre in Mackay. When they sent down the invitation for today, my secretary noted that it was a parliamentary day, and I said, "Well, I do not expect to be speaking after question time, but tell them it must be scheduled so that I can attend question time." I said that because the Leader of the Opposition is always absolutely insistent that people such as myself be here for question time so I can answer his probing questions. Imagine my shock and disappointment when I came in here, having rescheduled the University of Central Queensland and the Mackay Asian Studies Centre so that I could leave after question time, to find that the Leader of the Opposition is not present. To leave immediately after question time, I have to take the plane.

**Mrs Sheldon:** Who set the date for the Mirani by-election?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I did. I am not sure if that was the honourable member's second question. I am happy to treat it as part of her first question. The answer is that the people who sit on this side of the House get to make those decisions. Given the Leader of the Opposition's huffing and puffing and righteous indignation that he parades here every question time about the absence of a Minister from question time, I am surprised that he is not here. But I am not surprised in another sense, because I am told by a mate of mine from Mackay called Tim that the National Party, in a safe National Party seat, is running a television advertising campaign; we are not. Furthermore, in that television advertising campaign—

**Mr Horan** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Toowoomba South!

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The National Party has dropped the Leader of the Opposition from that advertising campaign and, instead, has inserted Mr Cooper, "The Comeback Kid". Given that the National Party has dropped the Leader of the Opposition from its advertising campaign, I am not surprised that it has dropped him out of question time.

### School Curriculum Review

**Mr PITT:** I refer the Premier to the Government's review of the school curriculum, and I ask: is the Government aware of any need for the teaching of basic political history and theory in Queensland schools? What is the Government's attitude to this issue?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I believe that this Government has a proud record in relation to education. It is evidenced by the basic statistics of dramatic increases in funding—record increases in funding—with record Education budgets in each successive Budget of this Government. The latest initiative of the Government is the Wiltshire report *Back to Basics*, which has been released and is now the subject of a three-month public comment period. We believe that this will lead to further reform and improvement of the education system. That will include the need to remedy a situation that I believe occurred in the education of most of us—those of us who attended Queensland State schools—that is, the absence of adequate teaching in respect of the history of Government and civic affairs in this State. I believe that the need for this is evident, because even significant organisations in our community that should know better are capable of making mistakes and making significant omissions in terms of their own understanding of the system of politics and Government in Queensland. An example of this has come to light in the last few days.

**Mr Littleproud:** What's wrong with your Minister over there?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** This is mainly directed not at the honourable member but at his colleagues.

**Mr Littleproud** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Western Downs!

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I have been given by a member opposite—not from the Liberal Party, but I will not say which party—a copy of a Liberal Party internal document headed "Liberal Party General Training Program". This simply highlights the need to improve the education of all people in our community about civic affairs and our system of Government. It is a comprehensive program running from Tuesday, 1 March till late September. It covers a wide range of subject matters essential to an understanding of Government and politics in this State. It deals with the Liberal Party, Liberal Party Constitutions and a political quiz chaired by a person called Mr Phillip Bushell-Guthrie—with a hyphen, of course. It covers psychology and minor parties. So far, we have the Liberal Party and minor parties. It covers the Green factor, that is, Green politics. It covers BCC politics. In fact, there is a lecture on today about Queensland's past Premiers. I presume that is a bit of dreaming about the days when they used to prop up Joh Bjelke-Petersen. It goes on to cover Federal Parliament. It covers council, State Parliament, Federal Parliament, Liberal Party, psychology, minor parties and Green parties. It goes on to

cover women in politics. It covers Labor Party welfare and public spending. So far, it covers every party. It covers small business, pensioners and, lastly, the political scene at our universities.

I said to myself that there was something missing in the Liberal Party's education program. Then it clicked. The one party that is not covered in that six-month seminar program is the National Party. There is no reference to the "A" word; no reference to the "C" word and no reference to the "N" word. The Liberal Party has a problem when it comes to mentioning the "N" word; that is why it ripped up Mr Borbidge's amalgamation proposal. The six-month seminar program is on today. It covers every party, every level of government and every aspect of structural relationship in politics, except the National Party and the coalition. What is Mrs Sheldon telling us?

### **Criminal Sanctions Against Homosexuals**

**Mr PITT:** I refer the Attorney-General to a recent public controversy over criminal sanctions against homosexuals in other parts of Australia, and I ask: is the Attorney aware of any moves to take the Government and the police back into people's bedrooms and reintroduce criminal sanctions against people's sexuality in Queensland?

**Mr WELLS:** I am aware of some statements made from time to time by honourable members on the other side of the House to the effect that the criminal law amendment of 1990 would be repealed. If I remember correctly, the honourable member for Beaudesert said that a couple of years ago. Other members on the other side of the House have made statements that seem to indicate the same view. For example, in the *Bulletin*, referring to women's refuges, the following words appear—

"They are supposed to be centres for domestic violence victims but they are being used to promote lesbianism and extremist feminism," Littleproud says."

The article continues—

"They've been hijacked by the hairy armpit-type of women's groups."

**Mr Littleproud:** Correct.

**Mr FitzGerald** interjected.

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

**Mr WELLS:** I noted a certain amount of merriment among members on the other side of the House, but none of them actually said, "Hear, hear!" to what Mr Littleproud said.

**Mr W. K. Goss:** Mr Littleproud said, "Correct."

**Mr WELLS:** I thank the Premier and note that Mr Littleproud now confirms what he said. The trouble with this is that it is not a view which is entirely agreed with. I hate to speak of absent friends, but the Leader of the National Party says that he doubts that legislation which decriminalised homosexuality would be repealed, but he is not sure. He denies that he is embarrassed by his colleagues. He said—

"It is part of the National Party tradition."

This was described by the *Bulletin* as an admission that raises questions about his authority as leader.

Mr Borbidge says that what his frontbenchers are advocating is not necessarily the coalition position. It is not necessarily the coalition position because the Leader of the Liberal Party, as honourable members will recall, voted in favour of the decriminalisation of that particular activity, along with the spokesperson for Justice for the coalition. I think they were the only two Opposition people who voted in favour of that measure. Mrs Sheldon adds that a coalition Government will not reintroduce criminal sanctions for this particular activity. Stands of principle by the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Opposition spokesperson for Justice! Do we hear "Hear, hear!" from the other side of the House for the stands of principle taken by these people? What are members opposite going to do if the sorry day comes that they ever get into Government? Are they completely split down the middle, or do they have a coalition policy about this? It would be interesting to hear the answer to that question before the Mirani by-election.

### **Estimates Committees**

**Mr LINGARD:** In directing a question to the Premier, I point out that he promised the people of Queensland that this Parliament would introduce Estimates Committees. At this stage, with only two days of parliamentary sittings before the Budget is brought down, we have been told nothing about the format of these committees. No-one has been told when each committee will sit, or for how long they will sit and seminars for parliamentarians have been postponed or cancelled. The organisation is a shambles and is a disgrace. I ask: why has the Premier allowed this to happen?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** I have not allowed it to happen. The cheek of these people! They never ran an honest or comprehensive Estimates debate. They would allow the Estimates of five or six departments to be debated. They would hide Ministers whose portfolio had a problem by not allowing a debate of the Estimates of that

particular department. The first reform that we brought in was to debate the Estimates of every department and every Minister—something that the Opposition never did; something it never had the guts to do! Now, on the back of the various reports that have come forward recommending an Estimates committee, this Government will introduce an Estimates committee.

**Mr Littleproud** interjected

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

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The Leader of Opposition Business, the member for Lockyer, has been given by the Leader of the House a list of the committees, and how members are to be appointed to those committees. That information was also included in a public statement issued by me a couple of weeks ago. That shows the need for a literacy and numeracy program. I will send members of the Opposition another copy of the release. Let me outline the essential elements—

**Mr Lingard:** A great sham—an absolute sham.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** The member for Beaudesert is the last person who should talk about shams. There will be six committees. As I have said, the details of the committees have been given to the relevant representative of the Opposition. The questioning system will be, for example, that the Opposition will get a minimum of equal time. Furthermore, they will get the first 20 minutes. In addition, there will be seven members—

**Mr Lingard:** Wow!

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Does the honourable member genuinely want to know or does he just want to whinge? He is a great, big, whingeing sook. Does he want to be a great, big, whingeing sook or does he want to hear the answer?

**Mr Lingard** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am on my feet. I warn the member for Beaudesert under Standing Order 123A.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** Each committee will have seven members, but any other member of Parliament who wants to join in the proceedings of a committee will be able to do so.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Will they run concurrently or not?

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** No, they will be run one after the other, so Mr FitzGerald can go to every one if he wants. This is an unprecedented opportunity—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr W. K. GOSS:** They do not want to know. They are frauds; they are pretenders. They ran the most dishonest Government in the history of Queensland and now they complain and do not want to listen when somebody is trying to tell them about a reform that will put the Government under more scrutiny and provide more accountability. It is an unprecedented opportunity for members of the Opposition, but the reason they really do not like it is that they are going to have to do some work and the biggest bunch of logs in the history of this Parliament are allergic to it.

### **Mirani Electorate Water Supply**

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I ask the Minister for Primary Industries: can he advise the House of the initiatives undertaken by the Goss Government in regard to water supply in the Mirani electorate and the benefits of those initiatives to that area?

**Mr CASEY:** It is not coincidental that the acting Leader of the Opposition started question time today with questions about the very important Mirani by-election upon which the community will focus today and for the rest of this week. It is well for us to look at what has been happening in this safe National Party seat since the Goss Government came to office because it is the sort of thing that did not happen in Labor electorates during the tenancy of these benches by the people opposite. Mirani, which is perhaps the biggest sugar electorate in Queensland, has received a tremendous number of benefits from the Goss Government that it did not receive from the National Party during its period of office. Just last week, I launched the Teemburra dam project, which will cost more than \$61m. That dam will underwrite the water resources of the entire Pioneer Valley for a long time. Recently, the Opposition held a shadow Cabinet meeting in Mackay, at which the dam was one of the focal points of discussion. The next day, the response of the local media was to totally ignore any comments made by members of shadow Cabinet because the local people know them to be absolutely wrong. The Teemburra dam proposal underwrites the entire water resources of the Pioneer Valley—for urban water supply, for irrigation supply and also industrial supply—

**Mr HOBBS:** I rise to a point of order. The Minister is misleading the House. It only provides 46 per cent of the use in that area.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I am on my feet. I warn the member for Warrego.

**Mr CASEY:** The ideas that were put forward by the Opposition spokesman when he was up there—

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

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

**Mr CASEY:**—were a little bit like their whole philosophy so far as this work is concerned—just a bit of a drip.

**Mr HOBBS:** I rise to a point of order. I ask that comment to be withdrawn.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Minister to withdraw—unequivocally withdraw.

**Mr CASEY:** Because I called him a bit of a drip?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I will give the Minister some advice. I can see the look on his face. I suggest that he just withdraw.

**Mr CASEY:** But he did not say what he was objecting to—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the Minister to withdraw.

**Mr CASEY:** I withdraw. I will let him go because he made a big enough fool of himself when he was up in Mackay.

**Mr HOBBS:** I rise to a point of order. I ask the Minister to withdraw that as well. I am wounded totally by those dreadful remarks.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member is very sensitive today. I ask the Minister to withdraw again.

**Mr CASEY:** I withdraw, seeing that he is very sensitive, because there are more important points that I want to get across to this Parliament today. For instance, Stage 2 of the Dumbleton weir was completed early last year. We underwrote further irrigation work in the Pioneer Valley. We put \$3.7m into the Mirani pumping station to correct the wrong that was done by the previous Government as far as the whole of the Eton irrigation system is concerned. It has underwritten water supplies for the whole of the Eton irrigation system in a year that has seen one of the poorest rainfalls on record. Because of that pumping station we have been able to get water into the off-stream storage at a time when it was vitally necessary. The sound economic development of the entire Pioneer Valley is guaranteed by this Government and the work that we have done since we took office. The final strange thing that I would like to tell the House about all of this work on the Sarina tramway line, the St Lawrence water supply scheme and the water treatment plant that we built is that in the almost five years that we have been in Government until he retired, I can never remember one letter of representation from the former member for Mirani on any of these matters. So it was no thanks at all to the National Party that any of these things were done.

### Women's Refuges

**Mr LIVINGSTONE:** I refer the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs to the Government's funding for women refuges, and I ask: does the Minister believe that such refuges provide a valuable community service? Does the Minister perceive any threat to the funding for such facilities?

**Ms WARNER:** I thank the honourable member for the question. Every year, more than 25 000 Queensland women are the victims of domestic violence. The provision of services such as refuges has been, and will continue to be, a high priority for this Government. In contrast to the position adopted by members opposite, the Government's commitment in this area is firm and clear.

I was interested to read an article in the *Bulletin*, which demonstrated quite clearly that the Opposition could not agree on something as basic as women and children escaping domestic violence and the sorts of services that should be available. The member for Western Downs says that he would divert funds for women's refuges to traditional church-based charities. That shows just how much he knows about the funding for women's refuges. The fact is that all the funds for women refuges are either run by people who work for church-run organisations or by dedicated community groups that are trying to do something about this problem, whether or not they shave their armpits. They do not need undermining by Mr Littleproud.

I will give members a few examples. There are five St Vincent de Paul refuges, which receive more than \$800,000; three refuges operated by the Uniting Church, which receive over \$500,000; and the Salvation Army receives approximately \$200,000. The Government also funds Centre Care, the Marriage Guidance Council, Anglican family care, the Baptist and Lutheran churches, community organisations and the joint church task force for the education of domestic violence, and the Baptist Church's children's specialist program.

However, in the very same article, thankfully, Mrs Sheldon came to the rescue. She took on that hairy-chested simian, the member for Western Downs, and adopted a position not unlike that of Joan of Arc.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

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

**Ms WARNER:** However, I fear that Mrs Sheldon's coalition colleagues may very well burn her at the stake.

### Anzac Day Betting

**Mr SANTORO:** I refer the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing to the fact that yesterday, because of Anzac Day, the TAB agencies were supposed to open only at 1 p.m. The first race in Brisbane yesterday was at 12.35 p.m. and no other races were on at regional areas such as the Gold Coast. This meant that the TAB punters could not bet on the first race unless they held telephone betting accounts. I ask: how did this situation, which discriminates against the normal TAB punters, occur? What are the TAB's estimates of the revenue lost because of this error?

**Mr GIBBS:** The fact is that the Racing and Betting Act was amended to allow the TAB, upon representation from the industry, to open on those particular days. I certainly have no objection to the TAB operating at the time that the races—whether they are southern events or Queensland events—are due to take place. There was broad consultation in the community in relation to that.

It is a great pity that the member's concern about Anzac Day was reflected by the fact that his party was not even represented at the major ceremony in Brisbane, which was attended by the Premier. What a shocking indictment! It is an absolute disgrace that that lot opposite were not present at the Anzac Day ceremony to pay honour to those people who had fallen in defence of this country. They stand condemned for it. All they are concerned about is the TAB—

**Mr SANTORO:** I rise to a point of order. My point of order is that the Minister is trying to make cheap political capital out of Anzac Day. I happen to have laid five wreaths.

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

### TAFE College Directors

**Mr SANTORO:** In directing a question to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, I remind him that several years ago a group of TAFE college directors voluntarily signed employment contracts, the benefits of which included higher salaries and motor vehicles for personal use, and that these contracts are almost due for termination or renewal. With that in mind, I ask the Minister: is the department planning to modify the original contracts so that departing college directors will be given the very generous SES redundancy package on top of the already generous termination arrangements specified in the original contracts? If so, how much will this

decision cost the department and the Queensland taxpayer?

**Mr FOLEY:** It is true that a number of contracts which were signed during the term of the previous Government are reaching their expiration date. In each case, they are the subject of consultation between the department and the officer concerned. The outcome of those consultations will be made known when the matter has been finalised.

### Inner-city Bypass

**Mr BEATTIE:** I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Economic and Trade Development to his recent joint announcement with Lord Mayor Jim Soorley regarding the inner-city bypass in my electorate, and I ask: can the Minister outline to the House the benefits of this future bypass road? How will it contribute to solving the traffic problems in Brisbane's inner city? What is the public consultation process that will take place?

**Mr HAMILL:** Last week, Lord Mayor Jim Soorley and I announced the proposal for the Valley bypass. I might say that it is a very important development for the road network of the inner northern suburbs of Brisbane. For a long time, the Brisbane City Council has been considering options to try to remove much of the heavy traffic from streets such as Ann and Wickham Streets in Fortitude Valley. The council is concerned about the volume of heavy vehicles passing through the Valley. This bypass proposal comes after a long period of analysis by the Brisbane City Council, assisted by my department, in which options such as St Pauls Terrace and others were considered.

This proposal is so important because the Brisbane City Council, Councillor Soorley and also the sitting alderman in the area, Councillor Hinchliffe, have a strong commitment to urban renewal of the Valley and the north-eastern suburbs of Brisbane. That is why the council has been pushing so strongly for a bypass to solve the traffic problems in the area. Indeed, the State Government is supporting the council in this project to the tune of some \$35m to enable a link road to be developed between Gilchrist Avenue and Breakfast Creek Road. Along with this cooperative work being undertaken by the council and the State Government, the council is going to spend additional dollars in attending to the traffic needs of the Valley. The council has on its agenda a number of other less significant projects, including a couplet in the Valley, to try to sort out the traffic problems in that area.

Over the next six months, in conjunction with my department, the council will undertake a process of consultation and an environmental impact assessment will be carried out. I might say that the council's program is a five-year program and that the Government is pleased to support it because it will improve the quality of life of people living in the Valley. Associated work that will link Hale Street with Coronation Drive will enable heavy vehicles to move to the west of the central business district of Brisbane and Fortitude Valley. That will provide better amenity not only for through traffic but also for the citizens who live in the inner city.

### Education

**Mr BEATTIE:** I refer the Minister for Education to a report in today's *Courier-Mail* in relation to the scholastic achievements of girls and boys, and I ask: are boys being disadvantaged by the current education system in Queensland?

**Mr COMBEN:** This morning, I noticed the front-page report referring to the South Australian Minister for Education and the statistics that the schoolgirls in that State were performing scholastically at about 12 per cent better than the boys. I gather that that will be discussed at Friday's meeting of Education Ministers in Sydney. In light of those figures, the most important question for the education system to examine is: is something working well for girls and failing boys; alternatively, what is working and what is not working?

Traditionally, school results have not been as good for girls as boys. But in the last 10 years that has changed—as most people would appreciate—because there have been new opportunities for young women to participate fully in the curriculums and syllabuses. They can choose their job opportunities ahead, and they have role models. They can say, "Yes, I want to go for that." They have an aim to work towards. In addition to their role models, encouragement has taken a wide range of forms, such as the University of Southern Queensland summer school for girls in science, from which we are now beginning to see girls from Years 10, 11 and 12 flowing into science areas and engineering. We are doing some things very well.

Why are girls performing 12 per cent better than boys in South Australia? The answer is: we do not know. I have asked the department and the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies to tell me what the statistics are in Queensland, and why they think there is achievement or non-achievement. Girls may be more competitive or more stable in the last years of schooling. It

could be anything. We will wait for the results. It is an interesting set of statistics. We should remember that there will always be an imbalance—that is, the statistics will never come out dead even. Perhaps it would have been the same story had there been a 1 per cent difference. South Australia has a nice challenge ahead of it. In due course, I will advise the House of what the statistics are in Queensland.

### Westbrook Youth Detention Centre

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** My first question is to the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I refer to the events surrounding the riot at the Westbrook Youth Detention Centre in March 1994 and the Minister's ministerial statement in March 1994 insisting that there was widespread verbal and physical abuse of inmates at Westbrook by staff members. At that time the Minister stated—

"I was disturbed and appalled by the level of reported physical abuse of the boys by the staff and the extreme verbal abuse."

I also refer to a departmental report on that riot tabled by the Minister on that same day which stated there were allegations of abuse of inmates by staff, but none proven. It stated—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest to members that question time is not a time to debate an issue. The Standing Orders are very clear that members may quote only if it is relevant to understanding the question. The member has already given a precise of the question. I will not allow him to read the quote.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Since that day in Parliament, 31 inmates of Westbrook have written to the Minister and signed a letter insisting that there had been no assaults on them by the staff. This has been backed up by the person in charge of Boystown, Brother Declan Thomson, a person in regular contact with Westbrook inmates. In his letter to the Director-General of the Minister's department, this man advised that he was unaware of any assaults on inmates at Westbrook. I table those two letters. I ask: what was the Minister's reason for deliberately misquoting the facts?

**Ms WARNER:** Which particular fact was the member referring to? I failed to hear any in the litany.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Do you want it restated?

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that you place that on notice.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** No, the Minister can answer it, Mr Speaker.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I suggest that the member will get no answer. If he wants an answer, he should place it on notice.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I do not want to put it on notice. I want a definite answer now.

**Ms WARNER:** It was a bit garbled, but I will do my best. This is not surprising, as the member opposite has such a poor grasp of the issues involved in this portfolio. Firstly, I did catch one thing that he said, which was that there was a petition sent to me by 31 boys from Westbrook. That is false. It did not happen.

**Mr Littleproud:** I've got a copy of the letter.

**Ms WARNER:** The member might have a copy of the letter, but it was never, ever sent to me. I have heard other rumours about such a petition, but it has never come anywhere near my office. That is one fact. Obviously, the member's informants are wrong and are clearly misleading him. I think he should check that out.

In all honesty, the rest of the question was so all over the shop that it is quite difficult to follow the thin vein of what purports to be logic in the member's question. The report that came out after the Westbrook riot indicated that there were high levels of physical and verbal abuse. For a number of reasons, not only because of the information that was in that report but also a review that was being done into the location and placement of detention centres which was running from September last year—for a number of rational reasons; not emotional or illogical reasons—it was decided by Cabinet that the Westbrook centre should close down in the interests of the best care that we could offer to young offenders in this State. This was also for reasons of public security and also for reasons that have been raised by the staff on a number of occasions, and which were outlined in that report. For all those reasons—not just because of that one report on that riot—the answer is that we should close down Westbrook—

**Mr Cooper:** It is being closed down for one reason only.

**Ms WARNER:** There is no one reason. The people concerned make decisions on the basis of all the facts and reasons in front of them, not on the basis of one reason.

**Mr Horan** interjected.

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

**Ms WARNER:** That is the problem with the narrow-minded approach which operates only on the basis of bigotry and ignorance and which we have come to expect from members of the

Opposition when it comes to the so-called issue of law and order, which they seem to think is a winner. I advise members opposite to have a look at the polls to see how far it has gotten them; it has gotten them nowhere. I would respectfully suggest that the member for Western Downs does some homework on the portfolio and checks his informants.

### Westbrook Youth Detention Centre

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** My second question is based on homework done on the portfolio. It was interesting to hear the Minister's last answer.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! In my absence, I was advised that the Deputy Speaker the member for Inala said that, if members comment on previous questions, it would be their second question. I am not going to be as harsh as Mr Palaszczuk, but I may be directed that way if members decide to have a chop at the previous answer before asking their second question. I have been dissuaded so far, but I may be inclined to go that way if members abuse that privilege.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I refer to the announcement that the Westbrook Youth Centre will close on 30 June 1994. The Westbrook centre consists of about 1 000 acres of farmland and, on the open market, would command a price of about \$1,000 an acre, or a total price of \$1m. I ask: if the Minister intends to close this centre, why is she spending an enormous amount of money to refurbish the centre—somewhere between \$500,000 to \$1m—when within 10 weeks it will be closed? Does she not concede that this represents a gross waste of departmental funds?

**Ms WARNER:** I do not concede that it represents a waste of money. The fact is that two sections of Westbrook were damaged during the riot. They have been refurbished, as had to be done, because the centre is still open. It will close by 30 June, not necessarily on 30 June. There are some serious gaps in the scholarship of the member for Western Downs. The centre was fixed up because it is still in use. There are boys in those two centres. In relation to the disposal of the centre—we will be looking at a number of options, one of which may be that those buildings will be used by future tenants of that centre.

### Corporatisation of Government Owned Enterprises

**Mr FENLON:** In directing a question to the Treasurer, I refer him to statements made recently by the Queensland Farmers Federation that the State Government's policy to corporatise

Government owned enterprises will not result in efficiencies, but will instead increase cost burdens on industry. I now ask: are the QFF's concerns justified?

**Mr De LACY:** I read with interest the comments by the QFF. I have also attended a meeting with the members of the QFF at which they raised their concerns about corporatisation and their general concern—and this is a concern shared by many people in the community—that, if we run these entities on a commercial basis and they are required to pay taxes and dividends, that will inevitably lead to higher costs to consumers. It is ironic that all of the free enterprise people in this State are becoming so nervous about a Government wanting to run its public entities on a commercial basis. Another piece of irony is how the Opposition—which is trying to cultivate this impression—could expect that there would be no payment of taxes and/or dividends if it privatised those entities, as the Leader of the Opposition suggested before the last election. He intended to privatise the ports of Queensland. I can only say that, if those entities were in private hands, quite obviously they would be paying taxes not only to the Commonwealth Government but also they would be paying dividends, otherwise the private people involved would not be interested in them.

Corporatisation is all about efficiency and attaining world best practice. That is what we are on about. As we become more efficient, it is all about sharing the benefits of that efficiency between the consumers on the one hand and the taxpayers of Queensland on the other hand. I would have thought that everybody would have supported that principle—not only the Opposition but also the business community.

I advise the Opposition not to hang its political career on the prospect of prices increasing after corporatisation. I think we will be able to prove, even before the conclusion of this year, that corporatisation will not lead to increases in the prices of the product; it will have completely the opposite result. If members opposite want to hang their political careers on saying that corporatisation will increase prices, they are welcome to do so, but they might have to wear the consequences of that position.

### **Southern Brisbane Bypass**

**Mr FENLON:** In directing a question to the Minister for Transport and Minister Assisting the Premier on Trade and Economic Development, I refer to the Government's decision to proceed with the Southern Brisbane Bypass linking the Logan Motorway with the Gateway Arterial Road, and I ask: what is the significance of this decision

for the road network in south-east Queensland? What has been the community's reaction to it?

**Mr HAMILL:** That was a significant decision taken by the Government in relation to a very important part of the strategic road network for Brisbane. Everyone needs to understand that, if we are to have the sort of population growth in south-east Queensland that we are experiencing currently and that we expect to continue over the next decade or more, we need to provide infrastructure to enable us not only to improve or maintain the quality of life of the people of this State but also to balance the population pressure with the need to protect the environment and with the basic need of people to have access to transport. That road link fulfils those criteria.

The decision was taken after an extensive process of community consultation. As a result, I believe we have seen widespread acceptance of the decision. We put in place a hotline to enable people who had inquiries about the decision to express those inquiries and to receive further information. I want to pay particular tribute to the efforts of the member for Sunnybank in this regard. One particular community—the Chinese community in the Stretton area—was feeling disadvantaged in gaining access to information because some of those people had difficulty in expressing themselves in English. We put in place one of the hotlines in Mandarin to accommodate the needs of that community.

The hotlines received a number of calls—it was not an excessive number of calls—and by and large people have been pretty happy with the outcome. The only negative reaction would seem to be a letter that has been published in a number of the local community papers on the southside. That is an interesting letter, because the same letter is signed by a different person when one reads different papers. I can assume only that it is a form letter that has been sent out by the same action group that sought to confuse and create alarm in the community during the consultation process.

If I had had concerns about the effectiveness of that action group, I should not have. It would appear that the letter was written by the same group that orchestrated the Liberal Party campaign in the ward of Runcorn in the local government elections. It would seem that that group had the singular success in relation to misinforming the community as it did in returning a Labor member to what had previously been a Liberal ward.

### **Queensland Rail Workshops, Townsville**

**Mr JOHNSON:** In directing a question to the Minister for Transport, I refer to the Government's ill-considered decision to reduce Queensland Rail workshops in Townsville to almost non-existent status, including a drop in staff numbers from 640 to 380, and still declining. In view of Townsville's strategic importance in the future development of north Queensland and the necessity for Queensland Rail to maintain a base in that city to service its north Queensland operations, I ask: will the Minister now reverse his decision to virtually close the workshops, or is he content to be responsible for the loss of hundreds of rail jobs in Townsville?

**Mr HAMILL:** I am content to be remembered as the Minister under whom railways in Townsville were rejuvenated, new maintenance facilities were established at Stuart and the largest single rail contract ever to be awarded in north Queensland was awarded in Townsville.

**Mr Johnson** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member for Gregory that he has just asked his question. I warn the member under Standing Order 123A. I will not allow him to continue to interject.

**Mr HAMILL:** The largest single rail contract ever to be awarded in north Queensland was awarded in Townsville under this Government to Goninans of north Queensland for the manufacture of new-generation diesel locomotives. That is evidence of the Government's investment in rail, which is generating jobs not only in the public sector but also in the private sector. The crocodile tears of the member for Gregory simply do not wash when it comes to railway workshops.

I am aware of what has been occurring in other parts of Australia. One State of Australia actually has a National Party Minister with responsibility for railways. I refer to Western Australia. I know that the member for Gregory consults with his coalition counterparts interstate, because they tell me what a dill he is. They tell me that they cannot believe——

**Mr JOHNSON:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! That comment is unparliamentary, and I ask the Minister to withdraw it.

**Mr HAMILL:** I did not necessarily share that view. I am sorry for reporting those comments. I withdraw the comment. Those people cannot understand the attitude of the member for Gregory and the Leader of the Opposition, who parade through the railway workshops in Townsville claiming that they will

reverse all the decisions of this Government and maintain the dilapidated, run-down evidence of underinvestment by previous Governments.

What happens in Western Australia, where the National Party holds the Transport portfolio and where it has responsibility for railway workshops? Last May in Western Australia, the National Party announced the closure of the Midland workshops. Of itself, that may not seem such a momentous decision. However, when one learns that the only railway workshops run by West Rail in Western Australia are those at Midland—the workshops that the National Party Minister is closing down—where does it leave the National Party in this State?

Time and time again, the member for Gregory conveniently forgets that the decision in Townsville is part of an overall strategy to rebuild and invest in railway workshops in this State. An amount of \$22m is being spent in Rockhampton developing a state-of-the-art workshop to service the mining industry and rail operations in central and north Queensland. In the Ipswich area, \$35m is being spent at Redbank to provide another state-of-the-art railway facility to service the needs of Queensland Rail long into the future. We are investing in rail. We are investing in workshops. By comparison, if people want to see the product of the National Party's endeavours after 30 years in Government, they should visit Townsville and have a look at the galvanised iron shed that is rusting and rotting away. That is clear evidence of the National Party's priorities when it comes to railway workshops in Queensland.

## MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

### Representation of Women in Parliament

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (11 a.m.): I rise today to address an issue that is fundamental to the concept of democracy in Queensland and Australia. This issue poses serious questions for individual members of this House and for Governments and political parties. It raises questions about the current and future conduct of parliamentary business and highlights grave inadequacies that exist within our system of democracy that are not being confronted.

In Australia, 52 per cent of voters are women, yet the numbers of women in any Australian Parliament or political grouping are few and far between. The recent acrimonious exchanges in Labor Party ranks over the proposal to apply a quota to the number of women in State and Federal seats is indicative of the serious problems faced by women. This absurd proposal and the fact that it is being taken

seriously highlights how far the Labor Party in particular and political parties in general have strayed from the interests of women and the best interests of the general community.

Then the ever-ready political hack of the AWU, Mike Kaiser, leapt into the fray, opposing the quota not because of the obvious slight against women, but because he did not think the talent pool among Labor women was big enough to sustain it. I have not heard Labor women come out and get stuck into Kaiser at all. I am absolutely amazed that they were prepared to swallow that insult. May I add, that was compounded and backed up by the Premier.

How demeaning it is for women to hear Mr Kaiser mouthing his platitudes in talking of women. He is talking women but, my female friends in the Labor Party, he is counting men. What has surprised me and motivates me to speak up today is that in the weekend papers and in my travels over the past week, I have heard a concerted outcry over the actions of Mr Kaiser and Premier Goss and his AWU faction.

Among men choosing to play the game of Queensland politics, Mike Kaiser is probably one of the least astute in political terms, but through his incompetence and insensitivity, and that also of the Premier, the important question of adequate representation for women is at last being aired through the media. I would like to say that at last it is being addressed, too, but we women are not going to get carried away with too much huffing and puffing from mere males such as Mike Kaiser or Wayne Goss. Out there in the electorate, Queensland women have been led up the garden path by male dominated political organisations for too long, and they know it. They know that most politicians in this State walk, talk and behave like members of a boys' club. The most outrageous examples of that are those found in the absurd and archaic factional systems that run the Labor Party to this very day.

Earlier, I referred to the impact of Mr Kaiser's regressive remarks and the stream of comment they have evoked—

**Mrs Edmond** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Obviously the honourable member agrees with him; it is very sad for any female Labor member to say that. Out on the street, particularly among women, the feeling of anger over their lack of representation in the current system is growing every day.

**Mrs Edmond:** This sounds as if you are trying to fight off a challenge.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I would have thought that the honourable member who keeps interjecting would have been more interested in putting up the main issue of more women in this House

rather than interjecting and telling the truth about her Labor mates who are selling her down the drain.

**Mrs Edmond** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Out on the street, particularly among women, the feeling of anger over their representation in the current system is growing every day. We no longer have a trickle of concern but a rising tide of resentment which demands that women be given their say in the running of this State and this nation.

An article in the *Sunday Telegraph* written by Shirley Twist summed up the situation nicely. That article states—

"Women in the community are sick and tired of men in suits running their state and federal parliaments. Women make up more than 50 percent of the population"—

in fact, women make up 52 per cent of the population—

"yet the number of women in our parliaments is on a par with some third world countries."

The grave under-representation of women in our Parliament and in Parliaments across Australia is a scandal, yet it receives scant regard. Despite our importance and our sheer number, the representation of women receives about the same level of consideration as the representation of very small minorities such as Aborigines or ethnic groups. Of course, these groups do require consideration, but I suspect it is much easier to address the concerns of small groups that do not threaten existing power bases than to address or even acknowledge the seriously neglected needs of a majority.

So as soon as the question of female representation comes up, male Labor parliamentarians—and, unfortunately, female Labor parliamentarians, judging by the comments of the member for Mount Coot-tha today—experience a collective shudder of paranoia. Too many fall back behind the existing protective barriers such as the factions or hurry off to begin recounting heads in branches where too many women would be a real concern.

It is revealing to consider the way in which the article in the *Sunday Telegraph* was written. It is an article about women, yet it spends most of its time addressing the problems of the faulty factional system that keeps male Labor parliamentarians in their jobs. The article states—

"It's high time the Queensland ALP came clean over the issue of getting more women into elected positions. The current fight within Labor ranks over just how to do

this is not about women at all, it is about factions."

That certainly is the case. Later in the article Ms Twist wrote—

"Premier Wayne Goss has backed Mr Kaiser, saying he believes Queensland women would want to be represented by the best possible candidate, so this was why the talent pool of available women needed to be boosted."

The article went on—

"But the Premier should ask himself whether male party members are always selected on the basis of talent or merit to fill or run Labor seats."

We all know the answer to that when we look at the appalling representation on the other side of the House—not only the back bench, but also, unfortunately, most of the Cabinet.

Here is the crux of the article: ALP State President and Left faction member Ian McLean wants the expected seven vacant ALP seats at the next State election to be filled by Labor women. I think it would be very interesting to run a bit of a poll of the male Labor parliamentarians here and find out who are the seven who will be axed.

**Mr Welford:** He didn't say seven.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Indeed he did. I suggest that the honourable member goes back and listens to the ABC.

**Mr Welford:** He said "several".

**Mrs SHELDON:** I just wonder who is going to get the axe and which women are going to be put in. I say to women: do not hold your breath, but let us run a poll and find out which of the very dead wood on the other side is going to be axed. I can certainly name seven Cabinet Ministers who can go.

Mr McLean says that he is right behind the women. That is very noble of Mr McLean, but it is also very convenient given that many of the outstanding Labor women who would compete for these seats are members of his faction. Male Labor parliamentarians had better watch it. The real fear is in the Premier's faction—the Right—over the prospect of seats going to women not because they might have talent but because the Right will lose some of its party room clout. I am right, girls, am I not?

So what does the Premier mean when he says that women want to be represented by the best possible candidate? Note that he did not say the most talented or intelligent or meritorious candidate. What he means is that he wants

women in this State represented by more ambitious men simply because these are more likely to be found in the ranks of the Right. What a joke this really is, and what a joke it is that the Labor Party is endeavouring to perpetrate this on the women of this State. It is also a joke that the Premier of Queensland is so condescending towards women that he expresses their aspirations in such a shallow and self-serving way.

I am the first female ever to lead a parliamentary political party at the State level in Queensland. I am proud to be a Liberal, partly because, unlike Labor, the Liberal Party is prepared to take women at face value. Although a great deal of work is to be done, the Liberals at least offer a career path based on merit rather than the tawdry boys' club antics that prevail among the Labor factions—and, may I add, in the National Party honourable members see three women sitting in this Chamber who have certainly been elected on merit.

Not surprisingly, the Liberals have a proud history of female representation that will develop strongly over the next few years. In Queensland we have one of the longest standing female MHRs, Kathy Sullivan. She has been in Parliament for 20 years now. The Liberals also had the foresight to preselect Sallyanne Atkinson, who was the first female Liberal Lord Mayor in this State and, may I add, the only female Lord Mayor.

I notice that Mr Welford is slinking out of the Chamber, because he really has no answers. Under John Hewson, the Liberal Party has developed and put in place a major women Liberals forum. Unlike Labor, we are concentrating on equipping women with the skills and resources they need to campaign for and win the seats that count. May I add that, in the Liberal Party in Queensland, over half the members are women. We are setting up proper candidate schools. We are training women so they will know what the rigours are in politics; they will know how to do their numbers and they will know how to get preselected. I have spoken hard and long about women being preselected for winnable seats.

Time expired.

### Inner-city Bypass

**Mr BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central) (11.11 a.m.): Unfortunately, by her performance, the honourable member for Caloundra has set back the cause of women 100 years. Last Thursday, 21 April 1994, the Lord Mayor, the honourable Jim Soorley, and the Transport Minister, the Honourable David Hamill,

announced that an environmental impact assessment would be conducted on a proposal for a major traffic bypass of Fortitude Valley and the Brisbane CBD. This matter has been of some concern to me for some time.

The aim of the new bypass is to divert at least 30 per cent of trucks from Fortitude Valley and reduce traffic volumes through the CBD and the Valley and over the Story Bridge. The bypass will run from Breakfast Creek Road to Bowen Hills, connecting to Gilchrist Avenue at Herston. It will then connect to the inner north western ring-road. The route will be further improved by constructing an overpass from Boomerang Street to Coronation Drive and extending the traffic bypass to the Riverside Expressway and the South East Freeway. The proposal is a joint scheme involving both the Brisbane City Council and the State Government and is aimed at significantly reducing the amount of traffic in the CBD and Fortitude Valley.

As honourable members would know, the Brisbane City Council has long been concerned about traffic movements in that area, particularly the movement of trucks. I have expressed my concern over a period both in this House and in other places. The proposal will cost a total of \$60m, to be completed over a period of five years, and is designed to replace the proposed St Pauls Terrace bypass, which required excessive resumption of privately owned land at a cost of \$130m. The St Pauls Terrace proposal would have been far more expensive, and while it would have diverted traffic away from Fortitude Valley, it would not have diverted traffic away from the CBD. Again, that is a matter that I have previously raised in this House.

Most of the land affected by the proposed Valley bypass concept is State Government owned land, and the Lord Mayor, Jim Soorley, has given a commitment that the urban renewal task force will look at avenues to relocate those affected to the urban renewal precinct. As honourable members can see from this map that I produce for the House today, the areas marked in pink are currently State Government owned land, so one gets an understanding of how much land is privately owned and how much is State Government owned.

The conceptual planning has been completed, and the State Government and the Brisbane City Council have reached agreement in principle on the project. However, a vital environmental study will be carried out along with a comprehensive consultation program, which is expected to start later this month and be completed by November this year. A separate environmental impact assessment will also be carried out by the Brisbane City Council into a

\$20m council proposal to remove through traffic from Wickham Street. This proposal from the Brisbane City Council will involve creating a couplet between Ann and McLachlan Streets by reversing the direction of existing traffic flows. As I said, this proposal is a matter for the Brisbane City Council.

The Valley bypass—or the inner-city bypass, as I prefer to call it—will mean that the drivers of trucks wanting to travel from Acacia Ridge to Eagle Farm, for example, will travel along the South East Freeway and join the inner-city bypass at the Coronation Drive link by turning right into Boomerang and Hale Streets. There will be no traffic lights at Coronation Drive for this turn, and trucks—by virtue of an overpass—will drive straight onto the link with the assistance of a grade separation and then follow the inner-city bypass to their destination at Eagle Farm or the airport.

The problem with trying to solve heavy traffic movement through the CBD and the Valley is dealing with how to get traffic from Acacia Ridge through to Eagle Farm, because that is where a lot of businesses are and where a lot of traffic routes go. Unfortunately, the Gateway Bridge was put too far east in its construction, and those travelling from Acacia Ridge—and you, Mr Deputy Speaker, as member for Inala would know this from personal experience, as would the honourable member for Archerfield—do not want to use the Gateway Bridge, because it is too far east. Certainly the toll is part of the reason why the Gateway is not used by them, but that is not the major reason. As people would know, we have kept increases in the toll under the inflation rate. The bypass road will go some way towards addressing the problem of moving traffic from Acacia Ridge through to Eagle Farm and getting it off those inner-city streets.

The aim of the inner-city bypass—in addition to getting trucks out of the inner city—is to improve traffic flow along Bowen Bridge Road and Lutwyche Road. Subject to the environmental impact study, cars should be able to travel along Bowen Bridge Road, turn left into O'Connell Terrace, which will be made two way, then join the inner-city bypass and link up with the South East Freeway. At the present time, there is a major bottleneck near the car park at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, both turning right from Bowen Bridge Road into Gilchrist Avenue and when travelling in the opposite direction outbound.

The bypass will reduce delays for traffic wanting to move "circumferentially" on the existing network. Queues in Gilchrist Avenue approaching Bowen Bridge Road regularly extend for more than one kilometre and involve

delays in excess of five minutes. In addition, the right-hand turning movement from Bowen Bridge Road to Campbell Street involves delays of a similar order. I travel over those roads every day, and I experience those delays, as do the rest of the people of Brisbane, including my constituents.

The consequence is that the movements around the city are being discouraged, notwithstanding the use being made of Hale Street. Studies done by the Brisbane City Council for the Valley Urban Renewal Project show that the proposed bypass road can divert 30 per cent of the existing traffic flow currently using Wickham and Ann Streets. At the moment, trucks using St Pauls Terrace, Gregory Terrace and Herston Road would be attracted onto the inner-city bypass, thereby reducing traffic in the nearby suburban streets and roads of Herston, Kelvin Grove and Spring Hill, all of which are constituent residential areas of mine.

This week, the Brisbane City Council will start a survey of Gilchrist Avenue—amongst other things—identifying trees both by their trunks and canopy so that the road widening of Gilchrist Avenue to four lanes will be done in such a way as to minimise its impact on the belt of significant mature trees along the route. The council study will also aim to reduce the impact of the widening of Gilchrist Avenue on Victoria Park at Herston. The major roadworks will be restricted as much as possible to the eastern end of Victoria Park, which is used for car parking. If necessary, retaining walls will be built to save the trees, and the road widening will be done on the south side of Gilchrist Avenue so that the bike path will remain on the north side, as well as the mature trees growing there, to which I just referred. Most of the mature trees are on the north side, that is, the golf course side of Gilchrist Avenue.

Last night, I attended a meeting of the Herston/Kelvin Grove Residents Action Group, a very active community group in my area which has had a longstanding interest in traffic flows in its area and the environs around Gilchrist Avenue and Victoria Park. People at that meeting expressed their concerns to me about the proposal, and I will be endeavouring to arrange for departmental representatives to attend their next meeting—along with me—on 23 May 1994 to explain the proposal in greater detail. I will also be endeavouring to ensure that they have maximum input into the consultation process.

In addition to this, the local councillor, David Hinchliffe, and I have doorknocked many of the local residents in Bowen Hills directly affected by the proposal, and we have written—along with the Department of Transport—to all affected

constituents. We have arranged a meeting this Friday of transport officers of both the State Government and the Brisbane City Council with local Bowen Hills residents to brief them fully on the proposal.

When the Liberal Party city council rammed through the Hale Street proposal—of which all members of this House would know I was a strong opponent—it dumped traffic at the car park at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and created the traffic nightmare that this inner-city bypass is designed to resolve. In essence, this inner-city bypass is Stage 4 of Hale Street.

When I pursued this matter with the Liberal City Council in years gone by when Sallyanne Atkinson was Lord Mayor, they lied to me about the need for such a road. But when one looked at the situation, it was quite clear. Unfortunately, the current State Government and the Brisbane City Council have been forced to deal with this Liberal Party created traffic nightmare. I intend to do everything in my power to ensure maximum public consultation and involvement in the consultation process on that road, to pursue the western bypass around Mount Coot-tha to alleviate traffic moving through the inner city, and to continue my strong commitments to public transport, transport of goods by rail and the inner-city rail loop, of which I have been a strong advocate for a long period.

In the few minutes remaining to me, let me appeal to those involved in this process—including the media—to pursue a constructive and reasonable approach to the debate on this issue. When the announcement was made last Thursday, there was a media frenzy to get to people in Bowen Hills, to get them on television, and to make sure that the ratings were good. There was little concern for the people affected. I understand that the media have a constructive role to play in this. I will not in any way be critical of that. The problem that the Government and the council have is that there has to be an announcement, and there cannot be speculation before that, otherwise there will be speculation in terms of land and speculation and problems in terms of sale.

We have to go through a process, beginning with an environmental impact study. I hope that we can sensibly go through this period of consultation and the environmental impact study and come up with reasonable, rational solutions which, in the long term, must include greater emphasis on public transport.

Time expired.

**Minister for Family Services and  
Aboriginal and Islander Affairs**

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Western Downs) (11.20 a.m.): The list of issues that highlight the incompetence of the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs is so extensive that at least some need to be revealed and recorded in *Hansard*. Put simply, Mrs Warner has been a disaster as a Minister for Family Services. She has been Minister of this department for four years—long enough to have tangible evidence to point to as achievements, and she delights in referring to her alleged achievements; long enough to have proof that this is not the case; and long enough to have proof that her leadership has been incompetent.

Today, I will list some of the major areas of embarrassment and incompetence of the Minister. Firstly, the Minister was responsible for providing a system of financial management and financial accountability for the community councils of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Queensland. In 1990, the first year Mrs Warner was Minister, the Auditor-General saw fit to warn that these community councils would need assistance in managing their finances. In 1993, two years later, the Auditor-General found such a mess that for the first time ever he produced a special report solely on one department—her department—to highlight the lack of accountability in many of these community councils. One would have thought that such an embarrassing report would have moved the Minister to take appropriate action to rectify the matter.

Honourable members may recall at that particular time I suggested to the Minister that she should direct the department to check all councils on a monthly basis to ensure council meetings had been held, to ensure financial reports on all of the councils' accounts were presented and to ensure any irregularities could be investigated immediately rather than feature in the Auditor-General's report. It is now quite obvious that this was not done. The Auditor General's report tabled in this House in February 1994 once again was critical of the Minister's supervision of some of the community councils under her control. Let me list some of the scandals he identified—

huge amounts of money being lost while in transit between a council and a bank;

shortages in stocks held in council shops;

money lent by councils to individuals even though this is quite specifically prohibited in the Act and even though the same practice had been identified the previous year and condemned then;

a council funding a boat building enterprise that was designed to teach skills and provide employment—it used \$117,000 to

build one 4.5 metre aluminium dinghy in 12 months. Why were progress reports on the venture not sought every month?—and

a community council's explaining the absence of its beef cattle by claiming the cattle were still finding their own way back from a rodeo held 60 kilometres away. Any halfwit of a stockman would see this as a lame excuse for poddy dodging or worse!

The Minister's statements to the public of Queensland after these shocking revelations went along these lines—

"I don't want to be paternalistic. I'll call in all the council chairmen and give them a good talking to."

She did that last week. She said also—

"I'll start a special financial management course in February 1994."

In March, the Chairman of the Aboriginal Coordinating Council advised me in Cairns that this course had still not been started. I wonder if it has been started yet. These community councils receive the bulk of their funds from us—the taxpayers of Australia. This being the case, the Minister has a responsibility to ensure these public funds are used properly and that those using these funds comply with the Act and other laws. Until the Minister insists on proper management and financial accountability she is failing the people of Queensland. In fact, for four years she has been incompetent in this area of her responsibility.

I turn to the area of Protective Services. The Minister has the responsibility of providing protective services for children at risk. This includes conducting detention centres for juveniles who break the law. The Westbrook Youth Centre is one of those detention centres. In fact, it is designed to hold and rehabilitate the worst of our juvenile offenders. For at least two years Westbrook has been a place at risk. It is at risk because Mrs Warner has instituted a type of management that does not work. Staff members of Westbrook have made repeated appeals for her to abandon a system of management that leaves them powerless. It is a system that has the boys holding the staff in contempt; a system where assaults against inmates and staff are on the increase; a system where the boys know they can revolt and receive what they consider a "let off"—limited segregation, minimum loss of privileges—an ability to lay unfounded charges of assault against staff knowing the staff will suffer financially and emotionally but they get off scot-free; and a system in which inmates make threats of violence against staff members' families yet are not punished.

In spite of the well-intentioned warnings to Mrs Warner, she persisted with her preferred method of correction, and what happened? A mass riot occurred on Saturday, 19 March. Damage is estimated at \$750,000. There were nine escapees and it was mayhem for six hours or more. Mrs Warner was full of action then. She chartered a helicopter to Westbrook on that Saturday night and made things worse. In hindsight, Mrs Warner probably realises her colleague Mr Milliner had the best *modus operandi*—while Wacol prisoners rioted he let his staff quell the riot and he had a quiet beer or two. It would have been wise for Mrs Warner to have done the same, but instead she meddled in something she should have left to her trained staff. If the staff and the Dog Squad had not been hindered by Mrs Warner, the riot could have been over in two hours, not the seven or eight hours it took.

Much has been said about the transfer of some of the boys from Westbrook to the adult prison at Wacol. Quite clearly, the Minister had to act and then cover the legalities. It was illegal action but probably unavoidable. One thing that has not been aired sufficiently, however, is the fact that, if the riot had been quelled quickly, Westbrook would still have been secure and the transfer of boys would not have been necessary. It would not have been necessary to breach her own Act. If Mrs Warner had not meddled, an estimated \$750,000 of taxpayers' money could have been saved.

The next issue I will raise is the Community Services Development Division. I turn back to the Auditor-General. He has been kept very busy with Mrs Warner. He must shudder every time he opens the books of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. The Auditor-General's report tabled in Parliament in late 1993 revealed Mrs Warner was not exercising sufficient scrutiny over this division, which makes grants to various community organisations. The Auditor-General identified five officers within this division whose tasks were to issue grants to community organisations and then to ensure audited accounts were received from the recipients. He reported to Parliament that only one of the five officers was performing the task set. The result was that a number of organisations simply took the money and disregarded their obligation to provide audited accounts to the department. One of the recipients received over \$1m per year but had failed to provide proper proof of expenditure. This raises the question: does Mrs Warner not worry about the public money—our taxes—that she hands out? It appears she could not care less. Well, that may not be totally correct, for

there are many community organisations that complain to me that Mrs Warner favours organisations aligned with the women's movement.

This raises another question: are some of these organisations thumbing their noses at the audit requirements? Is the Auditor-General referring to some of them? Whether this is the case or not, one thing is certain: Mrs Warner is not exercising proper ministerial control in yet another area of her administration.

Juvenile justice is another issue I will raise. In 1993, I went to the launch of the new Children's Court Act and the new Juvenile Justice Act. The Minister invited me but, not surprisingly, failed to acknowledge my presence, although she acknowledged her fellow ALP parliamentarians. I thought that a bit petty. At the function Mrs Warner boasted about the new legislation. In many respects it has merit, but the present crisis in juvenile crime has shown that the legislation is not being allowed to work properly—not because of the legislation but because the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs does not carry out the functions expected of it.

I will explain. If the Children's Court puts a child on a care and protection order or a care and control order the offender is placed under the responsibility of the director-general on behalf of her department. The offender is supposed to receive professional counselling, and his behaviour is to be monitored. This simply is not happening in too many cases. I will cite a case that occurred in Chinchilla. A young lad was brought to my attention. He was in big trouble with the police. I rang the Department of Family Services in Toowoomba and asked for some counselling for the boy. They said that they would probably never get there. Such a statement is backed up by Judge McGuire of the Children's Court and a magistrate in Cairns. Both have said that, when they order that these people be placed on probation, or under care and control orders, the counselling that is expected to be given to them by the Department of Family Services is not delivered. In fact, each officer of that department is responsible for between 80 and 100 people. The counselling that they provide under those conditions would simply be not worth while.

The Minister claims that she is spending more money in her department. She is probably right, but she is not spending her money wisely. She is not making sure that the people receive value for their dollars.

In summary, in at least four areas of administration, the Honourable Anne Warner has been incompetent. Some community councils continue to ignore their responsibilities. The Westbrook Youth Centre riot was caused by maladministration.

Time expired.

### Women in Parliament

**Ms SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt) (11.31 a.m.): I consider the Labor Party's current debate over whether or not it will introduce affirmative action rules to ensure that increased numbers of women are given preselection to win seats in Parliament one of the healthiest debates we have seen in this political sphere for a long time. It is fairly obvious that we in the Labor Party do not all agree on this issue. It is a party made up of very disparate groups of people, and I have no doubt that we will see many points of view proffered. But the wonderful thing is that the party is having the debate, and that it can see that poor representation of women in this country is a cause for concern.

The Labor Party has always been, and continues to be, the only political party that is prepared to put feminist issues on the agenda. Until this morning, when we heard a fairly shallow attempt at debate by the Leader of the Liberal Party, the National and Liberal Parties have continued to avoid this issue. Last week, the member for Maroochydore said that women do not need any help to get into Parliament. That is a bit rich coming from Miss Simpson who, undoubtedly, was helped along the way by her father, who served for 15 years in this Parliament in a seat in the district she now represents. The truth is that the coalition cares so little about increasing its representation of women in Parliament that it does not even discuss the issue.

Unfortunately, other women are not as favoured as Miss Simpson in having family members act as mentors in guiding them in a political career. The history of women parliamentarians in this country reveals that they are often wives, daughters, sisters and nieces of prominent male parliamentarians. I have a list of over 35 female parliamentarians who fall into that category. Obviously, those women all benefited from some form of help. The Labor Party's current debate is about helping women in the political process. Unlike the Opposition, which is happy to allow the familial system to continue to determine its female representation, the Labor Party is having an open, honest debate. It is fitting that, 100 years after women gained the right to vote, this matter is on the political agenda.

The member for Caloundra was very vocal about wanting Labor women to speak out against State Secretary Mike Kaiser, because he has criticised the proposed quotas for women. I am confused about the member's stance. Does that mean that she supports quotas? Does that mean that the Liberal Party is going to bring in a quota system to increase its representation by women? The member for Caloundra had many positive things to say about the need to increase women's representation in Parliaments. That surprised me somewhat, because she is the same member who is recorded in *Hansard* as saying that she does not believe women in Queensland suffer from any discrimination. However, she has obviously had a change of heart, which is pleasing, but she really failed to outline what her party is going to do about the issue. Up until now, it has not even brought on a debate.

As I said before, this year is an important anniversary in Australia's history as it marks 100 years of women's right to vote in this country. In 1894, South Australia was the first Australian colony to introduce adult suffrage when it granted votes to women. The Commonwealth did so in 1902, and by 1908, all States had followed suit. We have much to be proud of, as Australia led the way in introducing universal adult suffrage.

In Australia, women from all States and all walks of life laid the foundations of the rights and opportunities we now take for granted. That is why, a century after women first gained the vote, women throughout the country are taking the time to reflect on just how far they have come in the political sphere and the appropriateness of their parliamentary representation. I understand that, later this month, Mr Speaker is having prepared for public viewing in the Parliamentary Annexe a display that celebrates this important anniversary. I take the opportunity to congratulate him on this initiative which, I am sure, will be appreciated.

In Queensland, we have some outstanding examples of women, such as Margaret Ogg, Emma Miller and Vi Jordan, to name a few, who urged women to stand up for their rights. However, despite the significant gains made by women in so many walks of life, the figures on the representation of women in Parliament are still appalling. Most members would be unaware that since Parliament began in this State in the 1860s, there have only ever been 20 women elected to the Queensland Parliament. Over that time, 1 042 people have been elected to this Parliament, and those 20 women represent 1.96 per cent of the total. Currently, 13 women sit in this Chamber, which represents 14 per cent of women in the State. I am unashamedly of the

school that believes that as women make up 52 per cent of the population, it is not a representative system unless women are equally represented in their Parliaments. In recent times, a myth has arisen about women's liberation that has been accepted widely. That myth encourages us to believe that women have already achieved equality of opportunity and status. The general feeling is, "Baby, you have come a long way. What more do you want?" That myth is encouraged further by the worldwide acknowledgment of Australia as a leader in pioneering changes that enhance the status of women. Participation in the paid work force is the prime basis for the myth that things have improved dramatically. The facts are that although women represent 42 per cent of the paid work force, almost 80 per cent of women work in only four industries. In fact, more than half of the employed women are found in only two occupational groups: 31 per cent are clerks and 21 per cent are sales assistants. The myth is based on a few high-profile and outstanding exceptions to the rule. The myth is just that—a myth. Women are not represented in equal numbers in either occupations or industries, and they are certainly not present in large numbers in Parliaments in this country, which is where decisions are made.

Women know that there is still much to be done to achieve their share of power in this country. One hundred years of dedicated feminism has hauled the political infrastructure into place. Women have the vote and the right to join political parties. A sufficient number of women have enough money, clout and education, and most women have enough desire and determination to begin to redress the imbalance of power between the sexes. We might well ask: "Why, then, are women still underrepresented in the political system?"

One of the obvious reasons women are not in Parliaments is that they are not preselected for safe seats. An early justification for not preselecting women was that they did not win votes—women would not vote for another woman and men did not find women credible as candidates. As women were so rarely preselected for safe seats, when a female failed to be elected in a marginal seat, party members could invoke the gender factor as the cause. Research has demonstrated that women are more likely to vote for a female candidate than they are to vote for a male candidate and that, far from being a liability, women can be an electoral asset for a political party. Despite that, women still fail to gain preselection in winnable seats. That can be explained partly by the fact that women do not join political parties in the same number as men join them. Women have roles that tend to

confine them to the home, and that places restrictions on their time for political activities and their amount of exposure to political stimuli.

I do not believe that women generally lack an interest in politics, it is just that they do not convert that interest into political activity. Why should they? Political parties are dominated by men who make the rules, share information among themselves, dispense favours to each other and actively promote ambitious young men to join their boys' network.

The problem with women's experience of our political system is that it has been cast in the male mould. Women have not been comfortable in this male domain because they have not had enough power to remake the workplace in a way that is more congenial to them. Unlike men, women in political parties tend not to have mentors. There is no-one teaching them how to access power. For all these reasons, women do not join political parties in sufficient numbers, and men continue to use that as an excuse to avoid giving them any power in those parties. But what comes first: the chicken or the egg? Until political parties start giving women positions of real power within their structures and in their parliamentary representation, women will generally not be attracted to contemplating a career in politics. Until men are determined to share some of that power and actively promote women in their parties, women will not try to access that power, and we will continue to hear that very silly line, "We would like to give the women the jobs, but they just aren't up to scratch."

By far the most ridiculous argument that I have heard in the past few months is that there is insufficient talent among women to fill parliamentary positions. That the criterion for endorsement should be competence goes without saying. But the proponents of this argument argue that there are not 45 competent women in Queensland to fill half of the positions in this Parliament.

Time expired.

### **Smuggling, Cape Melville National Park; Mr D. Barbagallo and Mr D. Atkins**

**Mr SLACK** (Burnett) (11.42 a.m.): The Opposition has long suspected that the list of improbabilities, contradictions—and at least one established instance of grossly improper behaviour—associated with the visit by the Premier's two most senior personal staff to Cooktown last November, in relation to what has become known as the Cape Melville affair, hid something serious—something the Government desperately does not want the public to know. Were it to become public knowledge, it would

raise grave doubts about the appropriateness of the involvement of the Premier's office in the entire episode.

It is now well known that a vehicle belonging to Mr Paul Barbagallo, a brother of the Premier's then private secretary, Mr David Barbagallo, was seized by park ranger Pat Shears at Cape Melville National Park on 11 November last year in gravely suspicious circumstances. The vehicle was seized within sight of a stand of foxtail palms, which are the subject of a highly illegal seed trade. It was seized on a known seed-smugglers' track. It has also been established that the classic smugglers' form of transport in the wet season, which coincides with the seed season—a seagoing vessel—was due to rendezvous with Mr Barbagallo and his party. These circumstances were so suspicious, so telltale, that Detective Sergeant Gavin Ricketts, head of the Fauna Squad, in a summary of his investigation into the seizure addressed to the Regional Director of the Department of Environment and Heritage, Mr Greg Wellard, dated 22 November, said—

"There is little doubt in our minds as to the intentions of the party at Cape Melville National Park. However, there is no evidence to support any charge of interfering with forest products."

Today, we may well have an explanation as to just why no such evidence was available to the head of the Fauna Squad at the time that he became involved.

First, though, we should complete the basic outline of events as they have been clearly established. When word of that 11 November seizure got out, we had a chain of telephone communications that has been admitted to by the Government. It began with a phone call from Mr David Barbagallo's close colleague, the Premier's media adviser, Mr Dennis Atkins, to the Director-General of the Department of Environment and Heritage, Dr Craig Emerson, concerning the seizure of the vehicle. We know, too, from the same answer to a question in this place on 18 February that Dr Emerson subsequently and consequently telephoned his regional director, Mr Wellard.

We know from the Premier that he personally approved an extraordinarily coincidental trip by both Mr Atkins and Mr David Barbagallo to Cooktown from 12 November to 14 November, ostensibly to organise a trip he never made to the Starcke property, which adjoins the Cape Melville National Park, at which time it was their intent to use with great implausibility Mr Paul Barbagallo, an Innisfail sugar farmer, as their local expert.

Another major and suspicious improbability associated with this trip by the Premier's two most senior aides, involving travel from Brisbane to Cooktown via Cairns in the middle of a parliamentary session, was Mr Atkins' own private admission that the principal task of the journey was merely to determine whether there was a suitable airstrip near the Starcke homestead. All explanations for this trip are preposterous and incredible. Just one example is that whether or not there was an airstrip at the Starcke homestead could have been determined with a \$1 phone call from Brisbane.

Then, of course, we had the extraordinary events on the morning of Saturday, 13 November, in the Cooktown Police Station, about which it can be said with certainty, because of the previous statements in this place, that Mr David Barbagallo at least took part in a discussion with the police and ranger who seized the vehicle in Cape Melville National Park. Mr Atkins maintains that he was also present. While Mr Atkins' presence in the room is disputed, the admitted presence of Mr David Barbagallo was clearly grossly improper.

I now table a statement by Mr Peter Harris, the District Manager of the Department of Environment and Heritage for Cape York Peninsula, which I believe throws new and significant light on this entire matter. Paraphrased, Mr Harris' statement boils down to these key elements. Firstly, in Cooktown two days after the vehicle seizure, the Paul Barbagallo party expressed eagerness to return to Cape Melville in order to keep a prearranged rendezvous with another Barbagallo brother in a boat. Secondly, the Department of Environment and Heritage Regional Director, Mr Wellard, notwithstanding the extremely suspicious circumstances of the vehicle's seizure, let alone the eagerness of the party to get back to the cape for such a suspicious rendezvous, placed constraints on immediate follow-up action by ranger Shears, proposing as his reason for such constraints an alleged top-secret matter.

Thirdly, police, despite the prima facie suspiciousness of the circumstances, also suspiciously took no action. Fourthly, this joint failure of the department and the police to follow up accorded Paul Barbagallo the perfect opportunity to return to Cape Melville without fear of running into the authorities so that he could load seeds aboard his brother's boat and make good his getaway. Fifthly, subsequent to these events, Mr Wellard sought to determine from departmental officers whether they had passed on to anybody his instructions that no further departmental action be taken in the period immediately following the Cooktown meeting and that "no-one was to know" of these

instructions which had purportedly come from undisclosed high places.

This statement of Harris' amounts to nothing less than an allegation that there was a conspiracy involving Wellard and others to prevent either police or the Department of Environment and Heritage following Paul Barbagallo to Cape Melville at a time when there was clearly significant—indeed, overpowering—circumstantial evidence that he was in the process of a foxtail palm seed smuggling operation.

Other elements in the statement deal with information suggesting Paul Barbagallo was deeply entrenched in that illegal trade well before the events of November last year. Clearly, all that has been revealed in this place in recent months, combined now with the evidence of Harris, points the finger at the Premier's own office in the search for what Harris has Wellard labelling as "people in high places". The Premier has himself told this House that he personally authorised the trip by his two most senior personal staff to Cooktown, ostensibly looking for an airstrip at a time which coincided to within a few hours of the extraordinary events flowing from the seizure of Paul Barbagallo's vehicle in Cape Melville National Park on 11 November.

We know that David Barbagallo, on Mr Atkins' word, improperly took part in what the ranger has described, at substantial variance with Mr Atkins' description, as a grilling of him in the Cooktown Police Station on the morning of Saturday, 13 November. We know that Dennis Atkins telephoned the Director-General of the Department of Environment and Heritage—that would-be Federal Labor candidate—in relation to the seizure. We know that Dr Emerson then telephoned Wellard. Now we have evidence from the senior officer in the department with direct responsibility for the area concerned of how Mr Wellard responded with a clear and unambiguous bid to ensure that there was no immediate follow-up investigation by the men in his department whose job and inclination it was to do so.

If that investigation had proceeded immediately, as common sense dictates it should have, I might not have to be on my feet today in another effort to get to the truth. We would perhaps know it. I suspect we are now finally getting to the sordid bottom of the Cape Melville affair. While my principal concern from the very beginning has been that we could be dealing with nothing less than an effort to pervert the course of justice from, to borrow Mr Wellard's apparent phrase, "undisclosed people in high places", based on the absolute implausibility of the explanations for the Atkins/Barbagallo trip,

the obviously prima facie suspicious nature of the communication from Atkins to Emerson and the grossly improper involvement of the Premier's men at the Cooktown Police Station, I must say that now, in the light of the Harris evidence, that concern must be brought into the open.

In the light of the extraordinary statement by Harris, what were the exact words spoken by Atkins to Emerson about the vehicle seizure? What were the exact words subsequently spoken by Emerson to Wellard? What were the exact words spoken by Wellard to Shears and other departmental staff who kept them away from Cape Melville at the pertinent time? Were police also leant on, as Harris suggests, and by whom? What did the Premier know, and when did he know it? This is one of the reasons why we believe this inquiry presently being conducted by the CJC should be extended to a full, open inquiry into all events surrounding the affair commonly known as the Cape Melville affair.

### Sydney Olympic Games

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave) (11.50 a.m.): The 2000 Olympics is one of the most exciting and potentially rewarding opportunities Australia has been given in recent history. For Queensland, it is the event for which we have been in training since the 1982 Commonwealth Games. Queensland has worked hard to earn a solid reputation for holding world-class events at world-class facilities. For example, last week Brisbane hosted competitors from 30 countries at the World Gymnastics Championships. I want to read into the record the benefits flowing from that event, as presented in today's *Courier-Mail*—

"The World Gymnastics Championships in Brisbane have been credited with injecting about \$6 million into the state's economy and creating a boom in the sport's popularity.

International gymnastics officials yesterday praised the professional organisation of the six-day event, which resulted in a \$500,000 profit for the Australian Gymnastic Federation.

Queensland Gymnastic Association executive director Mark Baigent yesterday said thousands of budding gymnasts were expected to join the sport in the next two years."

Our State's importance as a training and preparation venue in the lead-up to Sydney and even Atlanta cannot be undersold. The Olympics are a lot more than one week of competition; rather, that week is the culmination of years of

planning and preparation in which Queensland can play a pivotal role. We have much of which to be proud and much which can be shared with overseas competitors, officials and spectators. Queensland boasts the climate, political stability, facilities and on-the-ground expertise that sporting officials are looking for in their Games preparation. Across the State, we have shown that we can host events of world standard and do it well. Indeed, our hard-earned pride in our various associations and home towns could turn out to be a potential drawback.

For Queensland to reap the spin-offs, we must have a concerted, planned approach. As the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, Bob Gibbs, said at a recent Olympic sports forum, we must put aside our regional boundaries and our allegiances to our particular organisations. Now that the euphoria has died down, it is time to take a critical look at how Queensland can maximise the tourism, sporting and business benefits from the event. To make the most of the Olympic opportunity, we must act now and get as much input from the community as possible. We must aim to identify the best management and consultation mechanisms that will need to be in place to ensure that the people of Queensland obtain the maximum benefit from the 2000 Games. The result of this process put in train by the Minister will be a detailed submission to be presented to Cabinet in a few months' time, and hopefully an indicative statement will be made in conjunction with this year's Budget.

The Goss Government has a longstanding commitment to the future of sport in Queensland, but Governments alone cannot organise, conduct and finance an event the size of the Olympic Games. The three tiers of government must forge a closer relationship with the private sector to ensure the maximum financial resources can be generated for sport. We must have the community involved, and we must think of the long-term benefits.

A number of world championship sporting events are held in the Olympic host country during the year of the Games. This is where Queensland is perfectly credentialled to secure a huge slice of the cake. Tourism is our fastest-growing industry, and by the time the Games are in progress, it will be our largest sector. Queensland is accessible. We have three international airports in Cairns, Townsville and Brisbane, and we are growing at a rate twice that of the other States. We have the infrastructure and the trained staff to complement this picture.

Queensland is a logical place for athletes to prepare for the Sydney Games. Athletes can acclimatise in our sunny winter before heading south for the Games in spring. The weather, the

food, the language—it is all the same. Here again, promotion will be the key. The international sporting community must be made aware of the training facilities and other advantages we have to offer. How we make them aware was one of the major topics of discussion at the forum I attended recently.

The Minister has made it quite clear that the State Government will be examining closely the expansion of major international standard sporting facilities in the Games lead-up. They are facilities that will earn valuable export dollars for Queensland and provide a legacy of better facilities for our own community. At present, the Government is investing more than \$19m from the 1993-94 Budget into major and minor facilities throughout the State. I believe there is a greater role to be played in this area by the Federal Government. The Minister has made no secret of the fact that he will be pressing the Commonwealth Government to reintroduce the International Standard Sports Facilities Program to complement the funding commitment being provided by the Government and local authorities.

Another area in which coordination is vital is harnessing the benefits for our State's tourism industry. The industry is already in a robust state, and the Games announcement could not have come at a better time. A KPMG Peat Marwick report estimates that the Games will generate an extra 1.2 million international visitors between 1994 and 2004. That figure is distinct from the estimated 300 000 Olympic-specific visitors expected in the months surrounding the Games. Currently, 51 per cent of all international tourists to Australia visit Queensland. We can legitimately expect an extra 600 000 visitors over the next 10 years as a direct consequence of the Olympics.

The conference and business markets will also provide tremendous opportunities in the pre and post-Olympic periods. In coming years, Queensland will be able to boast some of the best convention facilities in the country, with the \$117m Brisbane Convention Centre, the \$35m Cairns development and facilities at the Gold Coast, the Whitsundays and Townsville. Already, Sydney has booked more than 70 international conventions coinciding with the Games, at an estimated worth of \$1 billion.

Part of Queensland's planning process must focus on avoiding an economic void in the years after the Olympics. We must learn from the mistakes and successes of past Games hosts such as Barcelona and Los Angeles. For this reason, in August, Minister Gibbs will be leading a fact-finding mission to Los Angeles to talk with sports officials, tourist operators and Government representatives to determine

precisely what sorts of marketing strategies and sporting programs we in Queensland should be using. The fact is that Queensland is in a prime position to benefit most from the Sydney Olympics and will incur none of the capital infrastructure costs likely to amount to billions of dollars, face no problems of overcrowding or traffic congestion, and have the tourist and sporting facilities to cope with increased demand.

Although it is obvious that a Statewide coordinated approach is necessary to gain maximum benefit from this opportunity, it is equally obvious that regional areas can play their part. The far-north Queensland region is well placed to capitalise on both the Sydney 2000 Olympics and the earlier Games in Atlanta in 1996. A series of fortuitous coincidences give far-north Queensland what some would say is an unfair advantage. Besides the fact that Cairns boasts one of the fastest-growing international airports in the country and besides the fact that it is predicted that Cairns will rank with Sydney as one of the two top entry/exit ports for international travellers by the turn of the century, there are other reasons to be optimistic. The region's undoubted tourist appeal is internationally recognised. Its climate fits the bill for acclimatisation training for Sydney 2000 and, additionally, provides a rare opportunity for Australian Olympic teams to gain tropical experience before heading to Atlanta, which I am told experiences similar heat and humidity.

As a matter of fact, the Cairns Hockey Association has already stolen a march in this respect by hosting the Four Nations Tournament in 1992 in the lead-up to the Barcelona Games. Teams from Australia, Argentina, Malaysia and Korea battled it out on the international standard artificial surface that the association had the foresight to install. The series of matches stood them all in good stead for Barcelona. The Canadian women's hockey team went one step further and established itself in Cairns for its pre-Barcelona training camp. The point is that the Cairns Hockey Association was able to capitalise on the opportunity provided, and I have no doubt that other sports will learn from the example that it has set.

I have to hand a recent letter from the Australian Hockey Association signed by Linden J. Adamson, the executive director of that organisation. I want to quote one paragraph of that letter that I think is indicative of how such events can have ongoing benefits. The letter says—

"In 1992 the Australian team played international matches in both Darwin and Cairns for preparation purposes for the

Olympic Games and I confirm your view that Cairns is suitable for heat acclimatisation. It is our intention to repeat this part of the program in 1996."

The other great advantage that Cairns and the far north have is the involvement of the Australian Olympic Committee in the Cairns casino and conference centre—both of which are now well under construction. The Australian Olympic Committee is a major shareholder, and Mr John Coates of that organisation has indicated a desire to promote the region. Already a committee has been formed under my chairmanship. It has received enthusiastic support from the local government players, the media, the business community, the tourism industry, the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing and, most significantly, the various sporting organisations. Other members of this steering committee include Mr Peter Dodd, the member for Leichhardt; Councillor Kevin Byrne, the Mayor of Cairns; Councillor Tom Pyne, the Mayor of Mulgrave; Brett Gilbert from the Far-north Queensland Promotion Bureau; and Mr Ross Nargar, of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing.

A comprehensive inventory has been taken by local government and the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing of sporting venues in the region along with their compatibility to Olympic events. On a recent visit, Mr Craig McLatchey, the director of sport for the AOC, went through that inventory and visited many of the sites. He indicated that most of what we have is up to the standard that will be required for training and, with a little extra effort, international competition could also be accommodated. The current facilities and those on the drawing board give the far north a great base from which to work. Combine that with the local athletic talent and the proven organisational ability of some of our administrators, and we have a recipe for success.

With Sydney 2000 still some six years away, many future Olympians may still be in their early teens or even younger. Talent identification is one of the areas in which we hope to secure the involvement of the Australian Olympic Committee through coaching clinics and regular visits by elite athletes. Early indications in this respect are encouraging. I understand that Ms Cheryl McCormack from the Australian Olympic Committee has offered to join our working group, which will be established within a month. In addition to those activities, other activities are occurring in sport in far-north Queensland.

Time expired.

**TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS)  
AMENDMENT BILL**

**Second Reading**

Debate resumed from 14 April (see p. 7554).

**Mr SANTORO** (Clayfield—Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) (12.01 p.m.): The Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 1994 before us today represents a watershed between the Government and the Opposition. It represents a watershed in terms of the delineation of the attitudes of the Government and the Opposition towards small businesses in Queensland. It is the Government initiative which more than any other Goss Government initiative proves that this Labor Government, like all other Labor Governments, does not support the small-business sector.

In fact, through initiatives such as this dastardly piece of legislation, the Goss Labor Government is proving that it is hell-bent on destroying the lifeblood of this State's economy—the small-business sector.

It is because this Bill represents an unmitigated assault on the viability of a vital section of small business in Queensland that the Opposition will strenuously oppose it. But it is not the only reason why the Opposition totally opposes the Bill. There are many more reasons—many of them quite poignant—and many of these clearly demonstrate the cynical, opportunistic and even corrupt methods which this Government adopts in its dealings with those groups in our society who lack the clout of its union masters.

Some of the extra reasons why the Opposition opposes this Bill relate to the consequences of extending retail trading hours by Government decision-making, including—

- (i) the decline of custom, turnover and profitability for small retailers;
- (ii) an increase in costs for small retailers;
- (iii) the consequent closure of many small retailers and thus the destruction of many full-time, part-time and casual jobs;
- (iv) the transfer of employment from the small retailing sector to the large retailing sector;
- (v) the consequent greater unionisation of the retail work force and therefore more union power and influence within the Queensland economy;
- (vi) the inevitable kickbacks from a grateful union movement to a subservient Goss Labor Government;

- (vii) the destruction of family lifestyles for those small retailers who decide to persist with their chosen calling despite the great adversity of the new order which this Bill will create;
- (viii) the decline of regional and rural economies as important focuses of commercial life disappear; and
- (ix) the undermining of the role and jurisdiction of the Industrial Relations Commission which to date has been entrusted with the setting of retail trading hours.

And all of this despite the undeniable fact that the current legal and consultative apparatus allows deregulation of retail trading hours to occur in a fair, equitable, predictable and orderly fashion, and despite the fact that the vast majority of the small retailers operating in Queensland do not want the extension of trading hours which the Bill before us today will bring about. And all of this despite the fact that in its pre-election policy, the Labor Party promised not to introduce the type of Bill that is before us today.

In fact, in its pre-election policy, the Labor Party said—and I wish to quote this for the benefit of all honourable members, but particularly for the honourable member for Chermide, who constantly bleats one thing in this Chamber but goes and tells the small retailers in his electorate something different—

**Mr T. B. SULLIVAN:** I rise to a point of order. That is a lie. I am not two faced with my constituents.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! Firstly, I remind the honourable member for Chermide of the provisions of Standing Order 126, which states that when the Deputy Speaker rises, the member then speaking should resume his seat. Secondly, the term "lie" is unparliamentary. I ask the honourable member to withdraw that term.

**Mr T. B. SULLIVAN:** I withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Mr SANTORO:** I will return to the Bill very soon. I must say that I listened patiently to the member for Chermide, and it seems that he likes to dish it out but he cannot take it. The honourable member knows that people like me will get around to the shopkeepers in his electorate and tell them what he says. I will make a point of circulating that interjection in particular—

**Mr T. B. Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I ask the honourable member for Clayfield to return to the contents of the Bill and not to be as provocative as he is with the member for Chermside.

**Mr SANTORO:** For the benefit of all honourable members, I wish to quote a statement issued by the Labor Party prior to the 1989 election. It said—

"As a party, the Australian Labor Party is philosophically opposed to uncontrolled extended hours as we believe that owners as well as employees are entitled to enjoy some leisure time with their families and participate in recreational activities."

**Mr Connor:** Hypocrites—total hypocrites!

**Mr SANTORO:** I will take that interjection by the member for Nerang, because the stance of the Labor Party today becomes even more hypocritical as we progress through the detail of its policy. The policy statement goes on—

"However, the facts of life are that with the spread of the big chain stores it is only by opening out of hours that the small operators can survive. Additionally, of course, consumers demand this service from their corner store."

**Mr Connor:** Is that the Labor Party saying this?

**Mr SANTORO:** This is what the Labor Party said in 1989. The policy statement continues—

"Also the growth in the tourism industry has created areas of tourist activity which has to be serviced. A Labor Government will consult with small business on this important issue but we believe that decisions on trading hours"—

and this is the crunch—

"are best left with the Industrial Commission. We would hope that trading hours of the major chains can be limited to a five day week plus Saturday mornings and one evening."

That was the Labor Party policy up to a couple of months ago when certain forces intervened and certain things occurred, but I will talk about those in a little while. In a rare but welcome agreement, both the Liberal Party and National Party also agreed that retail trading hours should be determined by the independent umpire—the Industrial Relations Commission.

I think that honourable members opposite should listen to what the Liberal Party policy had to say on this. I would like to put that part of the policy on the record and also in the minds of members opposite. The policy stated—

"Under a Liberal Government, trading hours will be left entirely in the province of the State Industrial Commission. We believe there has been far too much Government interference over recent years in the trading hours question."

Just so honourable members do not think the National Party did not have a view on this particular point, the National Party in turn said—

"It is agreed that trading hours determinations should be left to the jurisdiction of the Industrial Commission without intervention by Government."

How ironic it must seem to all these true believers, to all these good Labor Party people who have placed their faith in the independent umpire, including and particularly members opposite, to see the Labor Party cut the independent umpire off at the knees. Something has obviously changed in the minds of the Government and the unions but, as I said, I will discuss that soon.

The question that needs to be asked at this point is: has the independent umpire failed? Has the independent umpire been getting it wrong? Even a casual look at the evidence will answer these questions in the negative. There is much evidence to prove that since March 1990, the Industrial Relations Commission has greatly extended retail trading hours when one or all of several criteria have been proven, including:

- (1) a genuine and sustainable level of consumer demand has warranted an extension of retail trading hours;
- (2) where circumstances specific to a definable geographic area warrant an extension of trading hours, for example, tourist areas such as the Gold Coast and Cairns; and
- (3) where certain and specific festive season conditions warrant a special extension of retail trading hours, including those that apply during Christmas and the Easter period.

As a result of hearing many applications and much argument for and against the extension of retail trading hours, the Commission has built up a high level of relevant and very useful expertise and, as a result, the bulk of its decisions have achieved two major outcomes: the gradual extension of retail trading hours and the striking of a sensible balance between the interests of the broad community and the demands by the big retailers for greater deregulation.

I wish to table a summary of the decisions of the commission since March 1990 in relation to retail trading hours which illustrates the points that I make. As those honourable members who

take the time to get a copy of this document will see, the bench has basically made decisions upon applications by various interest groups within the retail sector, including—and particularly—the large retailers. Not all applications have been successful.

This brief history, which covers from 23 March 1990 to the end of last year, demonstrates a very real willingness by the Industrial Relations Commission to take into account the community interest and benefit in the whole issue of deregulated or extended trading hours. Where those particular criteria, which I delineated before, have been satisfied, the Industrial Commission has granted them. The consumers have benefited—as they rightly should—because their views should be taken into consideration over a progressive period. As the Minister said in his second-reading speech, times do change, but they need to be monitored by experts; they need to be monitored by people who have all the facts before them, and not by a Government which capriciously—and as a result of outside pressures—changes its mind and its policy overnight. I wish to table that document to which I just referred.

As a result of the decisions that have been made progressively by the commission over a number of years, we now have a situation whereby, in the Brisbane City heart, the total hours per week available for trading are 63. For the Brisbane near-metropolitan area the figure is 57.5 hours, and for the Gold Coast it is 67 hours. The Gold Coast is one of those tourist areas that I mentioned before where special consideration can and should be afforded by the commission or anybody else when making decisions in relation to trading hours. The hours available per week in the Cairns CBD are 69. For the Sunshine Coast, the figure is 57.5 hours; for other tourist areas, 57.5 hours; and the rest of Queensland, generally grouped, 53.5 hours. This situation could hardly be described as a drought of shopping hours available to the shopping public. We constantly hear from those opposite, and from those proposing extended trading hours, that we have new lifestyles, that lifestyles have changed, and that there is a need for more shopping hours, particularly for those who work full time. Figures from the ABS show that the average weekly hours worked by full-time employees today, compared to 1983, have increased only marginally.

The figures for average weekly hours worked by full-time employees make very interesting reading indeed, as indicated by the following table. Members opposite who have been very heavily involved in the campaign to reduce working hours for full-time employees

should take particular note when considering this issue in the context of this debate.

AVERAGE WEEKLY HOURS WORKED BY  
FULL TIME EMPLOYEES

	1983	1993
Men	39.2	41.9
Women	35.9	37.4
Married Women	38.2	37.7
All people	38.3	40.4

These figures show that, by comparison with 1993, men are working 2.7 hours per week longer and women are working 1.5 hours per week longer. Married women, who one would expect are the principal shoppers, work 1.2 hours a week less, and all people 2.1 hours per week more.

On the other hand, shopping hours during that same period have increased by four hours a week in Brisbane, not even counting the 5.5 hours that the CBD is open on a Sunday. Figures in other areas, such as the Gold Coast and Cairns CBD, have increased dramatically. For example, on the Gold Coast the figure is 67 hours, and in Cairns it is 69 hours. Townsville suburban and Cairns suburban areas have increased by one hour to 54.5 hours. Even in the rest of the State, where shopping hours have not changed in that 10-year period, the allowable hours are 53.5, some 13 hours over and above the average weekly hours worked by all people.

As to those members on the other side of the House who have been putting forward the suggestion that the working lifestyle of Queenslanders has demanded that we deregulate and, in fact, extend trading hours, that is a sham. It is an argument that simply does not make sense. The number of available shopping hours has more than matched the slight increase in average weekly hours worked by full-time employees. In relation to shift workers, I suggest that the situation is even more advantageous because, in the main, their non-working hours would fall during daylight hours, which are predominantly retail trading times. Thus, it should come as no surprise to anyone that there just does not exist a huge public demand for an extension of trading hours. In fact, all the evidence available to the Opposition—and I suspect it is available and very carefully noted by silent members opposite—indicates that the buying public is simply not interested in extra shopping hours.

A *Courier-Mail* article on Sunday, 13 February, regarding the Premier's statement on the possible liberalisation of trading hours prompted a survey by a group of retailers in one large shopping centre. The retailers put together a very simple and straightforward customer

survey which asked customers to "Please indicate below if you do or do not require extra hours for shopping". In a period of seven days, the survey was signed by 1 707 customers. The response was quite definitive. A total of 1 601 people said that they did not favour extra shopping hours; 10 people said "Yes" to extra shopping hours; and the "Do not know" amounted to one person.

**Mr Beattie:** Open your brown paper bag. What's in the brown paper bag?

**Mr SANTORO:** I take that interjection about a brown paper bag. Even in the dying hours of the struggle by small retailers and small businesses within this State to get the Government to make sense out of this abysmal piece of legislation before us, they are still fighting it. Just a little while ago, I got a phone call from someone who said, "Look, the Government is telling everybody that there is not a ground swell of opinion against this decision." But if I know my bundles of photocopying paper, I reckon that I have had delivered to me about 600 letters pleading for the Minister and the Government to rethink and reverse their decision. I table those letters. This is what is in the brown paper bag.

I notice that the honourable member for Brisbane Central has all of a sudden gone quiet. He realises that that brown paper bag contains dynamite for him and his colleagues. They all know that the ground swell in the community is enormous. In a moment, I shall quote from some of the 20 letters that some of those members wrote back to small retailers. I shall tell the House and their other colleagues what they said in those letters. We will see exactly how they respond to that in their own speeches.

I shall return to that survey and the expression of public opinion. A more independent and scientifically conducted survey has produced even more startling results for the pro-deregulation lobby. Last weekend, the AGB McNair research company conducted a random telephone survey of 300 Gold Coast residents. My honourable colleague the member for Nerang will go into this in greater detail. He is to be commended for the initiative that he encouraged in the form of that survey. One of the questions asked was: "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with current shopping hours?" Again, the results were quite definitive. A total of 82 per cent of respondents replied that they were satisfied, 14 per cent claimed that they were dissatisfied, and three did not know or were not sure.

These are cold, hard facts and statistics arrived at by independent sampling and surveying—something which the Goss Labor

Government has not done in relation to this issue. It is not the Government's style to consult—to talk to people and really determine what they, as consumers, want. This Minister and this Government have presented this Parliament with no hard evidence—no proof—that what they are doing through this Bill meets with public approval.

If we turn to further surveys that have been conducted, if we have a look at what happened following an application to have extended hours on a Saturday afternoon, we will note that a newspaper survey, which was conducted in one of Queensland's largest cities, showed that less than 50 per cent of consumers who responded voted for change. More than 70 per cent of retailers voted against change. Two television stations, as honourable members may recall because they were very high profile exercises in 1992, conducted a phone poll regarding extended trading hours. This followed an announcement from a major chain that they would be pressing for the ability to stay open until 10 p.m. nightly. The results of that particular survey were 70 per cent against and 30 per cent for, in one poll; 60 per cent against and 40 per cent for, in the other.

If we consider the interstate experience, a public opinion poll organised by the *Adelaide Advertiser* on Wednesday, 22 December 1993, indicated that 59 per cent of the 500 people phoned at random said "No" to maintaining late-night trading for supermarkets; 31 per cent said that it should continue; and 10 per cent did not have an opinion. So, really, 69 per cent of the adult population did not want extended trading hours at all.

Let us consider what overseas visitors to this country want. The Minister keeps on saying that we are becoming an increasingly tourism-driven economy; therefore, we should rightly try to determine what the tourists who come to Queensland want. We should seek to determine what their feelings are. A recent survey of Japanese tourists showed conclusively that a majority were quite happy with the trading hours. It was the quality and the origin of many products—especially souvenirs—that caused them to return to Japan with unspent dollars. That is the sort of issue with which the Minister and the members of the Government should be concerning themselves—the whole question of value added to Australian products, the products of small business, which, via this legislation and other legislative measures in place, this Government is seeking to destroy.

If we consider what occurs in other countries whose economies, and particularly those whose local economies are driven to an even greater

extent by the tourist dollar, the arguments of the Minister and the Government do not stack up. There are many examples of cities overseas that do not have Sunday trading or the extended trading hours that this Minister and the Government are forcing on us today; for example, New York, Berlin, Paris and Athens. In Japan, although large stores open on Sundays, they close on Wednesdays. In the United Kingdom, which is commonly referred to as the nation of shopkeepers, trading hours are 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Monday to Saturday, and no trade on Sunday. In some cities, stores even close half a day during the week. This is in England, which has an economy that is driven by the demands of tourism far more than the Queensland economy. London, which has approximately six or seven times the population of Brisbane, has 18.5 hours per week less shopping. With the number of tourists that are pouring through that capital city, are people suggesting that the Brits are getting it wrong in this particular case? I hear complete silence from members opposite because they do not have the answers.

I challenge the Minister and members opposite to produce the proof—the research which proves the consultation. I will refer to union members in a moment and whether they were consulted. I will ask the questions, and the Minister may care to supply the answers as to whether or not union members were consulted.

The editorial in today's edition of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* states—

"Industrial Relations Minister Matt Foley is adamant the Government has carried out an exhaustive 12 months study with all sectors of the retail industry."

The editorial goes on to state—

"It may well have to draw on facets of this study to convince small businessmen, in particular, that the new legislation will not hinder their efforts to survive against competition from the big chains."

I challenge the Minister during his reply, or at any other time during the next few days—preferably before this Bill is forced through this place with the force of the Government numbers—to produce an outline at least, if not the conclusive results, of the consultation process. He will have lunch time; he will have several hours—

**Mr Foley:** Have you seen the Rearth research from last year?

**Mr SANTORO:** The Minister can quote—there is research and there is research.

**Mr Foley:** Eighty-one per cent of that

survey indicated people believing shops should be allowed to trade after 5.30 p.m. on weekdays.

**Mr SANTORO:** I have seen that research but I have also seen the lack of consultation by your Government, particularly with the small-business sector that in this State is faced with particular conditions. I only have an hour to speak. My time is running out. You will have an opportunity. I will ask the questions. As the Minister, during the Committee stage or in reply you can answer them. During the Committee stage of the debate, if you do not guillotine the debate, we can go on for a few hours—backwards and forwards. I am happy to debate with you. In the meantime, I have some key points that I to raise on behalf of many people who have made numerous representations. I am not being gutless; I am not being rude. I will debate with you during the Committee stage if you want to take it any further.

I challenge you to table the outline of your consultative model and the details of your research, which the *Gold Coast Bulletin* is also asking you to do. I suggest that in the offices of the Minister and members opposite exist thousands of letters, thousands of petitions and the record of thousands of phone calls from small retailers and customers who say loudly and clearly, "Leave trading hours matters to the Industrial Commission. Allow that body with its years of experience and expertise to continue to do the excellent job it has been doing."

I seek leave to table this latest bundle of over 500 representations that have come through to the Opposition this morning. I ask the Minister to respond to all of those, justifying his legislation, so that he can see what response he gets back. These are just 500, and I know there are many more within his offices.

**Mr Foley:** It was 600 a minute ago.

**Mr SANTORO:** It will be between 400 and 600. I have not counted them. As you can see, I just pulled them out of the bag as they arrived. I challenge members opposite to table all of the letters, petitions and the like, which they have received from their constituents, opposing the extension of shopping hours.

**Mrs Edmond** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** I will come to Mrs Edmond in a moment. I am told by sources within the Premier's office that he has received thousands of objections to this piece of vandalistic and cynical legislation. So where is the push for extended trading hours coming from? As I keep on saying, I will get back to that in a minute, but before I do so I wish to tell the House and the people of Queensland where it is not coming from, and that is from what eventually proved to

be a spineless and cowardly Labor caucus, which, when it comes down to the crunch, simply caved in to the will of the Minister and the Premier, the two most obedient puppets of the union heavies in Queensland.

Let me read into *Hansard* some of the replies of members and Ministers opposite to representations they received against the extension of shopping hours. Peter Pyke, the honourable member for Mount Ommaney, stated—

"Regarding extended trading hours, this issue continues to be of great concern to me. I have spoken to the Premier about this matter and will continue to push for the status quo."

**Mr Connor:** He's not on the speaking list.

**Mr SANTORO:** I take the interjection. He is not on the speaking list. Ed Casey, the member for Mackay and the Minister for Primary Industries—

**Mr Connor:** He's not on the list, either.

**Mr SANTORO:** To a constituent who is complaining about the Bill, he states—

"My personal views concur with yours and I will ensure that they are put forward again when further discussions on this matter take place on a Cabinet level."

**Mr SANTORO:** Laurel Power—

**Mr Connor:** Also not on the list.

**Mr SANTORO:** The honourable member for Mansfield stated—

"I stated earlier, I'm not a supporter of the changes but I do believe the process has been fair and I'll accept the decision."

Rod Welford, the honourable member for Everton, stated—

"While I am in principle opposed to any further extension of trading hours, I can understand that more flexible hours might be arguable for high-intensity tourist resorts."

Molly Robson, the member for Springwood and the Minister for Environment and Heritage, said—

"I am also concerned over this proposal and support your views."

As the honourable member for Nerang says, those members are not on the list of speakers to this debate, because they do not want to defend the indefensible. They do not want their constituents to regurgitate the letters they wrote, and from which I have just quoted.

Of course, we have the amazing

performance from Mr Ken McElligott who, in a letter to the *Townsville Bulletin*, stated—

"The further I study the implications of extended retail trading hours the more concerned I become for the people that I represent.

As a Member of Parliament, endorsed by the Australian Labor Party, I see my priority as representing the 'little' people or the battler if you like who, by virtue of their personal powerlessness, are liable to be trampled under by the great and powerful."

I said at the beginning of my speech that the people who are not empowered in the Queensland economy and who do not have the support of the union heavies are not listened to. That is precisely what the honourable member for Thuringowa is talking about. He went on to say—

"In this task I have always assumed that I had the support and assistance of the trade union movement.

I was therefore amazed to receive a circular from the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association (Queensland Branch) which purports to explain to me why that union has withdrawn its traditional opposition to any extension of trading hours.

Apparently, it's all to do with enterprise bargaining."

I will come to ALP-style, bogus-style enterprise bargaining in a minute.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! The Chair has been very tolerant with the member for Clayfield in that he has not been addressing his remarks through the Chair. I suggest that he adhere to the courtesies of the House and address his remarks through the Chair. I would also remind future speakers to this Bill to do the same.

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I apologise. You know that I have a very high respect for the Chair, particularly yourself, and from this point onwards I will certainly address my remarks through you. The slip was an inadvertent one. Mr McElligott stated further—

"The more I read and hear about enterprise bargaining the more convinced I become that it is the greatest sell-out of the workers that has yet occurred in Australia."

Of course, Mr McElligott is right. This Bill represents a sell-out of the workers within the small retailing sector, particularly the thousands who will lose their full-time jobs. However, did Mr McElligott and other bleeding hearts on the Government benches stick up for their beliefs,

their principles and their concerns for the workers in the small retail outlets? No way. They huffed, they puffed, they carried on for public relations purposes and then, just like the union, they sold out those retailers who provide employment opportunities in the small retailing sector. In fact, it is my view that, despite the posturing of those members, they willingly sold out the small retailing sector in order to promote the interests of the union movement.

I turn now to the main reason why this Bill is before us today, and that is to promote the interests of the union movement which, for many years now, has been witnessing its membership base stagnate or decline, and which has become increasingly desperate to reverse this situation. Despite their long-standing opposition to the extension of trading hours, the unions have come to regard them as a tool to help reverse their declining industrial fortunes. It works like this: the small retailing sector is, in the main, not unionised. Nevertheless, it is still a very significant employer of labour and has in its possession a hefty share of the retail market. The deregulation and extension of trading hours will see the collapse and the closure of many small retail outlets, the capturing of market share by the large retailers and the transfer of employment from the small retailing sector to the large retailers. That is what this Bill is all about—herding people into the large retail sector, which is heavily unionised, and which will become even more so as a result of arrangements that have been agreed to by the unions, the Government and the big retailers. Mr McElligott referred to those arrangements in his letter to the *Townsville Bulletin*.

Mr Deputy Speaker, through you, it is instructional to realise that the union movement has always been opposed to the extension of trading hours along the lines so eloquently put forward by Mr McElligott. In this context, it is relevant to quote further from Mr McElligott's now famous letter to the *Townsville Bulletin*. He stated—

"In the case of shop assistants, their union has agreed to seek extended trading hours to 9pm Monday to Friday and to 5pm on Saturdays. All this to achieve a 2 per cent increase in wages.

In the process the union has agreed to ignore the impact of extended trading hours on family and social life, employment, penalty rates and working conditions generally.

One of the strategies adopted nationally by at least one form of small business to overcome the extra cost of

increased hours is to get rid of all of their full-time staff.

By replacing their full-time staff with casuals working a maximum of 15 hours per week they avoid the costs of training and various salary on-costs.

Of course, the customer suffers from the absence of full-time trained assistants."

So it is not only me saying that full-time employment is going to decline within the small retailing sector; it is also one of the Government's own members, who has a very clear insight into the real impact that this legislation will have on small retailers. Obviously, things have changed for the union and this Government, and they have changed very quickly, so much so that not even certain union organisers know what is going on. In fact, in a recent case before the commission, a Mrs Coyle appearing for the union had this exchange with the commission. Mr Deputy Speaker, through you, I wish to place that exchange on the record as it indicates the level of surprise this Government initiative took not only for retailers and consumers but also for certain advocates of certain unions. The following exchange occurred—

"Mrs Coyle, could you tell me what you understand the attitude of the SDA to be with regard to trading hours?— Do you—do you mean exactly what times the—

No, just generally what they want to see with regard to trading hours at present?— Mainly—you mean from the union's point of view? Trading hours, well, just the normal day and the night with the Saturday seems fine.

The one late night only?— Yes, well, I can't see any need for it—any other.

So, you wouldn't be aware that the union are actively promoting before the government at present for late night five nights per week?— No, I wasn't aware of that."

So said the poor union advocate. The exchange continued—

"So, does that change any of your statement?"

Of course, as the honourable member for Nerang said, that poor union advocate, who had not even been afforded the courtesy of a briefing by the chief unions, had to answer the question by saying that, no, it did not change the status of her representation. Again, that is indicative of the way in which the unions and this Government do business. They treat their people like mushrooms; I will not elaborate further.

So there members have it. As late as 23 March, not even union officials knew what was really going on, not to mention the poor members of the union who, again, have not been consulted on this massive reversal of long-standing union policy. I ask Government members and the unions: when were members of the union surveyed and consulted? Maybe the Minister can produce the results of that survey. I also ask: what percentage of members voted for this change of policy? If, in fact, there was a ballot, what type of ballot was it? Was it a postal ballot? Was it a secret ballot? If it was, that poor union official to which I referred certainly had nothing to do with it.

This Bill represents nothing but the outcome of a cosy deal between Goss and the unions, which want to increase their membership base and their power. That is why on Tuesday, 1 February, the Premier told people attending a BOMA lunch—

"I think we'll have to have, and we will see a liberalisation of trading hours this year."

**Mr Connor:** He let it slip.

**Mr SANTORO:** The Premier did let it slip. He did not want to because, straight after he let it slip, the Minister received a telephone call which said, "Get on with it. It is going to have to happen."

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** I take that interjection from the Minister. Of course the review had been going on. It is appropriate that certain things be reviewed but, until the big push from the unions, there was never an intention to do anything. In common with many reviews that the Government undertakes, that review was destined to sit on the shelf. It would have been left to the Minister's beloved Industrial Relations Commission to keep on making the decision. However, what happened—

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr SANTORO:** We could talk about Aboriginal deaths in custody; we could talk about an enormous number of reviews that the Minister has not acted upon. There was nothing subtle about the Premier's statement and his declaration of interest. However, it did not represent the interests of union members, who were not consulted, or the interests of backbenchers who, as I pointed out, up to a week or so ago were engaging in public relations stunts by saying that they supported small retailers against the onslaught of the measures that are contained in this Bill. Of course, the Premier's statement did not represent the interests of those thousands of small retailers

who will be adversely affected by the provisions of this Bill.

However, the Bill will certainly look after the interests of the union movement, which will be only too happy to enter into enterprise agreements with the big retailers, provided that all shop assistants are herded into the union with which the enterprise agreement is struck. Of course, the enterprise agreement legislation that was introduced by the Minister makes it mandatory that that be so. Is it not very cosy that all that has come about in this way?

It is instructional to remember that 80 per cent of the retail sector employees are not in the union and that most of these are employed by small retailers, who will be most affected by the provisions of this Bill. As small retailers are sent broke and as employment in the retail industry shifts from the small retail sector to the large retail sector and the union net, the unions will have achieved their objective of more membership, more money, more power and, undoubtedly, more reward for the puppets in the Government opposite. That is the deal. Small business is being sacrificed on the altar of the union, all for the sake of more union power and more support by the union for the Government.

What are the likely effects of this Bill on investment and employment? Devastating! Let us not forget that the deregulation of trading hours has been occurring in Queensland on and off for at least 20 years. One of the most dramatic changes was the introduction of late-night shopping in major shopping centres. In April 1981, the then Minister for Employment and Labour Relations, Sir William Knox, told this place that the introduction of late-night shopping put at least 3 000 small retailers out of business in Queensland. That was the assessment of the former Minister, with whom I have had many discussions in relation to this in my preparation for this debate. That former Minister said, "Santo, that decision by the Government was a mistake. That is why we put it back in the hands of the Industrial Relations Commission."

Small businesses are asking this Government to realise that this Bill is a mistake. The people in power before this Government dabbled in this area also realised that it was a mistake. I do not believe that the Minister and the Government have the courage to accept the validity of the hundreds of representations that have been tabled, not to mention the many thousands more that have come through to the Government's various offices. The sudden and dramatic change in shopping hours being forced on the community by a deliberate—and the word "deliberate" needs to be stressed—Goss Government decision, and given effect through

this Bill, will have precisely the same impact that Sir William Knox described in 1981. At this point, I wish to stress that small, independent, non-exempt retailers are not against change for the sake of it; they simply want change to occur in a gradual and predictable way.

I submit to all honourable members that small retailers have a need for plenty of notice before they are subjected to change. This notice has not been provided by the Government and this Bill. The sudden change in trading hours will affect their level of sales, turnover and cashflow, and will compromise their capacity to service and meet their commercial obligations to the lending institutions that have provided capital to them. Big business and big retailers have a greater deal of security over their capital. However, small retailers depend very much on the continuous and short-term profitability of their businesses. Thus a sudden change such as that which is being introduced by this Bill is understandably opposed by them, because it will utterly undercut their ability to service their financial commitments.

Small retailers believe that many of them will go out of business, as major retailers and major shopping centres will very quickly attract custom and business away from them. That this will occur can be ascertained by analysing the experience of the recent deregulation in South Australia. Shortly after the shopping hours of that State were deregulated and extended on 1 November 1993, a survey of delicatessens, seven-day supermarkets, green grocers and other small retailers was taken. The picture that that survey produced was not a pleasant one. Members opposite should listen very carefully to the results. I will quote some of the figures. The percentage of delis for the year ended 31 October 1993 which showed increased turnover was 31.8 per cent. Turnover was down for 52.3 per cent of delis. The percentage of delis recording no change was 15.9 per cent. For all other categories of retailers other than delis, turnover was up in 22.2 per of cases; down for 55.6 per cent of cases; and 22.2 per cent recorded no change. Another question asked was: what changes have occurred in turnover since the extension of trading hours on 1 November 1993? Members opposite should listen very carefully to this, because this will happen to the small retailers in their electorates straight after this legislation is introduced. The percentage of delis recording increased turnover was 1.1 per cent. The percentage of delis recording a decreased turnover was 85.3 per cent. The figure for those recording no change was 13.6 per cent.

For all other categories, 2.6 per cent recorded increased turnover; 65 per cent

recorded a decreased turnover; and 32.4 recorded no change.

**Mr FOLEY:** Is that over one month?

**Mr SANTORO:** I take the interjection from the Honourable the Minister. It is a short period. The reason why it was mercifully short is that the incoming Liberal Government—and I will elaborate on this point—had the fortitude to keep a promise and reverse the decision made against the strong opposition that had been mounted, similar to the strong opposition mounted here. It had the fortitude to keep its election promise, which the Minister's Government has not kept.

**Mr Beattie:** What Liberal Government?

**Mr SANTORO:** For the edification of the honourable member for Brisbane Central, I point out that it was the Liberal Government in South Australia. If members opposite look at what changes occurred in turnover between 6.30 and 9 p.m., a time period relevant to the current debate, they would see that nobody surveyed showed an increase in turnover, and that 85.2 per cent recorded a decrease. For all of the other categories of shops, 1.7 per cent experienced an increase in turnover, and 51.3 per cent showed a decrease in turnover. The figure for those recording no change was 47 per cent.

Honourable members opposite should pay particular attention to the following figures that relate to variations that have been made to staff hours. For delis, staff hours were up in 14.8 per cent of cases, and 43.2 per cent showed a reduction in staff hours. For all other categories of shops, 18.8 per cent said that they had increased staff hours, and 37 per cent said that they had decreased hours. As to the percentage of retailers who have employed or retrenched, when they were asked whether any jobs had been created, delis said that no extra people were put on. The percentage of delis which had reduced jobs was 25 per cent. That is the impact that this measure, which reflects the Labor Party experiment in South Australia, will have on Queensland small retailers. Small retailers will tell the Government that. These are the real consequences of the extension of trading hours in South Australia, an experience which has been foisted upon the retail sector in Queensland. As Sir William Knox pointed out in 1981, after the introduction of late-night shopping, thousands of small retailers in Queensland went broke. Again, I reiterate that the same will happen as a result of this Bill. Members opposite should reflect very carefully on all of those experiences.

The question also needs to be asked: does the public in other Australian States where the extension of trading hours experiments have

been undertaken really want to support the extension of trading hours? Again, the answer is a most resounding, "No." Ample proof of this exists. In supporting the statement I have just made, I wish to quote directly from an advertisement, prepared by a group of retailers headed by a hardworking individual in our community called Mr Bill Bowden, which has appeared in many provincial newspapers. In that advertisement, Mr Bowden reproduced a series of photographs that he took when he visited a major Sydney shopping centre on Tuesday, 12 April. Members opposite should have a close look at these advertisements and the photographs contained therein. I will table the originals of these photographs. I will quote directly from the advertisements, which tell the sad and sorry tale. I urge honourable members to look at these photographs, because they do show the late-night shopping experience in Sydney. That advertisement reads—

"Photographs taken in Sydney last Tuesday between 6 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. show a supermarket shut with all specialty shops and independent stores closed, except for some supermarkets open."

The question asked in that advertisement is: "Where are the customers?" It continues—

"Lots of rope is used to shut off fruit and vegetable shops and escalators from vandalism.

We in Queensland have been told about the success of NSW extended trading hours."

The advertisement goes on to say—

"Each store has a guard, not for the customers, but for the stores and staff who have to be escorted home. All arcades are empty, shutters drawn after 5.30 p.m. Grace Bros are shut in the City at 6 p.m., Suburbs 5.30 p.m. They could open all night.

No car park is safe after dark."

I support the statements made by the honourable Leader of the Opposition during the weekend that this Bill will lead to a loss of safety for retail staff and for the very few people who will shop in these shopping centres, as a consequence of similar situations that have arisen in Sydney, as described in that advertisement. That is the scene that the Goss Labor Government is foisting upon the Queensland public and the smaller retailers.

The same people who produced that ad and took those pictures have trudged the length and breadth of that State and asked thousands of small retailers the question that this Minister and this Government should have asked—that is: do you want extended trading hours? The answer

that the producers of that ad received to that question was a resounding "No". Government members are quite aware of that fact. Unfortunately, the will of the people is not supported by this Government.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister put forward many arguments in favour of extended trading hours. He stated that small retailers in a shopping centre have control over whether or not they can open for the extended hours. I know that Opposition members who will follow me—including, in particular, the member for Nerang—will cover those points in great detail from a small business perspective. If they do not go along with the policies of the big shopping centres, small retailers who do not open the extra hours and whose leases expire in a staggered manner may be picked off by the owners and managers of retail chain stores. The Minister is well aware that an enormous amount of intimidation may occur. That will not apply in all cases. I am not claiming that all owners and managers of shopping centres will be unethical. However, a degree of intimidation will undoubtedly occur. Those who do not go along with the masses will be picked off.

**Mr Foley:** What about the 75 per cent—

**Mr SANTORO:** The Minister can respond to me when he replies. The Government cut back from an hour and a half to one hour the time that I have to speak to this Bill, and as a result I feel compelled not to take interjections.

The Minister stated that shopping centres as a whole can decide whether to open or not. Let us say that the Toowong shopping centre decides not to open but the Indooroopilly shopping centre does decide to open. The forces of competition will place so much pressure on the democratic will of the operators of the Toowong shopping centre that they will have to get into the game and set off all of the consequences that that will represent for the small retailers, including increases in costs and loss of employment.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated that all other States have extended shopping hours. That is not true. It is true that New South Wales and Victoria have longer shopping hours. I have just tabled photographs and detailed the contents of an advertisement that proves that extended shopping hours in New South Wales have been a disaster. However, the same does not apply in Western Australia, Tasmania and, as a result of the reversal of a Labor Party policy, in South Australia.

The Minister stated that manufacturers will benefit from the mass marketing that will occur under this legislation, as they will be more

effective in marketing their products through the major retailers. The Minister should be well aware that the major retailers impose various fees and charges on manufacturers, including case-off allowances, line fees, co-op allowances, shelf fees, gondola end fees and new store fees. I cannot see how the consumer will benefit, particularly if monopolistic situations develop in which competition is killed off completely. The honourable member for Nerang and other Opposition members will speak very eloquently on the impact of this legislation on small businesses.

I want to speak on behalf of local communities. I know that my honourable colleagues who represent country and provincial electorates will have a lot to say about the destruction of lifestyles and the destruction of support mechanisms in country communities that will occur under this legislation. I suggest respectfully that, although large retailers such as Coles Myer and Woolworths contribute to the life of regional communities, those retailers are in the main not approached by community fundraising organisations to support local raffles, local functions or local charities and activities. Principally, such fundraising organisations turn to the local shopkeepers and the small retailers, who have roots in and an affinity with the local community.

None of the major companies service towns or suburbs below a certain population level. Small retailers and businesses certainly do. However, what will happen to the small retailers as large shopping centres open up as a result of this legislation? Obviously, the smaller retailers will be under enormous pressure to close down as their profitability levels decrease. Once again, the local community suffers. Most of the major chains operating in Queensland have head offices out of the State. I suggest to the Minister that in the main their profits flow out of Queensland. Coles Myer makes a profit of over \$1m every day of the year. In contrast, the profits of independent traders are generally spent within the local community, which in the main cannot be said for the larger traders. Under this legislation, it appears that the support offered to rural and regional communities by retailers will be decimated. In terms of its assault on rural Queensland, this Government has a lot to answer for.

Other Opposition members will refer to the monopoly that will be created in many areas and the high cost of operating small businesses under extended trading hours. At the Committee stage, we intend to present the Minister with some questions for which we hope he has answers. I want to conclude my contribution by referring to the impact that extended trading

hours will have on the personal and family lifestyles of those who operate small businesses. In the Opposition's opinion, there is absolutely no doubt that, despite the introduction of this legislation, those in our society who are entrepreneurs, who believe in hard work, who believe in taking risks and earning honest profits and who have built up a business and put a lifetime and perhaps generations of investment into small businesses will persist with them. Those people will hope for a change of Government that will lead to better policies for small businesses which will see them prosper free of Government decisions such as those contained in this Bill and free of Government red tape and regulations that cripple their capacity to operate efficiently. Despite all that, small retailers will continue to operate.

However, I ask members to think of the case of a small business which will not want to lose market share and which will fight against the large shopping centre half a mile down the road. At present, the operators of that small business close at 5.30 or 6 o'clock, spend half an hour to an hour tidying up and counting the take and then go home to spend some reasonable time with their young families and their wives. However, under this legislation, those small business operators will close at 9 o'clock or 9.30. They will then have to clean up, count the take and go home at an hour when their young family is asleep. Under this legislation, small business operators and their families cannot enjoy the quality of lifestyle that they enjoyed previously. The same will apply to Saturday afternoons, when sporting commitments or other family commitments will mean that small retailers will not be able to spend quality time with their family during that particular time. Those are the sorts of impacts that this Government has not taken into consideration. The maintenance of family lifestyles should be of paramount importance when any Government formulates legislation or makes other decisions.

In this the Year of the Family, I suggest to the Honourable the Minister and this Government that no legislation is more anti-family for operators in the small business sector than this one.

**Mr Foley:** What about the families where mum and dad both work?

**Mr SANTORO:** I have already said to the Honourable the Minister that there are ample trading hours at present to accommodate all workers, including shift workers. The shops are open on Thursday nights and Friday nights. There is plenty of time for people to work and to do their shopping. The great majority of representations—particularly from small retailers,

who do not have any say under this Labor Government—indicate clearly that extended trading hours are undesirable.

Now that this issue has been brought to public attention and before this legislation is passed, I challenge the Minister to use some of the consultancy money that has been used so freely by this Government to commission a survey to discover whether people really want extended trading hours. I ask the Minister to delay the passage of this legislation until a proper consultation process has been undertaken. If the Minister undertakes that process, he will agree with the Opposition that this legislation should not be supported. For all of the reasons that I have outlined, the Opposition will not support this legislation and will divide on it.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 to 2.30 p.m.

**Mr BARTON** (Waterford) (2.30 p.m.): I rise to support this legislation. It is all about customer choice and creating opportunities for business and, indeed, for the employees of business. I support the legislation for those reasons. I support it because there is a demand from consumers in this State for the changes that this legislation will enact. This legislation has a great level of support from most of the parties involved, including most retailers, shop workers and their union, the SDA. Importantly, this legislation cuts red tape that currently exists around trading hours issues. This Government acknowledges that there is some level of criticism by some of the smaller retailers and the organisation that represents them. However, I want to stress again what the Minister stressed in his second-reading speech, that is, that extensive negotiations have occurred with the organisation that represents those retailers. Their concerns have been taken into account in drafting this legislation.

**Mr Stoneman:** And swept aside.

**Mr BARTON:** I take that interjection from the member for Burdekin. In taking the action that we are taking, we cannot fully overcome all of the concerns of the smaller retailers. However, to do otherwise would be to leave the trading hours legislation at the status quo, and that is something that is not supported by the majority of people in the retail industry. It is also not supported by consumers, who want some deregulation and flexibility of shopping hours. This Government has consulted with those shopkeepers and, where possible, it has taken their concerns into account and modified the plans. However, those shopkeepers need to remember something that a small businessman in my electorate said to me on Saturday afternoon. He said, "My view is that if you are not open, then you cannot sell anything." I think it is

important that all small shopkeepers take that into account.

This legislation provides for extended allowable hours. They are not mandatory hours. The shopkeepers have a choice. Small shopkeepers in large shopping centres—the groups that had been expressing concern—have had their hours protected by the changes to the Retail Shop Leases Act. I would certainly ask the member for Clayfield to take note of that, because that is very important. A ballot is required under that Act. A 75 per cent majority of tenants need to agree that the shopping centre should be open, but, of course, the retailer may choose.

Another important issue that needs to be remembered is that these changes will create jobs. I will repeat that—these changes will create a large number of jobs. I acknowledge that most of those new jobs will be in the larger stores, simply because it is the larger stores that employ most of the employees in the retail sector now. I do not accept, as has been put to the Parliament this morning, that only casual jobs will be created because enterprise bargaining, if utilised effectively between the union on behalf of their members and those employers, will create the possibility of a greater spread of normal hours or different spreads of hours as has been achieved in many other industry sectors. It will allow the possibility of innovative solutions between the parties for normal working hours. Some people might find this hard to believe, but some people actually prefer to work hours other than the straight 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. This legislation will accommodate those people and will lead to a larger number of permanent employees, provided that the parties are innovative in their enterprise bargaining and do seek to achieve higher levels of permanent employment.

This morning there was some mention of a survey arranged by a Gold Coast shop owner, Andrew McCallum. That same survey was mentioned in the *Courier-Mail* this morning. It is a survey of only some 300 people on the Gold Coast conducted by AGB McNair. As well as that, the member for Clayfield also presented his own survey of an uncountable number of sheets of paper—and we do not know what was in the middle of the pile. However, I want to come back to surveys because, if the member for Clayfield wants to quote surveys, I think it is important that this Parliament know about the survey conducted last year by the Retailers Association of Queensland Limited.

**Mr Santoro:** Get it right. That's it.

**Mr BARTON:** I have it right. That survey, which was conducted by Reark research of 2 777 Queenslanders in nine areas of the State, shows

very clearly that in excess of 80 per cent of people surveyed believe that there should be considerable extension to trading hours. The break-up of that survey was that 81 per cent believe all shops should be allowed to open after 5.30 p.m. on weekdays; 81 per cent believe that all shopkeepers should be able to set their own trading hours without control from tribunals or Governments; 95 per cent believe that all shopkeepers should be able to open their stores on Saturday afternoons; 89 per cent believe all shopkeepers should be able to open their stores on Sundays; and 93 per cent believe all shops and tourist areas should be able to trade seven days a week. That is a very different survey result compared with the one that was carried out with a very small number of people. A survey of nearly 3 000 people showed a very different result when compared with a survey of only 300 people. The survey of 3 000 was conducted over nine major areas of the State and it came up with results that I would suggest to this Parliament are much more in line with what the real feeling out there is. Those results certainly reflect the feeling expressed to me by people around my electorate as to what the people in this State want out of trading hours.

There has also been an enormous number of misinformed concerns. Other States have had real experience in extended trading hours. The bankruptcies and shop closures which were predicted prior to those changes and which are again predicted here have not occurred in other States. Regular customers of corner stores will still go to the corner store because they are nearby and because they provide the level of service those people want. They will go there provided those stores continue to provide that same style of service or continue to cater for a particular niche market.

These stores are opened for extended hours now. This is not a change for them. If customers receive the service they require close by, they will not travel longer distances, because essentially they are creatures of habit. Other concerns have been that this legislation will cruel major sports such as basketball, netball and softball. I have heard all of this before, particularly when I used to be a union official looking after mining communities which were arguing over the introduction of continuous shift rosters. In these sorts of circumstances, the sports adapt, the sports administrators adapt and the people adapt. I would suggest that that is just an unnecessary furphy.

We also heard that this legislation would be in breach of the Labor Party policy. I think the Labor Party is much better placed to know what the Labor Party policy is. The reality is that this is not about open slather or total deregulation of

hours, it is all about more choice. This legislation gives people more choice by extensions on four nights of the week to 9 p.m., and it gives more choice on Saturday afternoons. There are no exceptionally late nights and no all-night trading; there is no shopping on Sundays and public holidays, which compares favourably to what has been done in other States and what is still being done in other States. This legislation maintains a relative advantage for the small corner store and the small owner/operator who now stays open late and opens on Sundays and public holidays.

In their concerns, small operators have raised with us two major issues. Their first concern is their loss of relative advantage, because they do open on weekends, Sundays and late at night. They are saying that they cannot compete with the big stores. In other words, they want their advantages maintained. Their second concern is that they will be forced to be open when they do not want to open. Very clearly, we have said that they are not going to be forced to open when they do not want to open, because there is certainly that 75 per cent majority vote required in major retail complexes.

The Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association and its executive director have been very vocal. I do not criticise that; I would expect them to be vocal in these circumstances, but I make this point: many of their members are the people who fall into the first category I spoke of. They are people who are open now and who now have a competitive advantage that they want maintained. They simply do not want other people to be able to be in genuine competition with them. They do not want others to have the capacity to trade while they are trading.

I find it very interesting to do a short walk through the list of supporting stores attached to the letter to me of 11 April from the QRTSA. It is very interesting and very enlightening. Most of those stores are open for longer hours now. In other words, they are saying, "We have it. Others should not have it, because we want to maintain the advantage that we have now, and we want to be protected from competition." I shall mention the ones that I am aware of in my electorate. Typically, independent food groups are open very long hours. The list includes Bumpa T Bumpa, A Mart All Sports, Supercheap Auto Accessories and newsagents. From my movement around the city, I am aware that many of the others on that list attached to that letter of 11 April are also open; they simply do not happen to have stores in my electorate. Those people want protection from fair competition. That is not what this Government is about. Nobody has that now. Other business sectors do not have it. Workers and their unions all over this

country have had to accept major change over the past 10 years. This major change is long overdue in the retailing industry.

In relation to other issues, we keeping hearing from members on the other side of the Chamber that competition improves the breed. This has been proved in other industry sectors in this country. It has been proved in the retail industry in other States. The only ones who will not survive this change in the retail sector are those who otherwise would not have survived anyway. It might push a few of them to bankruptcy or closure a little earlier. The people who do it well will continue to do it well, and they will prosper. Changes such as this should be seen by those shopkeepers as opportunities, not barriers.

The shop assistants union supports this legislation. It does not automatically advance its members—as has been put by others—but it gives them opportunities to advance their position in enterprise bargaining and in cases before the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission. This is a reasonable expectation of that union and its members, and it is one that this Parliament will support. I am proud to stand in this Parliament and say that if the employees of that industry and their union are seeking these changes, then I am only too proud to support those changes that they are seeking.

This change is needed and wanted. Consumers in my electorate want this change. They are mainly blue-collar employees. In many of those households, both partners work. Many of them are required to work on Saturdays. They are not in jobs where they can flex off or make their own individual decisions to say, "I will leave that work till later, and I will come back to it, because I will go shopping for the next couple of hours." This gives those blue-collar battlers and their families in my electorate the opportunity to shop leisurely, as a family, and at times that suits their lifestyle. They do not have that now.

In my electorate, a number of shopkeepers—less than the number of fingers on my hand—have made approaches to me in recent months and personally expressed concern about, or opposition to, these proposed changes—or what they are reading in the media about these changes. My count of that number is that three people have talked to me directly. My electorate office has indicated to me that one more person rang on Friday while I was here on other parliamentary business.

**Mr Pearce** interjected.

**Mr BARTON:** I take that interjection. Three is less than five. That is how many people have approached me. Alternatively, in recent months, many business people and retailers have

expressed to me their support for these changes—certainly since the legislation was brought into this Parliament a fortnight ago.

In the past few weeks, I have had some personal experiences that I want to add to this debate. I was in Melbourne over Easter and the week after Easter. People down there love the capacity to shop at different times. It was great to see families shopping together on public holidays, and at night-time, when the shops would otherwise have been closed. Large numbers of people were out shopping, including on Easter Sunday. A similar position existed on ordinary weeknights. Every single person to whom I spoke and those who raised the issue with me indicated that he or she supported the extended trading hours. That included many of the small shopkeepers whose shops were open. I conducted some business with them and had a quiet chat about this issue.

I want to return to the Liberal and National Parties' attitudes, because they do not support it. I thought this issue was all about further deregulation of shopping hours, cutting existing red tape, creating opportunities for small business and giving customers what they want. I thought that the Liberal and National Parties were all about those ideals. Obviously, they are not—from what has been said in this Parliament today and no doubt will be said by other members this afternoon and tonight. Thankfully, the Goss Government is in power in this State to protect and advance the interests of business, particularly small business in this State, and to protect and advance the interests of consumers. What the Liberal spokesperson has said is totally contrary to what members opposite said when they were in Government but did nothing about.

I want to refer to a few quotes made by a gentleman who, unfortunately, is not in the Chamber today. I wish he was here to hear this. Vince Lester, the Minister responsible for trading hours for a number of years prior to the 1989 election, was quoted in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of 26 October 1989 as saying—

"It is my view that, ultimately, there will be open-ended trading in Queensland. Those who are the most entrepreneurial will succeed."

In the *Sunday Sun* of 4 January 1987, Vince Lester said—

"It's good for them but it's not good for the rest of the community. We can't afford to live in a State where the trading hours are the worst for the tourists."

In the *Daily Sun* of 16 December 1986, Vince Lester said—

"The Queensland Government believes retailers should not be dictated to on when they can open their businesses and therefore they should have the right to determine their most profitable trading hours."

Again, on 16 December 1986, Vince Lester asked—

"Why should a Government dictate when a person can earn a living?"

**Mr Santoro:** It was a trial.

**Mr BARTON:** People can say it was a trial. These are the quotes of the then Industrial Relations Minister in the National Party Government prior to its defeat in 1989. What does this mean? I think we have to analyse those statements. This week, the Nationals appointed that very same person, Vince Lester, to look after the Mirani by-election. This week in Mirani, prior to the by-election, the Nationals are campaigning against extended trading hours. Yet, in Government, that very same person—when he was Minister—was the champion of freeing up trading hours in this State. It is very typical of the National Party and its running mates, the Liberals, that they say one thing in the bush and yet another thing when they are in Brisbane. We know full well what is being said before the Mirani by-election, yet they are saying exactly the opposite in this Parliament. They need to be brought to heel for that.

This morning, the Opposition Industrial Relations spokesperson, the member for Clayfield, criticised this Government for taking the issue away from the Industrial Relations Commission. I want to make it clear that the Industrial Relations Commission still has the same powers in terms of determining hours outside what are the normal, allowable hours.

**Mr Santoro:** Except that from time to time you just tell them what they can't do.

**Mr BARTON:** That very same person is attempting to interject—as he normally does. He stands for a coalition whose policies are to do away with the Industrial Relations Commission. Now he wants to leave the powers residing with the Industrial Relations Commission. The member for Clayfield spoke about this Bill as though it was providing for uncontrolled hours of shopping. Nothing could be further from the truth. It involves extensions of the allowable hours, but it certainly falls far short of what Liberal Governments have put in place in other States.

Because the member for Chermside might not get an opportunity to do so, I want to point out that the comments made in this Chamber this morning by that member are valid because his family has been in small business for decades.

He has worked all hours in small business. He has been involved in it since he was 10 years of age. He, more than anybody, would know what happens in small business and the retail industry. This is good legislation. It meets consumer, business and employee needs. It is the result of extensive consultation. Where possible, it takes into account the concerns raised. It is a reasonable extension to allowable hours. It is not open slather. Nobody is forced to open for trading if they do not want to. They have a choice. It will create a significant number of jobs, and I support the Bill.

**Mr CONNOR (Nerang)** (2.50 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 1994. In summing up this legislation, it can only be described as a betrayal and a sell-out of Queensland small business. I believe that the Government will regret introducing this piece of legislation. Before the end of the year, it will be brought back before the House for amendment, and the Government will be back-peddalling. Today, I will be speaking about the problems with outgoings and the core trading hours; the weekend survey in which 82 per cent of people surveyed said that they were satisfied with the Gold Coast trading hours; the Woolworths High Court challenge; and the ALP's policy back in 1989. I will also be speaking about regional issues, and I will put on record what is being said in the community.

An article by Paul Weston in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of Tuesday, 19 April 1994 headed "Late trading \$500,000 blunder" relating to outgoings states—

"Small businessmen at the Gold Coast shopping centres will share a combined bill of more than \$500,000 annually due to a loop-hole in the controversial trading hours laws.

The problem was revealed yesterday by the Australian Small Business Association Gold Coast president Greg Rix .

Mr Rix said he had discovered a 'glaring mistake' in the Trading (Allowable Hours) Bill after reading the legislation at the weekend.

When introducing the new laws, Industrial Relations Minister Matt Foley said protection existed for small traders because any change to core trading hours must be decided by 75 per cent of traders at a shopping centre.

But Mr Rix said that the legislation also stated any single tenant could trade to the extent of the allowable trading hours.

...

He said discount supermarket chains, unlike most small retailers, would opt to open longer.

But small traders would be faced with paying their share of an increased bill for air-conditioning, lighting, and security arrangements for the entire shopping centre."

The article continues—

" 'We as centre managers are forced to charge the small businesses under their lease,' said Mr Rix.

...

'The smaller retailers will be horrified. They think they don't have to open to 9 o'clock but they will be paying for the major retailers.'"

Either the Government did not understand what the ramifications of the legislation would be—which means that it is incompetent—or it knew what it was going to mean and it simply sold out small business. There was nothing whatsoever in the Government's position paper as a result of the review of the retail shop leases legislation about being able to charge according to when a shop opens.

**Mr Elder:** Yes, there was.

**Mr CONNOR:** No, there was not. The honourable member is talking about the RAQ's position. That was all about the vote. It had nothing do with outgoings—nothing at all.

**Mr Santoro:** Put yourself on the list. Speak up for small business.

**Mr CONNOR:** Exactly. If the Minister has a position on this, why does he not get up and say something? He has been out there talking to the industry, promising the world, and he will not deliver. Where is the amendment to the Retail Shop Leases Act to fix it? The legislation amends the Retail Shop Leases Act. If the Minister has got it all sorted out, where is the amendment?

**Mr Santoro:** Do you think the Minister for Small Business will stick up for small business today?

**Mr CONNOR:** I will take the interjection. This Minister has absolutely no regard for small business in Queensland. It will come down to the small traders having to pay the extra outgoings, which in the case of regional shopping centres have been estimated at \$500,000. I would like to table a couple of examples of very common retail shop leases. I will quote from two of them. The first lease states—

"Proportion of Variable Outgoings

The area of the demised premises in square metres is 88.3 square metres.

The area of the Centre in square metres is 6,764 square metres.

The Lessee's proportion pursuant to Clause 17.16 is therefore 1.31 per centum."

This quite clearly shows that standard retail shop leases are proportionate on the floor area, not on when a shop opens. The second lease states—

"The Lessee shall pay during the said term by way of additional rental within fourteen (14) days of demand by the Lessor an amount equal to the proportion of the total of the operating expenses payable by the Lessor for that year or part thereof which is equal to that proportion"—

and members should listen to this—

"which the area of the demised premises bears to the total lettable area of the ground floor and first floor of the Centre."

Those are two prime examples of very common leases out in the marketplace. It has nothing whatsoever to do with when a shop opens. It is determined purely by the amount of floor space. I table those two documents.

I would like to quote from the RAQ's issue paper. I would also like to quote from the Government's position paper on this subject. The RAQ's issue paper states—

"The majority of tenants (one vote per tenant, irrespective of size) agree with the landlord the hours they guarantee to be open for business in each individual centre. Such hours then become the 'core trading hours' for all retailers in that centre."

That is basically what the Government has done in this legislation. It has accepted that, thrown in the 75 per cent, and that is it. The Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association is basically in favour of no extra hours over and above those outlined in the existing leases. These core trading hours will mean that small traders will be able to be required to open above and beyond what they had agreed to in their leases. That is the point. The agreed core trading hours will bind them so that they must be open. While the QRTSA accepted the fact that tenants should be limited only to the total number of hours that they agreed to in their lease, they also accepted the fact that they may be required to open and close at differing times.

I want to mention also the position taken by BOMA—the Building Owners and Managers Association. The stated position of that organisation is as follows—

"It is most important to shopping centres that all traders be open at certain specific times and therefore the decision of when to open and close for trade cannot lie

with individual tenants and must lie with the landlord who will always have the good of the overall centre in his mind.

It is only the owner or manager of a shopping centre who can, without bias, define the best core trading hours for his centre."

So what does BOMA say? BOMA says that the trading hours should be determined totally by the centre management, that the people who have signed the leases—the tenants—should have no say whatsoever in trading hours.

What is the Government's position as outlined in the Minister's position paper, which has only just been released? That position paper states—

". . . the Government proposes that the existing section 14(a) be replaced with a new provision which will require trading hours to be detailed in the lease and disclosure statement. Any subsequent extension of hours may be agreed through negotiation between landlord and tenant but the landlord will not have the power to compel the tenant to trade for hours any longer than those specified."

So in the past couple of months the Government has done a complete backflip. This position paper was printed only recently. Now, all of a sudden, the Government has decided to jump into bed with the RAQ. Why? What sort of backroom deal has been done?

Under this Bill, shops may trade outside the agreed trading hours—that is, the core trading hours—and the managers may force the small traders to pay for the cost of the opening of a centre purely so that the major tenants can stay open. A problem arises from the additional cost of opening the shopping centre. One cannot just open one part of a shopping centre. One must turn on all the lights and all the airconditioning, provide all the security, and so on. Under this legislation, if one of the major retailers such as Coles, Woolworths or Franklins want to open the extended hours yet the rest of the stores do not—and that is probably what will happen—the major retailer can still open. This will force the centre to be fully opened, and all the tenants will have to bear the cost.

While the Minister for Small Business is in the Chamber, I would like to remind him that only a couple of weeks ago members of his staff told me that the draft of the new Retail Shop Leases Bill should be ready by now so that members could have a look at it. If the Minister has this wonderful amendment that is going to solve all these problems, it should be in the draft legislation that the Minister said he would have

by now. So where is this wonderful amendment that is going to solve all the problems in the shopping centres? I do not believe that it even exists. I think that what the Minister has been saying is absolutely false.

I turn now to the survey that was carried out over the weekend by AGB McNair, an independent research company. That company conducted a telephone survey of 300 Gold Coast residents. The key question it asked was, "Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with current shopping hours?" The results were, 82 per cent were satisfied, 14 per cent were dissatisfied and 3 per cent did not know, or were not sure.

**Mr J. H. Sullivan:** That's the Gold Coast shopping hours.

**Mr CONNOR:** Exactly. I take that interjection. Following an agreement by all parties, shopping hours on the Gold Coast were determined by the Industrial Commission. I might add that those hours exist not only on the Gold Coast but also on the Sunshine Coast, in Cairns and in parts of the Brisbane CBD. Those hours were negotiated, and all parties agreed. That was the substance of the industrial agreement. The four major tourist areas of the State are totally satisfied with those hours. However, the Government is moving to have blanket shopping hours throughout the State.

**Mr J. H. Sullivan** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! The member for Caboolture will cease interjecting.

**Mr CONNOR:** The Industrial Commission is the place in which to determine these hours.

**Mr J. H. Sullivan** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Caboolture will cease his interjections. The member for Nerang will continue his speech, and direct his comments through the Chair.

**Mr CONNOR:** The Government must delay this trading hours legislation and allow further public consultation. Where are the Minister's figures to indicate that the Government has carried out independent research into what the public in all the regional areas want? We have something that has been dragged up by the RAQ, which has a vested interest. Why cannot the Government carry out research with the real players—the consumers?

Mr McCallum, who is an independent retailer on the Gold Coast, raised \$3,000 to carry out an independent survey. He stated—

"Mr Goss has been telling other small retailers that longer shopping hours is what the people of Queensland want—yet this is

not true . . . Our opinion is that the . . . rest of Queensland will have similar views to those on the Gold Coast who are satisfied with the current trading hours.

The people of the Gold Coast have had something to say. Now the Goss Government must listen to the rest of the State."

The members of the Goss Government have two choices: they can listen to the people of Queensland, or they can bury their collective heads in the sand. I table a copy of the AGB McNair poll that was carried out on the weekend.

I turn now to what the *Courier-Mail* had to say today under the heading, "Govt refuses to back down on shop-hours law." The article states—

"The State Government has refused to reconsider its proposed extension of shopping hours, despite research suggesting consumers oppose change.

. . .

But Employment Minister Matt Foley said his department had consulted widely and would go ahead with the new law."

The article quoted Mr McCallum as saying—

"I could end up with nothing and standing in the bloody dole queue."

Mr Foley said research conducted at the Gold Coast was not necessarily indicative of public opinion across the state, because the Gold Coast already had extended shopping hours as a designated tourist area."

That is quite right. Consequently, the research is not going to be consistent throughout the State. Under the Trading Hours Act, the Industrial Commission has the power to determine hours on a region-by-region basis. The whole point of that legislation is that shopping hours can be tailored to suit the community.

I turn now to what the *Gold Coast Bulletin* had to say in its editorial today. Earlier, the member for Clayfield referred to a small part of that editorial, but I think that it deserves to be read in greater depth. The editorial states—

"The issue of extended trading hours invariably is vexed and complex with contrasting views between consumers, store owners and shop employees.

The Trading (Allowable Hours) Bill has the commendable intent of achieving this through giving greater flexibility and freedom of choice to both shopkeepers and consumers.

However, the premise that the Queensland public wants shops to open

longer is under question following a weekend survey which indicates more than 80 per cent of Gold Coast people are satisfied with current shopping hours.

. . .

While it maybe unwise to read a statewide interpretation into a survey on the Gold Coast, which already has more liberal trading hours than elsewhere in Queensland, the result does suggest there is merit in wider research.

Industrial Relations Minister Matt Foley is adamant the Government has carried out an exhaustive 12 month study with all sectors of the retail industry. It may well have to draw on facets of this study to convince small businessmen, in particular, that the new legislation will not hinder their efforts to survive against competition from the big chains.

The Gold Coast, as a tourist resort-city, enjoys considerable trading hours flexibility. Whether this should be broadened even further, and to what extent it should apply in other cities and regions, are thorny questions indeed."

This is where the editorial really sums it up—

"It will be preferable if the answers are drawn from adequate research rather than from an experiment that could send some traders to the wall."

That is the whole point. This is an experiment. The Government is basing its decision on research that was carried out quite some time ago by the RAQ. As the old saying goes, he who pays the piper calls the tune. Who framed the questions? The questions go on and on. We need to have independent surveys, and they have to be current while the debate is going on.

I turn now to the issue of who this Government is supporting. I draw members' attention to the fact that right now there is a High Court challenge to the State's right to be able to determine its own trading hours. The challenge relates to the suggestion that, in some way or another, shopping hours conflict with the right of free trade between States. Its decision is being challenged on a constitutional basis. If that challenge succeeds, Queensland may not even be able to set its own trading hours. The *Australian Supermarket* of 20 April 1994 states—

"As the full implications of the High Court challenge are studied, it is becoming clear that if Woolworths is successful, the Court could in effect rule that if Tasmania cannot legislate for its own trading hours then either can any other State."

So the Government is supporting big traders who would actually threaten the right of the State to determine its own shopping hours across-the-board.

I was going to discuss briefly the Government's pledge at the 1989 election, but the member for Clayfield has covered that detail. The one thing that is going around the caucus—around the corridors—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr CONNOR:** —and the caucus, from what I am told, is that the Labor Party's opinion is that the issue will blow over very shortly, "It's a short-term thing, not to worry about it, because we have a number of backbenchers starting to quiver at the knees." I say to Government members that this issue is not going to blow over. It will still be an issue at the next election. I also recommend that Government members talk to small traders in ALP electorates. I would also like to reiterate the regional nature of Queensland, the fact that trading in different areas has different hours now and so we cannot have an across-the-board approach. We need to look at it on a region-by-region basis. The two members who have most to fear, neither of whom are in the Chamber, are Merri Rose and John Szczerbanik. They both represent Gold Coast electorates. As we have seen, 82 per cent of Gold Coast residents are satisfied with the current trading hours. Those two members, the members for Currumbin and Albert, both represent marginal seats, and they have the most to lose.

Time expired.

**Mr BUDD** (Redlands) (3.09 p.m.): Surely the supreme irony this afternoon is that this Bill is being opposed by all those self-proclaimed champions of free enterprise on the Opposition benches. The member for Clayfield has built his reputation in this House—such as it is—on attacking the rights of workers and arguing for voluntary employment agreements and individual contracts.

**Mr Veivers:** You're against the legislation, aren't you?

**Mr BUDD:** Why?

**Mr Veivers:** Well, you spoke against it in caucus.

**Mr BUDD:** No, I did not. That is where the member is wrong. His leak in caucus is wrong.

**Mr Veivers:** Yes, you did.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! The member for Southport will cease his interjections.

**Mr BUDD:** Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The member for Clayfield argues an every man for himself philosophy when it comes to setting working conditions, but argues that one cannot have deregulation in shop trading hours because small businesses need protection. That is a lot of hypocrisy. It is about time our colleagues on the Opposition benches woke up to themselves and appreciated that the world has not stood still.

**Mr Santoro:** I thought you were going to attack me.

**Mr BUDD:** Why should I attack the member when he does a good enough job of attacking himself?

**Mr Santoro** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Clayfield.

**Mr BUDD:** Times have changed. Governments, both State and Federal, have recognised that Australia can no longer hide its head in the sand—like the member for Clayfield—and that we have to expose ourselves to competition if we want to create jobs.

**Mr Veivers:** You don't believe this.

**Mr BUDD:** I must believe it, otherwise I would not have written it. This stance was confirmed at the Council of Australian Governments held in Hobart when the following competition policy was agreed on by all State Governments and the Federal Government—

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member will cease interjecting.

**Mr BUDD:** The policy stated—

"There should be no regulatory restrictions on competition unless clearly demonstrated to be in the public interest. Governments which choose to restrict consumers' ability to choose among rival suppliers and alternative terms and conditions should demonstrate why this is necessary in the public interest."

It is clearly in the interests of consumers that shopping hours be deregulated. As I said before, times have changed. Forty years ago, the proportion of married women in the work force was relatively small. Shopping was a fairly social activity and done on a daily basis for the evening meal. One's local shopkeeper would cut and sell in the quantities that one wanted to buy and would probably have been considered a family friend. If one was a bit short then they allowed one credit. One of the first priorities for dad's weekly pay packet was to settle up the weekly tab at the corner store. As I said, times have changed.

Now, two-worker and single-parent families predominate. In the main, wages are now paid fortnightly or monthly. Grocery shopping is done in bulk where people serve themselves with prepacked items. I feel absolutely certain that anyone who, like me, has negotiated endless aisles with a wobbly trolley and then stood in line for a half hour would not under any circumstances class it a social activity. As to having a weekly tab, it is either EFTPOS, cash up front, or bankcard, with interest. The reality is that people do their big shop at the large supermarkets for three reasons, namely, low prices, variety, and the convenience of one-stop shopping. Nothing will change. The difference is that working shoppers will now have some element of choice, and that is what this legislation is about, giving people a choice. What I do not accept is that this legislation will have a disastrous effect on a large number of small, independent retailers.

**Mr Veivers** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Southport will cease his interjections. If he wants to add to the debate, he should put his name on the list.

**Mr BUDD:** Small, independent retailers are usually family-owned and operated convenience stores. Recently, I have spent some time researching exactly what type of trade these stores attract. Their busiest trading times are early morning and evening. The average shopper buys two or three items, such as basics like bread, milk—up until last Thursday I used to buy cigarettes—and papers or single food items such as a can of pet food, packet of spaghetti, and so on. I know of no single person who does their large weekly or fortnightly shopping at a local convenience store. I do not believe that people will change their shopping habits because of deregulation.

People shop at convenience stores because they are convenient. Nobody will drive out of his way each day to get bread and milk from the large supermarket when he can call at the local shop on his way home from work. The truth is that these people already have a choice of where to shop. They can get their newspaper from a newsagent or at a convenience store. They can buy their bread from a bakery or a convenience store. They can have their milk delivered by a milkman or buy it at a convenience store. They can buy a whole range of grocery items and cigarettes from any number of 24-hour garages or a convenience store.

Already, in my local area I can buy coffee or soap powder from the local chemist. My local garage sells everything under the sun apart from car parts and batteries. My local convenience

store sells garden implements, hardware and cassettes, along with groceries, not to mention acting as an agent for dry cleaners and developing photographs. Even our enterprising local florist sells eggs. Then, of course, there are the Cleveland markets, which operate every Sunday selling everything from jam to jewellery. The reality is that free enterprise is already out there flourishing in the suburbs now. The main impact of this legislation will be on the department stores and speciality shops.

People will now be able to shop for special items in a civilised manner. Have members ever tried to fit in buying a suit between the Saturday cleaning and the Saturday shopping or tried to compete with a hundred other people for the sales assistant's attention when buying a washing machine on a Thursday night? How many people in this House have walked out of a shop without buying anything because in the end they just cannot stand the hassle? This Bill is about giving people choices and responding to changing customer preferences for different trading hours.

Under this new legislation, traders will have the right to apply for extended trading hours while, at the same time, the Government respects the impartiality of the Industrial Commission in determining applications for extensions of allowable trading hours. It will also protect the rights of retailers, particularly small tenants, against being forced to trade longer hours if they do not wish to do so.

I noted before that the member for Nerang was talking about selective surveys. Let us examine one from the Retailers Association of Queensland Ltd Union of Employers. I am fairly sure that that association is not a great friend of a lot of people on this side of the House. The RAQ proposed that the current Government review of trading hours be freed up in the same way as the State Government is intelligently and rationally freeing up the dairy industry. Accordingly, amendments to the Retail Shop Leases Act will prevent individual tenants from being forced to trade outside core hours agreed by a majority of tenants in each centre. Thus they, not the landlord nor the trading hours laws, will decide when they trade. This is the crucial new element in the debate. For the first time, a discussion about more flexible trading hours does not necessarily mean longer trading hours for individual retailers. Just because one particular type of retailer may find it appropriate to extend its hours to take advantage of customer needs for its type of business does not mean that other types of business will have to, or will, follow suit.

In common with the member for Waterford, my office had four phone calls about the shop

trading hours. I had one from Ian Baldock from the QRTSA; one from a shopkeeper on the Gold Coast; one from a shopkeeper at Albion—possibly set up by the member for Clayfield—and one from a shopkeeper at Carindale. The bloke at Carindale, who lives in Shailer Park, happened to be a constituent of mine. He was a bit concerned until I told him what the Bill really means. He was worried about what he had heard from the Independent Retailers Association. When I explained the Bill to him, he was quite comfortable with it. He said, "This is a damn good Bill."

In conclusion, I find it somewhat ironic that, if I were to argue in this House that through Government legislation the small market fruit and vegetable growers of the Redlands should be protected and given preference over the large commercial growers, I am sure the National Party members on the Opposition benches would howl me down.

**Mr Nunn** interjected.

**Mr BUDD:** Particularly the member for Lockyer. They would haemorrhage. But I would never argue such a case. The fact is that the quality of Redlands fruit and vegetables is first class and will always be assured of a market. The very same principles apply to retail shops. Those who provide good service and quality and look after their customers will be successful. It is extremely important that we do not lose sight of the fact that shops are part of the service industry. They are there to serve the needs of public. This Government, through this legislation, will ensure that they will continue to do so. I support the legislation.

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (3.20 p.m.): At the outset, it must be stated that the State Labor Government did not bring in this legislation to make life easier for the shopper or for business. Despite what the Minister may want the people of Queensland to believe, this legislation was brought in because this Government's union backers had flexed their muscle. That is right, the unions wanted this change, so, once again, the State Labor Government did what it was told. Let us clear the air and wipe away the pontificating and posturing of the Minister and his colleagues, particularly the Minister responsible for small business, who sold out all those who relied on him. Yes, that is right, the Minister sold them out.

However, there is hope that the Government may be forced to change its mind on extended trading hours, because I believe that the Minister responsible for small business, Mr Elder, is going to move an amendment to the Bill. We know that this is the case, because I have here a letter, which I now table, from the

managing director of the Nightowl Group, Mr Rod Craig, to Mr Elder. In that letter, Mr Craig thanks the Minister responsible for small business for returning his call and for their "subsequent frank discussion on the Government decision to alter trading hours". Mr Craig goes on in his letter to state—

"The one glimmer of hope in a week of terrible disappointments was the assurance that you will support an amendment to the trading hours legislation of trading hours Monday to Wednesday until 6 pm, except in gazetted tourist areas."

Mr Craig concludes his letter by stating—

"Once again, thank you for your assurance to help small retailers in this crisis time. I sincerely hope common sense prevails and a revised position acceptable to all sections of the retail industry will be the outcome."

**Mr Elder:** Are you going to table my reply?

**Mrs SHELDON:** I know that, even last week, when Mr Craig rang and spoke to the Minister's adviser, his adviser said that the Minister had to accept Cabinet solidarity. The Minister's adviser apologised on his behalf. The Minister must hang on his hook.

**Mr Elder:** You only put forward half the argument.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I know what is in the Minister's reply. Is the Minister going to move the amendment?

**Mr Elder:** Table my reply.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Is the Minister going to move the amendment?

**Mr Elder:** No.

**Mrs SHELDON:** No, of course he is not. The Minister had no intention of doing so. He sold that fellow down the drain and all small businesses with it, and the Minister knows it. Some Minister he is! I—and, I am sure, every small business person in this State—eagerly await Mr Elder's contribution to this debate and his moving of the amendment that he has promised Queensland's small traders. Another broken Labor promise—by the Minister responsible for small business, no less!

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. This debate is robust, but the member for Caloundra has misrepresented the truth. I find her comment objective—sorry, objectionable—and I ask it to be withdrawn.

**Mrs SHELDON:** It is indeed objective, and the Minister is so right to point that out.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! The Minister has asked for it to be withdrawn.

**Mrs SHELDON:** What particular part would the Minister like withdrawn?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The part that he finds offensive.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Which part does the Minister find offensive?

**Mr ELDER:** I would like every reference and misreference to that particular article to be withdrawn. That article was not tabled in full. I ask the member to table it in full and table my reply.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I said that I would table the letter from Mr Rod Craig, the president of the QRTSA. If the Minister gives me his reply, I will table that, too.

**Mr ELDER:** I find the member's implication that I misled that person objectionable, and I ask it to be withdrawn.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I quoted from the letter. I do not see how that can be misrepresentation.

**Mr ELDER:** I find the remarks objectionable, and I ask them to be withdrawn.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member will withdraw.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I will withdraw any comment that you would regard objectionable.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thank the member.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I also table a confidential document from the managing director of Foodlink independent food retailers, John Berry, to his members in which he details how the small retailers were "sold a pup" by the State Government. Mr Berry states that he, with others, met with Mr Elder—

**Mr Elder** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** This is another man whom no doubt the Minister will claim to be misrepresented by. Mr Berry states that he, with others, met with Mr Elder on Friday, 8 April, at which time he was asked for his comments on the proposal to extend trading hours. In the letter, Mr Berry expresses his disappointment that, on the following Monday, Mr Foley announced the new extended trading hours—and the spokesman for big business, Mr Elder, is here to respond. In his letter, Mr Berry stated—

"Therefore, while we were being spoken to on the one hand by this Government, they had already made the decision to prepare the legislation to look after their union and big business mates."

So, what is the story here—or has the Minister been misrepresented again? Two major Brisbane businessmen have been misrepresenting the Minister—

**Mr Elder:** I shouldn't consult with small business; is that what you're saying? I should go down the path that you went down when you were in Government and I shouldn't consult; is that what you're saying?

**Mrs SHELDON:** When the Minister consults, I suggest that he listens and acts on it. The Minister may run around and say that he consults like the rest of his Labor mates; that is fine. However, if he does not put that consultation into practice, it is a waste of time—just like the Minister.

Was Mr Elder left in the dark about this decision, or was he just stringing small business in this State along until the decision could be announced by Mr Foley? Mr Elder could clarify his position by moving the amendment he has promised to Queensland small retailers, and the coalition could then have a very serious look at that amendment to see whether it actually lives up to Mr Elder's promises.

Just in case Mr Foley thinks that Mr Elder is the only one of his caucus colleagues who is not supporting this legislation, I table the following letters. I table a letter from the Primary Industries Minister, Ed Casey, in which he states that he is personally opposed to extended trading hours. I table a letter from the Minister for Environment and Heritage, Molly Robson, who expresses her concern about the proposed trading hours extension and—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Government members did not know about this, did they? In that letter, Ms Robson supported the view of small retailers in opposing the extension of hours. I table a letter from a Government backbencher, Mr Peter Pyke, who is also opposed to the Bill currently before the House. I know that Government members have never heard of Mr Pyke, but he is a member of this Government. I table a letter from the member for Everton, Rod Welford, opposing the extension of trading hours. I table a letter from the member for Mansfield, Laurel Power, secretary to the caucus, who also says that she does not support the extension of trading hours. I also table a copy of a letter to the *Townsville Bulletin* from the member for Thuringowa, Ken McElligott, in which he also opposes the State Government's moves. At least Mr McElligott has been honest about where he was coming from. Those letters expose the rift within the ALP caucus over this issue, and they highlight the support that Mr Elder would receive for any amendment he moved. Those letters illustrate

that Mr Foley and Mr Goss have run over the top of the back bench and the caucus in bringing in this legislation.

**Mr FitzGerald:** And "little" Jimmy.

**Mrs SHELDON:** And "little" Jimmy. Just why have the Minister and his boss pushed so hard for these extended trading hours?

**An Opposition member:** The Minister for "non-business".

**Mrs SHELDON:** He certainly is the Minister for "non-business".

Let us clear the air and tell the people of Queensland the real story. The real story is that the unions want to move employees from the small, independently run businesses into the big, union shop dominated supermarkets. That is what this legislation is all about, and that is why the State Government has sold out Queensland small business once again. In particular, the Minister responsible for small business has sold out that sector.

In his second-reading speech, the Minister even alludes to the fact that the unions have pulled his strings. He cloaks it in some feigned respectability and hides it behind enterprise bargaining and more flexibility, but the fact remains that this is a job for the union bosses and particularly the AWU. Let us examine Mr Foley's comments on ABC radio's Hadyn Sargent program on 12 April. He stated—

**Mr Bennett** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** This Government is looking after the workers? What a joke! What about the workers in the small business sector who will lose their jobs? Is this Government looking after them? What a sham this Government is!

On that radio program, Minister Foley stated—

"The retail workers themselves, through their union, the Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association, asked for it."

So, there you have it. That is why this Bill is so disgusting, and why small business has every reason to be outraged that it has been stabbed in the back by Mr Foley, Mr Elder and Mr Goss. This Bill is being introduced for all the wrong reasons.

Already on the Gold Coast, we have seen that major shopping centres are counting the cost of the legislation in the hundreds of thousands of dollars every year. Already, we have the example of South Australia, where extended trading hours proved disastrous and were thrown out with the failed Labor Government. Already, we have heard from small

business that this Bill will mean the end of the road for many of them—and all that before the Bill has even been passed!

This State Labor Government has brought in some absolutely disastrous legislation since 1989, but this one may well prove to be the king of them all. Its attacks on small business in this State have been infamous, from the establishment of the Building Services Authority and its financial burden on builders, to the red tape in which the Department of Environment and Heritage has tied tourism operators and the plethora of charges and taxes that it has introduced hand in hand with the Federal Labor Government—Mr Elder's mate, Paul Keating. Look what he has done for business. Hasn't he been the saviour of the nation? Is this Minister following in his footsteps? What is worse is that the State Government has ignored the Industrial Relations Commission in developing this legislation. This Bill steamrolls over due process—does the Government remember those words, "due process"—and makes a farce of the State Government's alleged consultation processes. There is Mr Elder's answer to consultation; it is a real farce under him.

People may ask how the State Government could get it so wrong? Well, it is a very good question and one which we on this side have often asked about this Government's bemusing lack of direction over policy when it comes to the private sector. The fact is that small business has spoken on this Bill and its verdict is not good for the Government. Small business is the engine room of the Queensland economy. It employs more Queenslanders than any other sector; it is the sector which will employ more Queenslanders than any other as the economy begins to improve. If every small business in this State hired one more employee, unemployment would disappear. What did the managing director of Nightowl stores, Rod Craig, have to say about the new legislation on ABC radio recently? He said—

"Well, I think it not only to Nightowl but to independent stores across the State, I think it will be devastating."

Mr Craig went on to say—

"The realities are that in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia where it was tried, this scenario was the ultimate end and the evidence was clear. I was in Sydney just recently, plenty of shops to let and stores that were obviously very viable prior to deregulation and now they are sitting vacant."

That is the scenario that Mr Foley and Mr Elder want in Queensland—more shops sitting vacant to add to all the current vacant shops. What did

the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association Executive Director, Ian Baldock, have to say to Caroline Tucker on ABC on April 11?

**Mr Milliner** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** The honourable member obviously does not know, but that does not surprise anyone. Mr Baldock said, "It's a black day for Queensland's small retailers." These are the people who head these organisations, but Mr Elder has obviously chosen to ignore that. I am astounded that he has chosen to ignore them. Mr Baldock went on to say—

**Mr Bennett:** You're a naughty boy, Jim.

**Mrs SHELDON:** It is a joke, is it? The Labor back bench thinks this is a joke. It thinks that small businesses going out of business is a joke. This Government's day will come at the polling booths. Mr Baldock went on the say—

"We've got evidence from other States as to what's happened there when extended trading hours have been brought in and it's decimated the independent sector and that's why we've been trying to tell the Government this."

He also added that in New South Wales a total of 600 small businesses have disappeared since late trading hours were introduced in that State. What about the employment question? Mr Baldock went on to say that the likely outcome of the extended trading hours was that the independent sector would lose 3.9 jobs for every one job that was created in the major supermarkets through late trading. Mr Foley is also the Minister for Employment; I would say that that is a rather strange track for him to be following.

**An Opposition member:** The Minister for unemployment.

**Mrs SHELDON:** The Minister for unemployment, the honourable member is quite right. The end result will certainly be more people in unions, but it will also be more people on unemployment queues. This is not scaremongering. I think everyone would agree that extended trading hours means convenience for many Queenslanders, but the question has to be asked: at what cost? Is it worth sending hundreds of small retailers to the wall? Is it worth adding yet more thousands onto the unemployment queues? Is it worth the death of the corner store and the community supermarket? My answer to that is that it is not worth it, and I would have thought that the Minister, if he had a brain in his head, would have realised that. Yet, unlike the Ministers, I am not beholden to the unions, so perhaps my view is a little clearer than theirs.

Let us talk about the win for the unions and this little deal that Mr Foley has so kindly stitched up for them with the help of the Minister responsible for small business, Mr Elder. The unions that kicked and screamed about enterprise agreements for years have now decided that they are a good thing and so are out to get the best possible deal for their members. That makes sense; after all, that is what unions do. Unfortunately, what it means in this case is that, with the State Labor Government's complicity, the large retailers will now open five nights a week from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. and they will not want to have to pay all those extra penalty rates. The only way around it is for them to meet with the unions and thrash out an enterprise agreement, giving the unions what they want and, hopefully, the large retailers what they want. Let us face it, they are one of the real power brokers in this, are they not, Mr Elder, not your small businesses? The real power brokers are big business and the unions.

**Mr Elder:** I don't know. It's your speech.

**Mrs SHELDON:** The Minister does not know, that is the sad fact. He does not know a damned thing about his portfolio. Unfortunately, the small retailers do not have the individual clout to deal with the unions in enterprise agreements and will be stuck paying the extra penalty rates if they want to be able to compete, and many will not be able to compete. We are not just talking about Foodstores, Nightowls and 7-Elevens here; we are talking about the corner store which has been a part of Queensland culture for as long as I can remember. How will that corner store, run by a family, be able to compete? How will it be able to put on extra staff when most of them already run pretty close to the margin? The fact is that many will not be able to compete and many will go to the wall. The corner store will die in many communities, and the communities will be worse off for it.

This State Labor Government has taken a short-sighted, narrow-minded view which will have far-reaching consequences for small business. Just some of those consequences were revealed in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on Tuesday, April 19, under the heading "Late Trading \$500,000 Blunder". In that article, the Gold Coast President of the Australian Small Business Association, Greg Rix—no doubt another man who has misrepresented the Minister—revealed a glaring mistake in this Bill which could cause chaos and confusion in the large shopping centres. It leaves the tenants of those shopping centres, both big and small, potentially facing massive bills whether 75 per cent of the centre's tenants vote to open or not. Mr Rix, who described the problem as a loophole in the Bill—

**Mr Budd** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Mr Rix happens to be President of the Australian Small Business Association. I suggest the Minister looks up the people he is supposed to speak to.

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order. That interjection actually came from the back bench. I happen to know who Mr Rix is, but I also happen to know that when bankruptcy proceedings—

**Mrs SHELDON:** The interjection came from you.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order!

**Mrs SHELDON:** Mr Rix, who described the problem as a loophole in the Bill, says that traders who decided not to open when the centre, or any tenant in the centre, opened, would still be stuck with paying their share of the increased lighting bill, air-conditioning bill and security bill for the shopping centre. Mr Rix said—

"The smaller retailers will be horrified. They think they don't have to open to 9 o'clock but they will be paying for the major retailers."

This is a loophole which this Minister and the Minister for Small Business missed, because obviously they have no concept of how business operates. The Minister is a—

**Mr ELDER:** I rise to a point of order.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Another one?

**Mr ELDER:** I only do this to save the member for Caloundra from further embarrassment. She should ask her colleague sitting beside her to have a look at the amendment to the Bill.

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

**Mrs SHELDON:** We have even heard various vague reports that his ministerial colleague, Mr Elder, who allegedly looks after small business, was moving to have the State Government introduce an amendment to the Bill to try and cover this loophole. Now the Minister is telling me he has moved that amendment and he is happy with that amendment, is he?

**Mr Elder:** You are the one on your feet.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I am asking the Minister. He is the man who just said it.

**Mr Elder:** You are the one making the claim.

**Mrs SHELDON:** He is the one who stood up in the House and said it. Obviously, if that is the case, he is not prepared to back his own amendment.

**Mr Elder:** Walk in there and just open the mouth and flap away.

**Mrs SHELDON:** The Minister would know about flapping the mouth, to try and stop me speaking that is all he has done ever since I commenced my speech. His words are all a case of too little, too late, I think.

**Mr Elder** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Power): Order! The Minister will cease his interjections.

**Mrs SHELDON:** This Government always claims to consult, but somehow it seems that it always does exactly what it wants regardless of what that consultation reveals. I think that is quite obvious by the letters that I have tabled. We have seen this time and time again in other areas and we have seen it again here with the extended trading hours.

The AGB McNair poll showed that 82 per cent of Gold Coast residents were satisfied with the existing trading hours. I think all honourable members would agree that that is an overwhelming result; it is an overwhelming indictment of this Government's absolute lack of morals on this issue. In direct contradiction to the feelings of even the shoppers themselves, the Government has sold out small retailers for its union mates. The poll shows that only 14 per cent of Gold Coast residents wanted the system changed. Mr Elder obviously did not do his homework, and Mr Foley certainly did not.

Are the Ministers trying to tell us in this House that the public at large wants this change? This survey shows that to be a complete falsehood, so they should abandon that pathetic defence and come clean on the real reasons they have done it. Those reasons are that the unions and big business have worked together to force the Government to make these changes—and the Government buckled.

On the ABC's Anna Reynolds program this morning, Dr Robert Baker from the New England University summed up a lot of the problems the Minister is trying to ignore. Dr Baker has studied the effects of the deregulation of shopping hours and found that elderly people and the poor were the ones who suffered from the closure of small supermarkets and corner stores. It is the elderly and the poor who use corner stores and small supermarkets to do their shopping because they do not have the transport and income to travel to the large suburban supermarkets.

Time expired.

**Mr NUTTALL** (Sandgate) (3.40 p.m.): It is interesting to note that, of all the States and Territories in Australia, Queensland has the

shortest trading hours. Today, members are debating that issue and discussing to what extent those trading hours should be extended. The whole argument really revolves around the number of hours that shops should be allowed to open. I am sure that, in common with other Government members, on 20 April I received a fax from the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association regarding the issue of extended trading hours. It said, "We have all sorts of problems with the proposal that you are putting forward", and it put forward a compromise. The compromise that the association put to the Government was that we would have retail trading from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday to Wednesday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, and till 5 p.m. on Saturday.

That organisation, which represents a large number of retailers in the State, is only at variance with the State Government by some nine hours. If we are looking at the overall picture of 24 hours in a day multiplied by seven, a difference of nine hours from what we are proposing is not going to make or break any retailer in this State. So the hype that is being put forward by the Opposition does not stand up to scrutiny when the organisations that represent small business are saying, "The only difference between your proposal and what we are proposing is the paltry sum of nine hours."

From the arguments that have been put forward today by members of the Liberal and National Parties, it is clear that they are really at variance with one another. Earlier, the member for Waterford quoted the former Minister for Small Business, the member for Keppel, about his views on trading hours. Basically, in the late eighties, when we had a trial period of extended hours, the Government of the day was really pushing for total deregulation, but because of the ground swell in the community, it backed away from total deregulation.

The member for Nerang spoke about trading hours on the Gold Coast. I might take a leaf out of the book of the member for Waterford and refer to what has been said by the Leader of the Opposition and member for Surfers Paradise. A couple of years ago, he warned local retailers that they cannot have their cake and eat it, too, in regard to shopping hours. He said—

"We have a choice between greater flexibility in trading hours and that does not necessarily mean total de-regulation, or rigid no holes barred enforcement of the existing draconian and outdated law which means that a retailer can be fined"—

a substantial amount—

"for opening one minute after the prescribed closing time."

The member for Surfers Paradise also said—

"I am convinced that Surfers Paradise, at least, should be deregulated."

He stated further—

"If our shopping hours fail to cater for visitors such as the Japanese who are big spenders then we may as well forget about tourism.

Unless we can provide the shopping hours our tourists want and can get in other competitive destinations then we are simply not serious about the (tourism) industry."

When the Leader of the Opposition says things like that and then, on the other hand, the Opposition spokesperson says that we should not be deregulating trading hours, that shows that the Opposition is once again divided and does not have agreement on that issue.

I would like to cover a number of other issues. One of them relates to the argument that trading hours will reduce the number of small businesses. I want to cover the argument that increased trading hours are not wanted by consumers, and I want to cover the argument that increased trading hours will increase unemployment. I want to put paid to those arguments.

In 1984, prior to the introduction of Saturday afternoon trading in New South Wales, the New South Wales Small Business Association said—

"Thousands of small shop-keepers are living in despair as extended Saturday trading approaches.

...

The big stores will profit while the small traders go broke."

**Mr FitzGerald:** One question: what happened to that Government?

**Mr NUTTALL:** In 1986, when the honourable member's party was in Government, prior to the trial of deregulated shopping in Queensland, the Retail Industry Alliance of Queensland said—

"The effects of deregulation will be dramatic and decisive—there is no if, but or maybe. Seven-day traders, convenience shops and specialty stores as we know them today will disappear, thousands of businesses will close, and thousands of employees will be out of work."

I have a better quote from 1987. In 1987, when extended shopping hours were being proposed for the Gold Coast, the Surfers Paradise Chamber of Commerce predicted that, as a direct result, small business would go to the

wall and, as a result of small business going to the wall—

"... the Gold Coast will die as a tourist resort within 10 years... and Surfers Paradise will die within five years."

Surfers Paradise should have been dead in 1992.

The point that I am trying to make is that all those doom and gloom merchants who made those forecasts in the 1980s are making the very same forecasts in 1994, but they really do not stand up to scrutiny. Over the past 20 years, many forecasts of the demise of small retailers have been made. In fact, trading hours have been extended considerably in Australia.

**Mr Veivers:** In that case, you are going to have public servants working the same hours, are you, so that we can go and get licences and whatever we want to?

**Mr NUTTALL:** If I ever reach the dizzy heights of the Ministry, I will certainly take that on board. I say to the member for Southport that I will be there before he will; I can assure him of that.

In 1992, in all States, the ratio of shops per 1 000 people was around 10. Since 1980, that figure has varied between 9.5 and 10.5. Only in the late seventies and in the eighties have trading hours for shops been deregulated, yet since that time the number of small businesses per 1 000 people has not declined by any margin. Between 1948 and around 1980, there were between 12 and 15 retail establishments per 1 000 people. There has since been some decline. As I said, the figure has varied between 9.5 and 10.5. The latest statistics show that it is around 10. For much of that period when retail trading hours were virtually unchanged between 1940 and 1980, business did decline from 12 to 15 retail establishments per 1 000 people to around 10. What I am getting at is that extended trading hours cannot be cited as the cause of small businesses declining to that figure of about 10.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** The reason there has been change is that there has been a change in the method of retailing. Honourable members should recall the 1950s and the 1960s, which is when we had the era of the establishment and the growth of supermarkets that started to replace the traditional small grocery shop. In that same period more and more households purchased electrical appliances, such as refrigerators. People were buying motor vehicles and thus did not have to rely on the small corner grocery shop to buy their groceries. They could use that modern technology to vote with their feet and go to major shopping centres. The

decline in the number of small corner stores that occurred between 1969 and 1980 has now stopped and yet trading hours were extended in all States between 1980 and 1992. Overall, the statistics indicate that increases in trading hours have not been directly associated with the decline in the number of small retailers. On the contrary, recent experience would show that the number of small retailers in Australia is on the rise, despite—or perhaps, we may argue, because of—the increase in retail trading hours.

If we consider the argument that increased trading hours are not wanted by consumers, and this is obviously a very important issue, in 1992 on the Gold Coast, again following a trial of extended trading hours at that time, 60 per cent of the residents on the Gold Coast and 77 per cent of visitors to the Gold Coast thought that Sunday trading should be retained.

I will go beyond the Gold Coast and beyond Queensland. In a survey carried out in Sydney in 1993, it was found that 70 per cent of respondents reacted positively to the idea of supermarkets opening for extended hours. In the same survey, over 52 per cent of the respondents said that they had actually been shopping during those extended trading hours. In Western Australia in 1994, a survey found that 84 per cent of household shoppers believed that shopkeepers should have the freedom of the choice to open when they preferred. Furthermore, among full-time workers, the group potentially most affected by restrictive trading hours, 92 per cent were in favour of total deregulation.

**Mr Budd:** That was in Western Australia under a Liberal Government?

**Mr NUTTALL:** Under a Liberal Government. The real test of consumer demand is in the behaviour of shoppers. In Brisbane City, we only have to note that Sunday has become the strongest trading day, with more dollars spent per hour on that day than on any other day of the week. The argument that says that trading hours are not wanted by consumers simply does not hold up to the market surveys that are being carried out just in Queensland but in all States throughout Australia.

There is also the argument that extended trading hours will increase unemployment. That is an argument that can again be refuted by the facts and without hysteria. In fact, in small retail businesses the average number of full-time employees per retail location fell in all States between 1980 and 1986, but then increased between 1986 and 1992, except in Victoria. In 1992, the number of full-time employees per location for small business ranges from 2.7 in South Australia to 3.1 in Queensland, with an

Australian average of 3. Growth in employment has occurred when trading hours have been deregulated and extended, and that is in small business. The argument that says that if trading hours are extended then employment in small business will decrease and will increase in large businesses simply does not hold up. Part-time employment in small retail businesses on a per location basis Australiawide has actually doubled in the past 12 years as trading hours have been deregulated. Part-time employment has increased from a figure of about 0.63 part-time employees per location in 1980 to 1.26 in 1992. That growth has been almost uniform across all States throughout Australia, except for Tasmania. In total, in relation to employees per location there has been consistent growth in small retail businesses from 3.6 employees per location in 1980, 3.9 employees in 1986 and up to 4.2 in 1992. Since trading hours were deregulated in the small retail industry in 1980 there has been an increase not only in the number of part-time employees but also permanent employees. So the arguments being put forward today that small business will suffer and small businesses will go to the wall simply do not hold up when—without the rhetoric—we look at the statistics and at the surveys that have been conducted. That has been shown when we have talked to consumers and shopkeepers after they have gone and had a look not only at consumer demands but also at what they need to do to meet the market of today.

It is a simple fact that we are heading towards the twenty-first century. We rely heavily on our tourist industry. As I said earlier, our State has the shortest trading hours of any State in this country, and that is something that needs to be addressed. This Bill does that. I commend the Minister on his introduction of the Bill.

**Mr STONEMAN** (Burdekin) (3.57 p.m.): I join in this debate today to express my concern about this Bill, a concern that is echoed unanimously on this side of the House and, in many instances, on the Government side of the House by those prepared to come out and speak up for their constituents. I say that on the basis that this Bill reflects the hypocrisy of the Minister, a subject to which I will return in a moment. Access to shops is not the only issue. We are also talking about the impact on shopping centres near major city conglomerates. That is not only outside the metropolitan areas but also within the metropolitan areas. We are talking about the specific impact on individual small businesses. We are talking about the personal ramifications for families, and that includes the impact on aged persons. It is fair to say that, when all of those aspects are brought into focus,

the changes proposed by this Bill have met widespread opposition.

At the outset, I would like to read and then table a letter dated 21 April from the Burdekin Shire Council Mayor, John Woods, to the Minister. I think that it will serve a very significant purpose if I read to the House the contents of this letter, which was given to me, which has also been sent to the Premier. I am sure that the letter could well have come from literally hundreds of communities across this State, but Mayor Woods and his council have put their finger on the core problem that is facing the community. I am not against progress and I am aware that with progress—in a lot of cases—there is some pain. This is clearly a process that the Government has set in train to appease its union mates because the union structures in this State and across the nation are crumbling and the only way to consolidate and in some way reconstitute those unions is to create a situation in which the employment is transferred from the small businesses to the larger operators. Sadly, of course, that will not happen, because the large operators increasingly, and to their credit, are able to operate on a very limited employment base—particularly in off-peak hours. They can put on one or two check-out operators and, with a minimum of other staff, run a huge store. Good luck to them. This letter dated 21 April to the Minister, the Honourable Matt Foley, states—

"Dear Minister,

Re: Legislation to Increase Trading Hours.

I refer to your plans to introduce legislation into Parliament to extend trading hours to provide for allowable hours of 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

The Council"—

and unfortunately, this is not the case now—

"is pleased that the legislation has not been set in concrete nor that it is a fait-accompli that the Government will necessarily proceed with this legislation.

The Government's initial plans to close railway lines in country Queensland resulted in a strong public back-lash with the Government reviewing the decision and responding positively to consumer and community demands for a review of the decision.

Whilst the proposal for extension of trading hours may have strong public support from the major grocery chains and could be popular in tourist areas of this State, it is considered that the proposal

could sound the death knell for some small businesses in provincial and rural townships.

In your media releases you have stated that the legislation is the culmination of wide ranging consultation with key stakeholders. Obviously, you may not have heard of the strong opposition from small businesses and Chambers of Commerce outside the metropolitan area. Federal Government spokespersons have often stated that it will be small businesses recruiting additional staff which will lead Australia out of the recession. It is difficult to see how small business will have the financial capacity to compete with the major retail chains.

What seems to be forgotten in the debate is that small stores and family operated businesses are usually viable through trade generated currently after the major retail chains are closed. Consumers are attracted to the convenience of these small stores and the friendly service provided by the proprietors. Lifestyle considerations of proprietors and employees working longer hours to ensure the viability of small businesses have obviously not been taken into account.

Two major shopping chains, Coles and Woolworths, trade in our area and make a valuable contribution to our local economy with the employment of many people in the retail area. The Council considers that the existing trading hours of these businesses offer consumers ample time and opportunity to shop.

One doesn't have to be an economist to realise that, with the exception of tourist areas, additional trading hours will not generate increased spending from the available consumer dollars in the community. It will, however, add to the business overheads and eventual additional costs to consumers.

The views of small business in this community are best summed up in the cartoon from artist, Harry Bruce which appeared in the edition of the Home Hill Observer printed on 14th April 1994. A copy is attached for your information.

Your Government was sympathetic to the voices raised in anger at possible closure of rail lines in this State. There is a groundswell of opposition to the Government's plans for increased trading hours which many acknowledge will be disastrous for small businesses in Ayr and

Home Hill and to the employment opportunities for young people in our area. Please give consideration to the views expressed by the Council, on behalf of the Burdekin community.

Yours faithfully,  
John F. Woods

MAYOR."

I table that letter along with the cartoon to which Mayor Woods referred. For the benefit of members, I point out that the cartoon, Harry's View, depicts a small business operator, with the proprietor saying to his wife, "Our hours are numbered." Obviously, that is a play on the saying, "Our days are numbered." Along with that, I table a letter to the Premier, which states—

"Dear Premier,

...

Enclosed, for your information, is a copy of a letter forwarded to your Cabinet colleague, the Honourable Matt Foley. My letter has the support of small business in this rural community. Also, the Ayr and Home Hill Chambers of Commerce support the Council's submission to your Government.

Please give consideration to the views expressed by the Council on behalf of the Burdekin community."

I table those letters, and I say with all sincerity that the Burdekin Shire Council is just one component of the Burdekin community, which I represent.

The northern end of my electorate encompasses the southern suburbs of Townsville City, and within it there are a multitude of small businesses situated along the highway. The member for Thuringowa would be well aware of the area about which I speak. Those people in that area are in even more direct competition with the major shopping centres in the city. I do not begrudge the major shopping centres their share of business. In fact, last week, I was in Sydney talking to one of the major operators. They make a major contribution to our community and to society generally. However, there is a thing called balance, and that balance provides the job structure and price competition. I wondered what the Minister was talking about in his second-reading speech when he said—

"In a free society, the rule of law should allow citizens the maximum liberty consistent with the rights of others and the public good. The welfare of the people is the chief law, as Cicero once observed. For this reason, our laws need to be constantly overhauled to ensure that they keep pace

with the changing lifestyles and needs of the Queensland people."

Further on, the Minister stated—

"It is imperative that Queensland's legislation keep pace with and reflect the changes that our society has undergone and will continue to undergo into the twenty-first century."

This is the Government that took industrial relations legislation back to the 1950s. Talk about back to the future! Minister Foley would be the greatest hypocrite of all time. Of course, he has no understanding of the portfolio. He must be an embarrassment to the people of his department with whom he has to deal, and who have to support him. I say that if this Minister is genuine, and undoubtedly he is not or he does not know what he is talking about, he should consider the hours of work in the public sector. Is he going to open up the main roads offices? Is this Government going to say, "It is fair that shopping hours should be extended"?

I welcome the Minister back to the Chamber—he has been away for two or three hours—to listen to the strength of my argument. I ask the Minister: is he going to open up the main roads offices so that people can pay their registration at a sensible and reasonable time, such as he suggests the private sector does? Is he going to open up the Lands Department so that people can get their titles work done, something that so many of us find difficult to do during normal working hours? Is the Minister going to open up the courthouses as part of his rule of law that should allow the citizens the maximum liberty consistent with the rights of others and the public good? Is that part of what this hypocritical buffoon talks about? I wonder about the depth of his sincerity. Is he is going to extend the operating hours of the Department of Consumer Affairs so that consumers have longer hours in which to talk to its officers as opposed to the present 9 to 5 situation?

**Mr Santoro:** The Minister probably believes, and rightly so, that that will cost him too much, just as it will cost small business too much.

**Mr STONEMAN:** That is the point I am coming to. If it is good enough for the goose, it is good enough for the gander. I say that if private enterprise and the thousands of small businesses in this State have to cop this extension of hours, why should not the Government then say, "We will throw open the offices of the Lands Department, Consumer Affairs, main roads", and a multitude of others that should, similarly, be serving the public under the rights about which this Minister speaks. What a lot of poppycock! What a ridiculous statement!

Talk about rights and convenience and conventions! Talk about Machiavellian!

**Mr Santoro:** I wonder why the Minister isn't responding to that.

**Mr Foley:** I am just waiting for you to talk about free enterprise.

**Mr STONEMAN:** I will talk a little about it. I thank the Minister for that interjection. When the Minister was out of the Chamber, I made the point that, with trading hours, there has to be flexibility, but there also has to be a balance. Some regulation is a vital component of economic growth, as well as serving the public interest. Last week, we heard the Minister for Consumer Affairs and the Premier going on about how they thought that the Commonwealth Censor had done the right thing, but that the appeal board had overridden it. In Queensland, we had the capacity to save people from disgusting shows such as *Salò*. As it is, we need regulation of every structure in the State. There has to be. We cannot have open slather, otherwise people's equity in their businesses and their borrowings will be all out of kilter.

This morning the Premier admitted to being wrong about the aeroplane. Apparently, the ALP shop-trading hours policy must have been wrong in 1986. Back then, its policy was that "Labor will not support the extension of existing trading hours, and will ensure that applications for variations to trading hours are heard before the State Industrial Commission". Again, it must have been wrong in 1989. My colleague the member for Clayfield mentioned this earlier. I was also interested to hear the member for Waterford talking about the ALP philosophy and so on. The policy in 1989 was, "As a party, the Australian Labor Party is philosophically opposed to uncontrolled extended hours, as we believe that owners as well as employees are entitled to enjoy some leisure time with their families and participate in recreational activities." Government members should talk to the people in my electorate, both in the small areas and in the big city. Further on, Labor policy stated, "Labor will consult".

The guided democracy of the Labor Party in this State is inextricably linked to the union movement and what it wants to do. I am not knocking the union movement—good on it—but I am knocking the cancerous growth of the mega-unions. There should be more little unions, not these huge conglomerate structures to which they are moving now.

Not only was the Labor Party wrong in 1986 and 1989; not only was it wrong over courthouses—and we saw the Premier boohoo over that; not only was it wrong about daylight saving; the sale of the jet; and the rail line

closures; it is wrong about this, as it is wrong about many other issues in this State. It does not care about those small families and the small businesspeople who have built up their own businesses on hard work over years and, in some cases, generations. It does not care about the impact on those people. It does not care about the newsagencies that will have to compete with the shopping centres. It does not care about the greengrocers. It does not care about the people who are now going to be able to be free to shop when they like. I do not blame people for driving 50 or 100 kilometres—which they will do—to trade in another area. We cannot put up a barrier, but we can maintain some sensible protection in legislation.

Some 93 per cent of Queensland businesses each employ fewer than 20 people. That is what the Labor Party is on about. On the most recent figures available to me, 83 407 businesses each employ fewer than five people. That is the thing that sticks in the craw of the union movement. That is the thing it does not want. It wants to grasp those people. The unions would rather have them on the dole than working for small businesses, where they cannot be stood on, controlled and brought into line. These are the people—the men, the women, the workers—who have put their shoulders to the wheel and maintained the economic structure that we have in Queensland.

The comparisons that the Minister and others on the Government side make with other States have little relevance to this State. We are entirely different. We are spread out. We have a series of major centres within a couple of hours drive of each other along the coast, so there is easy access to shops two hours either side of small communities. We have the huge centres of Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Hervey Bay, and Brisbane City. Those areas radiate out into adjoining small communities. Those small communities, and the fringes of areas such as Townsville, are serviced by good, honest and sincere members—like the member for Thuringowa and myself. We serve the fringe. We are not in the middle of the big cities; we are out where the real people are trying to maintain some sort of balance for small businesses. These people have mortgaged their lives and have given away countless thousands of hours in support of the community to make something. Now that structure is being pulled down. Undoubtedly, they will lose their equity and businesses through this change in the legislation.

There are a number of other issues that I would like to go into. I will conclude with the comments made by Dr Robert Baker of the University of New England. He was interviewed

very recently about the social impact of extended trading hours. He spoke of the problem of closing down the small corner stores, which have become the hub of elderly people's existence. For example, elderly people walk to the store along the footpath, and say hello to friends and neighbours in the security of their own community. They are supported by shopkeepers who know what they want and give them service. They do not have the hassle of having to catch a taxi or jostling into the city in a car. They can maintain the lifestyle that they have always had and that has been there since time immemorial. Yet these people will see their local corner stores, if not wiped out, certainly reduced in their capacity to provide service. Such stores will not be able to afford to adequately stock their shelves on a lower turnover. They will not be able to provide the same range of goods—and we are already seeing that. Therefore, these elderly people, as well as young people who push their prams down to the local store, are at risk because of the refusal of this Government, and particularly this Minister, to accept the enormous impact that his extended trading hours will have on the social and economic fabric of this State.

This is one of the most damnable days. I support the Burdekin Shire and I support all of those others who have recognised, as the Government has not, what this will do to our community. The Minister stands condemned. The day that the Government brings this in is a sad day for Queensland. Although some big operators will certainly be happy, the rest of the community will not.

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy) (4.17 p.m.): I rise to speak in this House today in relation to the new laws which will allow for greater freedom for retailers to trade in hours more appropriate to their individual business needs. The new hours are recognition by the Government that modern lifestyles are bringing about a change in customer demand for access to certain shops. The general consensus is that the changes were necessary to meet the needs of consumers. Many Queensland families now have both partners working. Changing work and leisure patterns make more demand on our time, something of which we are all aware. It does not matter what we are doing, as families we have greater demands placed upon us. Certainly, I am one person who would like to be able to spend some time shopping with my wife and family.

The legislation before the House will, in the main, create uniformity of hours; namely, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and on Sundays and public holidays shops will be closed. When I was first made aware that Cabinet was considering extended trading hours, I was one member who requested that the

matter be discussed in caucus. Having a number of rural towns in my electorate, I was concerned about the impact that extended trading hours would have on local business. I want to stress that the comments that I am making in this debate—particularly now—are personal; they are not because of any negative reaction that I received from the electorate.

I was concerned about the impact, not so much in relation to the additional hours or the local competition, but more in relation to what the local consumers would do. I was concerned about how they would react to having access to the bigger shopping centres of Mackay and Rockhampton and what impact that would have on small business communities, which are already struggling in small towns. For example, the coalmining communities in central Queensland are within two to three hours of the big centres of Mackay and Rockhampton. Extended trading hours on Saturday will definitely suit those people, as they will suit a lot of people in country areas, in the bush, and on land. It will suit those people because it will give them the opportunity to go into those centres to shop. They will not have to worry about the Saturday morning rush. They will no longer have to wake up at the break of dawn and rush into town before 12 o'clock to get their shopping done. So it will suit those people.

As I have already stated, small businesses in rural towns are already finding it difficult to survive. I personally believe that the decision to extend the shopping hours will increase the drain of consumer dollars away from small towns and the local businesses in those communities. Some shops will not survive. This will not be because of extended trading hours. There are a number of reasons why those little shops will not survive. I have lived in these rural communities for most of my life. I know the habits of the people who live there. I know the reasons why they want to go away to the bigger communities to shop. I talk regularly with the business people in those towns in my electorate. I know what they are saying. I know that they understand why those people are leaving smaller communities to go into the bigger centres of Rockhampton and Mackay. I am making informed comments, because I am out there in the electorate talking to the consumers and the people who operate the small businesses.

I want to mention some of the small communities in my electorate. They include Dysart, Middlemount, Tieri, Blackwater and Mount Morgan. Quite frankly, small businesses in those communities are doing it pretty tough. That is because, in recent years, the people who live in those communities have in increasing numbers taken the option to travel to the larger

centres, namely Mackay and Rockhampton. Shops in those smaller towns are closing. Because they are not getting enough dollars through the tills, they cannot pay their overheads. That was the position before extended trading hours were proposed. That position would have continued even if extended trading hours had not been introduced. That is just a fact of life in those communities at present.

Because of rostered shifts, families are travelling to the centres from which larger food chains operate. Shift workers have a number of days free in a row, and they take the opportunity to travel to their family home in one of the larger centres, and they purchase their groceries in those centres. While they are there, they purchase their meat, their hardware, they have a haircut, buy a carton of stubbies and purchase a new set of tyres. That business has been taken away from the smaller towns and it has gone to the larger communities. That has occurred for a number of reasons, one of which is the roster system that operates in the smaller centres such as in the coal fields.

As I was aware of what was occurring in those towns and as I was expecting a reaction from small-business operators based there, I was prepared to argue strongly in caucus against the extension of shopping hours. The reaction for which I was prepared did not eventuate. Prior to caucus, I received no more than three complaints about the possible extension of hours. Those who did contact me about the issue were newsagents who, because of the nature of their business, already work long hours and open seven days a week.

**Mr Santoro:** Let people know where you are; they will contact you.

**Mr PEARCE:** They know where I am. I am out there all the time. I have 34 500 square kilometres to cover. It takes me six hours to travel across my electorate, not five minutes. The newsagents contacted me because their organisation encouraged them to front up to their local members. That is the only type of representation that I received. That left me with no arguments to take to caucus. I had some personal concerns about extended trading hours, because I thought I understood my electorate a little better. I went to caucus without any feedback from the community. I was left feeling somewhat frustrated and embarrassed, because initially I had reacted strongly to my perception of the impact that extended trading hours would have.

When it came to the crunch in caucus, I had to admit that, due to the lack of response from my electorate, I really had no argument to put forward for small business other than my

personal feelings. As a member, it is not right for me to put my personal feelings across and hope that they represent the feelings of my electorate. I have to respond to the reaction of the electorate, and I usually take into consideration whether that is the opinion of the majority. I received no reaction from my electorate, so I was left with no choice but to support the legislation when it went through caucus.

**Mr Santoro:** Tell me, why do you think they aren't talking to you?

**Mr PEARCE:** The member for Clayfield should listen for a while. He is full of yap. He never takes interjections when he is speaking, so I ask him to behave himself and act responsibly.

I might add that, since the announcement that extended shopping hours would begin in July, I have received no complaints, no inquiries about the legislation, no phone calls—just silence. All I have heard is people such as the honourable member for Clayfield on the radio knocking something else that the Government is trying to do for people in this State. Other members have echoed my comments; they have received no complaints. I spoke to some people from Paul Braddy's office in Rockhampton—where 60 000 to 70 000 people live—and they said that they had received fewer than a dozen inquiries. Despite the claims by the member for Clayfield that he has received thousands of letters, phone calls and objections—

**Mr Santoro:** I tabled 500 this morning.

**Mr PEARCE:** The member probably signed them all himself! The reaction in my electorate has been much more subdued than the member is trying to imply. It is a well-known fact that the Nationals and the Liberals are campaigning against the extended hours, and every hard-working family in Queensland should be aware of it. The Nationals and the Liberals do not want families to have the opportunity to be together.

Poor old Mr Lester, the honourable member for Keppel. He could not miss the opportunity to pull a media stunt. What did he do? He roped some poor, innocent shopkeeper into appearing on television. The television segment in question referred to small business being affected badly by the extension of shopping hours. The member for Keppel had a lot to say. The poor old shopkeeper was a little bit bewildered and embarrassed. Old, filibustering Vince has made statements on television and in the *Morning Bulletin* about how bad the extension of shopping hours will be for small business. Where is the member for Keppel today? I will stand on my seat to see whether he

is in the Chamber. No, he is not here. Where is the member for Keppel?

**Mr Santoro:** He's looking after the people of Rockhampton.

**Mr PEARCE:** He is in the Mirani electorate. I thank the member for Clayfield for letting me know where Mr Lester is. He is in the Mirani electorate campaigning for the National Party candidate. What about the small-business operators who were relying on the member for Keppel to be in this House to put up their argument? Where is the member? He is in Mirani, waving his arms around, appearing on television—

**Mr Nunn:** He's trying to get into small business by buying a whip shop.

**Mr PEARCE:** The member for Keppel has run out of wind; I know that. Perhaps the people in the electorates of Keppel and Rockhampton in central Queensland will begin to appreciate what many people have been saying for a long time—that Vince Lester uses the media to his own advantage. However, that is where it all finishes. He does not go any further. He appears on television and radio and in the newspaper, but that is where it finishes. The member for Keppel does not follow through. I can predict what will happen. I can see it now, because the member for Keppel's colleagues will be running out and telling him about my comments in this Chamber. The member for Keppel will be back here, and he will rant and rave and say, "I am sticking up for the people in my electorate." I am good at imitating the member! The member for Keppel will make those declarations, but that is where it will end.

The member for Keppel actually urged small-business operators in shopping complexes to protect themselves and vote against the increases in core trading hours. I was very interested to hear the contribution by the member for Waterford, who referred to a couple of comments that the then Minister for Training and Industrial Affairs, Mr Lester, made in 1989. One comment in particular appeared in the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. I intend to repeat it. I want it to be recorded in *Hansard*, because I want to distribute it around the Rockhampton area. At that time, the then Minister stated—

"It is my view that, ultimately, there will be open-ended trading in Queensland. Those who are the most entrepreneurial will succeed."

Mr Lester was advocating total deregulation. The legislation before the House is about uniformity of hours, which offers small businesses the opportunity to trade when they want to within

certain limits. That is what it is about. It is not about deregulation, as Mr Lester was advocating.

On 4 January 1987 in the *Sunday Sun*, Vince Lester, who at the time was the Minister for Training and Industrial Affairs, stated—

"It's good for them but it's not good for the rest of the community. We can't afford to live in a State where the trading hours are the worst for the tourists."

On 16 December 1986 in the *Daily Sun*, Vince Lester, the Minister for Training and Industrial Affairs in the former Government, stated—

"The Queensland Government"—

that is, the Government of which he was a Minister—

"believes retailers should not be dictated to on when they can open their businesses and therefore they should have the right to determine their most profitable trading hours."

Mr Lester has now done a great backflip—a complete turn around on what he advocated when he was Minister. One could say he has walked away or one could say he has backed away from what he thought was good for small business when his party was in Government.

How much notice are people really going to take of Mr Lester? By the number of phone calls and letters that I have received, and from what I have heard from other members, I would say that no-one really cares what Mr Lester has to say any more. After all, small business operators are capable of making up their own minds and their own decisions about what they want.

After last week's outburst on flogging people until they drop, even fewer people will be listening to Mr Lester in the future. What a statement! He said that they should be flogged till they drop.

**Mr FitzGerald:** What has this got to do with the Bill before the House?

**Mr PEARCE:** Mr Lester deserves a flogging for not being here today to represent his constituents. What he is doing is a crime. He is not here doing what he is paid for, so he ought to be flogged until he drops.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I rise to a point of order. I point out to the honourable member that the Premier is not here, either.

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

**Mr PEARCE:** People such as Mr Lester make these comments without thinking for one minute about what they are saying. If Mr Lester had a son or a daughter who was caught committing an offence, would he support

flogging his own child? Of course he would not; neither would any other advocate of that style of punishment. The people I spoke to last week were angry about this outburst in Rockhampton, and the word around Rockhampton is that old Vince has gone too far.

I return to the Bill before the House. I am concerned that small business in my electorate will be affected by the extended hours because of its rural base and because people are within a reasonable driving distance of larger centres. I personally feel that extended shopping hours will impact on small business in the Central Highlands. However, I have to take into consideration what my constituents have to say. It is fair enough to have some ideas and feelings about how I think it is going to impact on my constituents, but one has to take what the community is saying, and the reactions from small businesses in my electorate leaves me with no argument.

I thought I would be supporting a group of people who needed me to stand up for them, but nobody in my electorate has complained to me about this extension of trading hours. The Minister has done his homework. The consumers have been telling the Minister that we need extended hours, and that is what this Government is providing. I support the intentions of the Bill. It is necessary to keep with the pace and changing lifestyles of most Queenslanders and, as I said, the reaction from consumers has been one of support. I have to be honest—I am honest all the time—but I did have some concerns about this. However, I am convinced that as a Government we are doing what the people want. I intend to argue that point.

I would just like to move to another aspect of the legislation that I cannot recall any other member speaking about. Also contained in this Bill is the removal of the necessity to obtain a permit to hold a church bazaar or school fete outside trading hours. That move has been welcomed by the community. I might also add that that move has been welcomed by me because I have been on a lot of committees that have run fetes and those types of things and I cannot recall ever getting a permit to hold one, anyway. That is a section of the legislation that I think in the interests of the community should be omitted because that would remove the necessity to obtain those permits to hold those types of gatherings outside normal trading hours. Every community of a reasonable size certainly holds a fare or festival, and it has been a legal requirement of organising committees in the past to obtain a permit for those functions. In the past, schools, hospitals, charitable organisations, etc., all needed a permit to hold a function. I think it is a good move by the Minister

to have these sections omitted from the legislation, as I think it will serve the community in a better way.

In closing—as I said, I have had a reaction of silence in relation to the legislation before the House. As the member representing the people in my electorate, it is my responsibility to appear in this place to express their views. I really have nothing to represent or to argue against on this legislation. So, not having any feedback from the consumers in my electorate, I do likewise and support this legislation.

**Mrs GAMIN** (Burleigh) (4.36 p.m.): I do not think I can quite reach the flights of fancy the member for Fitzroy put forward this afternoon. This is a very sad day for small Queensland retailers as we debate a quite unnecessary Bill that will successfully achieve many bankruptcies, whether that is the intention of the Bill or not. Queensland already has more liberal shopping hours than many other countries in the world. Tourist areas such as the Gold Coast and Cairns have shopping hours that visitors do not enjoy in tourist areas of far more renown, particularly in Europe or in the United Kingdom.

In bypassing the Industrial Commission, the Queensland Labor Government has shown its complete contempt for small traders and placed them at the mercy of southern based multinational retail giants and big unions. The Queensland Government's decision to extend shop trading hours across the board is a retrograde and tragic step for small businesses. Small business is a vital component of Queensland's economic balance, but this decision is clearly a victory for the unions. There has been a trend away from union membership, so the unions are determined to reverse this trend by wiping out the small operators. These small operators are the backbone of service to the public, family employment, price stability and small investment.

The Industrial Relations Minister is on record as saying that he would not expect all retailers to adopt the longer hours. If they do not adopt the longer hours, they probably will not survive anyway and some of them are barely holding on, perilously close to annihilation. If they do adopt the longer hours, they have only two choices: to subject themselves and their family members to killing longer hours, or to cripple their businesses financially by paying staff to work the longer hours.

There is no guarantee that these longer hours will increase trade by bringing more customers through their doors. The shopping dollar will only stretch so far. Housewives are the greatest shopping consumers and they are spending as much as they can afford right now.

Being able to shop during longer trading hours will not bring more trade to small retailers. What it will do is increase market share for the big retail giants who will stop competing against each other and start competing against small business with the aim of wiping it out. The retail giants want longer trading hours to increase sales, and they will be quite ruthless in putting smaller retailers out of business. In order to make quite sure of this, they have done a deal with the unions and then with the Queensland Labor Government to bypass the Industrial Commission and to achieve their nefarious designs by legislation.

In today's *Courier-Mail*, the Queensland Fruit and Vegetables Traders Association has taken out an advertisement and quoted a statement made in 1992 by the then Woolworths supermarket managing director on that company's growth in sales of fresh fruit and vegetables because of extended trading hours in Sydney. That advertisement states—

"We've got enormous growth, particularly in fresh food areas, because, let's face it, the independent operator has to go home some time or another . . . In the supermarket we just bring in another group of people."

The retail giants admit that they need longer trading hours so they can dominate and control the market. That same advertisement also says—

"While the top five retailers controlled 95 per cent of the \$25 billion national groceries market, the independents still dominated the remainder of the food industry, and it's extended trading hours where our opportunity lies for growth."

In trying to gain increased market share, it is obvious that the big chains have stopped competing against each other and are hell bent on destroying competition from the small independents. Ninety-three per cent of Queensland businesses employ fewer than 20 people, with 83 407 small businesses employing fewer than five people. By extending trading hours as outlined in this Bill, employment in this State will not be increased. On the contrary, more people will be thrown out of work as more and more small businesses are forced to put staff off and eventually close their doors. It is already a feature of operations of the big chains that not many permanent staff are employed and that they concentrate on casuals.

In order to survive this Government's attack on their business viability, small and family operators who already work very long hours will have to become virtually slave labour if they are going to survive. Small and family operators only exist because they provide a level of personal service coupled with price balance. This will

disappear completely from our economy. In many instances, their asset value will drop enormously. If they want to sell out, what will be left for them to sell? Most of them have their homes mortgaged to the hilt. Their backs are against the wall now. This legislation is a body blow from which many will not recover.

Furthermore, as time goes by, the other very large section of the community that will suffer will, in fact, be the consumers. Experience in the United States shows that, as the small retail industry gradually dried up and the big multi chains took dominance in the market, in addition to controlling the market the big chains then also controlled the price structure. Prices rose as competition decreased, and higher prices caused considerable consumer suffering. Consumers are now clamouring for better and cheaper shopping—for more retail competition.

The United States experience is succinctly covered in the final statement in this morning's *Courier-Mail* advertisement, to which I have already referred. It states—

"Extended shopping hours will not put more shopping dollars in your pocket. They will reduce the number of real shopping options and put control of product, service and pricing in the hands of a small number of large operators."

As I have said, in Queensland we enjoy shopping hours longer than those in many civilised Western countries. We have quite enough hours of shopping. This is borne out by the survey undertaken last weekend on the Gold Coast, which has already been referred to. The editorial in this morning's *Gold Coast Bulletin* quite rightly says—and I quote it again, although the member for Nerang has already done so, because I believe it should be said—

"The Gold Coast, as a tourist resort-city, enjoys considerable trading hours flexibility. Whether this should be broadened even further, and to what extent it should apply in other cities and regions, are thorny questions indeed. It will be preferable if the answers are drawn from adequate research rather than from an experiment that could send some traders to the wall."

As part of my activities as an elected representative, I make sure that I regularly get around to see many of my small retailers—in addition, of course, to the contacts that they make with me. I try to get around to see as many small shopkeepers as possible during the course of the year—talking to them, finding out what is going on and getting their views on a wide variety of matters. It so happens that, the week before last, I spent a morning visiting small businesses in the Palm Beach area. The most noted feature of

that morning was the concentrated opposition to extended trading hours. This came not only from businesses but also from shoppers. Consumers are quite smart enough to understand the ramifications of extending trading hours, and it is quite obvious that their sympathies lie with the small traders.

The push for extended trading hours is not coming from consumers; it is not coming from small retailers. The push for extended trading hours has come from the multinational chains working in conjunction with the union movement. The Goss Labor Government has joined this unholy alliance—spearheaded by the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations.

I have said that the Goss Labor Government's decision to extend shop trading hours across-the-board is a most retrograde and tragic step. We will see small business turnover decrease. We will see many, many small businesses close their doors. We will see more and more bankruptcies. We will see more people thrown onto the unemployment queues. We will see prices rise and consumers suffer. This will be a tragedy for Queensland small retailers and a tragedy for all Queenslanders.

**Mr ARDILL** (Archerfield) (4.44 p.m.): I was appalled by the cynical attack launched in this Chamber by the Opposition spokesperson, in his usual dishonest way, on members on this side of the House who strongly oppose an increase in trading hours. We had our say, made our points and now accept that the democratic process means that the majority view must prevail.

The member for Nerang compounded the hypocrisy of the Liberal Party by continuing the argument that small traders in major shopping centres will be forced to pay the costs of the major tenant who wishes to open for the maximum time despite the fact that the small trader has opted not to do so. This is the case in Liberal States and has been the case in Queensland shopping centres up to this point in time. The rapacious landlords in those shopping centres have been doing this. However, when he made his untrue statement, the member for Nerang knew that an amendment to clause 19 of this Bill, which had been circulated to him and all other members in this Chamber, would prevent that practice from being perpetuated.

Amendment 2 states that clause 19 be amended by inserting—

"A tenant under a retail shop lease (the 'first tenant') is not liable under the first tenant's lease for any additional outgoings only because an eligible tenant's shop is open for trading outside the core trading

hours when the first tenant's shop is not open for trading."

That will take away the opportunity for rapacious landlords to impose that charge.

**Mr CONNOR:** I rise to a point of order. When I made my speech, I was not aware of that amendment on the table.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk):** Order! There is no point of order. The Chair rules that there is absolutely no point of order. The member will resume his seat. I call the member for Archerfield.

**Mr ARDILL:** The Liberal Party should be the last to cast stones. It wholeheartedly supports deregulation, except when it is politically opposing what someone else is doing. What has it done in other States? It has allowed 24-hour, seven-day-a-week trading, but it is opposing an additional three and a half hours per day on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Why don't you want Sunday trading—24-hour shopping?

**Mr ARDILL:** I do not want Sunday trading at all.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Why not?

**Mr ARDILL:** Sunday trading in tourist areas is a must, but Sunday trading in the suburbs and in country towns is absolutely unnecessary, except for exempt goods.

**Mr FitzGerald:** Why?

**Mr ARDILL:** Because nobody should have to work those hours if they do not want to. Clearly, most traders do not want to.

At the outset, it should be said that the issue is not concern for the small traders in 24-hour trading situations, such as the Nightowl and service stations. The concern is for the grocery trade and the other food trades that do not have to open seven days a week now and still will not have to open seven days a week.

I am concerned that longer trading hours for the major retailers could give them an unfair advantage over smaller traders, particularly those in neighbourhood shopping centres and older neighbourhood shopping groups. I am greatly concerned about the possible effect on the grocery trade in particular, as the grocery sector in Queensland is already in a state of turmoil over the recent takeover attempts of the wholesale suppliers. This attempt failed. The new strategy that has been adopted will result in a new chain of retail discount grocery barns concentrating on no-brand-name goods.

If anyone doubts the danger that arises from Jewels discounting practices—and that is the chain that I am talking about—they should

consider that Jewels is already the fourth largest retailer of groceries Australiawide—behind Woolworths, Coles and Franklins. In 10 years, that chain has increased gross sales from \$350m in 1983 to \$950m in 1993. Its discount stores, which are heavily into no-brand-name goods, have up to 3 000 square metres in floor area—three-quarters of an acre in one store, or five building allotments. Those are massive stores. Jewels has finally decided to enter Queensland to compete with our local stores. It is proposed to build 20 of its stores in Queensland in the next few years. Jewels opened six new stores last year in New South Wales and has already established a Queensland bridgehead at Maroochydore. It also has links with major fruit barns in Queensland.

There is no doubt that this new war which has been declared will have a much greater effect on the main grocery groups in Queensland than the extended trading hours that we are talking about today, and traders should be aware of that. The major retailers have already attempted to apply pressure to manufacturers and suppliers to eliminate brand names, which is the only protection that the consumer has. The new campaign by Davids and their associates and partners, Jewels Stores, will apply further pressure to Australian suppliers to produce goods without identification. This in turn will allow further penetration of cheaper imports into Australia—imports which are often of inferior standard and are often prepared under very questionable conditions, including poor health controls. One simple example is the appalling standard of imported pineapple, which is unripe and tasteless and compares very badly with that produced by the Golden Circle cannery in Brisbane.

It is vital in the interests of consumers that control of the grocery supply and wholesale market does not pass to Woolworths, Coles, Franklins, Bi-Lo or the Davids group. The public, if they want to have freedom of choice, should be encouraged to support the independent grocery groups. The move to extend trading hours will not have a major effect on mum and dad stores, which will continue to capture the impulse buying market. Statements by members of the Opposition and others that these shops will close are nonsense.

The extension of hours could have an effect on neighbourhood centres, as I said, and on the Foodland, Foodstore, and Supa Valu type stores. This in turn would have an effect on other shops in those centres. The loss of a grocery store or the downgrading of a supermarket-type grocery store to a corner shop status would kill these neighbourhood centres and has already

done so in some areas on which older residents and one-car families rely.

What I am saying is that the new competition by discount trading barns would have a greater effect than longer trading hours by Woolworths and Coles-Myer and the public should take warning that a short-term lowering of prices could do long-term harm if it means the loss of local grocery supermarkets which concentrate on a wide variety of choice. The 7-2-7 stores and other long-hour stores already work long hours, so the new hours are not an issue for them. The local grocers in Foodland etc, and their attendant butchers, drapers and hot bread kitchens and hot food shops, are most concerned about the prospect of a large extension of trading hours, which would remove them from family life altogether. I have a great deal of sympathy for that fear.

I have predicted, and will restate it here, that these neighbourhood centres will not stay open for the complete range of hours for a very long period. They will find that the majority of residents do not want to spend their evenings in shopping centres when they can be at home relaxing before the television. In the initial stage, no doubt, the neighbourhood centres will try to compete with the major centres, but they will find that the people will stay away in droves. I believe that local shopkeepers will not have to stay open until 9 o'clock every night of the week as they at present fear; there will just not be the market there for them. Certainly people will take advantage of night shopping to buy furniture, carpet and white goods on the occasions when that is necessary. However, they will not be out every night buying groceries and clothing. This Bill will result in a shift from the neighbourhood centres to the major centres but the quantum is uncertain. We can only hope that it is not going to be the large-scale movement that is feared by the retail traders and promoted by the Opposition.

I urge the public to consider well before deserting retail traders who provide personal service. This change may give short-term gain but destroy services which they will need in the future. This debate gives an opportunity for the public to consider their long-term interests and this is what the Opposition should be concentrating on—a responsible attitude to advising the public how their long-term interests will be served and the danger that could have an impact on those long-term interests. Their interests can be protected only by the support that people give to a wide range of competing traders.

**Mr GRICE** (Broadwater) (4.56 p.m.): This latest reform by the Labor Goss Government has

nothing to do with giving the consumer or retail industry workers a better deal, as Labor members would have us believe. It is not about some new-found freedom of choice to consumers who have supposedly never had it. There is already a range of shopping hours about which few consumers could complain. It is not about lining the pockets of retail employees with new wealth. Anything extra they earn will be at the expense of long or very inconvenient shifts at the counter or the check-out.

What this legislation is all about is boosting the market power of Labor's mates in the big retail chains. It is also about boosting the membership and power of the factionally correct Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association. Very importantly, it is also about boosting the political prospects of the union's State Secretary, John Hogg. I will get to Mr Hogg in a moment.

This legislation is all about driving more customers into the arms of the oligopolies which already exist in the various retail sectors. It is about boosting their dominance at the expense of the smaller operators whom they have not yet been able to drive out of business. Along the way, of course, there are a few other implications, and I will spend a moment on them for the benefit of Labor's foot-soldiers on my left who will have to wear the flak in their marginal seats. Even the faithful are getting the shivers about Labor's unholy corporatist alliance which began with Bob Hawke and continues today with Paul Keating and his local sub-chief, Wayne Goss. By 1989, the academic Labor apologist Graham Maddox felt the need to put old Labor's fears into print. In a book entitled *The Hawke Government and Labor Tradition*, Maddox mourned the modern Labor Party's "betrayal"—his word, not mine—of the people it traditionally represented.

One of the modern Labor features Maddox feared was corporatism—that is a nice word for a dirty deal stitched up by Labor's new generation of so-called leaders. It involves big Labor Government sitting down to do deals with big business and big unions. It also involves the destruction of small unions in favour of large ones, leaving just a few union bosses for Labor's power players to do their deals with. It also involves helping a few big companies carve up Australia's markets at the expense of the real backbone of our economy—and that has always been small to medium-sized businesses. Along the way, everybody suffers except the Labor bosses, the union bosses who pull the strings and, of course, the big business power brokers. The losers are the consumers facing oligopoly pricing, the workers who are the pawns for their own union bosses, and the small family

businesses that are such a nuisance to big business and big unions alike.

Labor has sold out, and more and more people realise it every day. Labor bosses and union bosses have betrayed their traditional constituency, for a few bottles of chardonnay and the chance to hob-nob in a few boardrooms. Union members in the retail industry must wonder about their leadership. They all remember who used to lead the fight against extended trading hours. It was the boss of the shop assistants' union—John Hogg. How times change! Suddenly, the same Mr Hogg is pushing hard for extended trading hours. He has snuggled right up to the oligopolists who control the bulk of retail trade in Australia. Mr Hogg wants them to increase their market dominance.

It has not escaped notice that his union is now a major player in the inner councils of the ALP in this State. With the union fees of his 24 000 members as a bargaining chip, John Hogg is becoming a significant player at Peel Street. But he wants more; he wants to retire to the Senate, and he is dealing very hard for a spot at the unbeatable end of the Labor ticket. The king-maker is already on side, the boss of the biggest union affiliated with the ALP in Queensland. Honourable members know whom I mean—Bill Ludwig. He has already let it slip that John Hogg is Canberra-bound, so long as one of three incumbents can be persuaded to fall on his sword. Mal Colston was ready to go but, without receiving the right job offer, he now wants to stay. So does Gerry Jones. The Left already has the nod for the replacement for Bryant Burns. If no-one goes, then Hogg and Ludwig have a problem. The answer is: do a deal. This time, they rely on the fact that the only place in which the union has a hold is in the retail chains. Most workers in small stores will not cop a bar of the union and its capitation fees to the ALP. Only 5 per cent of staff in independent retail stores are members of John Hogg's union.

However, the chains are very different. Extensive warehousing and distribution networks make them vulnerable to union pressure. It is easier to go with the flow and recover added costs through pricing policies. In essence, extended trading hours are aimed at growth in the unionised retail work force at the expense of the non-union staff of small business. There would be higher capitation funds for the Labor Party and more clout for John Hogg. By swinging in his union behind the extension of trading hours, he gives himself and Bill Ludwig a much better chance to force the retirement of Colston and Jones.

This legislation lays the ground work for that deal. Without doubt, it will put pressure on the

small retail operators. It will saddle them with an extra cost that they will find hard to pass on in through their prices. We have heard already about the burden that some shopping centres will impose on tenants by way of sharing out the standing costs of major chains to operate extended hours. We must also consider the extra staff cost involved in staying open longer for very little, or no extra sales.

It is facile to say that smaller businesses need not stay open. If they do not, they will lose even more customers to the chains. If they do stay open longer, they suffer added costs. In the end, many will go under, delivering more market to the big oligopolists. Initially, as Woolworths has made very clear already, the chains will stay open for the full allowable period. They will use the extended hours to crush even more of their competition, as they have done so far. Take the words of former managing director Harry Watts. On 26 October 1992 in Adelaide, Mr Watts told potential shareholders how Woolworths would grow at the expense of independent operators and how extended trading hours should help in that endeavour. He said that the top five retailers controlled 95 per cent of the national grocery market worth \$25 billion a year. However, the independents were still dominant in the remainder of the food industry, worth an additional \$19.8 billion a year. Mr Watts talked about that section and referred to products such as fresh food, fruit and vegetables, meat, fish and the bakery as an area offering Woolworths the opportunity for growth. He linked that opportunity directly to increased trading hours which, by that time, were available already in Sydney. His next words put the lie to everything Labor has said about extended trading hours. I will quote what he said word for word—

"We've got enormous growth, particularly in fresh food areas in those stores because, let's face it the independent operator has to go home some time or other.

In the supermarket, we just bring in another group of people."

Government members are mandating the giants in driving the small, local businesses to the wall, along with their staff. Government members will also answer for it when the market power of the chains becomes even greater and the people who elected them suffer the consequences.

It is instructive to consider how a few major companies have carved up Australia's retail markets and used their power to bleed dry both consumers and product suppliers. Since the merger just two years ago of British Paints, Dulux and Berger, the price of paint, which is certainly a

major hardware line, has risen by more than one-third. Effectively, there are just two competitors remaining in the paint market, and consumers are entitled to wonder just how real the competition is. In the bread industry, mergers have eliminated any substantial competition except where a market share war is briefly fought in a particular area. In grocery retailing, as Harry Watts said, five players share 95 per cent of the market, and around 70 per cent of the market is held by the biggest players—Woolworths, Coles Myers and Franklins. The hardware industry is controlled by Woolworths, Coles Myer and Burns Philp. Electrical retailing is almost a private playground for five dominant companies, again including Coles Myer and Woolworths.

Not one of these situations has led to cheaper prices, better choice for consumers, greater access by suppliers, or any increase in total jobs. The opposite conclusion is inescapable. We now have a consolidation of massive market forces. Coles Myer, through its subsidiaries, has a market dominance unequalled throughout the world. The group controls 15.5 per cent of national retail sales. The biggest retailer in the United States is WalMart, which has a 2.8 per cent share of the total market.

When the Australian Senate Cooney committee inquired into mergers, monopolies and acquisitions, the evidence was frightening. Evidence given by the National Party Senate Leader, Ron Boswell, was strongly critical of some major companies. I will not go into detail of that evidence now, because it is contained in *Hansard*. However, it makes frightening reading. I will say that Senator Boswell, in his evidence, included examples of the way in which the oligopolies use market power to force suppliers to give huge discounts, which are then not passed on to consumers. The senator gave examples of how even medium-sized and larger-sized businesses could not cope with the fact that 18 per cent of their total output was in the hands of the three major retailers. Suppliers had the choice of submission to the plethora of discounts, promotional fees, preferred supplier discounts, special catalogue discounts, corporate rebates and shelf space fees, or losing access to a substantial part of the nation's retail market.

Senator Boswell gave the example of a manufacturer supplying a major retail chain having to give a discount of 40 per cent off the normal wholesale price. Survival for that manufacturer meant a higher wholesale price for the product. The bottom line was that, in many cases, the Australian consumer was paying higher prices because of retail market dominance.

The Cooney committee recommendations led to legislation having the effect of prohibiting mergers that had the likely effect of substantially lessening competition in a substantial market. However, there is more than one way to skin a cat. If Governments play along, the big oligopolists can still wipe out their small competitors and, as this legislation shows, Labor is only too happy to do that.

The Minister, in his second-reading speech, was quite misleading in a number of areas. One such area was the effect of the extension of trading hours in New South Wales a couple of years ago. The Minister told us that, during the period between 1986 and 1992, employment in the retail industry increased by 40 000. He told us that half of that employment rose within the smaller non-food sector. There would be something very wrong if retail employment did not grow by at least 40 000 over six years in the most heavily populated State in this nation. As at the 1986 census, New South Wales had a population of more than five and a half million. By 1991, the official estimate was that the population of New South Wales had grown to more than 5.9 million. With a population growth of almost 400 000 in five years, I think a retail work force growth of 40 000 is very moderate indeed. On the Minister's figures, 20 000 of those jobs were created in the smaller non-food sector.

The Minister claims that the evidence does not show a decline in trade for smaller retailers, but the Food Retailers Association of New South Wales can put the lie to that. It says that, in the last three years, coinciding with extended trading hours, more than 600 of its members have gone belly up. I am not saying that every one of those business closures was as a result of extended trading hours, but the vast bulk of them most certainly were.

How many independent businesses must be sacrificed at the altar of Labor's corporatism before the southern boardrooms are satisfied? The way things have been going, Labor wants just a few players in every area. We have seen what Labor did to the bread industry. By refusing to police orderly marketing arrangements, it then threw its hands in the air and proclaimed that deregulation was the only answer. Now, just a few factories control the major market in sliced and wrapped bread, and prices have risen alarmingly. Labor wiped out small business in favour of unionised big business and the consumer got it in the neck. Newsagents are next on the hit list of this unholy alliance of Labor and big business. That is already clear, and I am now prepared to forecast that pharmacy lines will follow. The chains want to skim the cream off the magazine market, and they have an ally in the

Labor-appointed Trade Practices Commission. The TPC has allowed oligopoly power to flourish in Australia, and now it wants to end the territorial arrangements that give newsagents certain rights with regard to sales of books and periodicals. The main trade-off for customers is an important one. The retail operation subsidises the unprofitable business of home delivery of newspapers. The sales of the half dozen mass-market periodicals such as the *Australian Women's Weekly*, *New Idea* and *Woman's Day* means that newsagents can stock the lower-volume lines such as the hobby and special-interest publications. But the Trade Practices Commission wants to deregulate, and the end result will be the chain stores moving in on a half dozen or so of the bigger sellers. That is another victory in the making for Labor and unionised big business at the expense of independent operators. Or course, the consumer gets it in the neck again.

The Trade Practices Commission even pulls on a guernsey in this matter of the extended trading hours. In case the independents have any thoughts of coordinating their fight back against the cosy arrangements between Labor and the big companies, the TPC has already issued a warning. Its local boss, Mr Allan Ducret, has put out a media statement warning of trouble for any groups of retailers who get together to re-regulate the hours that they will trade in any area. He stated—

"... any agreement of this kind which seeks to restrict competition between competitors is prohibited. This includes arrangements about shopping hours. A relaxation of legislative restrictions is not a green light for industry-based regulation. Each business should individually set its own trading hours. Those hours cannot be determined in consultation with industry associations or competitors."

To say that extended trading is good for the jobs of retail workers is an outright, blatant lie. This legislation places a great many people at risk of financial ruin. Figures show that in 1991-92 there were almost 30 000 shopfronts in Queensland. It would not be far from the mark to say that that represents up to 25 000 individual businesses employing up to 100 000 people.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics, in catalogue 8623.3, breaks figures such as that down by area. Take the example of independent supermarkets and grocery stores. In the coastal area from Noosa to the border, the ABS tells us there are 862 such stores, employing 6 895 people. They have an annual turnover of more than \$707m. How many of those independent business owners does Labor want to bankrupt

for the benefit of the southern chains? How many of those almost 7 000 staff does it want to throw on the unemployment scrap heap to satisfy southern boardrooms?

The Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association has cited to me a survey from South Australia showing the likely scenario. That survey indicates that only one new chain supermarket job is created for every 3.9 jobs lost when independents are driven to the wall. We should remember that in the past three years Coles Myer has shed 10 000 jobs nationally. I do not want the Gold Coast to face that sort of risk, but clearly it will under this Goss Labor Government scenario to betray small business and its employees. The Australian Bureau of Statistics tells us there are 2 875 independent shopfronts on the Gold Coast. They employ 18 462 people and have an annual turnover of \$487m. Clearly, the health of the independent retail sector is vital to the continued viability of the Gold Coast. Anything which threatens even 10 per cent of that employment cannot be contemplated.

But studies in other States have shown a 20 per cent decline in business to the independents when trading hours have been extended. Extended trading hours do not create extra retail dollars. All they do is redistribute some of the current market at an enormous cost to some businesses. The total market is growing at only a snail's pace—just 3 per cent in the past two years. In spite of that, the major players plan to spend \$1.3 billion getting 440 new supermarkets into operation over the next 10 years.

*Business Review Weekly* reported the expansion plans last August, saying that Woolworths plans 60 to 100 new stores over the decade. Coles will build another 57 new stores in the next four years, and Franklins an extra 142 in the next six years. Not even current levels of market dominance justify that sort of expansion. There has been an expectation that conditions will move even more in their favour. Some obviously have to go. Legislation such as this means that it will be the independents. In spite of what the Minister says, some of the evidence is to be found in Sydney. I have seen a report on night shopping there compiled from an observation made on the night of 21 March this year. I will mention a little of that very detailed report, which covered 15 suburbs in a period from 4.15 p.m. to 12.45 a.m.

The observer made this general comment—

"It is obvious that the big three are open after 5.30 p.m. in 90 per cent of shopping areas to kill off the 7-11 shops, Nightowl convenience stores, Foodstores, Foodmarkets and, more particularly, the

service stations which sell food at 50 per cent higher prices.

They are endeavouring to take trade which they never had, and are using the profits gained from normal trading to squander on late trading."

Early in the evening, the stores operated by the big chains were doing a booming business. The independents—butchers, pharmacies, newsagents and delicatessens— were either closed or doing no trade at all. By 7 p.m., the report says that even the big chains were doing badly. The Franklins at Strathfield had only three checkouts working out of 12. At Auburn, none of the 10 checkouts was operating. At 8 p.m. at Castle Hill, the Coles store had none of its 15 checkouts working. By 9 p.m., in most areas the chain supermarkets were still open, but the only people to be seen were security guards and louts—no customers.

That report made a couple of other points that we should be considering. It said the car parks at the big centres were dangerous places after dark, especially the ones with trees. The observer asked a valid question: how many security guards would be needed to make those car parks safe? The answer is: an army.

The final point that I want to make about the Sydney report is that Coles was open because Woolworths was open. Franklins was open because Coles and Woolworths were open. It made no sense to the man who wrote that report, and it makes no sense to me. If the Sydney example means nothing to Labor, what about the failed experiment for longer hours in Brisbane City?

Time expired.

Debate interrupted.

#### DISTINGUISHED VISITORS

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Palaszczuk): Order! Honourable members, I wish to acknowledge the presence of Mr and Mrs Saucedo in the Speaker's Gallery. Mr Saucedo is the Director of the National Court Reporters Association of America.

**Honourable members:** Hear, Hear!

#### TRADING (ALLOWABLE HOURS) AMENDMENT BILL

##### Second Reading

Debate resumed.

**Ms SPENCE** (Mount Gravatt) (5.17 p.m.): I rise in support of this legislation that is about extending the shopping hours of this State and making shopping hours more flexible. This

legislation is all about freedom of choice, freeing up a market, and ensuring that the Queensland economy continues to expand.

Earlier in the debate today, the member for Clayfield quoted some comments on this subject by members on this side of the House. I am not surprised that he should choose to quote our members. He obviously feels that a dearth of intelligent remarks were made by coalition members on this subject, but he is wrong.

I am loath to ever agree with the member for Keppel, Mr Lester, but when he was the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations he had some very intelligent comments to make about this subject. Mr Lester said when he was in Government that—

"... the Queensland Government believes retailers should not be dictated to on when they can open their businesses and, therefore, they should have the right to determine their most profitable trading hours."

This Government agrees. Mr Lester also said—and I am quoting from *Daily Sun* and *Sunday Sun* newspaper articles—

"Why should a Government dictate when a person can earn a living?"

I have to agree with Mr Lester. He also said—

"It is my view that ultimately there will be open-ended trading in Queensland and those who are most entrepreneurial will succeed."

He would get no argument here. He also said—

"It is good for them, but it is not good for the rest of the community. We cannot afford to live in a State where the trading hours are the worst for the tourists."

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** Was he the Minister at the time?

**Ms SPENCE:** Mr Lester was the Minister responsible for this area when he made these statements in 1986. That is exactly what this Government is saying today. This back-peddalling by today's Opposition is obviously just another example of the Opposition opposing legislation on the basis that it sees its role as opposing everything. In all of the debate that I have heard today, there were very few intelligent remarks from the Opposition. Very few members mentioned the consumer. Let us face it, the consumer will be the main beneficiary of this legislation. I think we have all lost sight of the fact that the retail industry is there to suit the needs of consumers. They will decide when they will shop, where they will shop, and what they will buy. The present shopping hours do restrict consumers and create costs for them. The

Opposition has failed to acknowledge that family situations have changed in this country in the last couple of decades; that employment situations have changed; that we have families in which both parents work; and that we have many single-parent families and many consumers who cannot shop at times optimal to them.

Anyone who has been shopping on a Thursday night will realise how unpleasant that experience can be. Very few members have mentioned that point. The member for Redlands has told us of his experience, but I have not heard any other members talk about that matter during the debate. Perhaps that is because they do not go shopping on Thursday nights and Saturdays; perhaps that is because they do not do the grocery shopping. However, those who do and those who are forced to use Thursday nights and Saturday mornings as their shopping time will know what it is like. If one goes shopping on a Thursday night, one sees a lot of tired faces—people who have worked all day and have had to pick up their children after school or after child care and then drag them out to the shops to purchase their groceries. Instead of shopping being a pleasant experience for those people, they are faced with long queues at cash registers and queues everywhere in the shops. Thursday nights is a necessary experience for many people, but it is certainly not a pleasurable experience, and it is not the way people would—

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Ms SPENCE:** My argument would be that the same people will shop at night-time. They will still be tired and they will still be stressed after their day at work, but the shopping centres will not be such unpleasant places as they are now. Shopping centres will not have long queues. They will not have full car parks. For those who are forced to do their shopping after work, let us hope that the whole shopping experience will be more pleasurable.

I heard the member opposite say, "Why can they not do their shopping on Saturdays?" Many people would like to be able to do their shopping on Saturdays. I think it is a better experience than Thursday night. However, for many families the reality of Saturdays is that people run the children around from soccer to football to tennis. People put on a few loads of washing, they try to do the vacuuming and maybe they try to wash the car. That is the reality of the two-income family in the 1990s.

**Dr Watson:** But you are arguing for Sunday shopping, are you?

**Ms SPENCE:** No, I am not. I am saying that the consumer is demanding more shopping hours, and I believe that the extended shopping

hours that we are offering in this State will benefit the consumer and will hopefully, for those who are forced to do it, make the whole shopping experience slightly more pleasurable.

The reality is that the present restrictions also do not suit many retailers, who would prefer to open longer. The retailers who in the past have asked for longer opening hours have tended to be furniture and discount and electrical stores—stores where people need to spend time looking round, deciding which article to purchase. Those retailers know that people tend to spend more money and make the purchase if they can shop as a couple. That is why Thursday night and Saturday trading only does not necessarily suit them. Hopefully, with the Harvey Normans of the world being allowed to open every night, couples will be able to shop together and make their purchasing decisions together which, given the opportunity, I think they would prefer to do.

The present restrictions on shopping hours also create costs for employees, who at present do not have much flexibility in their own shopping hours. Thus, I can see many benefits in extended shopping hours for the consumer. The extended hours will increase consumer welfare by allowing consumers to choose when to shop. They will increase welfare generally by relieving congestion on roads and public facilities in present shopping peaks. They will allow retailers to open at optimal times, and they will allow employees to work optimal hours.

I support this legislation not only because it will be good for consumers. The Shop Distributors and Allied Employees Association supports the extension of shop trading hours. The member for Caloundra, Mrs Sheldon, said that that is why the Bill is so disgusting—because the workers support it and because we are supporting the union. The member for Caloundra used the word "disgusting" in her contribution earlier today. The fact that we on this side of the Chamber care about the requirements of workers makes us repugnant in the eyes of the Opposition. I would not be supporting this legislation if it did not have the support of the workers who will be most affected by it. That is something of which I can be proud.

I have to acknowledge that some small retailers may be affected by extended trading hours, but we are not forcing them to open for longer hours. Nevertheless, I am aware of their concerns. Last Monday night, I had the good fortune to attend the annual general meeting of the Mount Gravatt Chamber of Commerce and listen to the real concerns of the small businesspeople in my electorate. The major argument—

**Mr Connor** interjected.

**Ms SPENCE:** There was no need for body armour. They are rational people. They were prepared to carry on the debate. I think I benefited from listening to their concerns. I am sure that they would agree that they benefited from listening to my point of view.

The major argument that liberalisation of trading hours puts small retailers out of business is not supported by the statistics of the number of shops in relation to the population. After decades of decline with unchanged trading hours, the trend in the number of shops per thousand people has levelled out since trading hours have been substantially extended or deregulated across this country—that is, their numbers have not been reduced. Retail employee statistics also show changes which reflect deeper changes in the retailing environment than trading hours. That increased trading hours increases prices is also not substantiated by any economic theory. As for demand for extended trading hours, both consumer surveys and evidence of usage of existing trading hours indicate that the demand does exist. Finally, retail concentration does not result from extended trading hours, as is evident from theory and experience.

In summary, the arguments long used against deregulation or extension of trading hours are not substantiated and simply reflect the views of particular groups in the community with self-interest in maintaining their current advantages over their competitors. I am quite surprised that the Liberal Party particularly, a political party that holds itself up as the defender of the free market, the laissez faire mentality, should choose to oppose this Bill, which does nothing more than free up a field of competition because the majority of Queenslanders are demanding it. I am very pleased to be able to support this Bill. I commend the Minister for the hard work and the consultation that has gone into it.

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly) (5.28 p.m.): Today, we are witnessing another broken Goss promise—similar examples of which we have seen on so many occasions in the past. This promise was made to the thousands of people in the small-business community in Queensland. Labor promised to abide by the umpire's decisions—the State Industrial Commission—on trading hours. The Minister is fully aware of that promise, but I understand that he has been pushed and shoved into this matter by the Premier, who has done a deal. I will refer to that deal in detail in a few moments.

I would have thought that the Minister would have had the backbone to stand up to the

Premier on this issue in the interests of small businesses in this State. All parties should have been able to make submissions and put their cases to the State Industrial Commission. That is the real crux of this issue. There is a mechanism for trading hours to be changed, but this Government has thrown that mechanism out the door because it does not want to abide by it. In a few moments, I will inform the House why the Government does not want to abide by the mechanism that has been used on numerous occasions to change trading hours in this State.

The undertaking not to politically interfere in trading hours was given in writing to the Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association prior to the 1989 election. That was a clear undertaking by this Labor Government. There can be no doubt that that commitment had an effect on many of the retailers and shopkeepers in Queensland. I am sure that, through that commitment, they gave their trust to Labor—trust that has now been shattered. Here we have a deal between Labor and its union bosses. This is a deal between big Government and big unions. This is a deal in which all employees of the large retail stores will become members of the union. This is a deal in which those retail stores will deduct union membership fees. This is a deal in which union bosses will gather new members without any effort on their part which in turn will make those bosses more powerful within their union, the union movement and the Labor Party. It is a deal in which the union will generate a huge windfall in revenue through increased union membership fees; a deal in which the Labor Party will in turn receive a huge boost in campaign funds from these unsuspecting employees who will be press-ganged into joining their union, by having their fees compulsorily deducted from their pay packets. That is what we have here—a typical Labor deal, the likes of which we have seen so often. The Minister should be ashamed of himself.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I will refer soon to what the Minister said in his second-reading speech. He will have plenty of opportunity to respond to me in his reply. By heavens, because of the way he has thrown the baby out with the bath water, he has a lot to answer for. He finds himself in a shameful situation. I can understand why he is so prickly on this issue. The Minister talks of hypocrisy! His Government said it would abide by the decision of the State Industrial Commission. He has clearly broken that commitment, and I am sure that the thousands of shopkeepers and small retailers in this State would have vigorously campaigned against this Government in both elections had the Minister had the guts to come

out and tell them what his position was. He did not have the stomach, though.

It is little wonder that this Labor Government is falling over itself to legislate this deal before the parties get cold feet. It is little wonder that the same union bosses who have so attacked the extension of trading hours in the past are now so supportive—and by heavens have they not attacked it in the past, as some members on this side of the Chamber will be only too readily and freely able to tell the Minister. It is little wonder that this Goss Labor Government has so quickly forgotten about its election promises to small business.

I have received dozens of complaints from small businesses about this legislation, but none better sums up the situation than a letter I received dated 2 March this year from a person with a 7-2-7 Store in Springwood. This person wrote to the Premier, sending a copy to the Minister for Environment, the member for Springwood, Molly Robson, objecting strenuously to the extension of trading hours. I want to read this letter because it is very important. I think it is important because it sums up what so many of my small business constituents have said to me. I think this person summed it up very succinctly indeed. That letter states—

"I don't think your government has looked into all the aspects of extended trading hours.

Firstly the likes of Coles will pick the eyes out of extended trading hours—no not immediately only after they have wiped out most of the convenience stores. I open at six in the morning, at this time, it's only a service—milk, break, and papers very low profit lines, would not pay wages, but it is a service. We make a profit 6—8 p.m. Monday to Friday, Saturday nights and Sundays, so it is not hard to see many will go to the wall.

Then there is the suppliers, many suppliers to this sort of store are the small businesses who can't afford to pay all the large up front and promotional costs to put their product into the likes of Coles, Woolworths, Franklins—many of these businesses start by supplying small stores.

What about the small investors or family who buy or build strip buildings or shops, as investments instead of superannuation. These strips shops nearly always have a convenience store as a draw card. The major supermarkets are nearly always in major shopping centres.

The country needs the small investor whether it be the little family convenience

store, the small hairdresser, the husband and wife snack bar. We hear from Local Government to Federal Government how they are helping small business—I would love to have the time to see the revenue each level of government gets from small business as compared to large conglomerates.

How many people will lose their jobs—yes the big stores will have to employ more people but only a small percentage of the people they put out of work.

Please Mr Goss look at all the ramifications of what this could do, and remember the pay packet of those who still have jobs won't get any bigger."

Then on 4 March, from the electorate office of Molly Robson, the Minister for Environment and Heritage and the member for Springwood, came the reply, which states—

"Thank you for your letter concerning the proposed extending shopping hours.

I am also concerned over this proposal and support your views.

I have forwarded your letter to the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, the Hon. Matt Foley MLA for his consideration and response.

As soon as I receive his reply I shall contact you again."

I table this letter for the information of members. Of course, we know what the response was. It remains to be seen how Mrs Robson is going to vote in this debate because, quite clearly, she has the opportunity, in common with honourable members on this side of the Chamber, to stand up and oppose this legislation, or is the Minister going to sell out her small-business shopkeepers and break another written promise?

It is interesting to note how Ministers write to various constituents. Mr Hamill is another Minister who does the same thing. They write these letters and within a few days the promise is broken. Of course, we know what happens when the crunch comes, because they are jelly backs. We will look for the Minister to stand up for her so-called principles, as she states in that letter. Or will we see yet another jelly back in this Chamber? It is quite clear that on this very important issue she will be forced to toe the line of Labor machine factions.

For once and for all this legislation kills the premise that Labor supports small business—that business and Labor are philosophically as one. Nothing could be further from the truth. As this person who writes in

relation to extended trading hours points out, we are not just talking about the small shopkeepers, we are talking about a whole range of other people. Day after day, we see examples of how the largest retail stores treat the smaller suppliers, how they are forced to pay part of the promotional costs in those stores, how they are in fact forced to discount in those stores, and so on it goes. Many small suppliers are going to feel the heat of this Government's legislation. It is not only shopkeepers but also small suppliers and small manufacturers who are providing those many small services. They will be affected just as greatly.

By this course of action, this Government has shown that it has no faith in its own State Industrial Commission, the umpire in this matter. There have been plenty of opportunities for the Government to take to the State Industrial Commission all of this information the Minister would have us believe he has and argue a case for extended shopping hours. He has had that opportunity over the last 12 months. The Minister would have us believe that he has been doing surveys, studies and investigations over the last 12 months, yet have we seen any? No, not one, not a word. However, over the last several years we have seen many groups in the community go to the State Industrial Commission and have their trading hours extended. If the Government has all of this material, as it says, and the public need these longer trading hours, then why does it not put its case to the State Industrial Commission? After all, the State Industrial Commission has given us Sunday trading in the city mall, has extended Saturday trading to 4 p.m. and, of course, we have Thursday night trading, and Friday night trading here in the city. Late shopping nights vary across the State.

Of course, over the years there has been a considerable extension of trading hours, particularly in the tourist areas of this State. Time after time, we have seen a worthwhile case of extended trading hours in tourist destinations put to the State Industrial Commission and it has accepted those arguments. I think it is fair to say that that system has worked reasonably well. Of course, there have been some people on the other side of the House who have been upset about it, but, of course, the Minister has decided not to go down that road because he has riding instructions—he has done a deal. He has riding instructions from his union masters. It is a sweet deal which involves them in little work but great reward—the Australian Labor Party also gets great reward from this deal.

One has only to go back a short time to when there was last an exercise in extended trading hours some six or seven years ago, when the situation was somewhat different and

members of the Labor Party were in Opposition. The State Opposition's Small Business spokesman at that time was Mr Paul Braddy. I have not noticed his name on the speaking list. If one goes through the press clippings and *Hansard*, one realises that it is no wonder that it is not.

According to an article that appeared in the press in 1986, Mr Braddy said that small businessmen and retail employees should unite to oppose the shopping hours extended trial that Mr Lester was then conducting. According to that article, Mr Braddy said—

"The unholy alliance between large retailers and the State Government must be stopped before more damage is done to the small businesses and the workers of Queensland."

According to another article headed "Trading still under spotlight", Mr Braddy said—

"The general wash-up of the trading hours trial for the month of December was that there were no major gains in overall retail sales in Queensland, but a substantial redistribution of revenue from small business to big business."

I repeat that this was said by the Opposition Small Business spokesman at that time, Mr Paul Braddy, who currently occupies the position of Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services. During the division we will see whether he is a jelly back. We will see whether he supports the Opposition in opposing this legislation.

Another article, which is headed "Shop trial condemned as failure", states—

"Retail sales statistics have proven the deregulated shopping hours trial was an abysmal failure, according to Opposition spokesman for small business Paul Braddy."

**Mr Perrett:** Would you buy a used car off that man?

**Mr BEANLAND:** I should think not. That article continued—

" 'Several areas had rises well below the current inflation rate. Clearly the only group to really benefit from the deregulation experiment was big business,' he said.

...

Mr Lester's ill-conceived experiment has meant small business had one of their worst Christmas-New Year periods on record.

Small business, which accounts for 60 per cent of all private employment, should be aided by practical government policies,

not stifled as it is in Queensland, which already has the highest rate of unemployment in the country."

I do not think that I need to refer to any other press clippings. I believe that my point has been very clearly made.

I refer to part of the debate on the Trading Hours Bill, which appears in *Hansard* of 15 October 1987—again, a fine, sterling effort from Mr Braddy, the member for Rockhampton. At 4.47 p.m. on that day, he said—

"This Bill is the culmination of what has been a fairly sorry chapter for small business in the history of Queensland. Prior to the 1986 State election, in the course of the election campaign the Australian Labor Party suggested that the Government was going to continue a policy, which was evident for some time, of abandoning small-business . . ."

Yet this Minister was forced to bring in this Bill because he is concerned that members involved in the deal will get cold feet.

No other country on this planet has less competition so far as retail sales are concerned. Nowhere in any other country—whether it be a developed country or a Third World country—is there such dominance of retail market sales as we have in this country. That has been indicated on many occasions. It is not something new. I am sure that Labor Party members would be fully aware of that. Now, we see a further attack on the small businesses of this nation, without adopting the course of going to the umpire and allowing that umpire to make a decision. Of course, there has been no mention of allowing a deregulated labour market.

Since this debate commenced, I have heard members on the Government side of the House come up with all sorts of excuses for this legislation. If they are so keen on choice and consumerism and choice and competition, then why do they not deregulate the labour market? Why are they so hell-bent on not deregulating the labour market? That would be the major area in which we could introduce competition right across-the-board in all sectors. Let us see that. Let us see the strength of the Minister's argument. He is the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations. He could do more to generate employment in this country. We will see whether or not his argument has strength. Let us see real competition and choice. That is what it is all about. If the Minister's argument is about competition and choice, then why do we not have 24-hour trading? Why is the proposal for shops to trade only till 9 p.m. five days a week and till 6 p.m. on Saturdays? The Government is not really interested in choice,

otherwise the proposal would be for trading seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

I nearly went to tears when the member for Mount Gravatt was wimping on about how the poor consumers had to go out and shop at all hours of the day; that the current hours were not convenient for them. Why did she not advocate 24-hour trading? Why is the proposal just 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.? The reason is that there is a deal between this Government, big bosses and the union movement.

It is quite clear that, if this Government was serious, it would extend and deregulate the hours for Government business. I have not heard one word from the Minister about allowing people to pay their various accounts at 9 o'clock at night. In the Minister's second-reading speech, nothing was mentioned about how the Government would deregulate Government services in this regard. The Minister has not consulted the public service unions about this. Of course, he will not, because they would also be opposed to it. This is the last we will ever hear about it. What about paying electricity accounts? What about small business paying its many charges, and the regulations, fees and all the forms it needs to fill in? Not one of those things was mentioned.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr BEANLAND:** The Minister can quack on, interject and carry on as much as he likes. I know that he is hurting. These are the very things that he does not have the gumption to bring forward. This is just another jelly-back operation.

The member for Archerfield, Mr Ardill, is also having two bob each way. In due course, he will get his, too, from small businesspeople in his electorate. They are a wake-up to him, and they will test him out when they learn how he votes on this legislation. That will be the test of whether those members support members on this side of the House.

Members are not talking only about a small number of people, namely, small business traders. We are talking about a range of other businesses. We are talking about suppliers and investors—people who invest money in those operations and generate wealth in the community. We are talking about the thousands of people who now enjoy employment in many small businesses and who will be affected by this legislation.

It is quite clear that members on this side of the House are saying that this Government had the opportunity to abide by the umpire, the Industrial Commission. The Government has said that it has no faith in that commission. It has

indicated that by its stance today, but it does not have the gumption to deregulate the labour market.

Time expired.

**Mr McELLIGOTT** (Thuringowa) (5.48 p.m.): As I have said publicly on quite a number of occasions, I have grave concerns about the proposal to extend retail trading hours in Queensland. Although I will not be voting against the Government, I would be failing in my responsibilities if I did not place those concerns on the public record. As a previous speaker said during this debate, parliamentary democracy operates on the basis of the views of the majority. My concerns and the concerns of other members on this side of the House have been expressed in the various forums of my party but failed to achieve majority support.

Quite simply, I do not believe that any extension of the present shopping arrangements is desirable. I take that view because I believe that we have in Queensland a unique lifestyle of which other States and other nations have every right to be jealous. We trumpet Queensland as the leading State—as indeed it is—with the most vibrant economy—which indeed it has—and yet to justify this extension of hours we look to New South Wales and Victoria as our models.

One radio station that interviewed me on this subject asked me to respond to the apparent success of extended trading hours in the central business district of Melbourne. If there is one place in this country where few of us would like to live, it is in the central business district of Melbourne. The Minister said that Queensland is a "Mecca for those from the southern States looking for a better lifestyle." If that is the case—and I am sure that it is—why on earth are we trying to create in Queensland the environment that people in that State are in such a hurry to leave behind?

At a recent meeting that I attended where the subject of trading hours was discussed, a recent arrival from Victoria expressed the view that extended trading hours in Victoria were marvellous because the shopping centres were full of families on Saturday afternoons doing their week's shopping. If spending Saturday afternoon in a supermarket is the best that we can offer to our families, then I fear for our future. I certainly fear for the loss of the quality of life that we have had the good fortune to enjoy until now.

Let me refer to a comment made in an editorial in the *Townsville Bulletin* on the subject of extended hours. The writer referred to a "wind of change sweeping the world" in retail trading. The writer was making the point that we in Queensland had no option but to go along with

worldwide trends. I simply do not accept that we who live in the best State and the best country in the world should follow interstate trends—and especially not international trends—to the detriment of our unique lifestyle.

I have spent my lifetime involved in sport. I have been a player, coach, umpire and an administrator. This State and this nation owe an enormous debt to the tens of thousands of volunteers who every Saturday and most Sundays provide sport and recreation for our young people. The only reward that they expect or receive is the pleasure that their young charges get from their sport. Now we are saying that those volunteers, some of whom might be nothing more than drivers taking kids to their sports, should instead be working to provide additional shopping opportunities. What about the players themselves? Most teams want to train on at least two afternoons or evenings per week and play their competition on Saturday afternoons. Thursday and/or Fridays are already now unavailable and we are now trying to take away the other nights of the week and Saturday afternoons.

For those members who perhaps have lost touch with grassroots sport, let me refer to a conversation I had with a member of a division 3 ladies hockey team in Townsville last Saturday. They are a division 3 team—they are not stars, they will never play for Australia but they turn up every Saturday afternoon and play their game of hockey. Most Saturdays they get 11 players and sometimes they struggle to do so. Four of their members are hairdressers and if they have to work on Saturday afternoon, which they anticipate they will be required to do, they will not be able to field a team. There are only four teams in the competition. If they do not field a team there will be a bye every Saturday afternoon. If there is a bye the other players in that grade will lose interest and give that sport away. That is sport at the grassroots level and that is sport at a level that I think we should be supporting.

The Minister says these are only allowable hours—of course, that is correct—and that tenants may determine their core hours. I have already heard that the manager of Stockland in Townsville, one of the largest shopping centres in the State, has told lessees that they will be opening to the full extent of the hours. I understand that the comment has already been made that the proposed change to the Retail Shop Leases Act to provide for a determination of core hours by tenants is "worthless". The question arises in my mind: what powers will the Government invoke against organisations such as Stockland if they do exert pressure on tenants to open. How much duress will be applied to tenants before they vote? I am told that at

another Townsville shopping centre, lessees have said that they will not make up their minds how to vote until, "We hear what Woolworths want to do". So what powers do the family-operated specialty shops have to resist the power of shopping centre owners and the Woolworths, Coles and Franklins of this world? I suggest that it is very little.

As far as the workers themselves are concerned, I have heard from people who have been told already that they will work the new hours or find another job. What sort of a choice is that with one million people unemployed in this country?

Sporting associations are particularly concerned for their members in the 16 to 18-year-old age group for whom Saturday afternoon trading means the end of their sporting careers. This is already the most difficult age, as parents would know, when kids could very easily take the wrong path in life. I have always believed that sport provides an important outlet for youthful energies and that the commitment to sport has kept many a young person off the streets and away from a life of crime.

I am very concerned that already Australians are becoming a nation of watchers, rather than players. Many people's idea of an afternoon's sport is an afternoon in the sponsor's box at the footy or the cricket. But the real grassroots sport is out there in the public parks and it is this level of sport that in my view this Bill sets out to destroy. I believe that we are moving quickly to a situation in which the only people playing team sports—and I emphasise team sports—will be the elite professional sports people for whom it is a full-time occupation. The rest of the population will be watching sport on television on their midweek days off. Someone once said to me there are two types of politician—there are caretakers who simply seek to occupy their seats for as long as they can and do not think beyond the next election and then there are visionaries who think about the future and have a vision about that future. In my view, this Bill does not meet my vision for the future of Queensland.

The Minister said that it is imperative that Queensland's legislation keep pace with and reflect the changes that our society has undergone. If we as elected representatives are not prepared to give some leadership—some direction to these changes, then we are nothing more than rubber stamps for vested interests. I have been accused of trying to hang onto the past. I plead guilty to that charge, but I fail to see why we should depreciate our high quality of life for reasons that appear to benefit only big business interests.

I now turn to the economics of the situation. The first question that has to be addressed is: where is the pressure for change coming from? Clearly it is coming from the southern-based, overseas-owned major chains. The issue of *Foodweek* of 22 March 1994 reports that Woolworths' Purity supermarket chain has initiated a High Court challenge against Tasmania's trading laws. The article states that Purity has challenged the equity of existing law, which enables competitors to open stores at weekends while the chain must keep its stores closed. The story concludes—

"Purity was confident of winning the case and believed that victory would open the way for 24-hour trading seven days a week in Tasmania."

The same periodical of 5 April 1994 states—

"Coles Supermarkets has tightened the screws another couple of turns to wring more money out of suppliers."

Suppliers are angered at what they regard as heavy-handed tactics to extract special case deals from suppliers to make Coles more competitive with Woolworths and Franklins."

So it is all about market share and bigger profits for big business. The big national chains already have 70 per cent of the retail food market and now they want to fight and scratch over the other 30 per cent and in the process destroy small traders. I have every sympathy for the corner shop owners and the like. In most cases, they are working class people who have used superannuation payouts, or whatever, to have a go on their own. A number of speakers today referred to the fact that the number of small shops in the community has stayed about the same over a period. I think the important statistic is the number of times that those shops have changed hands. These people are the unsung heroes of the community, who work long and unsociable hours to supply us with the bottle of milk, or the loaf of bread, that we need. They will never become millionaires, but if they work hard and provide good service they might pick up a capital gain when they sell out, which ultimately makes it all worth while. But who will want to buy a corner shop when the shopping centre down the road opens the same hours and sells the same commodities for much lower prices due to the power of a central purchasing operation situated, incidentally, in Melbourne?

It has long been my view that no Government of any political colour has properly realised the potential of the small-business sector to provide competition and create jobs. Indeed, the advantages that have been progressively given to big business have had the

opposite effect, so that across the nation 47 per cent of retail sales are currently controlled by just 27 companies. There are very clear benefits to local economies from the small-business sector. I will quote from a letter which I received from the owner-operator of the Wulguru Meat Market from the past 20 years. He states—

"Unlike the supermarkets, I purchase all my beef etc from local suppliers, have it slaughtered locally, therefore supporting the local economy."

Often when one visits the corner store one sees wholesale representatives supplying goods, unlike the semitrailers at the major chains bringing goods from the south. These are further locally based jobs that will go with the demise of more corner stores. Imagine the impact on country towns and areas like Burdekin, Charters Towers and Ingham, whose traders already lose business to Townsville. With extended hours, even more of the locals will travel to the major centres to shop. A day out for kids will be a day in Townsville at the shopping centre, when in my view mum and dad should be patronising local business and the kids should be involved in local sports, cultural activities, etc. We must not forget that it is the local small business operators who sponsor the local footy teams. One does not see junior league teams or soccer or netball teams running around Ingham with "Coles", "Woolworths" or "Franklins" displayed on their playing gear.

Sitting suspended from 6 to 7.30 p.m.

**Mr McELLIGOTT:** Before the break, I was expressing my concern about the potential impact of extended trading hours on small country towns, particularly those surrounding Townsville. I talked about the Burdekin area, Charters Towers and Ingham, and the impact that extended hours in the major chains in Townsville would have on the business communities in those areas. I also made the point that it is the small local businesses that support the local sporting organisations. I concluded by saying that we do not see junior league teams, soccer teams or netball teams running around in Ingham with "Coles", "Woolworths" or "Franklins" on their playing gear. In other words, unlike small businesses, those companies do not provide sponsorship dollars in the local community.

A number of speakers talked about the choice of shopping opportunities. I make the point that I think we need to consider lifestyle choices as well as choices about when and where we can shop. I strongly believe that, although Australians have always encouraged the work ethic, we have also had a unique admiration for sport and leisure time activity. I think it would be a great shame if we were

prepared to forgo the unique lifestyle that we have enjoyed so much in the past simply to provide people with a choice of shopping hours.

I turn now to the final issue that I wish to discuss. In his second-reading speech, the Minister stated—

"The increased labour market flexibility achieved through enterprise bargaining has weakened the case for maintaining the current rigid regulation of retail trading hours. In a classic example of micro-economic reform, labour market flexibility is leading to retail market flexibility. What began as a workers' protection has become an impediment to workers obtaining better pay and conditions through enterprise bargaining."

The Shop Distributive and Allied Employees Association has said the same thing, although in a different way. In return for a 2 per cent wage increase, the union has been prepared to concede an extension of trading hours and forfeit its traditional concerns about its effect on family and social life, its effect on employment, its attack on penalty rates, its attacks on working conditions and the fact that no wage increases are available as a result of extended hours. In his economic analysis of extended shopping hours, Jon D. Stanford said—

"Employment patterns of hours worked have changed as the influence of general changes in the structure of the economy, ie a movement of greater employment in the services sector, micro-economic reform and the recession.

In the retail industry, there has been an overall movement to greater part-time and casual employment but this overall change masks the fact that some sectors of the retail industry have relatively high rates of full time employment. In particular, butcher shops and furniture stores are in this category."

I do not have a university education but, as I see it, the union has accepted the carrot of a 2 per cent wage increase in return for less protection for its members. I think that there is a lesson here for all Queensland workers engaged in enterprise bargaining negotiations. I ask the question: what happens down the line when employers demand a further erosion of working conditions and a greater spread of hours but refuse to dangle the carrot of a 2 per cent wage increase? I am hearing it already—"If you do not want the job on our conditions, there are plenty of others who do."

In my view, the benefits to the union of extended trading hours are also short term. Certainly, there will be a move to greater use of

casual and part-time employees. Shop assistants will be less well trained, with negative results in regard to consumer satisfaction. One employer to whom I have spoken, who has several retail outlets in Townsville, told me that currently he spends \$50,000 a year on staff training, that is, training of his full-time employees. As a result of the decision in other States to extend hours, his industry has made the decision nationally to dispense with all of its full-time employees to help contain the increased costs of extended hours. For the company's part-time and casual employees, there would be limited formal training, no access to the conditions and protection of full-time employment and, of course, yet another opportunity for full-time employment is eliminated from the labour market.

My son, who is a manager in the small-business sector and an enthusiastic sports person, has said to me, "The Government has got it terribly wrong." I am afraid that his views, based on a practical knowledge of the situation, will prove to be correct. However, I am also prepared to accept that I may be wrong, and that the majority view of the Government may prove to be correct.

I have outlined my concerns and I hope that, by doing so, I have alerted the Minister and the Government to issues that may well create community reaction against this legislation.

**Mr PERRETT** (Barambah) (7.35 p.m.): On rising to speak in this debate, I would like to congratulate the member for Thuringowa on having the courage of his convictions to stand up in this House and deliver what I regard as one of the best and most commonsense speeches to come from a member of the Government since it gained power in 1989. In the face of almost united opposition from the Government, it certainly took a lot of courage for the member to stand up and do what he did. I certainly pay tribute to Mr McElligott.

I join with my fellow members of the Opposition in opposing this legislation, which is guaranteed to harm both small retailers throughout Queensland and the farmers and processors who supply foodstuffs for retail sale. Businesses in both sectors—and they are often family businesses—will suffer, along with their employees. That will happen without any benefit at all to consumers. Farming and small business are the twin pillars of economic activity in country Queensland, and this legislation is a direct attack on the viability of both of those. I have no doubt that the extension of trading hours, with its associated cost increase, will hand the few dominant players in the retail sector even greater market share and the predatory power that goes

with it. That extra market share cannot be justified on any rational ground.

Already, the big three control 70 per cent of our national retail market in groceries. Two of them, Woolworths and Coles Myer, are among the three sellers controlling even more of the hardware trade. Beyond that, the same two companies are among the five controlling electrical retailers and have major shares in every other single retail market in the nation. Woolworths and Coles have already built dominant positions in the fresh food areas such as meat, dairy and fruit and vegetables and, by their own reports, have targeted more growth there. Franklins is moving to become a major player in that area. To ensure total dominance in the food area of retailing, the big three have already announced massive expansion plans, with \$1.5 billion set aside for new store openings in the next several years.

Extra market share for the big three of retailing will have a profound effect on our rural economy and further inhibit our ability to trade successfully in world markets. It will lead to bankruptcy of family companies in the retail sector and rising unemployment in rural towns. It will also lead ultimately to higher prices and diminished choice for the consumers throughout the State. Extended shopping hours will have the effect of creating an exodus of shoppers from smaller country towns to the larger regional centres that have major shopping infrastructure.

In the past, when such a proposition came from retail sources, the economic rationalists sneered and talked about the virtues of the marketplace. The sneering can stop now, because the proposition has a base in academic research. I refer honourable members to the work of Dr Robert Baker of the University of New England in Armidale. He has used mathematical modelling concepts to identify a trend towards shoppers using larger shopping centres comprising up to 150 outlets. In a report released on 27 October last year, Dr Baker said that the deregulation of shopping hours would result in fewer household shopping trips. He offered evidence that shopping would become more centralised towards large centres. I make no claim to understanding the theoretical basis for Dr Baker's work, but I think we all have to accept his very impressive qualifications in the field. I am also impressed by the fact that Dr Baker based his findings on almost 1 600 field surveys in shopping facilities over a 10-year period.

For my own part, over the years, I have noted the decline and disappearance of hundreds of businesses in country towns with which I have been familiar. I have seen the effects of gradually extended trading hours and

the impact that major shopping centre construction has on small business. I remind the House of the words of Sir William Knox in this place on 14 June 1993—that the introduction of late-night shopping put at least 3 000 small retailers in Queensland out of business.

In my own area, I have seen how major shopping developments in Caboolture and Toowoomba have drawn off shoppers with such devastating effects on businesses in the smaller towns within the region. To date, the only real saver for the locals has been the fact that country people are simply too busy to rush off to Caboolture or Toowoomba during the working day. I fear that, with late-night shopping five nights a week and all-day Saturday trade in the larger centres, a lot more people will make the trip. They will naturally be attracted by the brief and artificial lowering of prices. Who can blame them at a time of rural recession?

The big chain food stores such as Coles, Franklins and Woolworths will certainly make the effort to attract custom from country areas within their reach. In this regard, I note that K mart, part of the Coles Myer group, has been heavily promoting its stores through catalogues in letterboxes in my electorate in the past weeks. They arrive every weekend. They are already bidding for the business extended hours will make available to them. Indeed, Woolworths has already announced that it will take full advantage of the extra trading time available. The big chains can afford the staff costs for longer opening, and their buying power means they have enough fat in their margins to wage a price war for long enough to put the country independents out of business.

That would be a tragedy for the independent store owners and for their staff. It is a fact that the independents have generally invested their life savings in their business. In many cases, the family home is the principal collateral for their business finance. When they go down, they lose everything. So do their employees. With the effects of long rural recession due to drought, high taxation, and corrupted world markets, there are few jobs to be had in a country town these days. Retail employees thrown out of work have little prospect of obtaining further work. That is just a fact of life, and no high-sounding arguments about the virtues of the market place can get around it.

Closing a country food store causes major problems in most towns. There is even a domino effect, with those people displaced from their work being no longer able to spend wages or sales revenue in the local economy. That situation is certainly not in the interest of any

local economy, or even of the economy of the State. Even worse is the fact that, in the long term, the prices charged by the chains will move back up as their monopoly position becomes entrenched.

The only way the small town stores can hope to survive is by competing on service levels. That means staying open at least as long as the national chains, and bearing the burdens that entails. Those burdens include extra staff hours without the prospect of significant extra revenue. The only answer for most will be increased family labour, because that need not be paid for. What will that do for family and community life? Does Labor care? Does Labor care that store owners will have to be away from their families from early morning until late at night? Does Labor care that children will rarely see their fathers, or that families will be unable to do the normal things together, such as church and sporting activities? This legislation says Labor does not give two hoots!

The wholesale fruit and vegetable markets at Rocklea will inevitably become a casualty of this legislation, as will the farmers and specialist retailers who rely on those markets. Farmers use the Rocklea markets as a price setter for what they grow. The smaller retailers use the markets to obtain supplies at competitive prices. But that will vanish more and more as the market dominance of the retail chains grows, as it must under this legislation. What if the chains use their market power to deny the independents access to particular lines or competitive prices? The big buyer always has the capacity to stand over a supplier, with the threat to withdraw custom if certain things are not done.

There is an alarming trend for the major retailers to bypass the markets already. Coles and Woolworths are increasingly going directly to farmers for their supplies and using the markets only for top-ups. Market sources tell me that as much as 40 per cent to 50 per cent of produce is handled this way, and that figure will rise steeply as Franklins gets more and more into the system. There are great dangers in this for farmers, consumers and specialist fruit and vegetable retailers.

For a start, the majors can very effectively set prices for the whole industry by contracting ahead with individual farmers to supply a particular line at a particular time. They get produce at a price set well in advance and can then use that to manipulate prices at the Rocklea markets. As well as that, because of their massive buying power, they can force big discounts even at the markets. Everybody suffers from that. Farmers are faced with wholesale prices forced down artificially. The independents can find

themselves faced with only the second choice of the produce available, either because the chains have bought direct from the growers or because agents are coerced into looking after the chains first. Consumers are ripped off, because retail fruit and vegetable prices charged by the majors rarely reflect their discounted buy-in price.

Surveys regularly show there is no consistent price advantage in buying fruit and vegetables from the chains as against independent fruit and vegetable specialists. Where does the money go? To excess profits, of course! How else can the majors be planning to spend almost \$1.5 billion building new stores over the next eight or 10 years? Farmers are ripped off, but the consumers get none of the benefit of that. Honourable members should not be surprised by the antics of the majors when it comes to the markets.

The Goss Labor Government gave up long ago on any support for the markets as a fair price setting mechanism or as a control on the quality of fresh fruit and vegetables. The Minister for Primary Industries was quick to withdraw inspectors and force the price reporting system into private hands. Farmers and consumers are now at the mercy of agents and major retailers because it is now so difficult to get a line on the real price of anything. Labor Government penny-pinching has exposed us all to rip-offs. The withdrawal of inspectors has also left us open to substandard produce going into the retail market, to the detriment of consumers and the industry as a whole. I would like the Government to tell me when the last consignment of anything was dumped on the orders of a Government inspector.

On the subject of regulation—I have had numerous complaints that Government weights and measures inspectors now do only random checks when they visit the outlets operated by the big chains. That sort of practice is hardly likely to engender confidence in the independents, who claim they are being checked meticulously.

Many people believe farmers have made a rod for their own backs by contracting with the large chains to supply produce lines at a fixed price rather than relying on the markets. I can understand that view, but I can also understand the desperation of some farmers trying to ensure their cash flow. They accept a lesser price than they might get through the markets, but they hope for a little money in the bank to pay for imposts such as the predatory charges imposed by the Goss Labor Government for irrigation water. They know they have a market at a set price, if they can deliver the quality and quantity of produce contracted for.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Bredhauer): Order! I have been fairly tolerant. However, discussion about the price one gets for fruit and vegetables is not relevant to the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill. I ask the member to come back to the Bill before the House.

**Mr PERRETT:** Mr Speaker, I believe that, as this regulation plays into the hands of the major chains, this issue is very relevant.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I understand the member's point, but he should come back to the Bill before the House.

**Mr PERRETT:** There is another way in which the majors use their monopoly power to rip off producers, processors and consumers. Consider the generic brands of food products on supermarket shelves these days. They are used by the majors to crush farmers and processors in a scam, which often involves massive imports of substandard product that is heavily subsidised in its country of origin.

I want to talk for a moment about the tactics the majors used in one specific instance of generic brand canned fruit. Cheap, substandard, subsidised imports were used to put unconscionable price pressure on two Australian companies—SPC and Ardmona—and, of course, the farmers who supplied them. As in most cases like this, the processors and suppliers had to supply at a loss just to keep farms and factories going.

An anti-dumping case was mounted and won, and a countervailing duty was applied, but that was far from the end of the story. When the Australian suppliers raised prices to take account of the duties, and get closer to the real cost of supplying the products, the Australian Supermarkets Institute raced off to the Trade Practices Commission. The majors were pretty good at dishing it out—preying on Australian farmers and processors—but they hated copping it back. So off they went, screaming blue murder, to the very body which has stood idly by while monopoly power was developed.

I am not against business, and I am not against management in big companies doing their best for their shareholders. What I am against is monopoly power—and that is what this Bill is all about—used ruthlessly against less powerful competitors or suppliers. Free competition may sound nice, but what this nation needs is a good dose of fair competition. The law of the jungle has no place in a modern, civilised society.

Imported foodstuffs sold as generics by the monopolists now account for as much as one-third of the market. They continue to do untold

damage to our local food industries, both the farming sector and the processing industry. We now import food worth well over \$2 billion each year. Just about every bit of that is heavily subsidised in its country of origin. Foreign Governments pay out around \$450 billion each year on agricultural subsidies, and that leads to large surpluses.

Of course, this Bill—playing right into the hands of big business—will increase that share of sales, working right against our own farmers and producers, particularly the producers of fruit and vegetables. Home markets can pick the eyes out of that produce, and the rest is available for next to nothing for export. That is the sort of garbage that some Australian buyers bring here by the shipload and slap generic labels on, with the sole intention of beating our farmers and processors into submission. There is no benefit to consumers. No matter what the advertising says, consumers buy that junk for the same price they pay for generic brands grown and processed in Australia. The monopolists laugh all the way to their Melbourne and Sydney banks, and Australians go down the gurgler.

We should remember that food processing is Australia's biggest industry, with annual sales topping \$20 billion. It is a major contributor to employment, providing work for about 15 per cent of the work force and 20 per cent of the workers employed in manufacturing industry. It is an industry that we should not permit to be destroyed. No Government should allow the monopolists in the retail industry to dismember our food industries by means of the predatory tactics available to them only because of that monopoly position. However, that is exactly what the Labor Goss Government is doing by seeking to encourage even more market concentration with this stupid legislation. The big three already control around 70 per cent of the grocery market. That sort of domination is unacceptable anywhere else in the world, except in the totalitarian regimes. Even the real bastion of private enterprise, the United States of America, uses anti-trust laws ruthlessly to ensure the benefits that come from many players competing fairly in any market. The United States gave the world an important lesson with laws that broke up monopolies and near monopolies such as Eastman Kodak and Standard Oil.

Interstate experience tells us that extended hours will expand the existing levels of market domination, with all its ill effects for the rest of the retail industry and suppliers. Labor brought in late-night weekday trading in South Australia. The same types of economic rationalists must have been in the saddle there as dominate this Goss Labor Government. The effect was immediate and disastrous, to the point at which

the incoming Liberal Government had to reverse the arrangement immediately. The South Australian Small Retailers Association surveyed its members and found that they had lost 14.9 per cent of their business to the majors. If traders in my area lost 15 per cent of their business overnight—or even 10 per cent—the towns in my electorate would be an economic wasteland.

Another South Australian survey found that each job created in a major store by the extended trading hours cost four jobs in the independent retail sector. If only another 10 per cent of retail trade shifted across to the major chains, that would cost the jobs of 8 000 to 10 000 Queenslanders. The majors would have to increase their staff by only 2 000 to 2 500 to cope with their extra business. Just on rough figures, we are talking about a net loss of 7 500 to 8 000 jobs, and the great majority of them would be in country Queensland. I simply cannot believe that a Labor Government—or any Government, for that matter—could contemplate such a result, but the evidence is before us today. That is the inevitable result of the passage of this legislation. It is a betrayal of Queenslanders, and it is a betrayal on a breathtaking scale.

When Labor politicians address farm groups, they love to trot out the platitudes about how Australia's agricultural industry is on the brink of a boom supplying food to the exploding populations of Asia. We could do that with plenty of investment in water supplies and infrastructure. We could do it with some encouragement for our farmers and food processors. We could do it with true waterfront reform and a railway system not only kept in place but also extended. However, we will never do it while a few major retailers do their best, with Labor Government encouragement, to grind farmers and processors into the dirt.

Our food industries will not survive while their future is in the hands of a few greedy monopolists. Today, we should be thinking about ways in which to make fair markets assist in the survival and growth of our key industries. We should be looking to promote fair competition, innovation and price equity for industries that are vital to the nation's future. We should never be looking for ways to increase monopoly power for the benefit of a few companies that have no real interest in the future of our farmers and food manufacturers. For the boards of the big retailers, the origin of their stock does not matter. Under Labor patronage, they now dominate a market that will always exist. People will always need to eat and drink, and they will pay what they have to—

Time expired.

**Mr BORBIDGE** (Surfers Paradise—Leader of the Opposition) (7.56 p.m.): This move is one of the most politically and socially inept from the Government since its decision to shut down one-third of the State's rail system. In terms of political impact, it may well have reinstated those cuts. We are seeing an unholy alliance between big Government, big business and big unions, and each and every Government member will pay dearly.

**Mr Bennett** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I will come to the member for Gladstone shortly. The fact is that there are already very satisfactory mechanisms in place to deal with this issue, put in place by the previous Government after an exhaustive examination of the issue involving widespread consultation and including a one-month trial of deregulated hours in 1987. The system has worked. It is eminently fair to the retail sector. If a group of traders wanted to vary hours, they had to take their case to the State Industrial Commission, obtain a ruling and live by the umpire's decision. There was no need and no justification for this heavy-handed approach from Government, operating in cahoots with the big retailers and, more to the point, the big unions.

The Minister should have put his Cicero down for a minute or two and listened to small retailers on talkback radio the night he announced the Government's decision. This is one of the few decisions from one of the few Cabinet meetings so far this year. One thing is for sure: we will not see extended working hours for Cabinet! Again this week, there was no Cabinet meeting. Next week, of course, there will be no Cabinet meeting, because it is a public holiday. It is Labour Day. There will be no trading for the Government next Monday, let alone extended trading! The Minister should have listened to that session on talkback radio, because he would have heard some very distraught people—people who were distraught because the Minister was giving the husband and wife teams who run so many small businesses the same medicine that the Transport Minister gave outback Queenslanders with his rail closures. The same cold, calculating heart was at work.

Never mind the seven-day grind people have gone through to keep their businesses going. Never mind the impact on families. Never mind the fact that parents will not be able to take the kids to sport on Saturday. Never mind the impact on people's profitability, because those are secondary considerations. This Government is in the business of satisfying the big southern-based retailers and the big unions. Again, the people the Government should be putting first,

the people at whom so much of its rhetoric is aimed—the small operator, the family-based business—came last.

The reason for this intervention is said to be deregulation and to meet the requirements of consumers. I say to the Government: show us the proof of that demand. Where is it? Mr Ian Baldock, representing the Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association, has quoted a host of recent surveys. Not one of them shows a majority of Queenslanders wanting extended hours. In my area of the Gold Coast, an AGB McNair study carried out on behalf of local traders and reported this morning in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* found that 82 per cent of the people on the coast surveyed are happy with the current situation—and so they should be, because it is fair. It presents an avenue for those people who want extended hours to achieve them.

**Mr Foley:** What about the Rearth survey last year? Eighty-one per cent!

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I think it is very interesting to note the fervour and the decisiveness with which the Government has approached this move in the private sector. I am coming to Minister "Cicero". I am heading his way. He should just sit and cop it for a while.

**Mr Foley:** Eighty-one per cent of the Rearth market survey supported the extension.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** If the Minister can contain himself, let us compare the Government's passion for deregulation in the private sector with its attitude to the public sector. During his contribution, the member for Burdekin made brief reference to this point. Honourable members may recall a brief public discussion in 1991 concerning the Government's push to develop more flexible trading hours in the Government sector. For a very short while, there was a discussion about the public sector working on Thursday nights and Saturday mornings to better meet the requirements of consumers without incurring penalty rates. The Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations wanted public servants to work their seven and a half hour shifts anywhere between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m., and to work their five-day week on any day of the week, including weekends. The principle was exactly the same. It was said to be micro-economic reform. It was said to be consumer driven, but what happened? The public sector unions opposed it and the Government dropped it quicker than anyone could blink. It dropped the whole concept.

**An Opposition member:** If the unions don't want it, the Government doesn't do it.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** It is a Government led by a puppet and a Cabinet representing Trades Hall. Let us go back to the great micro-reform of the public sector. State Public Service Union chief, Laurie Gillespie, was quoted in the *Sun* newspaper at the time as saying—

"Under the conditions proposed, they could flog counter clerks through the night.

They are not going to work people all kinds of weird shifts without penalties.

If you want people to hang about until 7 p.m. and work in excess of their normal hours of duty . . . you have to be prepared to compensate them."

So what happened with this micro-reform, this public sector extension of trading hours under this so-called reformist, pragmatic, deregulatory, consumer-oriented Government? It dropped it like a hot brick. It dropped it because the public sector unions did not want it, yet the same Government is now prepared to force private sector small businesses towards the same sort of situation and worse.

Will the mums and dads at the corner store be flogged through the night, as Laurie Gillespie feared on behalf of public servants? Of course they will. Will they have to work all sorts of weird shifts, to use Laurie Gillespie's words, without penalty rates? Of course they will. Is the Government prepared to compensate them? Of course it is not. So what the Government was not prepared to inflict on its own workers, it is prepared to inflict on small business and on Queensland families. Perhaps the Minister will now tell the House whether he will now reopen negotiations with the public sector unions in relation to extended hours in the Government sector, or whether he is prepared to do in the public sector what he has done in the private sector. Will he issue an edict? Yes or no? Come on Cicero—yes or no?

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Of course the Minister will not. I will bet neither is on the agenda, but, as I said at the outset, the key element of the irony here is that the Government did not need to make this move at all. The State Industrial Commission is there to make such decisions. If the operators wanted to vary hours, they could have taken the matter to the umpire. Instead, the Government has acted simply as a broker, ex the commission, on behalf of the unions. This is all about the Labor Party's connection with the unions.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** It is all about this Government's behind-the-scenes backroom deal, its conniving backroom secret arrangement

with big business and the trade union movement.

If this Government somehow thinks that it has pulled the right lever on this issue, it should study—and I am glad the member for Gladstone is in the Chamber—these 177 letters that I now table, which are addressed to the Premier and which the Labor member for Gladstone would not take the time to accept on behalf of his constituents.

**Mr BENNETT:** I rise to a point of order. Those letters were not presented to me, and I take offence at that allegation.

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

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The honourable member refused to accept them; that is why they were not presented to him. He has dinged out, like most of the Government back bench.

**Mr BENNETT:** I rise to a point of order. I find that offensive and I ask for it to be withdrawn.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The honourable member finds the remark offensive. I ask the Leader of the Opposition to withdraw.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I withdraw, but let me say what a difference there is between the member for Thuringowa and the member for Gladstone. What a difference there is in the standard of representation that the people of Gladstone have had in this place during this debate and the principled stand taken by the member for Thuringowa.

**Mr Santoro:** Mr Borbidge, those people across the road have told us they have received only two representations each. How many have you tabled?

**Mr BORBIDGE:** One hundred and seventy seven.

**Mr Santoro:** Where's your two?

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

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The sentiment expressed in these letters is exactly the sentiment of one of the largest sectors right across the State—the small-business sector, the sector which employs more people in Queensland than any other sector. That is a massive body of people, and this Government has just driven straight over the top of them. The Minister should have walked with me today through the shopping centres of Mirani. The sense of betrayal is immense. The Minister might not have bumped into Cicero or Machiavelli, but he would have bumped into many people who are angry at what he is doing to them with this Bill today. The Minister has sentenced those people to declining returns; he has sentenced them to

many more hours work; he has sentenced them to less contact with their families; and he has sentenced many of them to the loss of their livelihoods.

In Victoria, under liberalised trading hours between July 1990 and May 1992, the retail and wholesale sector in that State lost 39 000 jobs. Against this is the fact that in Queensland, where the small-business sector is so important, we have seen strong growth, while employment in larger stores has decreased by over 16 000 in the same period. In South Australia, where the former Labor Government extended trading hours, it was estimated that almost four jobs were lost in the small business retailing sector for every job that was created by the big retailers.

The small businesspeople of Gladstone who, in common with small businesspeople from one end of this State to the other, are concerned about this Bill, wanted their local member to bring these letters to Parliament this week. They were forced to turn to their Federal National Party member, the member for Hinkler, Mr Neville, for assistance. Mr Neville went to the trouble—the local Labor member apparently could not—of getting them to me yesterday. On behalf of the concerned people of Gladstone, I am happy to draw the attention of the Parliament to their views, even if their member has gone missing. Their letter is poignant.

The Minister should consider what it is like to be trying to run a small business in Queensland. The Minister should read those letters. Those letters say—

"Please listen to a small person like me."

"Do we really need late-night shopping every week night?"

"Won't that mean higher running cost for shops to stay open?"

"Won't those extra running costs be passed on to me in the form of high prices?"

"Will the big southern chains be the only people to benefit as small local businesses are forced to close down?"

"That's what happened in other States."

"I appeal to you to consider the compromise proposal already put to you by a group of small store owners that calls for an extension of trading hours to include Thursday and Friday night till 9 p.m. and until 6 p.m. on Saturdays."

"Surely this is all the shopping time we need, and it will stop prices rising to meet increased costs and it will stop all those hard

working Queenslanders who invested their life savings in their own businesses from being wiped out."

"Please put the interests of Queenslanders ahead of big southern and overseas chain stores."

I am sorry to tell the people of Gladstone that that is not going to happen. Once again, I compare the pitiful record of the member for Gladstone with the courage that at least the member—

**Mr BENNETT:** I rise to a point of order. I received no letters. I find what the member says offensive. I ask him to withdraw those remarks, as I find them offensive.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The fact is that the honourable member's leaders, the honourable member's Cabinet colleagues, have done a deal with their mates in the big unions to ensure that their membership grows while the non-unionised small retail sector diminishes. That is the name of the game. I ask the honourable member whether he has spoken in this debate. I ask the member for Gladstone whether he is going to speak in this debate.

**Mr Bennett** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Is the honourable member going to speak? His name is not on the list.

**Mr Bennett** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** Okay. I will tell the people of Gladstone that not only did their member refuse to meet with them to hear their concerns but he is also not even prepared to raise those concerns in the Parliament. I will tell them that he has gone missing in the debate and that he voted with his caucus colleagues tonight. The name of the game here is the number of card-carrying retail industry workers. This has got nothing to do with consumers and it will impose a shocking burden on small business.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Brisbane Central and the member for Warrego—particularly the member for Warrego, who is not in his usual place—will cease their interjections. If members want to interject, they should do so from their own seats. I call the Leader of the Opposition.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The Government says that those people will have a choice. What rubbish! If the big boys open, the small traders will have no choice but to follow. Whether their trade is menswear, fruit and vegetables or

convenience items, if the small business operator does not open when the supermarket or the chain retailer does then, by definition, he will lose business. This debate is all about market share. Even if the small retailer does open, the experience in New South Wales suggests that the small operator will still lose business.

I ask honourable members to read the comments by one of the big operators, published this morning in an advertisement in the *Courier-Mail* headed "Longer shopping hours: the hidden agenda." The person quoted, namely, the then managing director of Woolworths supermarket division, commenting in that very same paper in October 1992, said—

"We've got enormous growth, particularly in fresh food areas in those stores, because, let's face it, the independent operator has to go home sometime or other . . . in the supermarket we just bring in another group of people."

That very same spokesman went on to declare that extended trading hours are the way for the big five retailers, which he said dominated the \$25 billion a year grocery business but lagged in other food areas behind small independent operators, to extend that dominance.

I agree with the Queensland Fruit and Vegetable Traders Association; there is a hidden agenda in this legislation. It is an agenda in which even the larger retailers are secondary in the Government's backing of the big unions. Tonight, this Minister and all his colleagues are delivering control of the retail sector to unions as part of Labor's national campaign to save them from irrelevance and extinction. We saw that rearguard action at work in the recent Industrial Relations Act amendments, and we see it at work now in this legislation. There is nothing less and nothing more in this legislation than a push by this Labor Government to ensure that big unions survive in big retailing at the price of small business in this State. All the rest is rhetoric. This is an exercise in political lunacy. The Government simply does not understand the political price that it will pay as a result of what it is doing to small business in Queensland. This is economic rationalism gone berserk.

**Mr Foley:** What about your own colleagues a few years ago? You used to be a great supporter of deregulation.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** I was part of a Government that had a one-month trial of deregulated trading. We saw what happened in that period, and we enacted legislation that has stood the test of time since—legislation to which the Labor Party was committed and which it backed. We instituted legislation which tonight this Government is rendering irrelevant. It is

doing away with the role of the State Industrial Relations Commission in determining trading hours. The man who claims to be the champion of the State Industrial Relations Commission—

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** How wrong the Minister is with almost everything he does. He has handled this debate like a pompous fool, and he is about to pay a massive political price. The cost to Queensland families will be immense. The beneficiaries will be southern-based retail giants and the trade union movement. The Labor Government will be lining up beside Coles, Woolworths and Franklins and saying to the small businesspeople who are the backbone of Queensland, "Go to hell. You don't matter in our new Queensland."

**Mr Santoro:** Sacrificed at the altar of unionism.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** As my friend reminds me—they are being sacrificed at the altar of unionism. This Government has committed a massive political blunder. I do not know if honourable members opposite realise the extent of that blunder. Small businesses, their associated families and employees from one end of Queensland to the other feel a sense of betrayal by this Government that we have not seen since last year, when it so foolishly decided to try to close down one-third of Queensland's rail system. Tonight, we see a sell-out. Tonight, we see the conspiracy between big government, big unions and big business.

**Mr Foley:** What we see is the stunning hypocrisy of your own position.

**Mr BORBIDGE:** The Minister who now piously interjects will go down as the Judas of small business in Queensland, and everyone who supports him will go down likewise.

Time expired.

**Mr CAMPBELL** (Bundaberg) (8.16 p.m.): Tonight, I have had to listen to perhaps one of the most pitiful, deceitful and hypocritical performances that I have ever seen. I have said in the past that I am concerned about this issue, but I must say that I have not put up a performance like that of the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. The honourable member stands up for the backbone of Queensland. He says, "I will listen to the small business person."

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The House will come to order.

**Mr Santoro** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Clayfield!

**Mr CAMPBELL:** On 13 January 1987, the member for Surfers Paradise had to tell the small retailer—the person who is the backbone of Queensland—"You cannot have your cake and eat it in regard to shopping hours." The member for Surfers Paradise went on to say—

"We have a choice between greater flexibility in trading hours and that does not necessarily mean total de-regulation, or rigid no holes barred enforcement of the existing draconian and outdated law which means that a retailer can be fined \$10,000 for opening one minute after the prescribed closing time."

He said that it was time to change the law or enforce it.

**Mr Nunn:** Who said that?

**Mr CAMPBELL:** That was said in 1987 by the member for Surfers Paradise. What he did not deliver for Queensland, we are doing. But the hypocrisy of all this is that, when this occurs for his own electorate, he is happy; but if it is for anyone else, he has to say that we are selling out. That is the biggest sell-out that I have ever heard. He said—

"I am convinced that Surfers Paradise, at least, should be de-regulated."

That is happening now. Yet the honourable member has the hypocrisy to say at that time the exact opposite of what he said here tonight. I believe that hypocritical things have been said when members have moved from one side of the House to the other, but I believe that the honourable member's performance tonight has taken the cake. What he said in 1987 is exactly the opposite of what he is saying now. Opposition members spoke about the tourism industry and said that it does not need more shopping hours. But when the Leader of the Opposition wanted deregulated shopping hours and extended shopping hours for Surfers Paradise, what did he say? He said—

"If our shopping hours fail to cater for visitors such as the Japanese who are big spenders then we may as well forget about tourism. Unless we can provide the shopping hours our tourists want and can get in other competitive destinations then we are simply not serious about the industry."

The honourable member has that for Surfers Paradise, but he expects other areas that might want to develop a tourist industry not to have that. What hypocrisy to say that in 1987 and then turn around here and say the exact opposite simply because he is in Opposition. Even worse, the Leader of the Opposition had the temerity to

say, "Leave it to the Industrial Commission." But what did he say in 1987? He said—

"All Vince Lester and the Government have tried to do is to find a reasonable solution to a problem that the State Industrial Commission has constantly failed to address."

That is what he said. He said that it could not be the umpire. What has he got for Surfers Paradise and the tourism industry in his area? He has got what he said the Industrial Commission could not do. For a person to change direction by 180 degrees is hypocrisy at its worst.

One concern that we have had all along is the protection of the worker. Honourable members opposite have never given protection to the worker. They wanted deregulated trading hours. They could not have cared less about the small-business person. Their leader said that they could either accept it or go. That is what he said in 1987; he told his own retailers that—accept it or go. The one thing we have done is to protect the worker. That is the important thing. That is the difference between members on that side of the House and members on this side—we protect the worker. In this honourable and esteemed Chamber, we have a member named Vince Lester, who comes and goes. It is interesting to note what he said as spokesman for the then Government. On 26 October 1989, when he was over here on the front bench, he stated in a newspaper in Mr Borbidge's area—

"It is my view that, ultimately, there will be open-ended trading in Queensland. Those who are the most entrepreneurial will succeed."

On Sunday, 4 January 1987, he stated—

"It's good for them but it's not good for the rest of the community. We can't afford to live in a State where the trading hours are the worst for the tourist."

On 16 December 1986, Vince Lester stated—

"The Queensland Government believes retailers should not be dictated to on when they can open their businesses and therefore they should have the right to determine their most profitable trading hours."

That is interesting. When he stood on this side of the House as a Minister, he could say, in effect, "Let us deregulate. Let the entrepreneurial aspects of small business, big business, every bit of business come here and let them decide when they can open."

Again on 16 December 1986, Vince Lester stated—

"Why should a Government dictate when a person can earn a living."

That is very profound.

**Mr Beattie:** Particularly for him.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** Especially for a Minister. So when they are on this side of the House, these people can say they believe in the free enterprise spirit and they believe that we should be able to have open, deregulated shopping hours, but when they get to the other side the crocodile tears for the small-business person begin to flow. When they were in Government they said, "Let the small-business person of Surfers Paradise either become entrepreneurial and profitable or go out the back door."

It was interesting also that the member for Barambah put up the same story—the same concern for small business. Let us be truthful. I have lived in small towns. While honourable members opposite were in Government, over 700 small Queensland towns disappeared. They are disappearing still, but not because of deregulated working hours. I will tell members what is the cause—good roads. Every time a good road is built between two towns, that cuts out the smaller town in between. Honourable members opposite know it, I know it, but they do not have the gumption to stand up here and say what has been happening in Queensland for the past three decades. What will hit small farmers and small traders is going to be technology—better communications. If honourable members do not accept that those things are happening then they are not being truthful to themselves. They are not being truthful to themselves as a party, because they allowed 600 towns to disappear while they were in Government in Queensland.

**Mr Elliott:** Five seconds ago it was 700. It's a Dutch auction, that's what it is. You grabbed a figure out of the air. You made it up. Admit it.

**Mr CAMPBELL:** No. We have listed the small towns that have disappeared. Does the honourable member want to know about the 70-odd little rail sidings that do not exist now—the ones that disappeared when the National Party was in Government? It is interesting to note that when things happen and changes occur, members opposite will quote examples from other countries. Of course there is going to be change. For example, in most areas of America, shops do not open now until 10 o'clock. That is part of the changes that have occurred. It is part of the changes that will occur in the Myer Centre. When Myer opens all day on a Sunday, not every little shop in that centre opens. The owners made up their own minds. Members of the Opposition were prepared to accept that in 1986, 1987 and 1988. When he was in

Government, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise was prepared to accept that, but now it has all changed.

At least we are protecting the worker. That is important. I have expressed my concerns in the caucus room about the effect of this legislation on country towns and areas such as my electorate. Jobs will come and honourable members know that jobs will go from one business that closes down to the next. Similarly, when a new highway is built—whether we build it or members opposite build it—all of a sudden small businesses close down. Members opposite know that. What has concerned me is the effect on aspects of our community life—the effect on sporting bodies such as cricket associations that play on Saturday afternoon. If there is Saturday afternoon trading, they may not survive. I have made that point. Members opposite should not so hypocritical as to accept something when they were sitting on this side of the House then reject it totally now that they are on the other side. I believe in the interests of business people in areas outside Surfers Paradise. I believe that there will be changes and, in many cases, they will be changes for the better. I commend the Minister for being able to bring this Bill to the House and for being prepared to take the criticism, because in the long run it will mean a better and stronger economy for Queensland.

**Mr LINGARD** (Beaudesert—Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (8.28 p.m.): Members of the Opposition have shown during this debate that what we have here in this Bill is the battler versus big business. Clearly, the ALP and the unions are favouring big business. It is a disgraceful, shameful, deliberate attempt by this Labor Government to kill off small business in this State. It is favouring the big, multinational conglomerates over the little man. It shows up again the two-faced, spineless attitude of the Goss Labor Government. It has bowed to the power of the unions.

Let me answer the comments of the member for Bundaberg. It was the Labor Party and the Premier, Mr Goss, who promised during the 1989 election campaign that the Industrial Relations Commission would remain the arbiter of trading hours under a Labor Government. I quote directly from a 1989 Labor policy document, which states—

"As a party, the Australian Labor Party is philosophically opposed to uncontrolled extended hours as we believe that owners as well as employees are entitled to enjoy some leisure time with their families and participate in recreational activities."

That is exactly what the member for Thuringowa said. That is the Government's 1989 policy. I will continue to read directly from the 1989 policy—a policy which the Labor Party went to the people promising them it would observe. It stated further—

"A Labor Government will consult with small business on this important issue but we believe that decisions on trading hours are best left with the Industrial Relations Commission.

We would hope that the trading hours for the major chains can be limited to a five day week plus Saturday mornings and one evening."

That was the policy when the Labor Party went to the people and asked them to elect it to be the Government. That was the mandate the people gave the Labor Party. Yet since then the Labor Party has changed it. It has disregarded a policy that was written and expressed to the people of Queensland. The same assurances were given as far back as 1986 in a Labor policy document. For the benefit of the member for Bundaberg, who talked about hypocrisy, I will quote from that 1986 Labor Party policy document. The document states—

"Labor will not support the extension of trading hours and will ensure that the applications for variations in trading hours are heard before the State Industrial Commission. Special trading hour regulations applicable to declared 'tourist areas' and late night trading will remain in force."

Yet, the member for Bundaberg, knowing full well that, in 1986, the Labor Party went to the people of Queensland with those election policies, and with those election policies in 1989, dares to say that the Opposition is hypocritical for criticising the Government. How the leopard changes its spots!

Yet again, this shows the Premier to be what he really is. Today, we saw it in this House. As soon as he is on his back foot, he then says, "I was wrong. I was wrong regarding the plane. I said it. I promised the people. I asked for a mandate. They gave me a mandate, yet I have changed." He said he was sorry to the people in rural areas of Queensland. He said, "We promised you one thing, we have given you this, and I am sorry." Clearly, members of the Goss ALP Government are saying, "We are sorry. It was our policy in 1989. It was printed in our policy documents. We sought a mandate from the Queensland people. We received a mandate from the people of Queensland, but we are going to say we were wrong. We are sorry. We

are changing it, and we are going straight against the policy that we were elected on."

The passing of this Bill will rip market share off the little man. It will rip it off the corner store proprietor, the strip retailer and the independent. Effectively, the Government is hobbling free and fair competition and promoting a monopolistic marketplace. The little man will lose a significant proportion of the market share not through a genuine and fair competitive environment, not through the big retailers and big shopping centres genuinely attracting and earning a larger proportion of the retail market, but through Labor Government policy, which here tonight has been shown not to be the policy that the Queensland people elected it on. This policy was not contained in its 1989 policy documents. In fact, the Labor Party promised something else. The Labor Government's policy contradicts promises and assurances given to small business, which were accepted in good faith by those business people. Clearly, the Labor Party policy and Labor Party promises are not, in this case, worth the paper that they have been written on. Clearly, for the third time, Government members say, "Sorry." They have said sorry to the country people. This morning, the Premier said that he was wrong about the Government jet. Tonight, Government members have said that they told lies in 1989. They were not elected on this policy. It is not contained in their policy document of 1989. I have read what was contained in that policy document and it was clearly not what Government members are putting tonight. This malignant policy will place increasing pressure on small business survival, and it will assist large retail corporations to capture the market share with the assistance—indeed, the eager complicity—of this Goss Labor Government.

The Goss ALP Government is prepared to stab the battlers of this State in the back. It is prepared to hand the market share to the big retailers on a plate. These small businesspeople, the battlers who have struggled through this recession that we had to have, the battlers who have struggled to keep their heads above water, the battlers who have struggled to keep other Queenslanders employed, the battlers who have been hammered by hostile regulation after hostile regulation, the battlers who have sunk their life savings into their businesses, now risk losing everything at the hands of this two-faced Labor Government—a Government which went to them with a policy, asked to be elected, was elected, and now has said, "Sorry."

This Bill has the big traders' interests stamped all over it. Dr Robert Baker, who is a lecturer in geography at the University of New England, and who has conducted extensive research—and Government members are always

talking about research and how people should know all the facts—has examined the effects of extended trading hours in other States. Dr Baker says that the research shows the three major factors that have produced substantial shifts in the nature of retailing from 1980 to 1994. They are an increase in household mobility, an expansion program in large regional shopping centres and the deregulation of trading hours. He states that those factors have produced substantial shifts in the nature of retailing. He concludes that the major consequence of these factors is that it focuses consumer demand at planned shopping centres and away from strip and neighbourhood centres. Doctor Baker's research also finds that tinkering with trading hours will "engender a substantial impact on shopping patterns in suburban and regional centres over a short period". It will kill small business in this State—not just in the cities, but everywhere—and not in five years, not in two years, but in under a year.

The experience of the small traders on the Gold Coast is a prime example. Since trading hours on the coast were relaxed for larger retailers 18 months ago, small traders have suffered a 20 per cent loss in income. That was yet another decision by this Goss Labor Government. However, its effects extend much further than that. Small country towns will feel the pinch of this scurrilous legislation. One need only look at the studies that have been conducted interstate to confirm this view. A 1992 Ibecon study of retail trends in New South Wales states—

". . . there will be a growth of at least nine new shopping centres in NSW by the year 2000, and local suburban stores could dwindle as a result . . . consumers are more likely to head for regional shopping centres than local stores."

A report by market researchers, AGB McNair, that appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 13 December 1993 states—

". . . extended trading hours have dramatically changed people's shopping habits. It is the large retailers with their extended hours which have benefited the most while the small independent retailers have suffered."

The picture in rural and regional areas is equally alarming. The Government's retail trading legislation will crucify small business in country towns. What is politically expedient is the motivating factor. Many customers are commuters to the city. Why would a big retail chain want to be open in a small town such as Beaudesert at 9 o'clock on a Monday night? What benefits could it possibly achieve? The

answer, undoubtedly, is in the achievement of a monopoly; it is in the dominance of the local market; it is in the destruction of the local economic base; and it is in the destruction of countless small family businesses, particularly in small towns where the inherent danger of extended or deregulated trading exists. Smaller independent traders will lose out to the retail giants every time. Their principal markets would have existed in trading hours outside the reach of the big retailers. Their trading advantage is in convenience to the consumer, being close to their markets and being readily accessible to consumers at odd times of the day and night. Take that advantage away from them, and the giants will swallow them up. For example, small supermarkets cannot compete with the price structures of major retailers. Their costs are considerably higher than the national chain stores simply because of the ability of the major chains to influence their wholesale price of supply.

I will quote from an article in the *Jimboomba Times* of Friday, 22 April, which is typical of the small business response to this terrible legislation. The article starts off as follows—

"Conglomerates is a word filled with menace for our shopkeepers.

Because of the conglomerates, the K-Marts and Coles and all the other retail giants are poised to drain the lifeblood from small businesses if the legislation is passed which will allow extended trading hours from May 16."

Bernie Low, of the local Foodstore at Jimboomba, said—

"Many of our customers are commuters to the city."

It is not true to say that these small shopping centres will survive and will make their own agreements, because many of these shopping centres depend on the commuters that are coming from the city. Bernie Low continued—

"With the proposed extended hours, it is obvious that they will find it easy to stop off at Sunnybank or Calamvale on the way home. We haven't much hope of competing. We are open as long as possible as it is. Taking on extra staff to cover extended hours would leave us running at a loss."

Other Jimboomba shopkeepers confirmed his fears. They have said that, if this legislation is passed, the small businesses will be forced out of existence and customers will find themselves forced willy-nilly to travel miles for their daily needs. It is a bleak prospect.

In the cities, many convenience stores have already closed as a result of Government restrictions and fees. The assault is now as much on rural services. Without the competition of other major retailers in small country towns, one giant retailer could eventually have monopolistic control over the local market. In the short term, the local community might be better off with price discounts. However, once the small-business competition is eliminated, a new, inflated price structure may be imposed upon the region.

Dr Baker cites the following example—

"The classic case of price discrimination against regional centres is in the petroleum industry, where the fuel cost is up to 15c a litre higher than in the capital cities. The price is some 10c a litre cheaper where independents are in active competition, such as in the Hunter Valley."

Dr Baker concludes—

"Therefore, the passing of the control of the retail sector to large corporations should be of concern to regional communities and Government to ascertain whether this transfer is in the long-term interest of the Australian consumer."

The long-term interest of anybody has never been at the forefront of the concern of this Goss Labor Government. What is politically expedient is the motivating factor, the driving force behind the Goss Government.

Let us look at a hypothetical, but highly probable, example. Once again, let us take my electorate of Beaudesert as an example. There are two major retailers in Beaudesert—Coles in the food sector, and Best and Less in clothing and manchester. Let us project temporarily one year into the future. Let us say for argument's sake that the small independent retailers in Beaudesert and surrounding towns have been all but obliterated by the intense discounting and pressure exerted by big retailers such as Coles—a scenario that is not unlikely under this new legislation.

The small traders have disappeared. They have become some mindless statistic that will end up in some cynical press release issued by the Minister for Business, Industry and Regional Development. The two big retailers, Coles and Best and Less, have cornered a monopoly in Beaudesert in their respective markets. But due to the proximity of the larger centres on the Gold Coast and on the outskirts of Brisbane, the faceless managers of the big retailers decided that it is simply not worth their while to maintain their operations in Beaudesert when they can force consumers to go to their outlets in other cities and centres. What are the interests of the

community in the long term? Can large corporations be trusted not to manipulate the market to suit their own needs? The answer is that it is dubious.

A recent case in point is the Westpac closures across much of western Queensland. Westpac management simply decided to pull the plug. In the majority of cases, Westpac was the sole operating bank in those towns and had no competition to take over the gap in the market where it left off. Sure, Westpac management probably thought it would lose some customers to its competitors in larger towns. But if another Westpac branch is 300 kilometres away, as opposed to 450 kilometres for a competitor, it can still cut its losses and cut the cost of maintaining remote branches. Pity the people in those towns who have no banking service and who have to travel hundreds of kilometres to access one. It is important to note that this situation was the result of other Goss Government policies—the bleeding of public services to rural and regional Queensland and the consequent squeeze on the viability of small towns.

I will return to the Beaudesert example. The big retailers decide to close their Beaudesert operations. Nevertheless, they feel confident that they will not lose that market or that share of it. After all, there is no competition in that market from smaller players. They are just forcing consumers to shop elsewhere. Our small towns will become little more than ghost towns and dormitory towns—characterless, soulless and empty. What of the consumers in Beaudesert? What about the elderly and the infirm? What about the mothers with young children? What about those who do not have private transport? What about those who do not have an adequate public transport system, which as we all know too well is the norm rather than the exception? What happens to the people who are disadvantaged in the Goss Government's scheme of things?

The Government's argument—or should I say the big business argument—about increasing employment in the retail sector does not bear close scrutiny. One of the claims of the economic rationalists is that extended trading will create jobs and there will just be a shift in employment opportunities to the large retailers. Indeed, Coles and Myer Chief Executive, Peter Bartels, said that he "welcomed the new hours as a stimulus to retail employment and to more retail growth and development for Queensland". However, this movement will be from full-time to part-time and casual work.

The closure of small businesses in rural and regional areas will have a negative impact on employment. The local butcher will not be able to

take on an apprentice. The butcher will be lucky to be there at all. One small business proprietor in my electorate works long hours—7 days per week—and earns enough money from weekend trading to cover an employee's wage. Where will that employee's job be if there is no money in weekend trading any more? Those family businesses that scrape a living out of retailing now will lose not only their jobs but also their life's investment. Research in southern States shows that the growth of retail chains will not produce equitable employment transfers; rather, it will produce a preference for youth and lower award wages and casuals seeking double incomes.

The cost to the community does not end there. In small towns, local businesses are often the cornerstone of community activities. The member for Thuringowa spoke about it, and it is similar in my electorate. Many small businesspeople are heavily involved in community associations such as Lions and Rotary. They donate both their time and money to meeting the needs of the community that are being ignored, I believe, by this Government. But time means money. If small retailers do not have either, the community suffers a considerable blow.

I will finish with one last question. The Government has roundly applauded itself for not going the full hog, for not totally deregulating the retail market, but where next will it lead? Mr Bartels of Coles Myer said recently—

"Customer response would lead to more widespread deregulation of shopping hours in the future."

Is this the final insult the Goss Government will perpetrate on thousands of small businesses and their employees in this State?

**Mr BENNETT** (Gladstone) (8.48 p.m.): It is with great pleasure that I rise to participate in this debate. Originally, I was not going to do so, because there were over 30 speakers on the speaking list already. I believe that the Opposition is adding to that list all the time. I make no apology for supporting the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill. I was one of those who voted for it in caucus. I have no hesitation in supporting this Bill.

Tonight, we heard a lot from the honourable member for Surfers Paradise. I feel deeply honoured that he would spend some five minutes during his speech attacking a prominent backbencher in the Goss Government. I feel privileged. In the next few days I will be using the media to bring that matter to the attention of the people in my electorate. Tonight, the Leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Surfers Paradise, Mr Borbidge, tabled 179 letters which he claimed the Federal member for

Hinkler, Mr Paul Neville, MHR, gave to him. In doing so, Mr Borbidge said that I refused to accept those letters. Tonight is the first time that I have ever laid eyes on them.

During this whole public debate, I received about three phone calls and three or four letters generated within the electorate. I also received one petition that was not in the correct form, which I passed on to the Premier's office. I do not recall the number of signatories, but it was not significant. I can prove that the Leader of the Opposition has clearly misled the House tonight. I would like any person in the electorate to come forward and say that he or she gave those letters to me. I would like to see that person in my office. At no time, did I receive those letters.

**Mr Beattie:** Another Borbidge lie.

**Mr BENNETT:** I do not believe that that term is parliamentary, but it was a dishonest statement by Mr Borbidge—very dishonest indeed. Mr Borbidge is the leader of a party that has changed the attitude it held when in Government. One used to hear the former leader of the National Party, Joh Bjelke-Petersen, crowing around the State about free enterprise. He would say, "We have to have free enterprise." However, free enterprise always stopped at the farm gate; it never actually reached the farm. Joh Bjelke-Petersen led an agrarian socialist Government, and the comments by members opposite during this debate have followed that line. Members opposite do not support free enterprise, because they are opposed to freeing up trading hours.

I would like to outline some of the benefits that this Bill will have for the Gladstone community. The work force of Gladstone is made up of 30 per cent to 40 per cent of shift workers and workers who work odd or long hours. When I started work as an electrician at the power station, at one stage it was quite common to work up to seven or eight days straight and till 8 o'clock every night. Being a single person at the time, because the shops were not open I had no chance to do any shopping and no chance to buy anything. Genuine blue-collar workers did not have the chance to purchase groceries at a decent price. Members opposite want those sorts of people to be held captive to the high prices charged by corner stores.

With the advent of enterprise bargaining, many workers are working 12-hour shifts. They can work up to four days at a time from 7 to 7. This Bill will allow those people, after finishing work at 7 o'clock, to do a bit of shopping. Those workers deserve a decent quality of life. They are serving this State; they are serving their industries. They deserve the chance to do a bit of shopping with their families. Members

opposite want to stop genuine, hard-working, blue-collar workers from being able to stretch their dollar as far as it can go. Those workers have young families to look after and a household budget to run. They may still go down to the corner shop to buy the bits and pieces as they always have. However, a fact of life is that they deserve to purchase their groceries at a decent price.

Members opposite do not seem to realise that not everybody is on a fantastic wage. Some people work 12 hours a day, but they should still be able to purchase their groceries at a decent price at Franklins or Woolworths. Members opposite are trying to stop kids having a decent feed. They are trying to stop good, working-class families from having a decent feed. Members opposite should feel ashamed of themselves. It is a shame that the Leader of the Opposition is not in the Chamber to listen to my comments, because he might learn something about Queensland and Queenslanders.

**Mr Dollin:** He was afraid. He ran away.

**Mr BENNETT:** The Leader of the Opposition ran away.

Because of this Bill, at Boyne Island, close to Gladstone, Woolworths is now entering the Boyne Plaza. Until now, the major grocery shop was not located at the Boyne Plaza. Dozens of citizens from Boyne Island have contacted my office asking me to lobby a large grocery store such as Woolworths to operate from the Boyne Plaza. Because shopping hours at that plaza have now been extended, Woolworths sees it as convenient to establish a store in the plaza. That will give the people of Boyne Island a chance to do their weekly shopping without having to drive 25 kilometres to Gladstone.

Members opposite want to stop good, decent, honest citizens from getting their food on the table at a good price. Of course, people will still use the corner shop for bits and pieces, but it is unrealistic to expect people to do their weekly shopping at the corner store.

**Mr Dollin:** It's too expensive. It's 40 per cent dearer there.

**Mr BENNETT:** That is true. Members opposite want to take kids' food from the table.

In conclusion, I reiterate that Mr Borbidge misled the House in saying that I had received those letters. Recently, the member for Hinkler, Paul Neville, has been quoted in the newspapers expressing the view that, in the redistribution, he would like to see Gladstone removed from his electorate. That indicates the calibre of his representation. One can take that sort of representation with a grain of salt.

**Mr SPRINGBORG (Warwick) (8.55 p.m.):** In rising to participate in the debate on extended trading hours in Queensland, I want to return the Parliament to a debate held in this place three years ago on the bread industry. I remember at that time the Government suggesting that it would partially deregulate the bread industry, and that that would make it so much better for the consumers and for the people who operated small bakeries and the larger bakeries. The Government claimed that, at the end of the day, everybody would live in paradise.

At the end of that debate, many Opposition members and some Government members came to the conclusion that we would be back in the Parliament within a couple of years to put through legislation that would completely deregulate that industry or that would reregulate it. Within a couple of years, we did return to this place, and we did deregulate the bread industry in Queensland. The original legislation that was formulated by this Government was absolutely unworkable. I suggest that this legislation, which will undoubtedly be passed through this Parliament by the weight of numbers either in the early hours of the tomorrow morning or tomorrow afternoon, will follow the same course. I predict that we will be back in this Parliament at some time in the not-too-distant future to amend the legislation to make it more workable or maybe even to go that step further, if the Government wishes, to complete deregulation.

**Mr Campbell:** You weren't here for the debate in 1987.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I take that interjection from the honourable member for Bundaberg. I remember that debate. I was not a member of this Parliament, but I remember the then Government proposing that there would be a one-month trial of deregulated trading hours, which subsequently occurred. I remember the comments that were made at the time, but the reality is that we did not deregulate trading hours at that stage. The trial period occurred, and at the end of that time the Government came to the conclusion that it was not in the best interests of the consumers or the shopkeepers of this State.

Previously, some shops could open longer hours, which took into consideration the tourist strips and other special circumstances around the State. This legislation will take away the protection that is currently offered in Queensland.

In rising to contribute to this debate, I want to reflect on some of the concerns that I hold for small businesses in my electorate. They are genuine concerns. I will also admit that some business people in my electorate have suggested that there may be an advantage in

extended trading hours. By and large, those people are in the minority. At the end of the day, I believe that their position will be proven wrong, not because they do not know how to run a business but because a whole lot of nonsense has been peddled to them about what a great advantage this will be for their business.

I want to quote the reaction to this proposal in the local newspapers. The *WarwickDailyNews* quoted the President of the Warwick Chamber of Commerce, Kim Olsen, who said that he believed that the proposal was a push from larger businesses to crush the smaller ones. That article stated—

" 'Extended trading hours will not help small businesses', he said.

'The way I see it, it is for the benefit of big businesses.

'I think most people in the Chamber would support this view.

'From my own business (hardware) point of view I think the situation is harder on some of the other retailing organisations because they are in the thick of things with competitive products— hardware is a little less affected.

'Longer hours could mean Toowoomba will again benefit because people will have more of a chance to go and shop.' "

The article continued—

"Brysons Florist principal Mrs Lynn Bryson said to employ staff for extra trading hours would cripple some businesses.

'In our situation, we would have to do the extra hours ourselves', she said.

'Some businesses do not have their family to help them and would find it a struggle to employ more staff for about the same turnover.

'Businesses will be open for longer hours only to make the same turnover.' "

I turn now to some of the comments made by retailers in the *Stanthorpe Border Post*. I know that this week, in an effort to placate some of their concerns, the Minister responded to those retailers. However, I believe that the only way we will really placate their concerns is if we go two or three years down the track and one of us is ultimately right. I daresay that in this particular circumstance I fear that the Minister will not be right. One Stanthorpe trader, Mr Ron Wilkinson, who owns a jeweller's shop, stated—

" 'There are a certain number of dollars to be spent in the community and it doesn't matter if people spend them in 40 hours or

60 hours. You are not going to get any extra return,' said Ron Wilkinson, of Wilkinson's Jeweller, in a comment repeated by several other business owners."

Another trader stated—

" 'This is supposed to be the Year of the Family, but the State Government has not helped create any harmony in families by extending trading hours,' said Glenn Turner, of Glenn Turner's Mensland.

'Once again the government and unions have dictated terms that will affect small businesses and employment in general.' "

I will admit that I like to shop in some of the bigger stores. I will quite openly admit that I shop in Woolworths and Coles, but I also enjoy shopping in the smaller convenience stores and the smaller corner stores because I think that with this diversity we protect what is needed within our community.

I find some of the arguments put forward by Government members a little bit perplexing to the extent that they are saying that the reality is that there will be some job losses here but some other jobs will be picked up there. We have heard the honourable member for Bundaberg say that small towns die, and that is the reality of the situation, but I am not prepared to come into the Parliament and accept that argument. I think that there is a certain obligation on all members of Parliament to ensure that we keep as many business people as possible in business. We need to provide those people with the same sort of safety net mechanism that is provided to the people in our community who are least able to protect themselves, that is, the workers. That is why we have award wages, because it protects people who are not in the position to be able to dictate terms to suit themselves. That is what is happening with the current trading legislation in Queensland. If we allow the bigger southern-based chains a fair bite of the cherry, we also need to protect the smaller convenience stores that are basically and primarily family operations. Unfortunately, this Bill is going to jeopardise that protection.

What I put to the Minister is what has been put forward by some of the retailers in the articles I have quoted, that is, that this legislation will not create any extra dollars. It will certainly create no extra dollars in my electorate, which probably is currently suffering more from the effects of a drought than a recession. My constituents are in the position in which there are only so many dollars to go around. Under this legislation, the reality is that because the larger traders have greater buying power and their overheads are smaller than the smaller convenience stores,

they will be able to stay open and those dollars will shift from the smaller traders to those larger traders. I fear that by virtue of that fact, the larger traders will be able to crush those smaller traders. I believe that will come to pass.

I will cite an example. Recently, in Stanthorpe the owner of a Cut Price Supermarket which, by virtue of its size under the current legislation in Queensland is able to trade at any time, decided that he would open that store seven days a week. Today, I was speaking to a small trader. This man owns a small family convenience store. He opens the store every day of the year, even for some hours on Christmas day. Up until recently, he employed four people in a permanent part-time capacity. As a result of that Cut Price Supermarket trading longer hours and opening on Sunday, the small trader has actually had to lay off three permanent part-time people. If that can happen under the current legislation in Queensland, what sort of a situation are we going to see in this State when the bigger traders have the choice to open till 9 o'clock each week night and also till 5 o'clock on Saturday?

My electorate comprises many small towns, including Wallangarra, Texas, Inglewood, Allora, Killarney, the larger township of Stanthorpe and also the city of Warwick. My major concern is that we will see a situation where people will leave those smaller towns on the weekend, because shopping in the larger towns will become a weekend out for them, as was alluded to by the honourable member for Thuringowa in his most excellent presentation in this House today. What that will do is reduce the diversity of products available in those smaller towns. That will reduce the ability of those small shopkeepers to be able to supply the range of products in their shops necessary to meet demand.

While Government members might be prepared to accept that people will travel to the bigger centres to shop, the reality is that there are many people who still want the convenience; they want the ability to shop locally. The family people on a small budget who cannot afford to jump in their car and drive 40 or 50 miles, or sometimes 100 miles, just for the weekend still need to be able to shop locally. The more elderly in the community who never go away and who never shop in those bigger centres will one day go into the place where they normally shop and ask, "Why can't I buy a dress here?" or "Why can't I buy such a diversity of canned products?" The simple answer from the shopkeeper will be, "If you do not support me and if it is costing me money, then I will be unable to keep that diversity in the shop which I usually provide." That is the simple reality.

What the honourable member for Bundaberg said is true to a certain extent, that is, that there are now fewer towns in the State than there were a few years ago. However, I think now it is a case of protecting and supporting the towns that are left. Within my electorate, in the 1920s and the 1930s there were towns of 600 or 700 people. Those towns no longer exist because they were built around a silver mine or a copper mine. Those industries have gone, so the people have moved. But when is enough enough? If we were prepared to accept the argument that with better roads people are going to keep driving and driving, when does enough become enough? One hundred, two hundred, three hundred miles? By and large, people from country towns now have to drive half an hour or 50 or 60 miles to get the commodities they need. I think that we should make sure that that they are able to buy those commodities in their own towns.

I made a statement some time ago when this subject was first mooted that what we would see would be a situation in which there would be no more full-time jobs created and that there would be a redistribution of wealth away from the smaller centres to the bigger supermarkets. I think that that is a genuine concern, because it comes back to the fact that there will be no more extra dollars created in these areas. A couple of weeks ago, I saw a very interesting debate on the *Lateline* program with Kerry O'Brien. It was between three gentlemen, one representing a research institution that has done substantial research into what has happened with trading in Australia, another representative from one of the larger food chains, and a representative from a smaller family-type food store. That debate revealed an interesting trend in the United States, where only about 20 years ago they started to go the same way we have gone, that is, moving away from the smaller strip shops and convenience shops to the larger shopping chains. They are now seeing a turnaround, with people preferring convenience stores because it is less of a hassle to go into such a shop and purchase what they want.

What I suggest tonight is that we should not be rushing headlong into this particular legislation because we are going to get 10, 15 or 20 years down the track and find we will have to revert to where we are now. The wheel seems to turn—it is cyclic. I get sick and tired of members standing up in this place saying that because South Australia did such and such or that Victoria did such and such, we have to bring ourselves into line with such places. If we are doing it better than they are doing it elsewhere, then we should be happy to do it better. What we have now is something that provides the consumer with the

opportunity to buy whatever commodities they wish. We have extended late night trading and also trading on Saturday. We still have the convenience stores that provide customers with the friendly, personal service that many people demand. I think that we tend to take these things for granted. We will not know how much we miss them or how important they are until we get further down the track and realise that they are gone. I think that we will get to that situation. Unfortunately, it is going to mean that in the interim a lot of small businesses will close. They are the people who I stand here and represent tonight.

I have a great deal of sympathy for the plight of those whom the other side describe as the blue-collar workers, because I represent a lot of blue-collar workers. I was once a blue-collar worker. I understand their plight, and I understand they only have a certain amount of dollars but, certainly in my area, embarking on this particular program will not provide them with the better shopping that they demand. It will provide them with a reduced service. That is what I am voicing my concerns about tonight.

We have heard from some members opposite that families must be able to shop whenever they want to; that the current Thursday night or Friday night shopping in the middle of Brisbane is not good enough. I believe that it is good enough. The point that we have to keep hammering home is that there is only a certain amount of dollars to be spent. We are going to increasingly reduce the margins for the smaller shops, and that will inevitably lead to their closure.

There comes a time when rationalism should prevail. I do not believe that it is prevailing here with the passage of this legislation. I believe that the obvious problems which beset the Labor caucus when it debated this issue really show the passions that exist towards extended trading hours amongst people in the electorate.

Within my electorate, this is certainly not going to advantage small businesses or consumers. This will significantly disadvantage a great number of people by reducing their options and reducing small businesses—those people who have provided long-term employment and have been an essential part of the community for a long time. For those particular reasons, I say to all members of this House that this is not a good Bill. This is a bad Bill. At some time in the not-too-distant future, we will have to come back to this Parliament—perhaps in one year, two years or three years—and amend this legislation, because everything that has been said by members on this side of the House and by the

honourable member for Thuringowa will be proven to be correct. I am very concerned that we must go through this particular foray into social engineering before we have to prove to ourselves that we are going to open a Pandora's box.

**Mr VEIVERS** (Southport) (9.12 p.m.): How many times have members been forced to meet in this House to witness the Labor Government pandering to the wishes of the big guys while it stomps on the little ones? Time after time we have seen this Government chasing the minority vote, while the average, hardworking Queenslanders are left out in the cold.

**Mr Briskey:** Who wrote this?

**Mr VEIVERS:** I did. Yet again, honourable members are meeting under the very same circumstances. On this occasion, the small business operators in Queensland are being punished. What for? For their major contribution to the State's economy; for employing thousands of full-time and part-time employees; and for providing an infrastructure that Queensland cannot do without!

When introducing this Bill, the Minister spoke verbosely about how the rule of law should allow citizens the maximum liberty consistent with the rights of others and the public good—whatever that meant. Unfortunately, the Minister's rhetoric was very empty. It is so good to see the Minister in the House tonight.

**Mr Foley** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The Minister would know nothing about private enterprise. In seeking to deregulate and extend trading hours, this Labor Government is not acting for the rights of the majority or for the public good. It is going to destroy small businesses, create widespread unemployment and increase pressures on families.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** That is something which the honourable member for Brisbane Central does not worry about. The only winners will be the big operators—the guys this Government supports, that is, the major chain supermarkets and department stores, which will then channel their profits into other States or overseas. The small traders—those who recirculate their profits back into Queensland and those who support local sporting events, charities and residents—will be obliterated. The marketplace has been stolen from the people. The chain stores take three-quarters of our retail dollar, but we see little in reciprocal trade or any form of community support returned.

This legislation represents the combined efforts of a union, two chain stores and a very few shopping centre owners who have convinced the Labor Government to ignore the pleas of thousands of protesting shop owners. What has the Honourable the Minister, Mr Foley, got to lose? He has a safe salary and a big superannuation payout due. He has nothing to worry about.

**Mr Turner:** Have you been involved in small business in your life?

**Mr VEIVERS:** Very definitely, yes. I must say that I am very happy that I am not involved in it now. What a bunch of brigands Government members are! They stick with the big guys and shoot the little blokes.

**Mr Welford** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Mr Welford should not talk. In caucus, he fought against this issue and said, "I will stand up." Then he went out into his electorate and said to the small shop owners, "I am going to support you."

**Mr Welford** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** From the way that the honourable member handled that caucus meeting, he is the one who smokes marijuana. He went out into his electorate and told those people lies. He said that he would support them. He then crumbled in the caucus meeting. He folded like a damp Sao biscuit.

The Honourable Minister, Mr Foley, is going to lose support, but he is not going to lose his superannuation. He does not worry about those people. He does not have one dollar of his money at risk in a small business, as do many other Queenslanders. There are many families whose business is their only investment. They work long and hard to try to make their businesses succeed. Then they come up against an ugly brick wall. Do honourable members know what has been graffitied across that brick wall? "Queensland Labor Government"! It is the brick wall that Labor has erected to separate the big, influential operators from the independent sector, and it is the brick wall that will eventually crumble and crush all those members opposite under it.

In attempts to support deregulation of trading hours, the Minister, Mr Foley, has often referred to the findings of the Trading Hours Investigation Committee. Let us look not at its final conclusion but at some of the evidence that it used to reach that decision.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Has the honourable member for Brisbane Central doorknocked any brothels lately? I believe he is very good at that.

**Mr Beattie:** Yes, and they told me to get you to come back and pick up the shoes you left there.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The honourable member did not even know that they were there. Looking at that report, we find summaries of the arguments submitted for and against extended trading hours.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** At least they did not supply me with a new Mercedes to replace the SAAB 8000 turbo.

The arguments submitted in favour of deregulation fill one page, with the majority coming from retailers. There are no prizes for guessing which retailers! The arguments submitted in opposition to deregulated trading hours—coming from consumers, retailers, employees, unions and other interested parties—fill almost two pages and are of far more weight than the arguments in favour. Those honourable members who doubt my credibility should consult the report themselves. Basically, the support is coming from very few sectors.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The member for Brisbane Central is the one who spoke against this issue in caucus. He said, "My seat will be in jeopardy."

**Mr Beattie:** I did not.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Yes, he did. Once again, he dogged it. The honourable member for Redlands, Mr Budd, also did a total backflip with a pike. Luckily, the gymnastics were held recently. He has emulated them very well.

**Mr Beattie** interjected.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The only thing that will beat me is age. The Minister told us that the increased labour market flexibility achieved via enterprise bargaining has created a need for further retail market flexibility. How about that one! One would not want to be paying him to defend one as a Queen's Counsel. I smell a more sinister motive here. Enterprise bargaining is not being utilised because of current retail trading hours, so the Goss Government has decided to do its union mates a few favours. Of course, the Labor Government supports the move, mainly because it is weak and always bows to the highest bidders, regardless of the effect on the majority. One had only to see Bob Hawke speaking with a forked tongue on that program. Members opposite support that sort of thing. That is unbelievable.

**Ms Power:** No, we don't.

**Mr VEIVERS:** That is very nice to hear.

**Mr Beattie:** We're all Keating supporters. Where have you been?

**Mr VEIVERS:** That is out of the frying pan and into the fire. Members have only to ask the Vietnam veterans what they think of the honourable member. Yesterday, at the Anzac Day parade, I saw a few of them. They do not like the honourable member one little bit. However, I am getting away from the Bill.

Let me consider just some of the concerns that have been expressed. These are not the concerns of the Opposition or small business operators alone. Members know that there was a healthy debate in caucus, with a number of Labor members being vocal in their disapproval of the proposed extension.

In my home town of the Gold Coast, there is widespread disapproval. I have on my desk a mountain of letters and faxes from retailers and traders who are worried sick about the consequences of the proposals. We have been through this before. They know, despite the Minister's false rhetoric, that the results will be disastrous, and they are not alone in this knowledge. Our man here—Mr Santoro—tabled his letters earlier in the day—400 to 500 letters just to one Opposition member. The Queensland Retail Traders and Shopkeepers Association described the day of the Cabinet decision as a "black-letter day" for small retailers. So they should. The Queensland Small Business Association has been similarly impressed by Labor's so-called insight. In the north, the member for Thuringowa, Mr McElligott, has made his opinion well known. He is probably resting because members of the Government have attacked him all day. Perhaps he should move over to the sensible side.

**Mr Beattie:** He's a good man.

**Mr VEIVERS:** If he is good man, why are members opposite putting so many Wilkinson's swords into his back? Members opposite are known for that sort of thing. He stood up and he was honest and open. He was a little different from Mr Budd, who is not currently in the Chamber. I will be careful; I do not want to talk about people when they are not in the Chamber. In Townsville and Thuringowa, the mayors, the Townsville Chamber of Commerce president and the manager of the City Heart Traders Association have all expressed their disapproval at the proposals. This is supposed to be the heartland of the north—the heartland of Labor. Labor is collapsing like a bad deck of cards. Reports from Rockhampton, Mackay and Cairns have been the same. It is essential to look beyond Brisbane to consider how other regional cities will cope. The message from them seems

to be that extended trading hours will not work in their cities.

We know Mr Beattie, Mr Welford, Mr Budd and even the Honourable Minister for the Environment, Molly Robson, and unbelievably—

**Mr Foley:** In Cairns they want us to go further. In Cairns they are saying that they want to trade on Sunday.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I will take the Minister's interjection. If he is going to do this, why does he not get the State's public servants to open offices of the Transport Department so that people can get their licences, so this sort of thing is totally convenient for the people of Queensland? No, the Minister will not do that. What he says in his grand rhetoric is, "I will think about it and one day it is going to happen." Fair dinkum! We have more chance of seeing an honest day's work from the Minister than that ever happening.

**Mr Foley:** Have you ever been in small business?

**Mr VEIVERS:** My word. That is how I got where I am and I am very proud of it. It is people like the Minister who tried to grind us down. The Minister has not done anything for private enterprise in his life. All he has done is stand up and be paid to talk. His talk is cheap. I would not have employed him as a QC, or a barrister, while his tail pointed to the ground because he is not worth two bob.

As I said before, the profits generated in Queensland by the large retail chains will be channelled out of our State, whereas small-business profits are always directed back to the community. This will severely harm the viabilities of traders in country areas.

**Mr Beattie:** Mr Veivers?

**Mr VEIVERS:** The honourable member has had his shot. If residents of country areas are encouraged to travel to metropolitan areas to visit large operators, the local small operators will invariably suffer. Take Townsville, for example. People will come from Charters Towers for a day out. They will take the kids, travel there, do their shopping and go back home. In Charters Towers—it is a hypothetical scenario, but it is true—the town will start to die because the kids will not be employed there. The Minister has not any answer to that. He has just glossed over it. It will happen in many rural towns along the coast. It will happen on the Gold Coast. Pacific Fair and Australia Fair will take up everything and the small businesses five or six kilometres outside the business area will die. It will be the Minister who has killed them. Private enterprise is on the rocks thanks to this incompetent Minister. He would

not know anything about private enterprise. He has never been in it. He has only ever talked. He would not know anything. He has not consulted anyone. If he really had, he would throw out this Bill and start again.

Let us consider another of the Minister's arguments in support of deregulation—the supposed increase in employment opportunities. What a load of worthless rubbish! The experience in other States suggests very different realities. In South Australia—a Labor State—deregulation resulted in a shift from the independent sector. The small businesses and traders lost almost four jobs for every one job that was created by the chain stores. These are Labor's records, yet the Minister does not even know about them. He should get his advisers to do what they should be doing, that is, tell him the truth. Of course, they are working for an incompetent Minister, so the poor people do not know what they are doing. Only last week, independent wholesalers and retailers in Tasmania were expressing their fears that the liberalisation of trading hours would wreck the State's chances of an economic recovery and would destroy small businesses.

We are told that consumers want extended and more flexible hours. Why? Current trading hours are more than sufficient. Local convenience stores are available in times of need. The fact is that, ultimately, deregulation will lead to a reduction in the number of shops and a loss to the consumer of convenience and choice. Members of the Government do not know anything about it because they do not understand private enterprise.

On the coast, on average the big stores are open 67 hours week. People do not need any more than that. Today, members have been pointing out that no-one is in the stores, except the poor kids sitting at cash registers. It is crazy! The member for Thuringowa is sitting in here. He was right about north Queensland. Mr McElligott is pointing out a fact to the people on his side of the House and they will not listen. They have bricks in their head. Why? Because they are not on the ground; they have not been in private enterprise; and they would not know one thing about it.

Current trading hours are more than sufficient and local convenience stores are available in times of need. The fact is that ultimately deregulation will lead to a reduction in the number of shops and the loss to the consumer of convenience and choice. In the last few years, we have seen a significant reduction in the amount of disposable dollars available, an increase in the number of regional shopping centres servicing a relatively small population

base and increases in trading hours. Longer hours do not mean more customers. Local residents and tourists alike—and I come from a tourist area—are well catered for with current trading hours. The demand simply is not there. We will see the demise of the neighbourhood corner store, which currently provides a much-needed service to the aged, the infirm and those without transport. God knows that we have plenty of those people on the Gold Coast—and the Minister for Transport is not in the Chamber.

Increased labour and operating costs will mean price increases that consumers will have to bear. Public transport and other services—banks, post offices, and Government offices—will be expected to be available also. Of course, with this Minister they are not going to be available because he has a heart the size of a split pea; he will not put any pressure on them to open up because he cannot hack the extra charges that it will cost to open up those public State Government offices. There is nothing in this for the consumers.

What about the retailers? Apart from the big guys, there is not much in extended trading hours for the majority. There are a lot of people in the gallery tonight listening to the Minister. I have to tell him that not too many of them are on his side. Families and independent traders will face further physical, financial and social strain because of the necessity for them to work extra hours to save costs. Even so, the labour costs and overheads will rise, yet they will not see a corresponding increase in turnover or profits. These traders are not lazy. They would work 24-hours a day if it meant that the cash register was ringing 24-hours a day. The fact is that it will not happen. What will be the result? It will be the closure of hundreds of small businesses made non-viable by this Government's total stupidity.

I am particularly worried about those independent traders who operate within a large shopping centre or mall. I have first-hand knowledge of this, because I used to be one of them. The deregulation of trading hours is supposedly about choice, about giving retailers more freedom, yet for those traders there will be no choice. The honourable Minister has oh so kindly provided a requirement that 75 per cent of the tenants must vote in favour of establishing core hours. So what? That still leaves 25 per cent—a substantial number—of tenants in many centres who will be forced to work longer and harder for less return—and they will be forced. Retailers have told me that at all times they are at the mercy of shopping centre management. We have seen the power that chain stores and shopping centre owners can wield over the State Government. What makes members think that

those owners will have any trouble controlling a couple of small retail traders?

What about employees? Most employers will not employ more staff. They will simply initiate cost-cutting measures, such as understaffing and the employment of junior casuals. In many cases, permanent full-time employment will give way to part-time, casual or even junior employment, thus denying many employees job security and holiday and long service entitlements. There will be increased security problems for all of us and, as I have said, inconvenience. Shoppers and employees who leave late at night will demand extra security measures. Shopping centre and mall managers already have enough problems because of undesirables who hang around their centres.

In summary, it seems to me that many people will starve to feed a few already fat-cat businessmen. There is nothing in these extended hours for the majority of retailers, for consumers, for employees, or for the general public. The only proponents are the big chains, the unions and the Labor Party.

Time expired.

**Mr HEALY** (Toowoomba North) (9.32 p.m.): At the outset, may I say how honoured I am to follow the member for Southport, who made a most eloquent contribution to this debate.

Despite the constant and persistent assurances by the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations that this legislation is needed and wanted in Queensland, it is a fact, and this is confirmed by the contributions of Opposition members tonight, that it clearly is not needed or wanted. The Opposition will continue to highlight the grave concerns of small business in this State about the ramifications of this legislation for them, their family life, and their future viability.

The Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill is not unlike the legislation introduced to deregulate the milk industry. It is simply designed to assist major companies to the detriment of small business and, of course, to satisfy the whims of the unions in their negotiations with large retailers on enterprise bargaining.

Firstly, let me touch on the situation of small business operators whose businesses are located in major shopping complexes. Under the legislation, those businesses are obliged to open only for the set extended periods of the day or night if, in a ballot, 75 per cent or more of those businesses agree. Let me cite the scenario that was postulated by the Minister in an interview this morning on the ABC, when he stated—

"For shopping centres it means that there is protection for the small retailer in those shopping centres. If for example the landlord comes along and says listen mate, you've got to trade all hours of the day and night because we want to do that, then they won't be allowed simply to compel those tenants, they will have the protection of a 75 per cent ballot to determine the core trading hours and they can't be compelled to trade outside those hours, although of course they are at liberty to do so."

Let me suggest another scenario in which the same landlord comes along to that same small retailer and says, "Listen mate, I know that this 75 per cent ballot rule is in force, but the big retailer down there at the end of the complex is putting a fair bit of pressure on me to ensure that I get it. Now, if you do not agree, I am simply going to put up your rent." In other words, what is there to stop blackmail from making a complete mockery of this legislation? Of course the landlord will have pressure placed on him by the large retail outlet. Because of their floor space area, those large retail outlets pay the most rent. So not only will corner stores and small centres be affected by this legislation, but so too will the small operators in large complexes who will have no protection from the bullying tactics of the major retailers.

I want to refer to an extract from a copy of a letter which, incidentally, was sent to the Minister by a constituent of mine named John Schmidt, who is the proprietor of a delicatessen in one of Toowoomba's major shopping centres. In that letter to the Minister, Mr Schmidt states—

"Extended hours will increase centre overheads which will also increase our portion of outgoings whether or not we trade.

Our staffing alterations will be not to replace our permanent full time staff when they resign. We have regard for the efforts they put into our business so we will not cease their employment now but in order to cease the hours we will eventually cease employing permanent staff.

We will replace these staff with school children 16 yrs and under as few as possible and any figures regarding increased employment that are extrapolated to the broad employment rate would have to be treated with cynicism and scepticism.

Following updated changes to customer shopping patterns (via our franchise chains experiences in NSW) there will definitely be fewer hours work available for staff who rely solely on this for income (i.e.: not students).

Our most intensive staffing time will be clean up which is after trading hours. The casual hours on offer to non school staff is not sufficient income therefore they need to find additional employment which in turn means less hours with us due to lack of availability. This is currently the position for one of our staff, a no win situation.

Whilst there may be an increase in the number of staff employed it will not translate into an equivalent increase in total hours of employment. Indeed if we are to survive, it must remain as close as possible to the current amount."

In concluding that letter to the Minister, Mr Schmidt states—and I think that this is important—

"Your comment on family matters on ABC 7.30 Report is something of a back hander to retailers. We have two children aged 7 and 4. In our situation work commences at 6.30 am at the latest. Finish time for us is 10 pm at the earliest on late night trades and 7 pm earliest Saturday.

It would appear family time for our family would mean 1/2—1 hour Saturday and part of Sunday. Weekly trading sheets and accounts must be completed on Sunday.

The children will not experience family time at any other time. My wife also works in separate employment to cover living expenses."

Those are the sorts of matters that we have to consider when debating this legislation. Already, in my electorate in Toowoomba, we are faced with another major problem for small business, which will only be compounded by the implications of this legislation, and that is the fact that, each year, it has been estimated that already more than \$70m escapes from Toowoomba to Brisbane retailers. That figure has been confirmed by the Toowoomba City Central Traders and Property Owners Association. It was calculated from Myer Toowoomba's credit card system, which verifies Toowoomba card use in the Brisbane area. That figure is coupled with the *Downs Economic Review*, which has previously estimated a \$50m loss. So small retailers in Toowoomba who, for years, have been trying to attract their share of that \$70m that escapes to Brisbane are now about to be hit by a double whammy in the form of this legislation. Once again, the greed of the big chains and corporations and the unions is so entrenched that they wish to increase their market share over the broken backs of small retailers and owner/operators in this State.

No country in the world suffers from the monopolistic situations that exist throughout most, or all, of the economy of Australia. Three major companies in Australia account for 70 per cent of the food sales throughout this country. In comparison, in the United States, 10 major companies hold 12 per cent of retail food sales. In the United Kingdom, three major companies control only 28 per cent of food sales. Yet in Australia, 10 major companies hold 40 per cent of retail food sales.

Under the proposals being forced upon the Queensland public by this legislation, people will suffer reduced services. The after hours corner store will close, and the smaller, family-run businesses will cease to operate. That will not only cause a restructuring of our society in that family businesses will cease to exist, as will the concept of the owner/operator, but also there will be a shrinkage in the number of outlets.

There are a lot of poor people in this country who simply do not have access to motor vehicles. They have to walk to their nearest shop. Outside the Brisbane metropolitan area, and in particular in the country areas of Queensland, there is virtually no adequate public transport system during those extended hours. A lot of people in Queensland will find it very difficult to access shops if their local corner store or small retailer is forced to close down. This will apply not only to the elderly but also to poor people and people on low incomes who will be placed in grave difficulty because they do not have access to public transport during those extended hours.

Over the past few weeks since this legislation was introduced, all we have heard from the Government is that the people of Queensland will now be given a much greater choice to do their shopping by extending the hours available to them. I remind honourable members that not all of our disposable income is spent on shopping. Before we even think about doing the shopping, certain other things have to be done, such as paying the bills—for example, electricity, rent, rates, telephone, and mortgage repayments. When do we have to pay those accounts? We have to pay them during normal working hours, that is, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. If this Government is so concerned about the lack of choice, as the people of Queensland are being led to believe, why not deregulate the hours of electricity authorities, State Government departments and local government authorities? Of course, that will not happen because of the enormous backlash from the many unions involved.

The Opposition reiterates its stance that in Queensland the independent umpire, the State

Industrial Commission, should be the only arbiter, upon application, in the determination of shopping hours. We will continue to oppose deregulation of shopping hours on the basis that small businesses cannot compete with the southern retail giants. We will continue to highlight the fears of small businesses. However, many will close. There will be a decline in profitability; there will be a dramatic decline in employment within the small-business sector; there will be more kickbacks from the unions to the Government; and there will be a continuing undermining of the role of the independent Industrial Relations Commission.

I will conclude my brief contribution to this debate tonight by quoting the last paragraph of a copy of another letter that was sent to the Minister by another angry small businessman, Mr David Harpham, the proprietor of a Foodstore at Highfields, which is just outside my electorate. He is exactly right when he says—

"Thank you, Mr Foley, for taking this decision, particularly at a time of tight trading for everyone. Another landmark decision that will help the big get bigger and the small out the door."

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (9.43 p.m.): I rise to support the cause of a particular group of small traders who have been largely ignored in this debate—at least, they were until the particularly cogent contribution by the member for Warwick. In his contribution, the member for Warwick commented on small traders in areas which are not remote from large centres, that is, the people in hinterland areas connected to large centres—as was pointed out by the member for Gladstone—by ever-improving roads. My electorate is such an area. It is the hinterland region of the major tourist centre of Cairns.

This Government ought to understand that every region in this State is different. It is an enormously decentralised State—something from which we derive great benefit. People living in small towns look after themselves. There are small traders in those towns, which is also of benefit to the wider community, because people are not clustered in the south-east corner of the State. There are many people who choose to live outside the south-east corner and away from the larger regional centres. However, there are some traps in this legislation for those people who choose to be traders in hinterland regions, particularly those close to large tourist centres.

I do not have a problem with the CBD traders in Cairns City. About 90 per cent of them are exempt shops anyway under the existing legislation. They can trade at any time, but they are all small traders. They do not present a

particular concern to the small traders operating in the hinterland regions 40, 50 and 60 kilometres away. It is comparing like with like. For example, a bootmaker or another small trader in the CBD is dealing in exactly the same way as a comparable small trader in the hinterland region. The problem that we face with this legislation is with the major traders. It has been mentioned by probably every speaker in the debate. I am only reiterating it, but it is a point worth making.

We are worried about the K marts, Franklins, Coles and Woolworths—those very large national and international conglomerates that have purchasing power beyond the wildest dreams of small traders. They can sell goods profitably on special that small traders in my electorate cannot even buy at wholesale rates to put into their stores. So what happens? People are drawn to these large conglomerates as they are deregulated. The member for Thuringowa mentioned that there will be children whose day out on the weekend will be at the local shopping mall. That is not too far-fetched.

In those regions about which this Government apparently knows little or nothing, we will see mum, dad and the kids going over the range to spend their discretionary income. They will spend their money on a weekly basis for goods and services, not just food for the table—as was pointed out once again by the member for Gladstone. He said that we were taking food off the table of the little children. It is not only food items that we are dealing with here; it is the whole spectrum of goods provided by small and large traders in this State. People are going to be attracted to those things like flies to honey, simply because of the prospect of cheaper prices.

People will be able to offset the running costs and fuel expenses of their motor car against the illusion that they are having a day out somewhere. Mum, dad and the kids will spend the day together. In the case of the people who live in the electorate of Tablelands, they will travel to Cairns. That discretionary income, which will be no larger because of this legislation—there will be no more money to spread around—will haemorrhage even more than it is already haemorrhaging across the range. It will not go into the pockets of small traders and business people—the types of people who buy and sell their goods locally, who raise their children in the local school, who go to the local church, and who bank in the local bank. It will not circulate in that community. Rather, it will go into the pockets of large multinational companies. That is very unfortunate.

**Mr Santoro:** Straight interstate.

**Mr GILMORE:** Straight interstate and overseas. We are talking about the structure of small local economies. I said at the outset that every region in this State is different. There are reasons for that. In my region, I have depressed rural economies around me. It does not matter which industry one takes as an example; there are legitimate reasons why people are suffering—drought, depression of prices, failure of crops, failure of the latest wet season, and so on. They are supporting a small regional economy. There is only a small amount of money in it. For 100 years and more, there have been small traders who have been providing for such an economy. Many of them have been the unsung heroes of such communities. Many of them have extended credit to people who were hungry, and many of them were never paid. We owe the small traders an enormous debt as the employers and providers of services to this nation.

What happens as we deregulate? Do we take away the rules and say, "You small traders are now going to have to compete with Mr and Mrs International Shopkeeper—people who have international purchasing power and who do not care where their product comes from." They screw their suppliers to the floor. Those large multinational corporations charge people simply to put stock on their shelves. So we will lose one small trader, and there will be an empty store in the main street. I am not necessarily talking about the small traders who work within the Coles or the Woolworths complex; I am talking about the small traders who make up the main streets and back streets of our small towns. One at a time, those operators will close.

**Mr Santoro:** The strip shopping centres.

**Mr GILMORE:** The strip shopping centres. Nobody will take them back up.

**Mrs Edmond:** They have been closing for the last 40 years. Haven't you gone down the main street in the last 40 years? They have changed.

**Mr GILMORE:** I am glad that the member raised that subject. Yes, I do walk down the main street. Would the member believe that there are no empty shops in my town at present—not one! However, there will be, because the member for Mount Coot-tha is taking part in the greatest rape of small business that this community has ever seen. The member is proud of herself. She is willing to state in this Parliament how proud she is to take away the rights and the livelihoods of those people.

**Mr Santoro:** She doesn't care about the shops where Grandma and Grandad shop.

**Mr GILMORE:** I will inform the House what the member for Mount Coot-tha does care about, though, because it is a Labor Party philosophy. I have heard it many times. It decrees, "There are more shoppers than there are shopkeepers." That is the philosophy behind this legislation, apart from it being a sell-out to big business and apart from it being a pay-off to the unions. This legislation is evidence of the philosophy, "Out there, there are a couple of million voters, and they all eat three times a day"—at least they aspire to.

**Mr Santoro:** It really boils down that they don't like small business.

**Mr GILMORE:** Of course this Government does not like small business. It is anti-small business; there is no question about that. This Government says, "The people of this State all want to eat three times a day." That is a dirty habit that we have all developed! Some of us like to wear shoes and clothes. This Government has decided that there are more people out there shopping than there are traders, so let the traders go to hell. Let the traders die and wither on the vine. This Government does not care about the ultimate effect on those little communities that have been, for the greater part, self-supporting for many years. We will lose the heart out of our little towns. Many little towns will not be affected, because they are remote from the shopping centres of Cairns and other places. This legislation will not make any difference to them. However, it will certainly make a considerable difference to those towns which are not so remote and which are within a 60-kilometre or 100-kilometre radius.

One wonders about how it is in philosophical terms that intelligent people can look at a problem from different sides and come up with a different answer. It never ceases to amaze me that Government members apparently cannot conceive that Opposition members might sometimes have the right perspective on a particular problem.

**Mr Santoro:** I think we've got it right this time.

**Mr GILMORE:** Of course we have it right this time. There is no question that we have it right.

**Mr Budd:** We've got it right, did you say?

**Mr GILMORE:** The Opposition has got it right. Ultimately, the Government has got it absolutely wrong.

Let me quote the international professor Dr David Suzuki. Recently, he was discussing—

**Mr Beattie:** Who is this man?

**Mr GILMORE:** He is an excellent chap—Dr David Suzuki. He was discussing international trade, and he was talking about the GATT arrangements and the deregulation of Australian industry. He said that the only benefit to flow from the deregulation of Australian industry is that multinational companies will be able thereafter to purchase at the cheapest possible price and sell at the highest price. Of course, that means that they will buy their tobacco in Africa or they will buy their cheapest commodity goods on the Asian markets and sell them at Australia's highest possible purchasing price. Dr Suzuki said that the only consequence of that scenario is that small Australian businesses will wither on the vine to the benefit of small international business. Those farmers who are providing to the international community will thrive while our farmers, who cannot compete simply because of the imbalances in trade and in the costs of production, will wither on the vine.

The same analogy might be applied to small business in this State under extended trading hours. I do not believe that it is stretching the bow too far to suggest that Dr David Suzuki was absolutely right. We can turn his words to this legislation and say that all that will be achieved by the deregulation of shopping hours is that the large international conglomerates will become larger at the expense of the small businesses. The larger corporations can purchase at the cheapest price and sell at the most expensive price because our small businesses will not be able to compete. The small businesses will be forced to close and, whether we like it or not, we will then be forced to shop at the large international combines. Members should believe me when I say that they are the hungriest people in the world. They could not care less about us. They do not care about Mr and Mrs Householder. They care only about what they can extract from our community.

The honourable member for Gladstone said that the National Party is supposed to believe in free enterprise. He berated us because of our contribution to this debate. Let me correct the honourable member for Gladstone. I do not believe in free enterprise; I believe in private enterprise. There is an enormous difference. Private enterprise is what has made this nation work. All it means is that private people in small business and large business can get out there and compete, subject to some regulation—not subject to no regulation at all; not subject to the business of a free-for-all and let the devil take the hindmost. I do not believe in free enterprise; I believe in balanced enterprise. I believe that we as a State must insist that not only the big businesses in the south-east corner, Cairns, Rockhampton and Gladstone survive. It is

absolutely imperative that the small traders in Mareeba, Atherton, Ravenshoe and Malanda survive, because they are the heart of all of those little towns. They make it happen. They allow mum, if she has forgotten to do so, to go down to the corner store after hours and pick up a pound of flour so that she can put food on the table for her children. That is the service that small businesses have been providing to our communities for 100 years. That is the service that this legislation is taking away.

My colleague the member for Burdekin said that this is a very sad night for Queensland. I support that comment, because I believe it to be true. I do not seek to deny people access to affordable goods or, to quote the member for Gladstone, to remove food from the table of children. However, I do wish to see some balance in the shopping habits of the people of Queensland so that small business, medium business and large business can cooperate and survive comfortably, as they have in the past. Certainly, they have competed well. During this debate, Government members have suggested that this legislation will create more competition. It may well do so. However, some people will not survive because of the imbalance that will be created by this legislation.

People on this side of the House understand the business of business. We understand the business of family life and the need for small traders to see their wives once a week or so—even if they have to pass in the corridor. We look after families. We believe in families—not only the family at home but also the family business. During this debate, we have berated this Government in the hope that it would come to appreciate what this legislation is taking away. However, this Government does not understand and, most sadly, it does not care.

I believe that this legislation is bad. I believe it will ultimately result in the closure of many small businesses, particularly in the hinterland regions, which will be subjected to the vacuum of the larger towns and the larger shopping centres. Many small businesses will die, much to the detriment of our rural communities. Therefore, I will not support this legislation, and I will be pleased to vote against it when the House divides.

**Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South) (10 p.m.):** It is a pleasure to stand and support the coalition opposition in this debate tonight and to talk about the insatiable greed that is really the reason behind this Bill—the insatiable greed of the big monopoly businesses that just seem to want to have another slice and bite of what remaining business is left. I really liken the big businesses that are behind this to the great

white sharks. They already have approximately 70 per cent or 80 per cent of the business and they want a bit more; they want another bite of what is left.

This Bill is also about a sell out of the thousands and thousands of Queensland families who operate small businesses and who have bought small businesses on the basis of existing rules and regulation and worked and planned out just what their returns would be. These people have borrowed money, gone into debt and have worked long hours all on the basis of an agreed and fair system. All I can say is thank God there is a National/Liberal Party coalition to stand up for those people here in this Parliament because, with one exception, nobody on the other side has had the guts to stand up for them. This debate tonight is really about standing up and looking after your own. If we do not look after our own, no-one else will. There is no-one from the Government side tonight, as I said, with one exception, who is prepared to stand up on behalf of Queensland families who operate the thousands and thousands of small businesses that serve our towns, cities and regional areas, those people who provide employment and economy right throughout our State.

If the current system was not changed at all, if the status quo remained, there would not be a single job lost. We have heard all of the arguments tonight that if this Bill is passed, undoubtedly, a great deal of jobs will be lost. Not only will jobs be lost, but the whole Queensland lifestyle will change. Thousands of families will work through a system of grinding poverty.

Another important aspect of this debate is that this Government never had a mandate for this particular Bill. It would never have had the courage to go to the people saying that this is what it was going to do, because it would have been voted out on the spot, and that is probably what will happen to it next year.

The current situation is that there are exempt, non-exempt and independent stores. Trading hours are generally from around 8 a.m. or 8.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., to 9 p.m. on Thursday and 12 noon on Saturday. We have an Industrial Relations Commission which deals on an area-by-area basis for all the various applications for shopping hours. Therefore, we have a system where at least 90 per cent of the retail outlets of Queensland fall within the exempt or the independent category and are able to open at any hour at all throughout the week or weekend. Special tourist areas such as the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and Cairns are adequately catered for by applications that have been made to the Industrial Relations Commission. Special cases also apply in the Brisbane City mall. There

are also various rules and regulations that apply throughout the State and give some degree of stability to those small businesses that operate and want to plan ahead and organise their overdrafts, loans and so forth.

But what does this Government do? It comes in without a mandate, and with the stroke of a pen it takes all that away. The current system is satisfactory; it is working well. In my town of Toowoomba, the current system is satisfactory. All the convenience stores that people want are open, coffee shops are open, hardware stores are open and nurseries are open for that convenience shopping out of hours. I could honestly and fairly say that if a survey was conducted of all the consumers in Toowoomba—particularly those families where both partners are working—we would probably find that people want a little bit extra in the way of shopping. I think I would be quite accurate when I say that they would probably like to see the trading hours extended another two hours to 2 o'clock on Saturday. I think they could see then that that would be reasonable for the big shopkeepers, reasonable for the consumers, reasonable for the small businesses and would still leave the small businesspeople the out-of-hours time that they need.

Normally, if the community wanted to get that extra couple of hours and if there were a big enough push from the community, that would be able to be obtained through the Industrial Relations Commission, but that opportunity has been taken away from them. Now it is just a Goss Government system, so those who wish to be the big white sharks and take more and more hours and a bigger and bigger bite out of the cake have two avenues: firstly, they have the Industrial Relations Commission, and if they brow beat the commission and do not do any good there, then they can turn to the Goss Government and it will look after them.

The proposed hours are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. during the week and from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. That will mean that the cream time for small businesses, which is probably 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at night, will have gone. That is probably where they make most of their profit. They probably work 10 or 12 hours a day to meet their rent, bank repayments, overdraft payments, electricity and everything else, and it is probably only the people coming home from work, between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m., that provides enough profit to make the whole thing worth while.

I would like to read a few comments by some prominent business leaders in Toowoomba and elsewhere about the effect that these proposed hours would have. I would like to read an excerpt

from decision number B575 of 1992 from the Industrial Relations Commission when a number of retail organisations took a submission to the commission seeking extended hours in extended areas. That commission, which is charged with looking at all the evidence, came to a decision that the application should be refused. The final two paragraphs of its summation contained the following—

"By way of general comment we would mention for the benefit of persons not involved in the retail industry in Queensland, that in relation to possibly 90% of all retail shops there are no restrictions on trading hours at all, except on several days of the year."

So, basically, all the convenience is there for the consumers. The last paragraph of that decision states—

"In our view there is merit in an orderly and managed enlargement of trading hours if and when proved to be justified by the needs and interests of consumers and industry generally as opposed to significant and drastic changes"—

I repeat, "as opposed to significant and drastic changes"—

"to current trading hours which are likely to have a prejudicial impact on small retailers who may be vulnerable in the market place. Change which evolves in an orderly manner is more likely to give retailers in a weak and vulnerable position a greater opportunity for adjustment."

That is just what I have been saying. If the people of Toowoomba wanted another two hours of trading on a Saturday, they could approach the Industrial Relations Commission through the various organisations and have a fair and just decision which gives orderly change which allows the weak and vulnerable time to adjust.

Prior to that particular case, the Toowoomba City Central Traders received letters from the Rockhampton City Heart Association, from the Chinchilla Chamber of Commerce and from the Stanthorpe Chamber of Commerce, and they all opposed any extension of trading hours. The same organisation, the Toowoomba City Central Traders, received back survey forms from 134 businesses in Toowoomba, and 80 per cent were against extended hours. In Gatton, 100 per cent were against extended hours; in Pittsworth, 80 per cent were against extended trading hours; and in Warwick, 90 per cent were against extended trading hours. In Warwick, the managers of the three major chains preferred closing at 12 noon, despite their company policy being the opposite.

I would also like to read out part of an article from the Toowoomba *Chronicle* in 1992 that referred to the comments of the then President of the Toowoomba Central City Traders, Mr Peter Eldridge, a very successful inner-city businessman. That article stated—

"Small business, which was the economic backbone of Toowoomba, would suffer from any extension to trading hours."

To further support his argument opposing the Chambers' then decision, Mr Eldridge went on to say—

"Small business generally bought locally wherever possible and spent its profits locally, thereby sustaining and enriching the Toowoomba community."

Big business rarely buys locally, rarely uses local agencies, and wholesalers and their profits leave the town. Mr Eldridge also believes that small businesses in shopping centres will have covert landlord pressure to open to meet any extended trading hours after a settling down period.

After this Bill was proposed by the Goss Labor Government, another article in the Toowoomba *Chronicle* recently stated—

". . . changes to mid-week times, according to City Central Traders and Property Owners Association president Mr Peter Eldridge . . .

'Toowoomba doesn't warrant longer hours because it doesn't have the population to support trading until 9 o'clock each night'.

. . .

'We are flat out at Christmas trying to get enough support for the extended trading hours, so it would be impossible for the rest of the time.'

He said supermarkets might go for extended mid-week trading hours to 'knock out' corner stores."

Honourable members can bet their boots they will.

Likewise, the Mayor of Toowoomba has talked about the need for compromise without hurting small business. But, again, if we are going to dodge the Industrial Relations Commission and go straight through the Goss Government system, what opportunity and chance is there to compromise and to look after the vulnerable businesses?

I refer to the Business section of the *Courier-Mail* in October 1992 and an article about the managing director of Woolworths. This gives a good indication of how the great white sharks will operate. That article stated—

"He said extended trading hours in Sydney had already produced 'enormous growth' in sales of fresh fruit and vegetables"—

in their stores. The article continued—

"He said that while the top five retailers controlled 95% of the \$25 billion national groceries market, the independents still dominated the remainder of the food industry."

That is what he is after. The article continued—

"That's where our opportunity lies for growth . . ."

It continued—

"All of our Sydney supermarkets are open until 9 pm every night, more than 60% are open until midnight every night and 70% are open all day Sunday.

We've got enormous growth, particularly in fresh food areas in those stores because, let's face it, the independent operator has to go home some time or other.

In the supermarket, we just bring in another group of people . . ."

I refer to an article that appeared in the Toowoomba *Chronicle* of Wednesday, 13 April, which included some of the comments of the managers of the major retailers. Franklins' administration manager said—

"We will open the hours that the Government allows us.

. . .

And while 75% of retailers in a centre must be unanimous on the new hours, (he) said the experience of New South Wales showed smaller traders chose their opening hours while the supermarkets traded to the maximum."

The article continued—

"Whatever hours are granted we will be trading,' Woolworths operations manager . . . said."

According to that article, one pharmacist said—

"Saturday afternoons would be wonderful but opening every night would be disastrous."

But I will tell honourable members that he has something to learn. In the shopping centre where his business is located, Woolworths and Franklins will make sure that they will open, and he will have to open along with them because, if he does not, they will be selling the toothpaste, toothbrushes, talcum powder and all the rest of it. But if that shopping centre does not open,

you can bet your life that there will be one down the road that does open, and there will be a supermarket in there that will be pinching his business. The reality of the business world is that all those businesses will have to open longer and longer hours.

What will the results of this be for small business? We have just come through a terrible recession and, in Toowoomba, the effects of drought. Just when businesses in that area had the chance to get over some of their debts, the big white shark of this Labor Government is backing big business and big unions. What do those big white sharks—the big retailers—want? They are not happy to be just supermarkets. They want to carry nursery products, whitegoods, clothes, newsagents' products, hot bread, fruit and vegetables, hardware, lawnmowers, oil and petrol, and they want to service our cars. They want the lot! They are great, big white sharks. And as to that business about 75 per cent of a shopping centre deciding whether or not to open—who is naive enough to believe that?

Every hour that those big retail centres are open will take a bite out of the market share of tens of hundreds of thousands of small businesses—Queensland businesses and Toowoomba businesses—and the money going through Woolworths, Franklins, Coles-Myer and the rest will go to Melbourne, Sydney and Hong Kong.

I would like to read some excerpts from three letters I have received from ordinary people who own small businesses. One letter states—

"As an independent retailer I am very concerned that this legislation if passed will seriously thwart our viability, as well as that of thousands of others like us.

My wife and I have invested all of our capital (some \$200,000) in our business, having exchanged our house, and my superannuation for the business, in order to provide work and income for ourselves as well as our son, and to enable our daughter to attend university. We employ two others, so 5 people would be on social security and 1 on Austudy should our business fail. I am almost certain that our business will not survive if the large chain stores are able to trade during the evening and at weekends."

I will not read any more of that letter, but it is typical of those that I have received.

Another person from one of Toowoomba's western suburbs stores who wrote a letter to the Premier talked about the "huge buying power of the chains" and no opportunity for small-

business persons to compete with them unless they have some access to these outside hours.

I received another letter from a person who owns a small fruit and vegetable store on the east side of town. It was a simple letter from a middle-aged couple who run that shop. It stated—

"My wife and I have been conducting a fruit and vegetable shop in the . . . shopping centre since September of 1978, and we feel that if proposed changes to trading hours go through it will be the final nail in the coffin of small business operators, such as ourselves, in the hundreds of shopping centres throughout the State."

On top of that, jobs will be lost. Members go back to their electorates and talk about jobs and young people and ask, "What are we going to do?" Recently, at a summit in Toowoomba we racked our brains about how we can create more jobs. There is no doubt in the wide world that jobs will be lost. All the big chain stores will simply stretch their rosters. They will stretch their casual staff. One will go into a shop, and the place will be like a morgue, with music coming through the piped system, and one will be flat out finding someone to slice bacon or mix paint. But, for sure, the shops will make do. They have the infrastructure, and they will stretch what they have. But they will take market share from the others. We will see loss of apprenticeships, traineeships and jobs. We will see people lose permanent jobs and get casual work. They will not be able to plan on repaying their houses because they will only have casual work.

Why cannot we in Queensland be leaders instead of followers? People are coming here in their thousands. They have been doing so for 15 years. They like the place. What is wrong with this place? Is it the way we live, or the lifestyle? I will tell honourable members what it is.

Toowoomba on Saturdays is probably the best place in the world to be. Children play junior league, netball and basketball. People go to the races. There are fetes and scouts. There is a whole host of things happening. But what are we going to turn it into? A great commercial morass, where the main sport on Saturday afternoon will be dragging kids through the aisles of Woolworths with great big supermarket trolleys full of food! This is not about people just going and buying a few things; it is about those great white sharks wanting people with trolleys full of food, whitegoods and everything else that might be sold by people in small businesses. It is about time that we stood up and asked, "What else is there to life besides making a quid and big monopolies taking an ever bigger share?"

**Mr Nuttall:** Playing rugby.

**Mr HORAN:** The honourable member got it right. Can we not spend Saturday afternoons on the sidelines? Can we not spend that time at schools, at the swimming pool or at scouts? What is wrong with that? Will we be tied to the almighty dollar forever and a day? That is what makes Queensland a better place. That is why people keep coming here to live. Why would anyone want to live in Sydney and have to run around and do shopping on Saturday afternoon, Sunday and at midnight when one can go to Toowoomba and shop in relative security on Saturday morning, and then play golf on Saturday afternoon, or go to the park with one's kids, or go down to the lake to feed the ducks and all those sorts of things? This legislation will breed families who wake up later on Saturday mornings and spend their time walking up and down the aisles of Woolworths on Saturday afternoons instead of being with their kids at their schools, their churches, their community organisations, their showgrounds or wherever.

In the future, we will face another crunch when these big white sharks have still not had enough and they want Sunday trading. I predict that in about two years' time those people will start agitating for a greater share of the market if this unfortunate Bill goes through tonight and members on the other side of the House have not got the courage to vote against it. This Government has turned its back on small business and employment. What about all the jobs that used to exist in service stations? Kids used to put air into tyres and water into radiators. All those permanent jobs have gone forever.

Some jobs will be lost in every town. When those jobs are gone, they are gone permanently, and they will never reappear. The Government has turned its back on business and on permanent work. Worst of all, the biggest employer in the State—small business—has been shown the backdoor by the Labor Government. Small business and its supporters and customers should never forget how this State Labor Government has trampled over their businesses, families and communities in an insatiable drive to give more and more market share to big chains with headquarters in Sydney, Melbourne and Hong Kong. Queensland families and Queensland businesses come a long last with the Goss Labor Government.

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore) (10.20 p.m.): Tonight, Labor Party parliamentarians are voting for their own pay packets at the expense of small businesses. Small convenience stores have been sold out because of a secret union deal between big business and a union-dominated State Government. This Bill is not about free trade; it is about Government intervention in what had

been an independent process of determining shopping hours that aim to help the customers, workers and businesses.

**Mr Nuttall** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Briskey): Order! The honourable member for Sandgate will cease interjecting.

**Miss SIMPSON:** Because it has done a deal, the Government has neutered that independent judge, the Industrial Commission. I want to know just how much the big supermarkets get paid to collect union fees from employees' pay packets? I also want to know how many young people who need to work are being told by the big supermarkets and the big retailers that they have to join the union or they do not get a job. Small businesses, particularly food retailers, will be hurt by this legislation, but because they do not have many union members, the Government does not care how many of these employers and employees are destroyed. Yet, in contrast, many Goss Government members have been union organisers, and the Labor campaign budget depends on union donations.

There are only so many retail dollars to go around, and this legislation will merely shift that dollar out of the pockets of small Aussie-owned businesses which provide local convenience shopping and put that dollar into the hands of big multinationals which can play price wars with lower overheads until they have eliminated their smaller opposition.

If the Government really wants to get rid of superfluous red tape, why does it not stop sending Government employees around to investigate whether a meat pie has enough meat in it? That is meat pie madness! That is a classic example of red tape overkill, where there is no benefit to consumers overall or to businesses. The Government is not really serious about attacking the problem of red tape. The ultimate——

**Mr J. H. Sullivan:** People shouldn't get what they're paying for; is that what you're saying?

**Miss SIMPSON:** I think that the average person who eats a meat pie has enough brains to determine whether he or she will return to that shop if the pie is no good. Obviously, the honourable member does not believe that the average consumer of meat pies can tell whether or not a meat pie is good. The ultimate result of this legislation throughout the State——

**Mr J. H. Sullivan** interjected.

**Miss SIMPSON:** Is the honourable member saying that there are no good meat pies in Maroochydore? There are some excellent

meat pies in Maroochydore. I often patronise the shops that sell them to buy my lunch. The ultimate result of this legislation throughout the State, with its diverse regional economies, will be to cause less competition as the big and strong multinationals knock the local Aussie-owned businesses for six.

Tourist areas are different from rural Queensland. Brisbane is different from the Sunshine Coast. It is a diverse State. Different trading hours will be beneficial for some areas and not others, and that is why this legislation which extends trading hours carte blanche is so detrimental to the whole of the State. It is far better to have an independent commission tailoring the best conditions for those areas and not kowtowing to the big businesses.

I would hate to be one of the small retailers who own a corner store and have a mortgage that depends on the present system of margins and suddenly find that the Government has come in and whipped the rug out from under their feet. These people did not know that the Government was going to extend trading hours, and they had no chance of any consultation—no chance at all. These are the people who have been really kicked in the gut. They must feel terribly sick tonight to know that this Government does not care about the small-business operator.

**Mr STEPHAN** (Gympie) (10.24 p.m.): Having listened to the debate this evening, it is quite obvious to me that very few members on the Government side of the House have had any experience at all with business of any description, let alone small business.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr STEPHAN:** Before he came to this place, the honourable member was in the business of teaching school children, and that is a different kind of business altogether.

**Mr J. H. Sullivan:** Did you ever have a beer at the Ekka?

**Mr STEPHAN:** What has that got to do with it? The member for Chermside was serving beer to somebody else. He put his hand out to be paid for serving it to somebody else, too. That has nothing to do with running a small business. It has nothing to do with putting up one's own money and risking losing it. That is exactly what is going on. That is a very good indication that honourable members opposite do not know what goes on in small business. They do not have a clue what it means to lose \$1,000 or \$10,000 in a business deal. Government members can say, "Everything is all right in the garden because I have served a beer, and I have put out my hand for payment when I believe it has been worth it."

I took note of some of the comments that were made by other speakers in the debate. For example, the member for Waterford, Mr Barton, referred to a survey which indicated that a high percentage of people are in favour of longer trading hours. But did that survey point out all the facts? Did that survey say what it was going to cost to run businesses for a longer period?

**Mr Santoro:** They don't like talking about that.

**Mr STEPHAN:** I do not think members opposite like talking about the costs at all. They have the idea that somehow or other Santa Claus comes along every week to pay the bills. I do not believe that Mr Barton would know what it is like to wonder at the end of the week whether there is enough money to pay accounts and to pay for stock.

**Mr Santoro:** He has never had to be bothered with that.

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is right. He has never had to be bothered with that. He has certainly never had to be bothered with having to find the money to pay somebody who is for working for him.

I also noted the comments of the member for Mount Gravatt, Ms Spence, who intimated that the Opposition has not said very much about the consumer. She said that the processes have been put in place to bring about change that is necessary. We on this side of the House want the Government to spell out who will pay the extra costs. The Government wants to extend the present trading hours to a very large degree. The trading hours in many small country areas are from 8 a.m. or 8.30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Government wants to increase those hours by another four hours a day on weekdays and five hours on Saturdays. Government members do not have any compassion for the small-business operator. I will have more to say about that later in my speech.

The member for Bundaberg, Mr Campbell, talked about looking after the worker. I point out to members opposite that there is no greater protection of the worker than the fact that an employer knows quite well that, if he does not look after his workers, he will not have any workers tomorrow. At the same time, the Government must realise that forcing employers to accept shorter working hours and higher wages is not the answer.

**Mr Santoro:** If there are no workers, there are no businesses; if there are no businesses, there are no workers.

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is the other aspect that members opposite do not seem to be able to grasp—that the businesses have to be there

in the first instance. Government members talk about encouraging business and creating more jobs, but we need to ensure that those jobs will be there next week, next month and the month after that, too. We need an ongoing job-creation program.

I believe that the member for Thuringowa, Mr McElligott, is one of the honest members of this Parliament. I was very impressed by the fact that even the Government members listened to what the member for Thuringowa had to say in silence. He has their respect.

**Mr Budd:** Do you pay your workers the award rate?

**Mr STEPHAN:** If one did not pay workers the award rate, one would not have any workers. Does the honourable member not realise what the real situation is? I believe that such an inane comment is an indication that the honourable member does not have a clue what goes on in the real world.

One thing that did concern me a little was the comment by the member for Thuringowa that, in return for a 2 per cent increase in wages, the employers and the unions had reached a deal. It is of concern that the Government reached a deal on the basis of a 2 per cent increase in wages. How long will that last? Six months? Three months? What will happen after that period? Who is going to come along then and prop up the Government's ideas and ideals?

It was interesting also to note that Mr McElligott is not the only Government member who is opposed to this legislation. During this debate, we have heard that a number of Government members have written to their constituents stating that they are opposed to the legislation. Is that just rhetoric for the benefit of their constituents, or are those members genuine in their comments?

**Mr Santoro:** They won't have the courage to vote against this Bill, will they?

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is the telling point—how many Government members will either keep out of the debate or vote with the Opposition. That will indicate what Government members believe, and that is something that I am waiting to see.

**Mr Nunn:** How much cabbage in that stock of yours? How much Taiwanese stock? How many good, honest workers did you put out of work?

**Mr STEPHAN:** I have not put any good, honest workers out of work. However, I know quite well how many good, honest workers the Labor Party has put out of work. I know quite well how many workers have been put out of work by

the member's friend in Canberra, Mr Keating. The Government continues to increase costs and taxes, yet it still believes that it is doing a fantastic job. The member for Hervey Bay is supporting his friends in Canberra, but the sooner we have a change of Government nationally, the better

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Briskey): Order! There is too much noise in the Chamber.

**Mr STEPHAN:** While the Government is asking continually for a reduction in working conditions and working hours, it is expecting the employers—those who are putting up their own money—to in fact increase the amount of time that they spend at their job. The Government cannot continue with such an attitude. It has a great impact on the standard of service that will be offered. As members would know, unless businesses offer a service, they will not receive any support.

Under this legislation, small businesspeople, or people who work in family businesses, will be expected to be at their places of business from 8 o'clock in the morning until 9 p.m. for five days a week and almost that long on the sixth. The Government is not going to offer them any support if they want to spend time with their families, engage in sporting activities, or relax.

**Mr Santoro:** It is a fine gesture in this Year of the Family, isn't it?

**Mr STEPHAN:** It is. That sums up what this Government thinks about the Year of the Family. Again, it is only rhetoric.

I turn now to some comments that have appeared in the press that I would like to share with other members. They will give members an idea of what people in the community are thinking. An article in the *Gympie Times* stated—

"The decision to extend trading hours throughout Queensland was timed poorly and represented a direct threat to small business, the Gympie Chamber of Commerce said yesterday.

...

Throughout the Gympie region there are more than 1 500 small businesses. A big percentage of those are expected to be affected in some way by the changes."

I do not believe that Government members realise the number of small businesses in country and provincial areas. Up until now, they have operated under difficult circumstances because times have not been good, but at least they are still operating.

**Mr Santoro:** Problems caused by the Labor Party—high charges, regulations.

**Mr STEPHAN:** As I was saying before, they are problems that have been created by increased taxation and increased charges. The article stated further—

"Extended hours may be good for shoppers, holiday makers and big business, but their potential impact on small business was a concern.

...

The State Government had allowed the 'massive and unnecessary increase in trading hours' because of the pressure from big southern and overseas retail chains."

Even Government members have made such comments. The article stated further—

"It said the increases in running costs (to stay open) would push the prices up and probably force many small stores out of business."

That is their concern. One fellow who was interviewed for this article made the following comment—

". . . usually 'absolutely dead' on the one night of late trading a week in Gympie.

The extended trading hours would, therefore, have little impact."

That sums it up. Trading on those nights is fairly dead at present, and it cannot get any less.

**Mr Santoro:** They're not going to let that sort of evidence stand in the way of their folly, are they?

**Mr STEPHAN:** The Government is not worried about the facts. Once it has made up its mind to be difficult, it is going to be difficult. I want to point out some of the comments that were made in another article, which stated—

"Queensland's Industrial Relations Minister would not be so dismissive of warnings about the effect of extended trading hours if his own money was at stake."

That is the point. If he had his own money at stake, he would not be so dismissive of the comments that have been made. The article stated further—

"The minister, Matt Foley, has described some of the warnings as 'scaremongering'.

However QRTSA executive director Ian Baldcock said that Mr Foley would be scared too if the life savings invested in his retail business were about to be placed in jeopardy."

That is the point. I will say it again—

"... if the life savings invested in his retail business were about to be placed in jeopardy."

That is what concerns many people. To my knowledge, no academic has come up with an answer that is going to support the Government's way of thinking.

In the first sentence in his second-reading speech the Minister stated—

"In a free society, the rule of law should allow citizens the maximum liberty consistent with the rights of others and the public good."

Just as this Labor Government does when it comes to looking after the workers and putting the boot into them if, in fact, they dare to raise their heads, so too will it keep the rest of Queensland down and tell Queenslanders where to go. The Government is doing that very well, too. The Minister stated further—

"This legislation liberalises Queensland's trading hours to keep pace with the modernisation of society.

...

A comprehensive consultation process was carried out, and a diverse range of views was submitted to my department on the issue. In addition, an economic impact study was commissioned by the department to assist in the review process."

By whom? Who did the Minister ask to undertake this process? Did he go into the small-business sector and ask people about what they thought, and what their concerns were? Did he just remain in his own little world and carry out surveys that give him an answer—

**Mr Santoro:** The union leaders haven't got a clue what's going on.

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is right. If one couches the question in the right way, people will come up with the answer that one wants.

**Mr Santoro:** But they haven't even put up a bogus question paper. That's the whole thing.

**Mr STEPHAN:** That is certainly right, too. If they did, nobody in the business world has seen it. That is the pity of it all. The Minister stated further—

"The position of small shops has been considered carefully in preparing this legislation. Extravagant claims have been made of an adverse effect on corner stores and smaller retail outlets, but the evidence of interstate retail deregulation does not bear out such prophecies of doom. In New South Wales, for example, employment in

the retail industry has increased by 40 000 in the period between 1986 and 1992, with half of that employment growth coming in the small non-food sector."

This morning, on talkback radio, Mr Foley made that comment when he was asked about this non-food sector increase. However, when one considers this figure of 40 000 in New South Wales in the period between 1986 and 1992, that is about 1 per cent of the population. I would hardly think that that would be anything that the Minister would want to hang his hat on—an increase of not even 1 per cent of the population. That would certainly be going backwards rather than forwards. He finished by saying, "The right time to make these changes is not when the retail market is depressed but when it is buoyant. The time is right now."

I would like to point out to the Minister that the retail sector is not buoyant at the present time. Again, I challenge him to go out into the retail sector to find out for himself how buoyant it is. He should have a look at the books of some of those business people. He would find out that it is anything other than a time of buoyancy.

He continued further that "consideration needs to be given to the rights of retailers, particularly the tenants of small shops, to protection against being forced to trade longer hours". He stated that, if 75 per cent of the tenants vote not to open, then they do not have to open. But I have news for the Minister. For example, if the major tenants in that shopping centre decide to open, smaller tenants will have no choice other than to keep their doors open. If Woolworths, Coles or Franklins open their doors, everyone else will open their doors. Otherwise they will not operate from that establishment for very long. This is not because of the legislation that the Government brings in, but because of reality. Small traders cannot afford to lose the few dollars that may enable them to stay in business.

If the Government does see a requirement for change, surely such change could be gradual. In its folly, the Government has jumped off the deep end, without a clue as to what it is jumping into—whether there is cold water, hot water, or none at all. However, the Government is certain to be washed away in a tide of resentment. Small business needs protection and support. But, if the Government gets off the back of small business and leaves it to its own devices, it will achieve a lot more.

**Mr ELLIOTT (Cunningham) (10.44 p.m.):** The old saying of "the straw that breaks the camel's back" is a sad reflection on the Government of the day in Queensland. However, it is not the straw that breaks the camel's back, it is the additional weight. We all

know that. I suggest that the last vestige of credibility that the Government may have had has been destroyed by its actions here tonight. Members opposite claim to represent people who work for a living. If ever there were people who work for a living, they are to be found in the small businesses in the electorates of honourable members. Most of them work for anything up to 18 hours a day. They provide us all with milk, bread, and so on, at all hours of the day.

The people of the towns such as Pittsworth and Millmerran will be the ones most detrimentally affected by this legislation that members opposite bring before the House tonight. I would be very interested to see if any members on the Government side—and I challenge the Minister to put his money where his mouth is—would put their house on the line for a small business that will be affected by this legislation.

**Mrs McCauley:** Don't be silly; he would not do that.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** That would be right. He will stand around in "coward's castle" and make comments here, but he will not step out into the marketplace and have a go. That is what all these people are doing. They are backing their judgment. In most cases, they have worked with their hands, or in some other way, when they were young to make enough money to put a down-payment on a small corner shop, or takeaway store.

Members opposite are attacking those people here tonight. That is what they are doing; let us not make any mistake about that. They are selling out their birthright. At one time, the people who represented the ALP in the Parliament were the cream of the working classes. Today, one of Labor's Federal Cabinet Ministers was asked who represented the ALP today. That person replied that it was the scum of the middle class. I thought that was a very telling comment. That says to me that members opposite have lost their way.

**Mrs McCauley:** Very few of them would be called "middle class".

**Mr ELLIOTT:** Admittedly, it would be very few.

**An honourable member:** Yuppies.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** There is the odd yuppie around. We will not name names. It is interesting that members opposite do not appear to have any real convictions any more. They do the bidding of the hierarchy, who hand out prepared speeches. Many members opposite then deliver those speeches. I do not say that they all do;

there are those who can make a speech without the assistance of people from headquarters.

It is a sad day when we see this sort of legislation brought in by a party that once did truly represent those people who worked for a living. There was no question that it once did. In our areas, people such as Diplock and others truly understood what it was to work and what problems faced small businesspeople and people with mortgages. They had their true interests at heart and did something relevant to try to assist them. What members opposite are doing here tonight is driving another nail into the coffins of all of those small businesspeople, particularly in areas such as the one I represent. The members for Crows Nest, Warwick and so on all have the traditional types of country towns in their electorates. The Government will make it easier for people to go to the next biggest centre. For example, this legislation will not only cause the people of smaller country centres to travel to Toowoomba; the people of Toowoomba will also go to Brisbane.

The ultimate beneficiary of the legislation that members opposite have brought in here tonight is big business. The Government has sold out to big business in the true Federal style. No-one ever sold out to big business more than Bob Hawke or Paul Keating. They have absolutely kowtowed to all of the media and transport top dogs. Members opposite know whom I am taking about.

**Mr Littleproud:** Sir Peter Abeles.

**Mr ELLIOTT:** It is funny that the member should mention that name. Those people have been the beneficiaries of Labor's policies—we have had big government, big unions and big business. This Government has the hide to call itself the Labor Party. I suggest that this Government change its name, because it does not reflect the philosophies that the Labor Party truly represents.

I will not cover the same ground that other members have. If I did not voice the concerns that my constituents have raised with me, I would feel that I had not done my job properly. My constituents are truly disappointed that this Government is proposing this legislation. Do Government members honestly believe that it will assist small business? Whether Government members like it or not, small-business operators are the ones who create the employment in this country. Government members should have a look at the ABS statistics to see where jobs are created. Do they believe that all jobs are created by Coles and Woolworths? Sure, those firms employ quite a few people. However, the bottom line is that, if small business is not successful and is not running well, massive unemployment will

always be the result. Government members know all about unemployment. They drove the unemployment rate past 1 million people. That figure has dropped a fraction now, but it is disgraceful that the unemployment rate should be as high as it is in a country the size of Australia. I do not know whether Government members are proud of that record, but if I were them I certainly would not be.

I believe that this Minister will go down in history as one of the architects of a huge disaster that will further exacerbate the problems that this Government has already brought to bear on country centres by removing Department of Primary Industries personnel, closing courthouses and railway lines and cutting other essential services. Such cuts do not affect only those who are involved directly in delivering those services. Such cuts have a far more insidious effect. For example, police who seek transfers will not put in for a transfer to certain centres if the facilities do not exist to cater for the needs of their families. They will say, "I will go to Roma, Toowoomba, Nambour or Gympie, but I will not go to the smaller centres, because the facilities for my family for health and education and job opportunities do not exist."

I hope that the Government is proud of itself. It has undermined the decentralisation process. We in this State were proud to say that we were more decentralised than any other State in Australia. Perhaps that is not all that it could be. I have heard people say, "The former Government did this or it did that." Over the past 20 years, the Government of which I was a member did things of which I was not proud. Sometimes, I was not pleased with the end result of our actions. However, that does not excuse this Government. It is supposedly a reformist Government. It has been elected to change things, to bring about a better way of life for the people of this State. However, to the contrary, this Government is undermining everything that the people of this State stand for. This Government stands condemned for its actions. I hope that it is proud of them.

**Mr DAVIDSON** (Noosa) (10.55 p.m.): I join this debate on behalf of all small businesspeople who are worried about the deregulation of shopping hours and the impact that that will have on their businesses and their lives. In this the Year of the Family, business people are about to see family life as they know it destroyed, at least for those Queenslanders who operate retail business in this State. Having been part of a business family for over 20 years, I am very much aware of the pressures and problems that will be created by this legislation.

Some 10 or 15 years ago, I owned and operated some supermarkets in Canberra, and one in particular in Braddon in the ACT. That was a seven day a week supermarket, trading 12 hours a day. At that time, I employed 10 full-time people and some casuals. When I returned to Canberra a couple of years ago, I was amazed to discover that, following the deregulation of shopping hours in the ACT, a Woolworths supermarket down the road from my old business opened till 12 midnight and my old supermarket was in fact on the skids. It employed only the proprietors and one casual staff member. When I left it in 1983, that business was very viable. However, because of the deregulation of shopping hours in the ACT, I would say that it is now on the short list and will be lucky to survive.

I also established a business in Noosa, Davo's Bait and Tackle. I traded seven days a week, 12 hours a day, but I did that by choice, as do many other business people in Noosa who operate specialist stores. On the establishment of that business, I took a decision with my family—my wife and my children—that we were prepared to work seven days a week, 12 hours a day, as many people in Noosa do. The people who purchased that business from me bought it knowing that they were going to work seven days a week, 12 hours a day. Most people who buy businesses in my electorate understand that they will have to work those hours, because it is very much a tourist area. Many of the business operators in Noosa enjoy the benefits of a very good tourist industry. However, it should be accepted that the Noosa business community survives on the local economy. It is probably the backbone of the businesses in my electorate, but tourism is a bonus.

Many retailers stand to benefit from this change, and I refer to the larger food stores. It should be accepted by all members that most of us probably shop in Coles, Woolworths, Franklins and the like. Most of us shop at Big W, K mart, Target, Myers and David Jones. Those are the operators who will gain the most from the deregulation of hours. In many cases, those stores find that they are having difficulty servicing their customers in the limited hours that they trade now. Their market shares have grown dramatically in recent years, to the extent that many cannot operate effectively within the present trading hours. They see that an increase in hours will give them the ability to spread their business over a longer day. They also see it as one way of gaining more control of the day-to-day management of their stores. With their high technology computerised systems, they are able to exercise full control over all levels of administration. They do not require hands-on

managers and supervisors, because they have to do no more than press buttons for stock control, stock levels, profitability and general management of their sales.

In contrast, many of the smaller hands-on retailers rely in many cases on their own presence in their stores to ensure customer service, the honesty of their staff, stock control and doing a deal at the point of sale. They can achieve all of that only with their expertise being available in their stores at all times.

Many small retail outlets are husband, wife and family concerns, with the whole of a family's assets invested in the store. I know many people who have mortgaged their family home to set up their business. Many people I know have borrowed money from their relatives and friends. They have mortgages with banks and they have large overdrafts. We have had tough times in Noosa. A couple of years ago, we suffered a flood. For three months, our tourism industry was shot. Many of the traders in our town battled their way through that difficult three-month trading period. They extended themselves greatly with overdrafts, personal loans and all sorts of things. It is not all beer and skittles for the small-business person, even in an electorate such as Noosa, which does enjoy a very good tourist industry. There are times when many business people battle their way through a three-month or four-month slow period, depending on weather or other conditions.

Many small operators do not employ staff, relying on family labour for all tasks. It is those retailers who will feel most the impact of the deregulation of hours. At present, the average retailer operates 57 to 60 hours per week. With deregulation, that will increase to 75 to 80 hours per week. Many of those owner/operators will be forced to work those hours. From personal experience, I can tell members that that sort of working pattern impacts greatly on the quality of family life.

We should also appreciate that someone working in a store open till 9 p.m. at night will not be able to return to the family home until 9.30 or 10 p.m. In the case of many families with younger children, that will mean no parental supervision at dinner or bed time. In some cases, it will mean that one parent, after having worked a 10-hour day, will be forced to rush home and alone perform the full range of family commitments. After cooking and cleaning, and getting the kids through their homework and into bed, they then have to wait until 10 p.m. for their partner to return, exhausted, weary, and probably not in a very good mood. In some cases, single parent business people will be forced to pay baby sitters or nannies to supervise their families. We should

all realise that in extreme cases, many children will be left to fend for themselves. Honourable members can see that this move will create a lot of hardship and family instability. Exhausted parents are not in the best position to give the love and care they know their children deserve.

The retail dollar is in short supply. At a time of inflation and rising population, retail sales in Australia have grown at only 3 per cent over the past two years. This is due partly to the impact of gambling promoted by this Government. There is Lotto, PubTAB, pokies, Scratch-its and soon the Brisbane casino. There is simply less money available for the weekly family shopping, but this Government expects it to spread further when it forces longer hours on the traders. The same amount of business is spread over longer hours. Turnover will remain the same or else it will fall.

The real increases stemming from this legislation will be on the side of the business ledger. The real increases will be incurred in overheads such as wages, lighting, air-conditioning, security, parking, superannuation and all the other things that will impact on the profitability of business. For too long, small business has been complaining to deaf ears about the difficulty of making a living with all the imposts it already has to face.

I have talked to people in New South Wales and Victoria about their experience of deregulation. In other parts of Australia, deregulation of trading hours has been a total disaster. In South Australia, it took only a very short time for the independent stores to lose almost 15 per cent of their trade. In New South Wales, the story was pretty much the same. The Small Retailers Association lost 600 members over two years. That means a very large proportion of smaller stores went bankrupt within a couple of years of deregulation.

I heard a member on the other side of the House talking about how deregulation of trading hours boosted trade in New South Wales because people like to shop at night. I suggest that member go to Sydney and look around at the big suburban regional shopping centres. They are like morgues after about 6.30 p.m. The big stores are open with very few customers and the small stores are shut, many of them permanently. Different people I have spoken to believe that Queensland shop owners, particularly in shopping centres, will spend plenty of time standing around all night waiting for sales.

These are the people most affected. The people who run businesses in centre stores, K mart, Big W and Myer centres, and major shopping centres like those, have told me that between 6 p.m. and 9 p.m. on a Thursday—late shopping night—there is not the traffic through

their stores and in many cases they would really like to close down but because of their commitments to leases and centre management, they cannot. I think we will find that for those people business will not be there after hours.

In my own electorate, we have two major food stores in small complexes complemented by 15 or 20 specialty shops. There is a proposed Giant grocery shop to open. It will include another 10 or 15 specialty shops. Many of these store proprietors contacted me over the past two weeks totally dismayed at the lack of consultation with either themselves or retail groups supposedly representative of them. They have complained bitterly that they were unable to have input into this legislation.

Many small retailers have raised concerns that their lack of profitability makes them unable to employ any staff, which means they are faced with working long hours themselves. Those who have no option but to employ staff will have to rely on juniors. There are some real downsides to that, of course, for all concerned. For the store owner, there is the problem of inexperienced juniors needing high levels of supervision. Certainly, the wages are cheaper, but the juniors will probably be used in the period from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. The kids will be finishing work late and going home to a late dinner when they should be doing homework and going to bed.

There is no doubt that the small retailers are the backbone of commercial activity in Queensland. When it comes to coastal tourism, particularly in areas such as the one I represent, that is even more evident. The Australian Bureau of Statistics figures for 1991-92 show that more than 144 000 Queenslanders are employed in the retail sector, and of those more than 57 000 are employed by small retailers. Unfortunately, the ABS does not break these figures down into meaningful small areas, but I would estimate that a huge proportion of those jobs are located in the tourism areas. Tourism is an industry that lends itself to small specialist traders. Most of the shops in my electorate are not the glitzy fashion boutiques, they are small food stores, butcher shops, hot bread kitchens, fruit shops, pharmacies, newsagents and so on.

I really believe that with the opening of Sunshine Plaza and the extended Sands Shopping Centre in Maroochydore now operating five nights a week till 9 p.m. the dollar drain from Noosa is going to be enormous. Already we have buses running down to Maroochydore on the hour and taking many of the Noosa shopping dollars out of town, but that trip will become a night out for many of the people of Noosa because they will go to Maroochydore not just to do their food shopping

but to visit McDonalds and the bowling alley and to use all of the facilities that are not available in Noosa. I am really concerned for small business and retailers in Noosa. The drain by Maroochydore, especially since the opening of the Sunshine Motorway, will be enormous and will impact greatly on my constituents.

Which retailers will this change affect? Probably not the more up-market specialist boutiques that sell in a different market from the chains. The traders I am worried about are corner stores, people with premises in small shopping centres and the traders in strip centres. In many cases, newsagents, butchers, fruit shops and hot bread shops are the core of small centres and strip shop facilities. Many people, including my wife and myself, shop at the local fruit shop, the local newsagent and the local hot bread shop. We walk down to buy our goods almost on a daily basis and we enjoy a very good relationship with all the shopkeepers and the people we pass in the street. It often takes us an hour to complete a 10-minute walk to buy a loaf of bread because of the time we spend talking to people.

In many cases, newsagents, butchers, fruit shops and hot bread shops are the core of small centres in the strip shopping facilities. But the trade in those items is exactly what the major chains are chasing—the demand for extended trading. Those are the areas in which they are weak at the moment and they know they are losing out on a huge market.

If the major centres are allowed to drive them out of the marketplace, what is left in those small centres? These people are vital to the community. The money they make stays in the community. I have said before in this House, and I will say it again, that the small-business community in Noosa donates enormous amounts of money to charity and community organisations such as Lions, Rotary and Meals on Wheels—organisations that cater for the more needy in our community. Those clubs also rely on the business community for raffle prizes such as meat trays, fruit trays, fishing rods, books and all sorts of other things. It is very important that we have a viable small business community able to support these charities for the betterment of all people.

It is probably not too difficult to see that the local butcher buys his car and boat or builds his house in the area in which he trades. The money does not go to Melbourne as it does with the big chains.

The Minister has made a big deal about how small traders do not have to open. He even talks about a vote by 75 per cent of shopping centre tenants. That situation will not last long, and the

Minister knows it. When new centres are built, it will be a condition of getting a lease that a shopkeeper will agree to open for the same times as the major tenant. As the lease of the people who are currently operating within those centres comes up for renewal, a condition of their new lease will be that they operate under those longer hours.

We have heard about how the major supermarket chains plan to open new stores worth \$1.5 billion over the next eight years or so. That is a lot of centres in which they will have the overwhelming say on trading conditions. We should also remember that all shopping centre lessees have to face up to periodic reviews. It is pretty obvious that when lease conditions are renegotiated, there will be onerous new conditions related to trading hours. It might be worth noting that a Myer operated centre in South Australia fines store operators \$100 for every hour they are late in opening for business.

Other honourable members have talked about the studies done by Dr Baker on the effects of extended shopping hours. I agree with his findings that small retailers will suffer badly, but I do not need to use mathematical models to work that out. I have been a retailer for long enough to know just what the effects of this change are likely to be. Just about anybody involved in selling convenience items or food will lose at least some business to the major supermarkets. When those major stores stay open for their full allowable hours, they will gather a lot of extra trade. Unfortunately, we have already had the announcement from Woolworths that they will stay open as long as they are permitted to do so. That inevitably means that their main competitors will do the same thing, so things look grim for the small stores.

This legislation gives an unfair trading advantage to the major chains. The Labor Party is camouflaging this legislation by saying it will give consumers extra services, but as we have heard from the poll on the Gold Coast, people do not want extra shopping hours. I think most people realise we have to give the smaller traders a fair go for the sake of the communities of which they are a part. I think we should be talking about fair competition rather than free competition, and that is how I will vote on this legislation. I will vote for a fair go for everyone.

**Hon. N. J. TURNER** (Nicklin) (11.10 p.m.): At this hour of the night, and after a lengthy debate, it is not my intention to canvass all of those issues that have been adequately covered by our leader and the other speakers on this side of the Parliament. Suffice it to say that extended trading hours will be the straw that breaks the back of many small businesses in

Queensland. We must recognise that small business employs more people than Governments and large business combined. They are the heart and the soul of society.

**A Government member** interjected.

**Mr TURNER:** If the honourable member listens, I might explain something to him. There are some 800 000 small businesses in Australia. If all small businesses employed only one extra person, there would be virtually no unemployment in Australia today. That is how important small business is in the scheme of things in society. It is a pity that the Government does not give the initiative and incentive to small businesses instead of constantly attacking them through increases in taxes and many other impositions—whether they be payroll tax, stamp duty, superannuation, the training levy, the 17.5 per cent loading or, now, the extended trading hours. It is quite easy to understand that some consumers wish to support extended trading hours. I can understand the reasoning behind that. Unfortunately, I do not think that those people always understand the full ramifications of it.

**Mr Elliott:** They're still on the other side; that's the trouble.

**Mr TURNER:** That is right. Part of the problem that exists in this Parliament is that many Government members have never been in small business and do not understand the problems that confront it.

As I was saying, those people do not understand the full ramifications. The major outlets crush the opposition and end up with a monopoly. We have seen this happen on many occasions in the past with the bread industry and other similar industries. In the bread industry the large chains brought down the price to a level at which the small bakeries could not compete. When those small businesses were driven to the wall, up went the price again. Whilst it might appear on the surface that the consumers will benefit, in the long term that does not prove to be so.

Those members espousing the belief that employment opportunities will increase as a result of the legislation should consider some of the figures. In the last three years, Coles-Myer—one of the major large companies—has shed 10 000 jobs nationally. Whilst Victoria has more liberal trading hours than those here in Queensland, from July 1990 to May 1992 the retail and wholesale sectors in that State lost 39 000 jobs—down by 25 per cent. So much for increasing employment opportunities! I suggest that, principally, those job losses come from the independent sector. Recent ABS figures show that, in Queensland, 37 500 jobs were created in

the small-business sector during the three years to November 1991, whilst employment in larger-sized businesses employing more than 100 people decreased by 16 200 in the same period. Therefore, the greatest job creator is small business. That is the point that I and other members on this side of the House have been making for some considerable time. The honourable member for Cunningham is one of those members who is well aware of this, because he has been involved in small business.

Shortly after the Labor Party Government in South Australia extended trading hours, a survey showed that 3.9 jobs were lost from the small retail sector for each new chain supermarket job that was created. It is not much of a benefit when nearly four jobs are lost to create one. We should also consider the other impacts on the local community. As the honourable member for Noosa said, it is not the Coles-Myers or Woolworths to which community fundraising organisations go for support for local functions or activities; it is principally the small traders in the area.

**Mr Elliott:** The worm traders.

**Mr TURNER:** Yes, the people who are down where the tyre meets the bitumen, or down at the coalface—the people who understand what is going on, such as the member for Noosa and others on this side of the House. None of the major companies service towns or suburbs below a certain population level; the independents do. Most of the major chains operating in Queensland have head offices out of the State. Therefore, their profits flow out of Queensland. Coles-Myer alone makes a profit of over \$1m every day of the year. The profits of independent traders generally stay within, and are spent within, the local community—be it on cars, homes, boats, clothes or whatever. People spend locally and support local charities and local businesses in their areas.

The undisputed dominance of major retailers in Australia and Queensland, if allowed to go unchecked, will create higher unemployment costs as a result of higher numbers of bankruptcies among small retailers. Various surveys have shown that the average impact of extended trading hours in the independent sector is a loss of 20 per cent in sales. Less efficient retail practices without an efficient independent sector to keep the large retailers honest will not be in the community's best interest in the long term. In the final analysis any cost to operate for longer hours, by both the major stores and the independents, must be passed on to consumers by way of higher costs. It is often stated that consumers favour extended trading hours. There is little factual evidence to

support this statement. That was canvassed by the Leader of the Opposition and others during the debate this evening.

Everyone in this Chamber would acknowledge that tourism is a major growth industry. Tourists really take away only photos and memories and leave behind their footprints in the sand and their money. Coming from a tourist area, I am aware of the need to cater for tourists. However, an often quoted argument for extended trading hours is demand by tourists.

**Mr Elliott:** You are a great supporter of it.

**Mr TURNER:** Yes. A recent survey of Japanese tourists showed conclusively that the majority were quite happy with the trading hours; it was the quality and origin of many products, especially souvenirs, that caused them to return to Japan with unspent dollars. There are many examples of cities overseas that do not, for example, have Sunday trading—New York, Berlin, Paris and Athens, to name a few. In Japan, whilst large stores open on Sunday, they close on Wednesday. In the United Kingdom—the nation of shopkeepers—trading hours are 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m., Monday to Saturday, and no trading on Sunday. In some cities, stores even close half a day during the week. This means that London, with something like six to seven times the population of Brisbane, has 18.5 hours per week less shopping. London would also have many more times the tourist visitation numbers than Brisbane.

The Minister's actions this evening help drive another nail into the coffin of small business. I do not believe that one should kill the goose that lays the golden egg. In common with other members on this side of the Chamber, I speak about the effect that this will have on the small business sector of society and, ultimately, the effect that it will have on the consumer through increased costs.

**Mr HOBBS (Warrego) (11.18 p.m.):** It is my pleasure to speak to the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 1994 and to voice my objection to the legislation before the House tonight. In this Bill, it appears to me that there is one main winner and one main loser. Of course, the loser is small business and the winner is the union movement. Considering that the majority of the funding for the ALP comes from the unions, it obviously has a vested interest. There is no doubt why this Bill is before the House today, and no doubt how Government members will vote and why. This Bill represents another broken promise by the Goss Government to the people of Queensland. It is quite clear what members of the Government said on previous occasions, and also before they were part of the

Government. They said that they would not have extended trading hours as we have before us today. But no, this suits the union movement, so we have it.

Let me relate to the House some opinions on this trading hours Bill by the people who will be mostly affected by it, that is, those in small business in the small towns in western Queensland, particularly in my electorate.

**Mr Santoro:** They are very lucky to have you.

**Mr HOBBS:** I thank the honourable member for that comment. Because of the way that the Labor Government is going at the moment, people out there need all the help they can get.

**Mr Santoro:** They need good people like you—and us.

**Mr HOBBS:** They do. The Charleville businesspeople have had discussions on this issue. The Chamber of Commerce President, Mr Ken Bray, said that he was very much against the extended trading hours. He said—

"It is difficult enough for small business battlers without competition from multinationals."

That certainly sums it up in a nutshell. Small business is not going to be able to compete with the multinationals. I want to make sure that I get across that point. Mr Bray also said—

"We have to think of our children who are going to start off in business one day and they will have to compete with big business."

It will be much more difficult for them than it is today. We hear how businesses were easy to start in years gone by. This Government is making it more difficult for anyone who wishes to start off in business.

**Mr Ardill:** Coles has you bluffed in Charleville, has it?

**Mr HOBBS:** Coles in fact may have small business bluffed in Charleville. That might just be the case down the track. What benefit will there be to have one shop in Charleville and all the small businesses closed down? Why would we want to support that? Another point is that small business employs more staff, overall, than the multinationals. That is not a good reason. Why would we have one store in the town and have 50 or 100 people on the dole? It is crazy. The Government is sending that message to everyone in Queensland.

The article quotes another businessman, Mr Ian Espie—

". . . he said he would not like to see extended shopping hours as shoppers had only so much money to spend, regardless of the time frame.

'All it will mean is that shoppers will spend 24 hours spending a set amount of money instead of eight hours,' Mr Espie said.

'Chains will be able to keep prices down to eliminate competition but then they will raise prices again.' "

**Mr Santoro:** I reckon this fellow is right.

**Mr HOBBS:** I think this fellow is dead right. Here is a businessman doing it hard. He was knocked down during the floods. He picked up his business again. He borrowed a lot of money and he is battling.

**Mr Santoro:** And another kick in the guts coming to him.

**Mr HOBBS:** One more—especially from members of the Labor Government, the ones who are supposed to be helping the battler. They are not helping the battlers. They are kicking the battlers; that is what they are doing. Another point was raised by Mr Espie, and he is a very wise man. The article continues—

"Mr Espie said the reason the union backed extended trading hours was that small businesses were usually non-union members."

I think that is a very telling point as well. In the article, Mr Bray goes on to say—

"The way of life of business owners would be changed because a small shop couldn't afford to employ more staff or pay overtime."

There will not be more employees out of this; in fact, there will be fewer. The article continues—

"Therefore the owner must spend more hours in his already long day at work."

People in other towns throughout the whole of western Queensland are singing the same song. I will relate a couple more examples that relate particularly to Longreach. Longreach, Barcaldine and Blackall are all the same. These are some samples that I have picked out from an article in the *Longreach Leader*—

"Proprietor of Solley's Department Store, Mrs. Eva Woodfield said she did not support the proposal for extended trading hours.

'I don't think it is any good to small businesses with a small staff as they would have to work harder and longer,' Mrs. Woodfield said.

She said it may work with larger businesses who would be able to rotate their staff."

**Mr Santoro:** Those opposite claim there have been only one or two people who have complained. They need to read the newspapers.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is right. There is a paper with quite a lot of information in it. All the honourable members opposite have to do is read the local papers to find that people are objecting to extended trading hours. I was amazed to hear a speaker earlier today say that there have been no objections to it. Government members cannot even read the papers. The interesting point was that Mrs Eva Woodfield said that the bigger businesses can rotate their staff. Perhaps they can. The small businesspeople will not be able to cope. As it is, they are working hours and hours. When the doors are closed, they are trying to do stocktakes, and so on.

**Mr Santoro:** They are laughing.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is typical. That is what one would expect from the Government. The article quotes Mrs Woodfield as saying—

"There's got to be a limit (on trading hours) to allow retailers and staff a quality of lifestyle."

It is not possible for people who are working probably 15 or 20 hours a day on occasions to have a reasonable lifestyle. Why would anyone want to be in small business and play a part in the community, be a member of the chamber of commerce and give donations to sporting clubs, rodeos and pony clubs when fund-raisers come around, if the Government is going to squeeze them out? Why would they bother?

**Mr Santoro:** They do not like people to be happy.

**Mr HOBBS:** That probably sums it up, too.

**Mr Santoro:** They are trying to put people out of jobs.

**Mr HOBBS:** Another person quoted in the article is an owner of a boutique. The article states—

"Mrs Parker, also opposes the legislation of extended trading hours in Queensland.

Mrs Parker said 'the current economy in town doesn't warrant extended trading hours'.

'It will send businesses down the tube.'

This is another objection that the Government members reckon they did not have. This is another small-business owner who is quoted in

black and white as saying that business will go down the tube. The article states—

" 'I've traded late nights before and to be quite honest, I was paying high wages for no apparent reason,' she said.

...

Mr. Terry Tanks, one of Tanks Butchers' proprietors, was another local retailer who did not support extended trading hours."

**Mr Johnson:** A good, solid, western citizen.

**Mr HOBBS:** He is a good, solid, western citizen, as the member for Gregory said. This particular person comes from the honourable member's electorate, and the member for Gregory would certainly know these people very well.

**A Government member:** The next thing you'll tell us he voted for us.

**Mr HOBBS:** If he did, he will not in the future, that is for sure.

**Mr Santoro:** They will find that out very soon.

**Mr HOBBS:** They will find out very soon. The article continues—

" 'It's selling out small businesses who can't compete with multi nationals,' he said.

'Everything is against small businesses' ..."

Mr Tank spoke about how the prices charged by meatworks for goods supplied to supermarkets and the small butcher shops were different. Even now he is finding a difference between them. He is quoted as saying—

"The supermarkets have opened up a monopoly."

This is the type of thing that small-business operators are facing today. Government members should have done some research, but obviously they are not interested.

Quality of life is one aspect that I would like to mention. While I support those who wish to work, it is their choice and we should encourage everyone to work harder and longer. We have to temper this with the incentive for the individual rather than a directive from the union movement which seeks to manipulate members and boost union fees. Sporting clubs are going to be affected in many ways. A-grade clubs will not necessarily be affected because the top sportsmen and sportswomen of Queensland will find jobs that suit them. I refer to the thousands of people who play second, third and fourth grade. Spectators or parents who are taking kids to sporting events and lessons will find that they

cannot do so because they are working or out shopping. I think it was Mr McElligott who responded to the comment that it was great to see families out shopping. I think that there are better places for families to be than trying to get around a great big shopping centre. That is a very good point.

I endorse the comments of the member for Cunningham, who pointed out very clearly the effects on the smaller towns compared with the regional centres in a decentralised State such as Queensland. The majority of towns in my electorate are small. If there are large shopping complexes in the regional towns, people may travel to those areas and the local people will lose the facilities that they have, such as a corner store. Tambo is a little town that is very close to where I live. There are two stores there. If people can go to Charleville, Rockhampton or elsewhere to do their shopping, one of those shops will probably close down.

**Mr Santoro:** Another Labor attack on small towns and rural Queensland.

**Mr HOBBS:** That is quite true. We have a declining population. We do not have the incentive for people to live out there. Who would want to live in a town in which there is no shop? The Government has a dreadful record in relation to the rural and remote areas of Queensland and I believe that this legislation should be thrown out.

**Mr JOHNSON (Gregory) (11.29 p.m.):** In rising tonight to speak to the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill, I would like to endorse fully what my colleague the member for Warrego has just said. He represents an electorate in western Queensland that is similar to mine. In the electorates of Warrego and Gregory, we represent an area that is comprised of half of the State's land mass. The rest of the House should take notice of that because the people in those electorates have spoken. As the member for Warrego just said, if Government members read their newspapers, they would be fully aware how this piece of legislation would affect small business in regional and remote Queensland.

**Mr Budd** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Listen to old hurricane lamp over here. Do honourable members know why they call him "hurricane lamp"?

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Palaszczuk):** Order! The member will please resume his seat. The Chair considers the term "hurricane lamp" unparliamentary and asks the member to withdraw it.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I will abide by your ruling.

**An Opposition member:** Why?

**Mr JOHNSON:** Why? Because it does not throw much light, and you have to carry it. The unions are back in the saddle, and that is fairly obvious, at the expense of the viability of small business in this State, which is unfortunate. Small business is going to bite the dust as a result of this legislation.

I understand fully that, once more, the leaders in the industry have been treated with contempt by this Government because the Minister responsible for small business has spoken with them, has consulted with them, and has then turned around and let his caucus rule. He and the leaders in the industry do not want to hear what caucus has ruled. The unions are dictating the agenda. That is the reason why we are here tonight to debate this legislation, and that is very unfortunate.

Under this legislation, unemployment will rise. We will see the decimation of family businesses throughout western and rural Queensland. When I say "decimation", I say that it will result in widespread unemployment throughout the community not only in small business but also in transport-related industries. That affects rail, because many of those businesses draw their goods by rail. I do not think for one moment that this Government has taken into account the ramifications of the legislation. Also because of this legislation, there will be only part-time employment; there will not be any permanent employment. Thus many people will lose their holiday pay and their superannuation. That will have a flow-on effect throughout the community, which is unfortunate.

As the member for Warrego said a moment ago, some of these western towns are still suffering. An example is Charleville, which suffered a flood in 1990 and then was confronted with the worst drought in living memory. Graziers have experienced low wool prices. These rural places still have not recovered. It is the same situation throughout the central west, and it is ongoing through to the north west and into north Queensland. Small business is on the bones of its backside now, and I urge Government members to take control, to consult with these people and understand their plight. The situation is grave. However, Government members do not seem to want to know about it. Exactly what this legislation will do is force people once more to the pits of ruin.

**Mr Budd:** How is it going to affect the people in Winton?

**Mr JOHNSON:** The people in Winton will be affected the same as the people in Blackall, Barcardine and wherever else, because they operate small businesses. They are often family businesses. I have just mentioned Blackall. Ten

days ago—and my colleague the member for Warrego might have the photo which appeared in the *Longreach Leader*—Tattersall's Hotel was destroyed by fire. Unfortunately, it took six businesses with it, and those businesses will probably not resume operations. Because of this legislation, those businesses will not bother to start up. It will hasten their retreat from even thinking about regrouping and trying to rebuild. Anyway, it is the old consultation program: if it is not working, the Government consults—but then it turns around and does the exact opposite. There is no doubt that the member for Thuringowa, who has left the Chamber, is one of the guts men of the Labor Party.

**Mr Santoro:** He has probably been taken out to be executed.

**Mr JOHNSON:** That is possibly right. I assure members that he is one of the guts men of the Government. I consult quite regularly with the people in Townsville about the problems that confront them, and I will touch upon one of those problems now. This morning, the Minister called me a dill for, of all things, standing up for the people who work for the railways in Townsville. The honourable member for Thuringowa represents 52 businesses in Townsville that supply goods and materials to those railway workshops. However, the Government has cut back the staff in those railway workshops from 640 to 380, and those numbers are still declining. With these trading hours, what will happen to those businesses? Why would they want extended trading hours? That is what the member for Thuringowa is talking about. Of course, they do not want extended trading hours because there will be nobody there to support them. That is an indictment of this Government. It does not understand how small business operates. It does not understand how, at this point—

**Mr HAMILL:** I rise to a point of order. I want to place on the record that I did not call the honourable member a dill. His coalition colleague interstate called him a dill, not me.

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

**Mr JOHNSON:** I am pleased that the Honourable Minister for Transport has returned to the Chamber.

**Mr Santoro:** You flushed him out again.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I do not know about flushed him out, but I am pleased to see that he has come back, because I would like to take him to Townsville. At Townsville, we could go to the railways and the businesses and talk to the people who work in those establishments. They will tell us exactly what the real problem is in

Townsville; it is this incompetent Minister over here.

**Mr Hamill:** I challenge you to be here tomorrow.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Tomorrow I am going to Mirani.

**Mr Hamill:** Why won't you be in the Parliament tomorrow?

**Mr JOHNSON:** For the same reason the Premier was not here today.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members, the Chair has been very tolerant this evening with persistent interjections coming from certain members. It has not been assisted by the Honourable the Minister for Transport, who has just moved into the Chamber. I ask the Minister for Transport to cease interjecting and also ask the member for Gregory to return to the contents of the Bill.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I will return to the Bill.

**Mr Beattie:** He hasn't even read the Bill. He doesn't even know the name of it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I warn the member for Brisbane Central.

**Mr JOHNSON:** Just imagine the member for Brisbane Central saying that I had not read the Bill! He represents the Valley area of the city, which has just about closed down. What is going to happen to that area when extended trading hours are introduced? He should tell me. It seems that I have touched on a nerve of Government members. They know that they have done the wrong thing. I know that the Minister for Industrial Relations is in charge of this piece of legislation and I hope that he will take on board—

**Mr Santoro:** The unions are in charge.

**Mr JOHNSON:** He is one of the heavies of the union movement.

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

**Mr JOHNSON:** The Government is not in control of the agenda, the unions are. This Bill will be known as the "Big Get Bigger Bill", and forget the rest. That will be the result of this piece of legislation.

**Mr MITCHELL** (Charters Towers) (11.38 p.m.): The Opposition is opposing this Bill because it is fundamentally adverse to the survival of small business. It makes a mockery of the role of the Industrial Relations Commission. The Government has decided to override the Commission which, until now, has independently made decisions on issues such as these.

**Mr Budd:** Where do you buy your groceries from?

**Mr MITCHELL:** I will take that interjection. I buy my groceries from the local stores—all the corner stores. I do not even buy them from the big stores in Charters Towers because I am never home long enough to shop at them. Where the consumer demand and the public—

**Mr Budd** interjected.

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

**Mr MITCHELL:** This approach is preferable to the open-slather approach which the Government has adopted. It has not taken into account that the sudden changes in trading hours will affect the level of sales of small businesses, their turnover and their cash flow. It will compromise their ability to meet their obligations to lending institutions.

Before any changes are made, small retailers require plenty of notice in order to accommodate the results of the changes. As it now stands, small businesses have relied on existing trading hours to survive by opening very early in the morning and closing late at night to catch the significant number of workers who are unable to shop during normal trading hours. However, the Government is now taking away this advantage by extending the hours that retail and food outlets can operate, thus giving them an even larger slice of the market. That will cause many small businesses, such as convenience stores and corner stores, to close because they will have lost a niche that they were designed to fill.

**Mr Budd:** Will you continue to shop at Charter Towers?

**Mr MITCHELL:** I will.

**Mr Budd:** How will the shops opening in Townsville affect Charter Towers.

**Mr MITCHELL:** It will affect a hell of a lot of shops in Charters Towers. It will be one of the worst-affected areas in Queensland. The problems do not stop here. Any loss of business will have widespread ramifications. Landlords may end up with empty premises and, due to the decreased viability of small businesses, will be unable to find new tenants. Delivery people, such as bread and milk vendors, will also show decreased profits. In essence, a domino effect will be created.

It would not just be those fighting for profits who would be adversely affected. The less mobile members of society, such as the elderly, mothers with young children, one car families and the disabled would also be disadvantaged. Corner stores and convenience stores serve a purpose for these people, because they are more accessible to them than the larger planned regional centres.

This brings me to the small businesses retailing within these large centres. These businesses will be disadvantaged, as will those outside such centres. In order to compete, they will have no choice but to extend their hours to coincide with those of the larger retailers. No consideration has been given as to how these small traders will be able to stand the physical demands of having to work extended hours or to the fact that working longer hours will affect their quality of life and keep them away from their families.

The ability to enjoy leisure activities contributes greatly to the quality of life, and should not be traded to line the pockets of the major retailers, which is a total backflip from the pledge by the Labor Party before the 1989 election. If small traders wish to maintain any kind of leisure time, their only alternative is to bear the financial strain of hiring staff to cover these hours. That would be a financial strain, and extended hours will not significantly increase profits. All this just to give more options about when people can do their shopping!

**Mr Budd:** It will kill them in Claremont, won't it?

**Mr MITCHELL:** It will not help them too much, that is for sure. This is fine for the larger retailers who can afford to employ more staff and cover additional overheads, but not so for the smaller traders who have lower profit margins. Increased competition from the large retailers will inevitably reduce small business profits. But add increased wages to this problem and it is obvious that their incomes will be dealt a blow.

**Mr Hollis:** Who wrote this?

**Mr MITCHELL:** I did, actually. The argument that traders will be given equal say about core hours is also a mockery. Certainly, hours that must be traded by all businesses cannot be extended without 75 per cent of traders supporting it, but the legislation also states that any single trader can trade to the extent of the allowable hours. Small businesses will not have anything to gain by opening additional hours, but will be forced to in order to compete with those who do.

A major argument put to the general public is that extended hours will complement their lifestyle by creating conveniences. On the surface, the proposed amendments do look attractive. But has the public been informed of the long-term results, which in the end do not benefit the consumer? As I have mentioned, corner stores and convenience stores will suffer, affecting all those who need stores that are easily accessible, which is all of us at one time or another.

**Mr Nuttall:** This is repetitious.

**Mr Budd:** Tedious repetition.

**Mr MITCHELL:** If I keep driving the message home, members opposite might realise what they are doing. Another argument put to the public is that deregulating trading hours will create jobs. In South Australia, this was not the happy scenario. For every job created in big business, 3.9 jobs were lost in the small business sector. South Australia has since had to reintroduce regulated trading. What of the jobs that do still exist? Will it be viable in the long term to maintain the current penalty rates? For small businesses, it definitely will not. But even for the big businesses, penalty rates may become a hindrance. If penalty rights are amended, how does this benefit those who work the more unsociable hours required of them? Furthermore, what happens when large businesses close down and larger retailers command even more of the market? Less competition will exist, which will give them greater power over pricing.

Small businesses are the backbone of price stability. Reduced competition means reduced choice. Longer hours mean more wages and overheads and, further, an increase in prices. The profits of the major companies also tend to go out of the State to New South Wales, Victoria and overseas. But with an independent retailer, the profits stay in Queensland or, more so in my area, the local communities. These are the local businesses that continually donate to our schools, sporting organisations and so on, advertise on our radio stations and, most importantly, employ our children in their home towns.

Another prime example of a less advantaged sector is small business in regional communities. Provincial and rural Queensland are made up of significantly large numbers of small businesses—in most of my electorate, actually—which rely on the fact that they have a reliable clientele in the immediate area. Once there is all-day trading on Saturday, and night shopping, throughout Queensland, these businesses will lose a substantial percentage of their customers. This will have a devastating effect in the electorate of Charters Towers, where such centres as Murrumba, Charters Towers, Claremont, and Capella are relatively close to the cities and major shopping centres.

**Mrs Edmond:** I heard there is a chain of Valentino's adults only stores going to Charters Towers.

**Mr MITCHELL:** The member knows more than I do. Shoppers will now be able to make day trips to larger towns in order to make their purchases. While consumers may focus on the

convenience and the novelty of this, the impact on their communities as a whole needs to be highlighted. With the closure of small businesses comes increased unemployment, which would eventually force people to leave the community to find jobs in other towns and cities.

Also, public transport is not available in remote areas, which again makes it difficult for less mobile members of the community to access larger shopping areas. They rely totally on the existence of small business in the immediate vicinity of their homes. It is obvious that the Labor Government has given little thought to considerations such as these or to any others that I have mentioned. The Premier, Mr Goss, and the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, Mr Foley, have severely miscalculated opposition to the amendments, which shows that they are extremely out of touch with the real needs of society. It is further evidence of the incompetence of the Labor Government and its failure to investigate matters thoroughly.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Western Downs) (11.47 p.m.): In joining this debate on the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill, I note that all sorts of arguments have been canvassed. But listening to the arguments coming from both sides of the Chamber has reinforced an opinion that I have had for a long time that, politically speaking, we have two Queenslanders. We have an urban Queensland with set demands and set ideas, and areas north of Caboolture and west of Ipswich, referred to as rural Queensland, which have a different set of requirements.

For this legislation, we could make an exception. We could extend the urban description to include the major regional centres also. We have heard the member for Toowoomba South tonight opposing the Bill, because he can foresee some disadvantages for an urban centre even as large as Toowoomba. I put to the Minister that he has a responsibility, in his carriage of this legislation, to consider the needs and requirements of all Queenslanders.

The Government is aware that the majority of people in urban areas are consumers. It is also aware that there are some losers—that is, the small businesspeople. That point has been made ably by my colleagues on this side of the House. Regardless of what happens, these urban centres will continue. Because they are big enough, they will still survive. The people on this side of the House have another matter that we believe should be considered. I have considered the consumers in the small towns in my electorate. I know that the victims will be the small businesspeople. There is also another victim—that is, the very lifeblood, the very

existence, of small towns. When small businesspeople fall over, the whole community is lost. That is not something that the Minister worries about in the large urban centres. But that is the reality, as all my colleagues have said time after time today, and it is now almost 12 midnight.

There is a responsibility on the Minister and on the people who support the Government to take into account that the legislation it is putting forward will have an adverse effect on the vast majority of people who live in that other Queensland, rural Queensland. The Government has a responsibility to look after minority groups. I have been in this House for a long time, and over the past four years I have listened to all of the Government's talk about social justice and equity, giving people a fair go and looking after them. As soon as members opposite get the chance to put their foot on someone's neck, they jump all over the poor bugger. This is a good example of that. I am reinforcing the case so ably put by my colleagues—that can go in *Hansard*, because it is a term of endearment out my way—that we have two classes of victims, not just the small businesspeople but also the very existence of small communities.

I have heard Government members interjecting on some of my colleagues saying, "How is it going to affect the shopkeeper in Winton?" I will cite the case of a place such as Dalby, which has a population of 10 000. It is a fairly large regional town. People in that town do not like the idea of extended trading hours, and I will tell members why. If shopping hours in Toowoomba or Brisbane are extended to all day Saturday, that has a dramatic effect on a smaller centre such as Dalby. The member for Thuringowa was right onto the consequences that such a decision could have. The quality of life in Dalby goes down the tube. Mum and dad pack up the kids and out go the shopping dollars, straight off to Toowoomba, Brisbane, Ipswich, the Gold Coast or the Sunshine Coast, and the whole family goes—

**Mrs Edmond:** Why shouldn't Toowoomba benefit?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I am not worried about Toowoomba, I am worried about the smaller centres. The member for Mount Coot-tha has been squarking all day. She should just listen for a while. So, the shopping dollar has gone elsewhere. Mum and dad return home, and all of a sudden their children want jobs. However, there is no employment in the town because the shopping dollar has gone elsewhere. There is no turnover; no businesses can be sustained; so there is no employment. The member for Mount Coot-tha left Gayndah because she could not

hack the pace of the bush. She came to Brisbane, and she has forgotten her origins.

The only investment that most people have in life is their house. Because there is no business around and there is no employment, down goes the value of their house. In a short time, Government members will have to vote on this Bill. I ask them to consider not just the consumers. The consumers are the majority in my electorate as well, but I am concerned about the existence of the towns we represent.

**Mr Nuttall:** Did you buy your TV in Dalby?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I ask the member to repeat that interjection.

**Mr Nuttall:** Did you buy your car in Dalby?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** No, I bought my car in Jandowae, which is smaller still. I bought my television there, as well. What does the member buy in Kingaroy?

**Mr Nuttall:** I bet you bought them in the city at a large discount store.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** The member has had his chance. My argument is hurting him terribly. Mr Speaker, I ask you to shut the member up, or I will be rude to him.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Western Downs should not use that phrase, but I ask the member for Sandgate to cease interjecting.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I make an appeal to Government members. They know that small businesspeople will be the losers under this legislation. I point out that the very existence of small towns is at stake. Government members have a responsibility to consider the needs of all Queenslanders, not just the consumers who live in urban areas. I have consumers in my electorate, too, but I am appealing to the people in my electorate to think past the shopping dollar that goes out every Friday and to think about the very existence of their towns—the investment in their houses, their employment and the quality of life that they currently have. Small business is the essence of those towns.

**Mr ROWELL (Hinchinbrook) (11.53 p.m.):** I support the Opposition's sentiments on the effect that this legislation will have on small traders, particularly those on the coastal strip. We have just heard from the member for Western Downs, who is very concerned about the effects of this legislation on small traders in that region. Much the same circumstances apply in every small town throughout Queensland. Small traders really do not have the resources to compete against their larger trading competitors.

I believe that is the big issue in this debate. Smaller traders do not have the capacity to maintain the longer hours that are necessary in order to compete with the large traders. This legislation will force smaller operators to stay open for longer than they do at present.

Many small businesses are husband-and-wife operations. They are a team. They work together. They work very long hours. They are very reliant on their business for their survival. The operators of such businesses certainly try to bring up their families in the best manner possible. I am absolutely certain that, if such people are forced to work extended hours, they will encounter major problems in their family life. With families in which both parents work or single-parent families, children may become involved in juvenile crime. In such families, the level of parental supervision is reduced. Very often, children are left unattended as the parents strive to maintain the viability of their business. Extended trading hours will exacerbate such problems.

Often, smaller operators have mortgaged everything they have and poured it into their business just to keep it going. As the member for Brisbane Central said, many other people build houses and are really up to their eyeballs in debt. There is nothing new about that. However, many small business operators have to contend with a debt from their business and a debt on their house.

Many small businesses are operated by former employees of Government departments who have taken voluntary redundancy packages. I know some railway workers who have done exactly that.

**An Opposition member:** Forced out.

**Mr ROWELL:** They were not necessarily forced out, but there was nowhere for them to go. The Government said, "We are going to dispense with your position. We are offering you this package." As a result, many workers have left a particular Government department and have purchased a small business. Extended hours will make it difficult for smaller operators to compete against the larger retail outlets, and the businesses of those former Government employees could be in jeopardy.

In the eighties, small businesses had to contend with unrealistic interest rates and the recession that we had to have. Those factors have created many problems for small businesses. They have had to battle like hell to survive. They are really the true battlers of this nation.

Another problem will be faced by small businesspeople who operate from a major

shopping complex. Under this legislation, 75 per cent of shop operators will have to decide whether or not they want to stay open for the extended hours. If a particular complex does not trade for the extended hours, it must compete against other complexes that may vote in favour of doing so.

Local businesses have a tendency to support local manufacturing interests in the purchase of commodities. That applies particularly to farm produce. As has been mentioned during this debate, the international conglomerates do not really care about the origin of farm produce. As the shadow Minister said so eloquently during his contribution, such large companies often go overseas in order to purchase cheaper products. They will import pineapples from the Philippines or pawpaws from another country that has very low labour costs. Of course, Australian producers must compete against those imported products. Australian producers find it very difficult to compete against the low labour costs of those imported products. In the past, Australian producers have been assisted by quarantine restrictions. However, that is only a temporary mechanism to stop the importation of some products and also to stop the spread of diseases, which is the most important factor of quarantine restrictions.

**Mr Beattie:** That won't change under this Act, you know.

**Mr ROWELL:** No, I know. The point that I am making is that quarantine restrictions are one of the mechanisms preventing much of that cheap agricultural produce from being imported into Australia.

I believe that both the Federal Government and the Queensland Government have no respect for rural communities and for small business. I would like to read an article from today's edition of the *Herbert River Express*, which states—

"State Cabinet was wrong in their decision to extend trading hours and should reconsider their decision, according to Ingham Chamber of Commerce.

Chamber President Felix Reitano likened the change to the failed attempt to introduce Daylight Saving in Queensland.

On that occasion the decision was overturned when Queenslanders voted against the introduction of Daylight Saving, prompting Premier Wayne Goss to admit he had 'got it wrong'.

...

Mr Reitano said the main issues were lack of small trader profitability, quality of life and district unemployment.

...

'At the present time, most businesses are still struggling from the effects of the 'recession we had to have' and are just now slowly getting back on their feet,' he said.

'Smaller regional centres like ours will be disadvantaged because more dollars will be spent out of town because of the availability of the larger grocery stores.

'This is at the expense of the smaller operators in country areas.'

He said our quality of life, in the balance of work and recreation, would be severely undermined by the extra work load.

'1994, the Year of the Family may be remembered as the year of disruption to the family ...

The chamber was disappointed by Cabinet's decision and hoped it would be reconsidered."

I would just like to go on and have a look at some of the decisions that have been made by the big traders, because most of those decisions were really made in areas such as Sydney and Melbourne. Very little input comes from the local scene.

The legislation now before this House will extend trading hours to 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays. It is well down the track to total deregulation. In other States I have seen shops that were open for 24 hours a day. One of the major chain stores had two to three people working from about 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. the following morning. Those stores simply adjusted the numbers of staff required in accordance with the customer requirements. No small traders can compete with that. If they do try, inevitably their health will be impaired or they will go broke trying to provide staff to keep the enterprise going. Effectively, monopolies gradually gain control and sooner or later prices rise and possibly the service declines.

All their decisions on how business is conducted are based on the level of profitability. That is the only consideration of big enterprises. Profits are siphoned off from the small towns to pay shareholders. Those shareholders could be somewhere in Australia or they could be foreign investors. This could prove to be disastrous for small communities. Small businesspeople leaving towns is a great loss to those communities. Very often there is a prospect, I suppose, of a new car being bought by those small businesspeople. They could be repairing their house or buying a number of items within the town. That money then recirculates in the town itself. If shops close and business confidence is eroded, people start leaving that

town, and that has been experienced in the past because of seasonal conditions. Of course, poor seasonal conditions do affect small communities. This added burden of additional trading hours will be a major impediment to the future of these people.

Generally, major shopping complexes are rented out to big retailers, enabling them to come and go as they wish and take profits when they desire and generally run their business based on the profit motive. If they leave town, their stock, of course, can be taken with them.

The Innisfail Chamber of Commerce president was interviewed for an article that appeared in today's *Cairns Post*. It states—

"Doug Olsen agreed there was a need for more research but said the questions would have to be worded carefully. 'I don't think they've (the State Government) done enough research to say emphatically that's what the consumer wants'

...

'They've been saying that's what the consumer wants when the real agenda is what the large multi-nationals want.'

Mr Olsen said smaller centres such as Innisfail would suffer because people would go to Cairns to do their weekend shopping.

He said the workload of small family-type businesses would increase as they tried to compete with the larger stores.

'A lot of businesses in Innisfail are the small family-type with working proprietors who can't stretch their hours—these people have got to have a life as well'

...

'The secondary and underlying worry is the fact we will further see a drift of money away from the smaller centres. There is a need for deregulation in areas where tourist services are required.' "

There is little doubt about that.

The Minister said that trading hours are being extended because lifestyles are changing. He says that laws need to be overhauled to keep pace with the needs of the people of Queensland. Does this mean that Government services will be available between 8 a.m. and 9 p.m. Monday to Friday and then on Saturday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.? Is the Government going to participate in this great evolution that is being thrust on the retailers of this State? Will Government services be accessible for all those hours that have been spelt out in this amendment Bill?

Will I be able to ring the Division of Workplace Health and Safety during those hours if a constituent is concerned with some aspect of the Act? Will a family, after they have had tea at night, get in the family car and drive down to the courthouse and pay the registration on their car? Will a young person who wants a driver's licence be able to make an appointment to have a driving test when his parents come home from work at night? Will the Department of Primary Industries staff be available to issue a permit to shift stock up till 9 p.m. each night if the grazier or the truckie is late getting in but wants to get away early the next morning to get another load?

If the Government thinks it is fair and reasonable for small business to fit in with these times, it should also be prepared to do likewise. As many of my colleagues on this side of the House have said, there was a mechanism through the Industrial Relations Commission to make effective the changes to trading hours. This legislation is really about what is supposed to be the workers' party getting into bed with the big business community—putting the battler, those small businesspeople who strive so hard to maintain viability, in a very delicate situation. This legislation is also about the unions and the Government controlling people.

Small traders employ limited numbers of employees who for the most part would not be worried about joining a union. This legislation is being introduced under the guise of providing the public with more accessibility to shopping hours. The tourist industry does need extended hours, but if operators want to get together and apply for those extended hours, they can do so. The industry basically requires food outlets, souvenir shops and accommodation to function in its normal manner.

Many of these towns rely on small business to provide trophies for sporting organisations. We see quite often that the sporting clubs go to the small traders and request a trophy or some donation towards an event that they are holding. I have looked very carefully, and over a period of time I have noticed just how much support they really receive from the likes of Coles and Woolworths. That support is not very great; it is very limited. Organisations such as development bureaus, which depend very strongly on membership from people in the local community, receive very little support from major organisations.

These big businesspeople simply are there to get profits out of a town and put very little back into it. The Government looked closely at the legislation and made some assessments. I think this amendment has certainly not enhanced any small business or certainly small trader

throughout Queensland. I am concerned greatly about the impact that it may have in towns on the coastal strip where I live. People there have put their hearts and souls into businesses and have worked extremely hard to get businesses up and going, and they may find at the end of the day that their resources are not sufficient to cope with the requirements of competing against those big operations. They may find that their assets have diminished. That is highly likely, because once shops start closing, the next thing one sees is a domino effect—people cannot get work and then they leave town, as I have said before, to look for other opportunities elsewhere.

The main point is that if we do not support these small traders, these people who have the capacity to employ people, I think Queensland will encounter some major problems in the future.

**Mr FITZGERALD** (Lockyer) (12.11 a.m.): In speaking to the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill 1994, I wish to place on record that I support small business and am very proud to stand up for small business in my electorate. I do this because I can understand that consumers wish to have extra shopping hours; but, in recent years, no representations have been made to me by people who want extra shopping hours. People seem to be able to spend the necessary amount of time and money that they want to spend on shopping at present.

I will admit that it has been very convenient for people to be able to use those corner stores and those other shops that are already exempt to do their shopping on a Saturday afternoon. I find that it is very convenient that hardware stores are open on Saturday afternoons. However, these changes have been brought about by the present system, whereby the Industrial Commission gives permission to sectors of the retail industry to open their stores for variable hours. I believe that has worked very well. But the Government has decided to legislate the allowable shopping hours to be extended quite dramatically.

I am very concerned about the future of towns in my electorate. I believe that these amendments will make some dramatic changes to the confidence of business and the viability of businesses throughout the electorate. I ask where on earth the Deputy Premier is tonight on this issue and why he has not spoken on the matter. He is the Minister for Rural Communities. I believe that rural communities will be the communities that will be most affected by these changes before the House this morning. The Minister has said nothing about this. He is the Deputy Premier—a powerful man in

Cabinet—but he is not standing up for rural communities. I believe that he is quite happy to see them go down the tube. Also, the Minister for Small Business, Mr Elder—

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** That's a disgraceful comment, and you know it.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** I ask the honourable member for Chermside: what has the Deputy Premier done in this debate to stand up for rural communities? Absolutely nothing!

There are three major towns in my electorate, namely, Gatton, Boonah and Laidley. I believe that they will all suffer an unnerving experience to try to adjust to the new regime that will operate. The towns of Boonah and Laidley will find that their stores will face intense competition from the major retailers. As an example, on page 12 of today's *Courier-Mail* appears a double-page spread from Woolworths. It says, "Woolworths cares for kids." On the next page is a whole-page advertisement for Big W. What small operator in a small country town can compete with the large companies that are advertising on a large scale and providing discount products? They provide those discounts because of the muscle that they have in the marketplace, and they are able to obtain their products much cheaper than the smaller shop owner can. Many consumers want cheaper prices, but the electorate as a whole must realise that the result of this will be larger and larger shops in fewer and fewer centres and the closure of small shops in other areas. We will see the demise of some of those towns, because this will have a detrimental effect on them.

The smaller towns in my electorate are also struggling. They provide convenience stores. They are basically Aratula, Kalbar, Harrisville, Forest Hill, Grantham, Helidon and Withcott. We have already seen the small country stores go from my electorate. There are virtually no small country stores left in that electorate, whereas in the past there were a number of them. They were run by great families in the community. They knew the whole community. I can think of some of those stores, such as the ones at Upper Junction View, Mount Sylvia and Caffey. A number of the stores have gone. We have seen them move out, and those areas have suffered as a result. I am now fearful that the three major towns and those minor towns that I mentioned will all suffer the same fate; that more competition will be placed upon them.

Last Wednesday, I attended a meeting of shopkeepers in Gatton when they were discussing this legislation. I explained to them the Standing Orders. I said, "For sure it will go through this week. The Government will use its numbers." I explained to the businesspeople

that I would be voting against it and that the House would be dividing on the issue. I assure honourable members that the House will be dividing. I will be calling "Divide".

The people who attended that meeting were virtually all mum and dad family businesses from the main street of Gatton and the shopping complex in Gatton. They are fearful of the rapid changes that will happen. They want their nights off. They do not want to be tied to their businesses any more than they are at present. There is a Coles store in Gatton, and it is an excellent store. They realise that once those businesses operate the maximum hours available, their businesses will be placed in jeopardy. If they do not open their stores, the Coles of the world will be stocking the best selling lines of the small shop owners. As a result, they will lose their bread and butter lines, and we will end up with one major shopping complex in Gatton. Of course, Coles will then probably expand its store; some landowner will lease some land to Coles, and Gatton will become a great big one-store town. I do not want Gatton to end up like that.

I asked those people what their options are. Those options are to open for some extra hours to try to compete with the major stores, or else they will go broke. At present, I believe that we have a happy blend for trading. I agree with the honourable member who spoke before me about issues such as sporting complexes, the number of sporting teams that play sport and the effect that this will have upon the quality of life that people in country areas enjoy.

We have a great life in country areas. Saturday afternoon is generally taken up with the playing of sport in my area. We have netball, junior Rugby League, tennis, soccer and cricket. All those sports will be affected if the mums and dads or the people who work in stores have to work in those stores on Saturday afternoons. I can understand that this will have a detrimental effect upon sporting life in that community, because that is a way of life in country areas.

I do not support this legislation. I agree with the shop owners who say that there will not be any more dollars for shopping. That means that the dollar will be transferred from one day's trading to another night's or day's trading, and we will find that there will be a transfer to the major stores that can afford to open for the maximum number of hours. Even if they run at a loss for quite some time, it does not matter, because eventually they will take over the business. That is what it is all about—market share.

There is quite a danger in having the generic lines and limited lines that some of those stores offer. In the past, when a product could

not get onto a shelf in a major store, it might have been able to be introduced in a smaller store, and eventually that product was accepted by the general community. But the commercial might is being placed in the hands of very few purchasers in terms of the major stores.

Tonight, I will be voting against this legislation. I believe that it is a retrograde step. I understand that the House will divide on it. I will be standing up for small business, the towns in my electorate and the small businesspeople in my electorate.

**Mr LESTER** (Keppel) (12.20 a.m.): Tonight is a very sad night. We are seeing the ALP bringing down the death knell on small business as a whole. What has astounded me is that, while members of the coalition have been fighting for the survival of small business, we have seen little else but sniggering and contempt from the members of the ALP. This sort of thing really makes me wonder about the sincerity of members of the ALP. Comments such as, "Why should the people of Dalby not be able to go to Toowoomba and support the big combine?", have been made with an absolute snigger.

Members of the Labor Party have shown clearly that they do not want small business. They have gone against all of their election promises prior to 1989, when they said that they would support small business all the way. They have sold them out. I say to members of the Labor Party who continue to condemn small business that small business employs 61 per cent of the workforce. The Labor Government is spending money trying to concoct all sorts of schemes supposedly to build up employment. Yet this Bill will take away a lot of employment in our State. Any group of people that employs 61 per cent of the workforce is surely worthy of consideration. There are some 800 000 small businesses in Australia and unfortunately their numbers are dwindling. Might I simply say that the small businesspeople try to employ more people. They try to spread their influence. They support various organisations by way of donations. What do the big companies do? The big companies, obviously, have a role in our society but basically the big companies have a budget to work to and they have their shareholders to answer to. Generally speaking, big business has been putting off people in the thousands with redundancies and so on. They have moved into using computers and moved right away from employing people, from giving more Australians a job with which to be able to support their own children and make Australia a bigger, better and healthier place.

When we left Government we had a good thing going in the State of Queensland. That "good thing going" was not easy to achieve. It was achieved after a lot of pain and a lot of trial. Let me inform honourable members how we came to have that good thing going. There was, in 1987 and some little time before that, all sorts of trouble with respect to trading hours. Big business wanted more trading hours; small business did not want that. Yet we had within the small-business sector many traders breaking the law and actually trading outside of the allowed hours. That made it extraordinarily difficult because, if one moved to prosecute a small-business person who is trading outside the hours, that person can become a hero and receive much sympathy, and that does not solve the problem.

When I called them together and told them all to pull their heads in and get on and obey the law, they refused to do it. So that is the reason that we had our one-month trial. It was to be that, and nothing more. That got everybody together. That got them started to sort out the problem and got them to obey the law. What we ultimately came up with was that, generally speaking, small businesses employing up to six people could trade without restriction. The bigger stores were subject to various trading hours. For example, in Brisbane they could trade six days a week and on Thursday nights. In the country it was five and half days a week with Thursday night trading. That gave smaller businesses an opportunity.

However, we did not shut the door there. We did not shut it at all. We said through the State Industrial Commission, "If your case is good enough, if you all agree, you can apply to the State Industrial Commission and you will be granted additional trading hours should your area need them." This happened successfully in the central business district in Cairns. It happened here in the mall in Brisbane. It happened in Yeppoon, which I now represent, and which now trades all day on Saturday without any problem. We left every avenue open through the umpire. Most people who wanted the additional trading and who had a good enough case accepted that. I have to say that there was pain involved in getting there, but we got there and we did the job properly. We addressed the subject properly and everybody was happy. I might say they have been happy until very recently when, all of a sudden, in conjunction with the unions and big business, the Labor Party has gone outside the umpire—gone outside the Industrial Commission—with this intolerable legislation which will be the death knell of small business.

I do not believe that what the Government is doing is absolutely necessary. For goodness' sake, members of the Labor Party should try to

understand family life for those people in small business. Many small business people operate as a man and wife team and physically they cannot really afford to trade longer than they currently are. Physically they cannot do it. They are going to knock themselves up; they will get sick. But they will have to do it if they want to compete. The irony is that this is the Year of the Family. Yet, here we are casting the family asunder—throwing it out the window.

In the shopping centres the big combines can trade those additional hours and, while Government members say that small businesses will not have to trade as long as the larger retailers, if they do not, they will miss out very badly. A small one-person or two-person business cannot afford to work the additional hours and will not be able to afford the obvious cost of employing somebody to keep that business going for those additional hours.

There are a lot of grey areas in relation to the cost of all of this. In a shopping centre extended trading hours will mean extra lighting, airconditioning and so on. Even if the small business is shut down, it will still obviously have to pay for its share of the airconditioning and whatever. What will happen in some of our country towns in which perhaps one of the bigger combines operates? These extended trading hours will force out many of the smaller businesses. That will mean that the large retailer will be almost the sole trader. To get to that point the big retailer will cut prices. I can see cut-price operations in the not-too-distant future but, when the big combines knock over the small businesspeople, the prices will go up. Honourable members should just wait and see. It has always happened and it will happen again.

In South Australia, quite obviously the Government is seriously considering again restricting trading hours because of the dreadful, catastrophic effects that deregulation has had on small businesses in that State. In central Queensland many of our smaller towns will struggle to survive. They will be very seriously affected. The first comment of the head of the Rockhampton Shopping Fair was that Rockhampton will do well out of this proposal because the people from the country will come in and shop in Rockhampton. That might be all right for some people in Rockhampton, but it is not good for the country centres.

Today, so that I would know what I was talking about in this debate, I visited Ogmoo, Yaamba and Marlborough with the specific intention of seeing how the small businesspeople in those towns felt about the extended trading hours. They are absolutely aghast at what the Government is doing. There is

no way in the world any of these people are going to support the Government in next Saturday's election. It was quite strange. Today, I went into a shop at Ogmoo and the lady in the shop said to me, "It is nice to have a nice politician visit us." Apparently, not so long ago Mr Burns, the Deputy Premier, went in there and, when the lady challenged him on a particular issue, he became very stropky, abused the living daylights out of her, and walked out. So that was Mr Burns' contribution to Ogmoo. All of the people of Ogmoo know about that, and they will vote accordingly.

I also have to say that, back on 24 February 1987, we had a bleeding heart, the Honourable Paul Braddy, pining for small business. It is all there in *Hansard*. He talked about how their hours must not ever be extended, and he talked about the family. Goodness knows what he did not talk about. Where the heck is he tonight in support of small business? He is not here. He has been in and out, but he is not going to support it. He has not spoken in its favour. He has let it down. I did a little bit more research, and discovered that on 6 October 1987, Mr Braddy talked about the Industrial Relations Commission and said that the umpire has to decide; that decisions should never be made outside. Tonight, this Government is doing exactly what Mr Braddy said it should not do. If Mr Braddy does not vote with the Opposition, he is a hypocrite. He should make up his mind. It is up to him. I have given him a chance. He has said in *Hansard* that he would stick up for small business. He is now selling it out. In Rockhampton he is not worth two bob.

As for Mr Pearce—I simply say that I am sorry for that fellow. I think that is about the best thing that I can say about him.

I will close by again suggesting to this Parliament that we consider the family and that we consider particularly those people in small business. As Mr Goss is present, I ask him now to withdraw this Bill, and we will all forgive him.

**Mr LAMING** (Mooloolah) (12.32 a.m.): I rise to speak on the Trading (Allowable Hours) Amendment Bill. I do not intend to repeat all the good remarks that have been made by the Opposition and by one member of the Government. However, a question remains in my mind, and that is: who is supposed to benefit from this Bill? During the speeches of members from both sides, I gave that question some consideration. I thought, "Could it be the consumers?" The answer is obviously, "No." I have not had one constituent come to me and say that we should have longer trading hours on the Sunshine Coast. Not one. They believe that, at the moment, the trading hours are quite

adequate. So I wondered whether it could have been for the benefit of small business. Obviously, it is not because these people are nearly, to a man and woman, against this legislation. So perhaps it is for big business? Perhaps it is, but after this legislation has caused many small businesses to fail, the question remains: will they keep these extended hours or will they fall back to the current hours? Could it be merely for the benefit of the unions? It seems that that proposition is closer to the mark. This legislation entails a mere transfer of the current non-union jobs in small business, the unions hope, into unionised jobs in bigger business. That is probably the hidden agenda—big Government, big business and big unions—a sweetheart deal.

Government members talked about the freedom to trade, and said that no-one will be forced to trade. Even the title of the Bill has in brackets "Allowable Hours". However, small businesses will have no choice. They will have to compete to survive. The same amount of money will be available for the community to spend; it will just be spread over more hours.

I would like to refer to one greatly concerned constituent who rang me last week about this legislation. He is the proprietor of Esplanade News at Mooloolaba. He told me that on a Thursday night during late-night trading his trade is down 60 per cent on the trade on other nights that late-night trading is not in operation. He believes that if this legislation proceeds, his hours will rise from 60 hours a week to 90 hours a week because he will not be able to afford the staff who normally look after the newsagency at that time of night. He will lose at least one senior staff and then perhaps have to drop back to 6 o'clock closing. Then the people in that area of Mooloolaba will have a worse service than they currently receive. He asks about his staff. They are senior staff; they are ladies of a senior age. Are they likely to get a job at Coles and Woolworths? Not likely. This constituent is just one of two or three people who have spoken to me about their concerns.

I am concerned not only for the small businesses in Mooloolaba but also those in Buderim, on the Nicklin Way strip at Kawana and in the village of Mooloolah. I am concerned about the small businesses in large centres because they will have to match the centre's hours. I have had no calls at all, and even if there was, there is a mechanism contained in the legislation for this to be addressed in the Industrial Commission. This Government has ignored the referee, it has ignored small business, it has ignored the needs of the public, and it has dealt a body blow to the only sector that can provide increased

employment in Queensland, and that is the small business sector.

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeronga—Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (12.37 a.m.), in reply: In this debate, we have witnessed the comprehensive retreat by the National and Liberal Parties from any claim to stand for free enterprise, freedom of choice or micro-economic reform. We have seen the member for Clayfield lead the brigade of Liberals against liberalisation. We have seen these people abandon any semblance of claim to be willing to apply the principles for which the Liberal Party once stood in this Chamber, namely, principles of free enterprise and free choice. We have seen the evidence of how the Liberal and National Parties have buckled on this issue. They have not the substance to support this change even when the change is on all four corners of their own philosophy. Why? Because they do not have the substance to distance themselves from vested interests.

Well may the people of Queensland look upon this sorry crew and ask themselves, "If these people do not have the substance to support this sort of reform, how can they possibly have the substance to negotiate the tough issues that confront the people of Queensland and that confront the Queensland economy?" As we are confronting time and again issues of change and challenge as technology sweeps through our economy and as the structures of our economy change, so there is a need for leadership among the elected representatives of the people. But we have not seen leadership from the Liberal and National Parties. We have seen this flight from the issue into sentimentality and anecdote, carefully avoiding the reason, the argument and the evidence behind this debate.

It is 120 years since the first Bill dealing with trading hours reached its first reading in this House. Over those 12 decades, that debate has raged vigorously at times in this House because it is an issue that affects people personally. It affects people's livelihoods, and I suppose that is why, during the course of this debate, we had some 38 speakers. What have been the key themes of this debate? I think that we can discern at least five key themes. Firstly, the issues or the principles of competition policy; secondly, the issue of changing lifestyles; thirdly, the changing needs of workers; fourthly, the needs of the tourism industry; and fifthly, the impact on small business.

Dealing with the principles of competition policy—one sees here an important question which confronts our economy both at State and national levels. How are we to get effective competition so that ordinary citizens can get a fair

go in the marketplace? In this regard, I table the submission to the review from the Queensland Confederation of Industry, which includes the remark that—

" . . . the Confederation would agree to deregulation of trading hours. Business already considers that it is overly regulated and that the market should be allowed to determine its own position."

These are the people in the Queensland Confederation of Industry who are supporting these moves.

I will table also an article that appeared on page 2 of the *Courier-Mail* of 12 April 1984. It stated that—

"Queensland Confederation of Industry general manager Clive Bubb welcomed the 'greater uniformity' of shopping hours."

That sort of support shows how paltry, how devoid of substance and how lacking in reason and logic have been the arguments contended for by the Opposition. The problem with the Opposition in this debate is that it has failed persistently to elevate its argument to the point of dealing with these issues. Instead, it has sought to attribute squalid reasons to the Government for embarking upon this reform.

It should listen to its own constituency. It should listen, for example, to the editorial published this week in *Business Queensland*, which represents the business community, from whom one would have thought that the National and Liberal Parties might have taken advice. That editorial was headed, "Government reaches fair compromise on trading hours." This is not a journal which could be accused of being a mouthpiece of the trade union movement. I table that editorial from *Business Queensland*. We are told that it has been urged upon us. We are asked, "Where is this push for competition policy coming from? Where is the evidence?" Members opposite need look no further than the Retailers Association of Queensland press release of today, which sets out in chapter and verse the evidence of the survey conducted last year by Rearth Research of 2 777 Queenslanders, setting out among other things that 81 per cent of those surveyed believe that all shops should be allowed to open after 5.30 p.m. on weekdays, but that 95 per cent believe that all shopkeepers should be able to open their stores on Saturday afternoons. I table that document.

That sort of evidence indicates the compelling case that has been mounting. Among the business community, on this issue members of the Opposition are a laughing stock. They have not the courage of their own would-

be principles and ideology. They have abandoned the principles on which they purport to stand.

We shall be reminding the Queensland people when they have the benefit of these extended trading hours that they got them despite the opposition of the National and Liberal Parties. When the tough issues come up in economic debate, we shall be reminding the Queensland people that the Labor Party had the courage and the determination to achieve reform and that it did so against the self-interested, vested interests manifest through the National Party and the Liberal Party.

Secondly, in the course of this debate the issue of change in lifestyles was discussed. We now live in a society in which in many families both parents work. They need and want the benefit of having more flexible shopping hours. Much has been said about the Year of the Family. I will inform members of the Opposition that many families nowadays have both parents working. They have to work hard for a living, and they need the flexibility to have the opportunity to shop to meet their family's needs.

Thirdly, I will refer to the changing needs of workers. The Opposition seems to have been unable to understand the simple point that the legislation, which has been in operation in various forms since 1900, was introduced as workers' protection legislation. It was there to protect workers against exploitation by the working of long hours. But the workers themselves through their union have now said that they want that restriction removed. Why? Because the labour market flexibility that they have been able to achieve through enterprise bargaining has enabled them to create better deals, and better pay and conditions outcomes for their members. So they are leading this debate. Labour market flexibility is leading to retail flexibility. What an irony that these would-be champions of free enterprise find themselves resisting, among other things, the trade union movement arguing the case for greater openness and flexibility.

They should consult their own constituency. If they can find a moment when their own constituency is not laughing at them, I respectfully urge members opposite to listen to them, because they know, among other things, about the difficult decisions. If members opposite think this is a difficult issue, let me tell them that the economic issues confronting our State and nation are many and varied. Many are much more difficult issues than this and will take a great deal more courage to solve.

Fourthly, the needs of the tourism industry have been glossed over blithely by members of

the Opposition. It is as if, in the course of this debate, all that was so loudly put by the member for Keppel, Mr Lester, back in 1987 about the needs of the tourist industry had vanished.

Fifthly, much has been made by the Opposition of the impact on small business. The evidence of the interstate experience simply does not bear out that concern. The evidence from New South Wales in the period between 1986 and 1992 indicates an increase in employment of 40 000, of which 50 per cent was in the smaller non-food retail sector. So the arguments that have been based upon that proposition are really devoid of substance.

Government members' contributions to this debate have included the canvassing of many issues in a multidimensional and, in some cases, a colourful way, whereas by contrast, I am sad to say, the contributions of Opposition members have often been one-dimensional and monochromatic.

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr FOLEY:** I will come to the member for Thuringowa. I am indebted to the honourable member. I noticed that in this debate the honourable Leader of the Opposition was wise enough to steer well clear from the extravagant claims he was putting about in the media on the alleged impact of the changes with respect to crime. At least, having trespassed a toe into the water, the honourable member had the good sense to flee from an unwinnable argument.

The member for Waterford, Mr Barton, discussed issues of consultation with the interested parties. For the benefit of honourable members, I table the list of persons and organisations making submissions—some 31 persons and organisations—in the course of the review of the Trading Hours Act. I table also with that an attachment of a meeting at my department on 4 March of many of those organisations to discuss key aspects of what form the legislation should take. That sets out in some degree of detail the background of careful consultation that has occurred over the past 12 months with respect to this issue. The honourable member for Waterford referred also to the Reark research, a copy of which I have tabled, and explained the developments in Labor Party policies over the past five years, and in particular the impact of labour market flexibility and enterprise bargaining upon those issues.

The member for Redlands, Mr Budd, informed the House as to the ways in which the Bill was in the interest of consumers, and importantly pointed to protections in the Bill for the rights of small tenants to trade longer hours.

The member for Sandgate, Mr Nuttall, canvassed the arguments dealing with the impact on small business and explained to the House that the evidence of the interstate experience does not support the extravagant claims that have been made of an adverse impact in that arena. He also drew to the attention of the House some now embarrassing comments by the member for Surfers Paradise a few short years ago as to his views in favour of deregulation, from which he now retreats so rapidly.

The member for Fitzroy, Mr Pearce, drew attention to the issues regarding the impact upon shopkeepers in his own electorate in the Central Highlands area. He reminded us that, among other things, this Bill removes the requirement upon P & Cs and upon charitable organisations to obtain a permit to run a fete. What an anachronism; what an archaism! The honourable member also eloquently pointed out the reforms introduced by the Bill.

The member for Archerfield, Mr Ardill, dealt with a number of aspects that confront grocery shops, including the proposed introduction of groups of grocery shops and the likely impact of those. He pointed to ways in which small corner stores still service an important part of the market.

The member for Mount Gravatt, Ms Spence, pointed out eloquently as a working parent herself the importance of this flexibility to people in that position.

The member for Thuringowa, Mr McElligott, made a thoughtful contribution to the debate, in which he raised eloquently a number of concerns related to issues affecting sporting life and issues of enterprise bargaining. He contributed in an intelligent and thoughtful way to the debate.

The member for Bundaberg, Mr Campbell, reminded us of Mr Lester's previous statements supporting deregulation, from which he too now distances himself.

The member for Gladstone, Mr Bennett, made a spirited contribution. He pointed out that those workers who work longer hours will now be able to shop at large supermarkets.

I will deal briefly with a number of the matters raised by the Opposition in the course of the debate. I have dealt with most of the matters in the course of the previous discussion. The honourable member for Clayfield discussed the role of the Industrial Relations Commission. It must be remembered that that role will continue; that applications may be made to that commission for any extension of hours in respect, for example, of tourist areas.

The honourable member challenged me to produce proof of the consultation process. To be fair to those representing the small-business sector who have adopted a contrary view, may I say this: although they have a contrary view on the merits, they were consulted fully—and indeed have not suggested to the contrary—by my departmental officers during the course of the discussion, and indeed by me personally on several occasions.

The honourable member for Clayfield made much of the fact that the trade union supports this legislation. If the accusation is that the trade union that represents the retail workers of this State supports the legislation, then it is an accusation to which I gladly plead guilty. This is a matter that has been urged by the trade union in support of its greater flexibility through enterprise bargaining over the past 12 months, and that is a matter of some significance in the history of this debate.

The honourable member said that, in my second-reading speech, I had claimed that all other States have deregulated trading hours. That is simply a false claim, which may be demonstrated by a reading of *Hansard*.

The low point of the debate was the South Australian figures. Much was made of those figures, which are based not on a 10-year study, not on a five-year study, not on a one-year study, but on the figures obtained selectively over one month. It really does injury to this debate to have it debased by the use of such dubious methodology.

The member for Clayfield drew attention to the issue of the 75 per cent rule protecting tenants in large shopping centres. The member for Nerang was obviously not let into the secret by the member for Clayfield about the amendment circulated earlier in the debate protecting tenants against incurring costs in respect of other tenants trading outside the core hours. Were the honourable member for Nerang to have been informed by the honourable member for Clayfield to that effect, it would have saved him the embarrassment of making the wildly false claims that he urged upon us in the debate.

It would be visiting too much upon the human mind to seek to precis the comments of many of the Opposition contributions. Regrettably, those contributions recited the same theme, all of it based upon a false premise, namely that this legislation will have a significant and adverse effect upon small business. The evidence from interstate does not support that contention.

This is an important reform. It is a reform that will be of benefit to Queensland consumers. It

will be of benefit to those families that have both parents working. It will be of benefit to retail workers, and it will be a boost to the tourist industry, which is one of the great industries generating jobs in Queensland. I commend the Bill to the House.

**Question**—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 49**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bennett, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Budd, Burns, Campbell, Casey, Clark, Comben, Davies, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Gibbs, Goss W. K., Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Mackenroth, McElligott, McGrady, Milliner, Nunn, Nuttall, Palaszczuk, Pearce, Power, Purcell, Robertson, Robson, Rose, Smith, Spence, Sullivan J. H., Sullivan T. B., Szczerbanik, Vaughan, Warner, Welford, Wells *Tellers*: Pitt, Livingstone

**NOES, 31**—Beanland, Borbridge, Connor, Davidson, Elliott, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Horan, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Turner, Watson *Tellers*: Springborg, Laming

Resolved in the **affirmative**.

**PAYROLL TAX AMENDMENT  
REGULATION 1993 (SUBORDINATE  
LEGISLATION 1993 No. 456)**

**Disallowance of Statutory Instrument**

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—Leader of the Liberal Party) (1.06 a.m.): I move—

"That the Payroll Tax Amendment Regulation 1993 (Subordinate Legislation 1993 No. 456) tabled in the Parliament on 15 February 1994 be disallowed."

When it comes to business in this State, the Goss Government has a carefully cultivated image that does not bear scrutiny. The Premier likes to tout himself as leader of Australia's low-tax State, but each year there are too many options to assist business that are bypassed by Wayne Goss and his Ministers. What a sad reflection on this Government was the Premier's empty claim that he has been let down by private enterprise. This Premier, who has more ready cash at his disposal than practically any other person in Australia, says he is doing everything he can for Queensland but that those horrible southerners will not invest here. It is of course the Mexicans; the Mexicans will not give the Premier a fair deal and perhaps that is why today he is striking back with a regulation that will whack them right between the eyes with a solid increase in payroll tax. It is that increase which I rise to oppose today.

It would be a joke if it were not for the serious consequences for our economy. I do not know whether the Premier thinks it is funny to

attack southern businesspeople, but by now he should have realised that, far from being a curse, southern investment is the goose that is laying golden eggs for Queensland. Last year alone the Victorian Government estimated that more than \$800m floated to Queensland in the superannuation cheques of Victorians fleeing the economic wasteland left by John Cain and Joan Kirner. Remember, for years Mr Cain was heaped with praise for what was thought to be sound economic management in Victoria. Today the same thing is happening in Queensland, where Labor is basking in a reputation built on nothing more than a limited ability to ride on the coat-tails of an economically sound predecessor.

The Premier's tactics have been simple. He has minimised the political risk to his Government by minimising the extent to which he is prepared to stick his neck out on behalf of Queenslanders. This is a Premier whose cleverest ideas are fleeced from someone else. If he is not following Paul Keating on Mabo, he is aping Jeff Kennett by selling State assets. When he is not advocating expenditure to match Bannon, he is retiring debt like the Victorian Liberals and politicising the bureaucracy like Joan Kirner. Given its massive head start and the multitude of hollow logs it has raided in four short years, we have had little that is innovative or unique about Queensland under Labor that we would not have had in spades if we had remained under conservative leadership. Yet we desperately need to rebuild our image as innovators if we are to retain our comparative good fortune as Australia hauls itself back out of the mire.

I move this motion of disallowance because the proposal to which it refers emerged interstate and serves the needs of Canberra first. A fringe benefits tax is an outmoded burden on business, one of the many that persist because of the Federal Government's failure to address real tax reform in this country and obviously followed by lack of reform from the State Government.

**Mr T. B. Sullivan:** What would you have done?

**Mrs SHELDON:** If the honourable member is to speak to this motion, we will wait to hear his words of wisdom shortly. Each year the number of volumes tax consultants need to keep track of taxation laws gets bigger and bigger, while State Governments add to the mess by following slavishly along, as we have our friend the Treasurer over there doing. The best thing the Premier and the Treasurer can find to advocate this local and latest proposed increase in the State's tax take is the comfortable excuse that it will make Queensland's slice of revenue equal to everyone else's. What a typically

unconstructive and bureaucratically hidebound proposal from the Premier!

Already Queensland is retiring debt because that is what everyone else is doing. We have sold the Gladstone Power Station because that is what other States are doing, and now we are selling Suncorp, even though such a sale is apparently opposed by the Treasurer. We have not been told why the Treasurer is allowing the Premier to take the running on this, but he obviously is. The move to apply payroll tax is not beneficial to business in Queensland, so the Premier should not be doing it. Certainly, the Treasurer should not be doing it; it is as simple as that.

Years ago Queensland took a great leap forward when the previous Premier abolished death duties. His move created a clear distinction between business prospects here and those elsewhere in Australia. I think it is fair to say that we have not looked back since those times. To some extent the credit and goodwill created by that move continues to reflect well on Queensland today. By comparison, this Premier is a political and economic mouse. He follows the clear, safe path that guarantees a plodding kind of progress oblivious to economic circumstances and the many opportunities we now face. While he seeks to avoid damage to his thin political hide, his formula guarantees that inevitably we will lose our position of economic leadership. The opportunity to entrench our economic strength and many natural advantages for the long-term good of Queenslanders will be lost until this Premier and his Treasurer grow a backbone and a new willingness to lead.

Over the years many proposals have been put forward that could recreate for Queensland the kind of economic climate and innovative reputation it had under the coalition. A uniform fringe benefits tax is not one of them. No longer is Australia staring down the barrel of deepening recession, yet that is precisely the mind-set that grips the Premier and the Treasurer when it comes to charting the future direction of our State. This regulation was born out of the Federal Labor Government's desperate grab for new sources of income as Australia's economic outlook worsened, yet here it is being trotted out in Queensland in 1994. Today, among all Australian Premiers only Wayne Goss represents the failed economic vision of the Labor Party. Only he continues to behave as if some major economic calamity may lurk around the next bend. While other States are selling assets and cashing up only to pay for Labor mistakes, our Labor Government is selling assets and cashing up for no other reason than it might make a mistake at any moment. To this end, the Labor

Government has admitted plans to strip more than \$240m from the Queensland Electricity Commission this year alone.

This Government is so busy looking in its rear-vision mirror it has not noticed that the light is green. Meanwhile bureaucrats from practically every Government department have been quick to cash in on the recovery and, while they have been quick to get their snouts in the trough, precious little benefit has flowed to the community or to Queensland business. For example, while the bureaucrats were preparing this regulatory gem for the Treasurer, he was crowing about an extra \$80m in revenue he creamed off Queensland taxpayers in the first six months of this year. This was an extra \$80m paid by Queensland businesspeople and taxpayers when the need for Government support and assistance was at its peak. That was when a responsive Government with a hefty bank balance would have lifted the jackboot to allow recovery to strengthen.

Eight months into the 1993-94 financial year, this regulation caps off a budgetary debacle for Queensland business this financial year. According to the Treasurer, this regulation has been brought into effect after two quarters in which expenditure on Government services was \$83m less than in the first two quarters of the previous year. Using the same quarters for comparison, administration and public service gobbled up an extra \$160m. So while the Treasurer prepared to apply payroll tax to fringe benefits and increased taxes to the tune of \$80m, he shoved an extra \$160m down the throat of the bureaucracy.

This is Goss the innovator. This is the kind of AAA economic management that crashed along with the stock market in 1987. Those who read page two of the *Australian Financial Review* would realise that it is now just a matter of time before Alex and Clive leave megabank for higher salaries and better perks with the Queensland Government.

**Mr De Lacy:** This is awful!

**Mrs SHELDON:** The Treasurer would not read the Fin Review, would he? Out there in the real world, this regulation gives business saddled with the fringe benefits tax yet another Goss Government incentive not to increase their payroll. To them it must seem ironic to hear of the growing list of perks that Ministers in this Government award themselves. The Government Air Wing, the use of which we saw an example today, is an excellent example of a fringe benefit for Ministers. We have seen the Premier misuse that today to the full extent.

This is a Government whose members enjoy a first-class airborne ferry service that blew out its own budget by almost \$2m, or 50 per cent, last year. But on the other side of the ledger, the Government continues to beat up on business with increased charges such as this year's hike in stamp duty on public liability and the scrapping of sales tax exemptions on land and house purchases. Already local business is suffering because of the imposition of export royalties on domestic coal, increases in tobacco licence fees and taxes on poker machines. The impact of the enlarged bank accounts debits tax still has not been revealed.

**Mr De Lacy** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** These are all the Treasurer's hidden, secret taxes and charges that he does not bother telling the people of Queensland about when he is standing there and saying what a wonderful economic manager he is. He is ripping that out of their pockets day and night. I suspect that we have silence on this matter simply because the true extent of this new burden is a serious embarrassment to a Treasurer who tried to claim that the change would be revenue neutral. That was yet another fib. This is the plodding path to mediocrity advocated by a Premier whose latest initiative to impose payroll tax on fringe benefits should be thrown out of this House.

Today, Queensland stands on the verge of a whole new epoch. In this State we have incomparable resources and the capacity to harness their development in such a way that Queenslanders and other Australians will continue to reap the rewards far into the next century. Unfortunately, the only missing ingredient is leadership. This Government spends too much time looking backward. Its preoccupation is not with the great potential of this State but with self-promotion and initiatives that usually serve to punish rather than reward success in business.

This regulation is a prime example of Labor at work. Conceived in Canberra, it is being imposed in Queensland only because it suits the Treasurer. Today, Queensland needs a leader with a vision for the future. What we get from Labor is someone with excuses for the past.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I require a seconder for the motion.

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly) (1.16 a.m.): It is my great pleasure to second this motion. What we have here from this Government is another new tax—something which Mr De Lacy is very good at. As the Treasurer, he has brought in a number of new taxes. He has another one here this evening which he initially foreshadowed in the Budget

last year, that is, a fringe benefit tax on payrolls. This will mean that fewer jobs will be created.

The FBT on the non-salary component of remuneration packages further increases the taxation burden on businesses in this State. At the end of the day, as the burden increases, it will mean fewer jobs—as the Treasurer is well aware. It will probably also continue to put pressure on full-time employment, as people will be reluctant to take on full-time staff if they can get away with taking on part-time or casual staff. There is no doubt that this unfortunate trend, which we have seen in the economy for some time, will continue. I believe that this new tax on the non-salary component of remuneration packages is probably one of the worst taxes that this Government has introduced for some time. It is the hallmark of this Government and this Treasurer.

**Mr De Lacy** interjected.

**Mr BEANLAND:** The Treasurer is whingeing and whining. He would take the last farthing of business in this State—the last halfpenny, the last penny, the last cent and the last dollar—and then he would complain about unemployment. That is him all over.

**Mr Borbidge:** He is evenly balanced. He's got a chip on both shoulders.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Yes. As the Leader of the Opposition says, the Treasurer is evenly balanced, with a chip on both shoulders. The Treasurer fails to say anything about the numerous returns and the paperwork that will be created with these regulations. I wish to look at the various items that were tabled in the Parliament—the regulations—and have a look at what it will mean for those business people who have to abide by this new requirement. There is a monthly return on an estimated value basis. The regulation states—

"A monthly return made on an estimated value basis must include as the value of the fringe benefits an amount that is—

- (a) in a return for each of the first 11 months of a financial year— one-twelfth of the Queensland fringe benefits for the previous year of tax; and
- (b) in the return for the last month of the financial year—the difference between—
  - (i) the Queensland fringe benefits for the last year of tax; and
  - (ii) the total of the amounts of Queensland fringe benefits included in the returns for each of

the previous months of the financial year."

What it means is one heck of a lot of paperwork—hours and hours. I am pleased to see the Minister for Small Business in the Chamber—the man who is always "gonna" cut red tape. He is the biggest "gonna" one has seen in the State. He never quite gets around to doing it. Here we have a huge amount of paperwork. Not only will there be monthly returns; there will also be a quarterly return on an estimated value basis. I will not go through the details of that.

Then we come to the biannual returns on an estimated value basis—more returns. Then there are the annual returns on an estimated value basis. Well done, Mr Treasurer! That should certainly tie up a lot of business people for days on end filling out all those returns and the paperwork that he is again thrusting upon the business people of this State. The Treasurer wants to—in his terms—balance the Budget. It does not matter about anything else. John Cain used to run around Victoria saying how well he had balanced the Budget. Right up to the day they sacked him, he said that he had balanced the Budget. He also cheated the taxpayers of Victoria, like that rogue in South Australia who is still running around the countryside and ought to be in gaol. Likewise, he defrauded the people of South Australia. Another fine effort from the Labor Party!

Let us have a look at what is talked about when it comes to business in Queensland. Mr Goss, the Premier, is always complaining and whingeing. On this occasion, he is complaining about the firms resisting Queensland investment as late as 19 February this year. An article states—

"Premier Wayne Goss yesterday said he was becoming frustrated that his attempts to attract corporate sector investment in Queensland had met with limited success.

He said Sydney and Melbourne boardrooms failed to recognise the investment opportunities available here and the fact that the state had lower taxes and charges."

The business people see through this Government. The Premier forgets about all the new taxes he and this Treasurer are introducing. Of course, we see it here this evening. The article goes on to state—

"Southern-based directors visited Queensland and congratulated the Government on the way it was going and its

ability to maintain the lower tax base while properly managing the budget."

That is a little more rhetoric from the Premier. The article continued—

" 'But they want to be on the plane back to Melbourne the next morning,' he said."

We can understand that; they can see this big taxing Government coming. Further—

"Mr Goss said Queensland had to overcome the branch office syndrome. 'We would like to see more head offices here so there is more decision-making power when it comes to investment decisions as I think Queensland does not get the attention it warrants from companies in Sydney and Melbourne,' he said.

Mr Goss said he was speaking 'rhetorically' at this stage when referring recently to some sort of differential, preferential treatment of companies that based their operations in Queensland.

'It is a very serious move actually to have a differential tax rate for interstate companies,' he said. 'But I get a bit frustrated at the cop out of some of the companies and what they say.' "

It is clear what companies say. They see the actions and the decision-making processes of this Government, and that is what we are on about here this evening. People see this Government for what it is—a big taxing Government; a Government not concerned about generating business or investment. In fact, private investment in this State is decreasing. According to the Treasurer's own Budget figures, the Government estimated that private investment in Queensland would decrease. We all know that the economy in this State has been driven by home building for some time now. With the drop-off in home building we are going to see that there will be a drop-off in investment across-the-board. In the private sector, we are not getting investment as we should, particularly in our limited manufacturing sector. Instead, we get another impost on business—not only by way of financial impost, but also by way of paperwork, by way of returns that have to be submitted. That will tie up staff members for hours and hours on end. In some cases, the managers and the proprietors themselves will be tied up. That is the result of this new tax.

It is a sad day, indeed, to see that Queensland is going down the track of introducing this new tax on this basis. If some members of Labor Party were listening to some of the rhetoric that we heard earlier this evening, perhaps they might think twice about the division

over this disallowance motion and review their position. We know that it is too late for the Treasurer because he is hell-bent on taxing people. His great record of that speaks for itself. I am sure that members on the Government side of the Chamber—including the Minister responsible for small business, if he is true to his own beliefs—will see that this new fringe benefit tax must be resisted at all costs. Therefore, it is my pleasure to second this motion.

**Hon. K. E. De LACY** (Cairns—Treasurer) (1.24 a.m.), in reply: That was awful. It was probably the worst performance that I have ever seen. I have been a member of Parliament for 10 or 11 years and I have not seen anything quite as bad as that.

**Mr Casey:** Only two points for dress, and they both went to Denver.

**Mr De LACY:** Following on that interjection, I have to say that this disallowance motion has achieved something: it got the Leader of the Liberal Party out of bed at midnight and into Parliament in her pyjamas. It is nice to know that she has recognised that Parliament does sit late at night, and it is nice to see her in here because we have not seen her in here late at night for a long time.

**An Opposition member** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** The honourable member would not know because he is never here, and the Leader of the Liberal Party would not know. In respect of the contribution, let me say that last year we passed the Revenue Laws Amendment Bill. This Parliament agreed with it. Tonight, we are debating the regulations pursuant to that Act that Parliament passed. As the Parliament passed it, I would have to say that what the Opposition is doing is in contempt of Parliament. Does the Opposition not agree that Parliament has the right to pass a piece of legislation? Parliament agreed with this legislation and now the Opposition is trying in a backhanded way to subvert the intentions of this Parliament. That is dreadful. Can members of the Opposition not accept the decision of the Parliament?

**Mr Beanland:** Haven't you read the regulations?

**Mr De LACY:** After listening to the honourable member's speech, I am sure that he did not. The Revenue Laws Amendment Act ensured that everybody was taxed on an equitable basis. Prior to the Revenue Laws Amendment Act, if a salary package was a package which was part salary and part in-kind, the package was taxed fully. But if there was another package that was not called a package before this, then it was taxed separately. We have taken the anomalies out of it. It has made no

difference to the amount of tax that most people pay, but it has taken away the incentive for people to structure their salary packages in such a way that they would avoid tax. It does not surprise me that the Liberal Party would argue for an arrangement that would encourage people to avoid tax because they have always been about tax avoidance.

A range of things that the members of the Opposition said tonight are patently wrong. With all of the wishful thinking in the world, they are not going to get in Queensland the kind of outcomes that they would hope. Mr Beanland was talking about the lack of investment in Queensland. The fact is that private investment in Queensland is increasing, and it is increasing rapidly. Queenslanders led the rest of Australia over the past four or five years. We will continue to lead the rest of Australia, despite all of the wishful thinking on behalf of the Liberal Party and the National Party. They sit opposite and look through all of the indicators and hope that they can find something which will prove that the State in which they live is not doing well. Yet, day after day, they are proved to be wrong.

**Mr Borbidge** interjected.

**Mr De LACY:** The Leader of the Opposition is making his inane comments over there—"Mr 12 per cent". He has had a lot of publicity recently, so he is probably down to 10 per cent. We just hope he remains there. If there is a vote, we will all vote for him.

**Mr Borbidge:** Tell us how your takeover of Cairns went.

**Mr De LACY:** How did the honourable member's takeover go? Of all the political figures in Australia, he is "Mr 12 per cent". If I had a 12 per cent approval rating, I would give the game away.

**Mr Elder:** It would have to be the best business confidence figure—certainly the best confidence figure in Queensland.

**Mr De LACY:** He is "Mr 12 per cent". I know they are all talking about Mr Cooper, who is the lemming that led them over the cliff at the last election, but they tell me that he is coming back. Tonight, when I saw Mr Beanland, I asked, "If we get Mr Cooper back, do we get Mr Beanland with him, or do we get another combination because we have had that one before?"

In conclusion, I have to say that it was a pretty pathetic performance. The Opposition brought on this disallowance motion late in the night. If it did nothing else, it had the Leader of the Liberal Party in the House late at night. Even though she did not make much of a mark in respect of this disallowance motion, we are pleased to see her here in her pyjamas.

**Question**—That the motion be agreed to—put; and the House divided—

**AYES, 30**—Beanland, Borbidge, Connor, Davidson, FitzGerald, Gamin, Gilmore, Goss J. N., Grice, Healy, Hobbs, Horan, Lester, Lingard, Littleproud, McCauley, Mitchell, Perrett, Quinn, Rowell, Santoro, Sheldon, Simpson, Slack, Stephan, Stoneman, Turner, Watson  
*Tellers:* Springborg, Laming.

**NOES, 48**—Ardill, Barton, Beattie, Bennett, Braddy, Bredhauer, Briskey, Budd, Burns, Campbell, Casey, Clark, Comben, Davies, De Lacy, Dollin, Edmond, Elder, Fenlon, Foley, Gibbs, Hamill, Hayward, Hollis, Mackenroth, McElligott, McGrady, Milliner, Nunn, Nuttall, 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**.

### MINERAL RESOURCES AMENDMENT BILL

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa— Minister for Minerals and Energy) (1.37 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

"That leave be granted to bring in a Bill for an Act to amend the Mineral Resources Act 1989."

Motion agreed to.

### First Reading

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

### Second Reading

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa— Minister for Minerals and Energy) (1.38 a.m.): I move—

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

The amendment to the Mineral Resources Act 1989 is necessary to accommodate a longstanding administrative practice in relation to the payment of rental on renewal of mining leases. Rentals are fixed for the term of a lease at a rate prescribed at the time the lease is granted. In the case of a renewed lease, rental is payable at the rate prescribed at the time the lease is due for renewal.

It is departmental policy that, in respect of any period between the expiry of an existing lease and the granting of the renewal, rent continues at the rate prescribed at the time the original lease was granted. When the lease is renewed, however, the renewal period actually commences from the expiry date of the original term and the leaseholder is requested to pay

rental back to the expiry date at the rate set for the renewed lease.

Recently, this practice was challenged in the Supreme Court, where it was successfully argued that rental was a condition of a lease and that all conditions, including rental, continued in accordance with the original provisions until such time as the lease was renewed. The litigant argued that a provision prescribed by the Mining Regulations 1968 triggered the exception contained in section 7.43 (6) of the Mineral Resources Act. In effect, the court agreed that there was no obligation to pay more than the rental rate as prescribed under the expired lease and that the new rental rate was payable only from the date of renewal of the lease.

Clearly, the intention of that provision of the Mineral Resources Act was to prevent retrospective application of conditions of mining leases as listed in section 7.33 of the Act, rather than provide an opportunity for a leaseholder to continue mining operations for an extended period at a rent set at the commencement of the original lease.

Applications to renew a lease may be lodged at least six months prior to the expiry of the existing lease, or such shorter period as the Minister allows and in extenuating circumstances. This enables a leaseholder in certain circumstances to lodge an application for renewal up to the day the lease expires.

Both the repealed Mining Act 1968 and the Mineral Resources Act 1989 provide that where a leaseholder has made application for the renewal of a lease, and where that application has not been granted or rejected prior to the date on which the lease expires, the lease continues to have force and effect. This good practice ensures that leaseholders are not required to cease work in the event of delayed renewal as a result of administrative matters, but at the same time requires the holder to pay the appropriate rental.

The decision of the Supreme Court effectively applies to every mining lease granted under the Mining Act 1968, and that is to be renewed under the Mineral Resources Act 1989.

This amendment to the Mineral Resources Act, to take retrospective effect, is necessary to ensure that all leaseholders pay the appropriate rental on their mining leases. Members should note that while the proposed amendment may impose a retrospective statutory obligation, the amendment actually is needed only to give statutory effect to longstanding practice, which is well understood and accepted by the industry.

I commend the Bill to honourable members.

Debate, on motion of Mr Gilmore, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH**  
(Chatsworth—Leader of the House) (1.42 a.m.): I move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

## Munns Fish Ladder

**Mr PERRETT** (Barambah) (1.42 a.m.): The Department of Primary Industries has behaved disgracefully in its dealings with a central Queensland man over his invention of a fish ladder. Fishermen and others who value our natural environment have long been concerned by the effect on fish migration of obstacles in watercourses. Of course, these obstacles include man-made dams, weirs and barrages, but they can also include natural barriers such as waterfalls. There have been numerous attempts to find effective designs for fish ladders but, until recently, few designs were very effective. That situation changed as a result of the work done over many years by Mr Sam Munns of Gogango near Rockhampton. His fish transfer system, based on the siphon system, has given good results under trial. The results were so good, in fact, that the Department of Primary Industries installed at least two of the devices in Queensland streams. It has also announced plans for more installations.

That is good news for everyone but the inventor, Sam Munns. While DPI takes the credit, he is left out in the cold, despite the existence of a worldwide patent issued to Rupert Henry Munns by the Commonwealth Commissioner of Patents in 1990. For the information of honourable members, I inform them that it is patent No. 629102. DPI has infringed that patent and continues to do so, with installations planned for the future. Certainly, DPI has made some refinements to the system as a result of experimental work and experience during the trials conducted with Mr Munns' help. But neither the concepts nor the basic design have changed. Indeed, the experimentalist in charge of the trials in 1989 reported that the only problems encountered involved air leaks, but wrote that they were not expected to be a problem in future models.

The system now in use is that designed by Sam Munns. It is still the Munns system described in his patent. But DPI and this Goss Labor Government refuse to acknowledge that simple fact or to compensate Mr Munns for the public use of his patented system. Our natural environment is reaping the benefits of his work.

So are the anglers of this State, because the Munns system is allowing the migration of fish in streams that were previously closed to them. So, especially, is the Minister for Primary Industries. He has boasted in newspapers about a fish ladder installed on Dumbleton weir in his own electorate of Mackay. For instance, on 4 March this year, Mr Casey was quoted as saying that over a 19-hour period 500 fish had used the system to bypass the weir. He claimed a significant breakthrough, and no doubt hoped that everyone would be impressed.

The same story released by the Minister's staff contained this paragraph—

"To facilitate fish passage around the weir, the DPI developed Australia's first automatic fish lock for the weir."

There was not a word about the real inventor, Sam Munns, who Mr Casey and his department both know very well is the inventor of the system. I have seen numerous replies from Mr Casey to letters written to him by Mr Munns seeking financial assistance with development and trials of his design.

Mr Munns is well and truly entitled to a contribution from the State Government, which is trying to pirate his patented work. The Patents Act of 1990 makes that very clear. It lays down conditions for the use of patented designs by a Government body, and one of those conditions is for compensation to be paid to the patent holder. I call on the Minister now to ensure that his department does two things: firstly, give this Queensland inventor the recognition he deserves for work that will do this State and its natural environment so much good; secondly, negotiate with Mr Munns proper compensation for the use of his patented invention. The Government can afford to do that, and it should do that. Mr Munns should not have to go to the courts in order to obtain justice with respect to his patented work stolen by the State Government.

I travelled to Rockhampton to look at Mr Munns' patent documents and to speak to him about his invention. Having done that, I have no doubt at all that he has been wronged by the Department of Primary Industries and the Minister. I also have no doubt that he is strongly motivated by the need for a workable system of assisting fish migration. His claim for compensation is within the provisions of the Patents Act. It is a natural reaction of a man who sees others stealing his work. It is time that the Government behaved properly in this matter.

Time expired.

### **Bus/Rail Interchange, Sandgate**

**Mr NUTTALL** (Sandgate) (1.47 a.m.): There is nothing like an Adjournment debate at a quarter to two in morning to keep members excited and awake.

**Mr Springborg** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I am just pleased to see that there are so many members here in the House to listen to what I have to say at this hour of the morning. I am very honoured. I wanted to speak this morning on the new bus/rail interchange that we have recently had built at Sandgate in my electorate at a cost of around \$2.5m.

Although it might be boring to some members, it is very important to people within my electorate. The bus/rail interchange at Sandgate was the first and, of course, the oldest bus/rail interchange in the Brisbane train network. An assessment found that there was a great need to update the bus/rail interchange. That updating required assistance from the local, State and Federal Governments. I am pleased to say that cooperation was forthcoming. Part of the reason it was so successful is that—

**Mr Budd** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I will take the interjection from the honourable member for Redlands, because I think that is the reason it was so successful. At every level of government, the seats in that area are held by Labor Party members. I think the cooperation and the maturity shown by those members in working towards improving the facilities for my constituents deserve great accolades.

In excess of 6 000 people per day use the bus/rail interchange at Sandgate. Obviously, those people come not only from the electorate of Sandgate but also from the electorates of Murrumba and Redcliffe. Hornibrook Bus Lines bring people across the Houghton Highway to Sandgate. Certainly, people make great use of that facility. Members might recall that people used to pay a shilling to go across the old wooden Hornibrook Bridge. The former Government decided to build a new bridge. In its wisdom, it built one with three lanes. I do not know what the benefit of having three lanes was, but in its wisdom the former Government built it that way.

The updated bus/rail interchange at Sandgate has seen a number of initiatives. The number of taxi bays, which are now all under cover, has been increased. Disabled people in particular get easy access to the platform, which is also under cover. There is the ever popular "kiss 'n ride" section at the train station. Every morning, I see a number of my constituents using that facility. As well, there has been an

increase in the number of bus bays. The old interchange had four bus bays, but, because of the increase in the number of people using the facility, that number has been increased to five.

In addition to that, for the first time traffic lights and pedestrian lights have been installed at the intersection. Unfortunately, in the past there have been a couple of fatalities at that location. I am pleased that the pedestrian and traffic lights have been installed. Bike lockers and car security are also now available, so that people can leave their vehicles in a secure area. Since that facility has been introduced, there has been a marked reduction in the theft of bicycles and motor cars. To ensure the safety of people in the evenings, there has been an increase in lighting in the area of the interchange. In addition, a number of public phones have been installed.

All in all, the new bus/rail interchange has been a great benefit to the people of Sandgate. I am pleased that this Government has played an important role in the establishment of that facility in my electorate.

**Ms S. Moriarty; Mr T. Beale; Ministerial  
Travel Expenses**

**Mr BEANLAND** (Indooroopilly) (1.52 a.m.): On 10 December last year, I asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice a question in relation to the position of principal project officer within the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, which was awarded to his former senior ministerial policy adviser, Ms Susan Moriarty. Minister Wells advised in the daily press on 7 December that this position had been advertised in the same daily press some time previously. The Minister was challenged to table that advertisement in the Parliament, which he failed to do because, contrary to his previous statement, the position was not advertised in the daily media but only internally in the *Government Gazette*.

Secondly, when I asked during question time whether Mr Tim Beale, his department's Cabinet legislation liaison officer and a well-known member of the Labor Party, was a member of the selection panel, Mr Wells pleaded failed memory about who was on the selection panel. I want to inform this House that Mr Tim Beale was a member of that selection panel. It is bad enough that the position was filled without being advertised in the daily press, as would be the usual practice for a position such as this. What makes it worse, however, is that the position was awarded to a well-known, active member of the ALP by a selection panel that contained another equally well-known ALP identity—a fact that Minister Wells forgot when

questioned on the subject in Parliament. Talk about a conflict of interest!

Yet Minister Wells tells us that he did not know what was happening under his very nose. That the Minister should be unaware that one of the most senior public servants in his department was on an interview panel that promoted a senior member of the Minister's staff, especially when it is remembered that both are long-time ALP members—friends of the Minister, in fact—is a story that is just a mite too incredible to believe. Cronyism and jobs for the party faithful are practices that are flourishing under the Goss Government. When the National Party was in power, the Labor Party made endless amounts of noise about cronyism. However, if there was a problem then, it is nothing compared with the current situation.

This new AO7 position was created last year following the Government being embarrassed by freedom of information releases. Ms Moriarty's appointment will entitle her to a salary of approximately \$50,000 per annum. Towards the end of last year, the Goss Labor Government significantly tightened the laws on freedom of information on other than personal matters, making it almost impossible to obtain policy information. Labor has now gone the next step and appointed one of its own to keep track of sensitive freedom of information applications.

This Government has been caught looking after the faithful. I am sure that equity and merit did play a role, but in this case the merit was political membership and support for Labor. What a sham the whole exercise is! What a farce it makes of the so-called equity and merit system that is hailed so much by this Government and by members of the Government day in and day out as though it were something new, fair and aboveboard. We see precisely what it is about when we investigate carefully exactly what is occurring with such appointments in the public service.

In the time remaining to me, I want to refer briefly to the lack of ministerial accountability in relation to ministerial travel. It has become a real farce. It has been a farce for some time. When questioned during question time on 10 December 1993, Premier Goss said that he was satisfied with the current system. Of course, the Treasurer, who is in the Chamber at present, says that accounting for every detail would be an administrative nightmare. That is just another falsehood and just another sham. It is just another untruthful statement. The Clerk of the Parliament can keep records relating to the 71 backbench members of this Parliament, and they are tabled each year in the House. Yet the Treasurer, with his large bureaucracy—his large

number of public servants and ministerial officers—says that to apply the same standards to Ministers would require too much detailed paperwork.

The tabling of ministerial travel expenses has become a farce, because only the total figures are tabled and not the details of individual Ministers. The only details that are tabled are bulk figures. It is made even more farcical with, for example, the Attorney-General, Mr Dean Wells, tabling a "nil" return for his annual report of daily travelling allowance claims by members of the Legislative Assembly for 1992-93, and yet he had total ministerial expenses of \$60,432 for the year, of which a large amount was travelling expenses. The Premier, Mr Goss, had total ministerial expenses of \$123,000; Deputy Premier Burns had total ministerial expenses of \$116,000; and the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing, Mr Gibbs, had total ministerial expenses of \$103,000, yet all had "nil" returns in their annual report of daily travelling allowance claims by members of the Legislative Assembly for 1992-93. However, we have no detailed breakdown—

Time expired.

### School Rail Passes

**Mr T. B. SULLIVAN** (Chermside) (1.57 a.m.): The new school rail pass system announced by the Education Minister, Pat Comben, at the end of March this year is a fair and affordable system. This historic agreement was a victory for sensible and determined negotiations. For more than 30 years, the difficulties of matching the guidelines to the changing transport needs of students had not been tackled properly. There was a time when most people walked to their local shop or to the local park for sport; when few women drove vehicles; when people went to the local store for groceries and to their suburban theatre.

The old guidelines may have suited the approach for those long-past days, but in a society that is very mobile we see adults and children today travelling many kilometres to regional shopping centres, to sporting fields from Caboolture to Beenleigh, and to city theatres. Over the years, the transport arrangements have also changed. Fewer children walk to school these days, and a growing percentage of parents have been driving their children to and from school in recent years. A change to the old guidelines was required, and it was left to this Government to tackle the problem.

Following a complaint to the CJC last year, on 19 November 1993 the Director-General of

Education directed all principals to enforce correctly the guidelines for the rail pass rules that had been in operation for decades. But the old rules were unfair, and the categories of schools disadvantaged many students, especially those attending State schools. Gross anomalies existed in which some schools, such as Brisbane State High, applied the rules strictly while other schools virtually had a "hands up those who want a rail pass" approach and handed them out willy-nilly. The system was unfair, and the parents, teachers and Government knew that it was unfair.

It was left to the Goss Labor Government to take the difficult step to bring the major players together. For months, negotiations took place with the Education and Transport Departments and the Office of the Cabinet and with parents groups from State and non-Government schools and from the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools of Queensland. Those key groups were prepared to negotiate.

The one disappointing feature of this whole saga was the sorry performance of a group of the Brisbane Archdiocesan Parents and Friends Association. Instead of constructive negotiations, this subgroup of the Queensland P & Fs was more interested in generating conflict through half truths and banner waving. That maverick group, which has been fighting the State association, the FPFAQ, for more than a year, had an internal faction fight going—something like Denver Beanland having a go at Santo Santoro. Some parents in Catholic schools and some principals were unnecessarily caught up in that internal struggle.

I have wide experience of the independent education sector, having taught for more than 20 years in it, having been for nine years a parent of children in Catholic schools and having been associated closely with four P & F associations over 20 years. The claim by this archdiocesan P & F group that education is compulsory, therefore transport must be free, is an illogical and silly argument. There are many things that are compulsory for everyone in society that are not free. They said that, because they need to have a choice of school, they are to have free transport. In common with many other parents, I choose to send my children to a non-Government school for philosophical reasons. Therefore, I pay tuition fees, extra money for sport and special sports clothing and for religious camps. If transport is one of the features of my choice of school, then I pay for that as well. Most people honestly looking at the situation appreciate that.

The claims by this group were dishonest. At no time did they suggest to their public meetings where new taxes would be raised or what services would be deleted because of their call for free transport. The Minister has received many letters in recent times from a wide variety of groups congratulating all those who were around the negotiating table. I congratulate the Minister for Education and the Minister for Transport for the work they have done. People such as Rosemary Hume, from the QCPCA, Leo Dunne, from the FPFAQ, Sir William Knox from the AISQ and Alan Drury from the QCEC also need to be congratulated. These and other people spent months of quiet, sensible negotiations to gain a fair and equitable result.

I look forward to this same goodwill coming to the negotiating table when the Minister and these groups prepare for the more difficult task, that is, finding the solution to the bus transport problem.

Time expired.

#### **Alternative Energy Advisory Group**

**Mr GILMORE** (Tablelands) (2.02 a.m.): I rise in this debate to bring the serious matter of another backflip by the Premier of Queensland to the notice of the Parliament—another admission that he was wrong. It began in July 1993 when Mr Goss, the gullible Goss, travelled north of the Daintree River with the then Chairman of the Douglas Shire Council, Mike Berwick. Although I do not know quite what happened on that day, it is my view that Councillor Berwick set out to trick the Premier into believing that there was rainforest all the way north of the Daintree River—and I am being kind to the Premier.

Quite clearly, Mr Berwick drove the Premier across the Alexandra Range and did not tell him that on either side of the road, where one cannot see because there is a 20-metre band of trees, most of the country on the south side of the Alexandra Range had been previously cleared for dairy farms and is currently used for grazing and for banana cultivation, as well as some subdivision. As a result of that meeting with Mr Berwick, the Premier was so entranced with the whole thing that he announced in July 1993 that there would be no power north of the Daintree. One of the things that Councillor Berwick failed to tell the Premier—and the Premier failed to ask anybody else about this—was that there had been power north of the Daintree for some 20 years. In fact, the power was 700 metres from the subdivision that we wanted to put power into.

Then, through the auspices of his failed Minister, the Premier set up the Alternative

Energy Advisory Group. Whom did he appoint as chairman of that group—the member for Everton, Mr Welford, who is asleep in the back of the Chamber. The Premier gave him a \$5m budget and said, "Go forth, young man, and find out all about alternative power for people in remote areas in Queensland." What were the results from that? A pamphlet has been produced—an extraordinary document. Among other things, that pamphlet states—

"The AEAG carried out a pre-feasibility study during September 1993 to assess the renewable energy resources in the Daintree areas. Sunlight was identified as the most abundant renewable energy resource . . ."

It has already been determined by more authoritative people that there are 180 days a year of available sunlight for renewable energy sources. That is the type of work that has come out of Mr Welford and his committee.

What else came out of that \$5m, other than this pamphlet? Six sheets of paper, that is what—six sheets of politically correct, recyclable paper. At least it is grey, so it looks like it has probably been recycled. God knows where it has been. Anyway, page one shows the address and telephone number. After ten months' work, all the first page got was the address and telephone number of the AEAG—very clever indeed.

Let me tell honourable members that this committee was set up to determine alternative power options for people north of the Daintree. Page No. 1 is the alternative power option No. 1—an open wire reticulation with seven wires strung on poles through the rainforest. That is very clever work, there is no question about it. Mr Welford was right on the ball. Of course, all of this is in relation to Forest Creek. Page No. 2 covered high voltage conductors and low voltage aerial bundled conductors on poles through the rainforest—not a problem. The member for Everton is sleeping through this—clever chap! Option No. 3 is aerial bundled conductors on poles through the rainforest. Option No. 4—at last we are getting somewhere—is underground cable; and, lo and behold, the last option is alternative energy systems.

Let me just go through the prices that the committee put on these things. For the information of the Parliament, I point out that the open wire conductors on poles in Mr Welford's documentation cost \$10,500 per household—great stuff! Let me tell honourable members the lie. The other costs are, No. 2, high voltage poles, \$12,500; aerial bundles, \$11,900; underground cable, \$19,000; alternative power, \$15,000 to \$30,000 depending on the household. What they forgot

to tell the people was that the FNQEB had done some numbers as well. They do not disagree with the \$10,500. What this gentleman and his Minister set out to do was to deceive those people and not tell them that the FNQEB was going to make a considerable contribution.

**Mr WELFORD:** I rise to a point of order. I find it objectionable that the honourable member suggests that we set out to mislead anyone or to deceive anyone.

**Mr GILMORE:** The member finds it objectionable—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Bredhauer): Order! The member for Tablelands, I am taking a point of order.

**Mr WELFORD:** I find it objectionable that the honourable member suggests that we set out to mislead or deceive anyone. I ask that it be withdrawn. The figures were provided by the FNQEB.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! The member will withdraw that comment.

**Mr GILMORE:** I have run out of time; I will withdraw.

Time expired.

### **Sikh Cultural Festival, Gordonvale**

**Mr PITT** (Mulgrave) (2.07 a.m.): I bring to the attention of the House a significant event conducted in my electorate recently. I speak of the Sikh cultural festival held in Gordonvale. The Sikh community has had a presence in far-north Queensland for over 100 years. Earlier this year, the family of Gian Singh celebrated the arrival of his forebears in this country. The celebration was attended by about 400 people—a gathering which included relatives, other members of the Sikh community and, importantly, a significant number of non-Sikh locals whose presence was indicative of the high regard in which Gian Singh and his family are held by their fellow Australians.

The Punjab Cultural Society members are to be congratulated for the significant effort they put into securing the services of Mr Hardeep Singh and his band for an important cultural celebration held last weekend. This exercise required a substantial financial commitment on the part of society members and they had to overcome the usual problems of red tape associated with bureaucracy both here and in India to bring the band to Australia from the subcontinent. In a small way I was able to assist that society with the issue of visas. No doubt it was a relief to us all when the band took the stage and proceeded to entertain us all with an exciting presentation of song and dance merely hours after landing in Cairns. Although I do not

speaking Punjabi, I must say one could not help being caught up in the spirit of the occasion. I am sure all present were appreciative of the work done by Mr Gurinder Singh and the committee.

I wish to read into the record a statement made by Mr Rajinder Singh setting out details which clearly identify the significance of the occasion the subject of the celebrations.

"The month of April (or Baisakhi as it is known on the Indian calendar) is very important in the lives of the people of northern India. The cold harsh winds of winter have passed and the pleasant spring weather is back again. Plants are flowering in all their majestic glory; the fields of mustard creating a sea of golden yellow; clusters of ripe wheat dance in the gentle breeze. The farmers are jubilant in anticipation of a rich harvest. It is a season to be merry—a time to sing and dance.

For the Sikhs, the month of April carries even greater significance. The 13th April, marks the birthday of the Khalsa—the faithful ones, or those who have taken the baptism to serve on God's army.

The year was 1699. Gobind Rai, the Sikh's tenth and last human guru, decided it was time to infuse a heroic spirit into the character of his people. This would help them defend the nation against foreign invaders and their excesses. As usual, the Sikhs had gathered together on April 13th to celebrate Baisakhi.

The guru spoke of a plan to replace weakness with strength and unity. It would demand supreme loyalty to God who is the ultimate leader, the being in whom we can place our complete trust. He then asked if there was anyone in the congregation willing to die for their faith. The request was made in a spectacular fashion with a drawn sword. Those who were not true believers began to panic and leave. Finally, however, one believer came forward and offered himself. He was led into a tent set up by the Guru. The Guru soon reappeared brandishing his blood stained sword. He asked again for another volunteer. The scene was repeated five times. After the last of the beloved five—as they are now known—had entered the tent, the Guru re-emerged with all five of them. Their fearless devotion to God had been proven. The fear of death had been demolished. There was no longer any barrier to their becoming great soldiers, defending humanity against the forces of evil.

The Guru then prepared a nectar using water and sugar crystals, stirring it with a

double edged sword; the double edged sword emphasising a Sikh's duty to live life first as a saint, but also being ready to take on the role of a soldier when as a last resort it is necessary to protect one's faith and honour. After administering the nectar to the beloved five, the Guru announced they would henceforth take the surname Singh, meaning lion (indicating bravery). Initiated women take the surname Kaur meaning princess. Men and women had always been considered as equals in Sikhism.

The baptism of the Khalsa also marked the birth of a democratic Sikh nation. After baptising the beloved five, the Guru then asked them to baptise him for they were his equals. The tenth Guru's name changed from Gobind Rai to Gobind Singh. He explained that wherever the brotherhood of the Khalsa gathered, God would be there with them helping them make the decisions affecting their lives.

The Guru had also given baptised Sikhs a distinctive uniform. As a result Sikhs are instantly recognizable. Everyone knows what they stand for. Members of the Khalsa are required to keep their hair uncut, but in a neat and tidy manner. This led to Sikhs covering their hair with a distinctive style of turban.

As everyone is well aware, in recent years the law requires cyclists to wear helmets. However, those of us who are baptised Sikhs were not comfortable about replacing the turban with a helmet. Our local M.L.A., Mr Warren Pitt, was approached to petition parliament on our behalf. He was successful in gaining us an exemption. For this, we are truly grateful.

During the years that Britain ruled India, their battles with the Sikhs in their homeland (the Punjab) impressed them greatly (regarding the courage of the Sikhs). They were successful in persuading the Sikhs to join with them. Sixteen Sikh regiments were created as part of the British army. The British were also aware that the Sikh dress code was important psychologically for their success on the battlefield. Consequently, any Sikh soldier who cut his hair, or violated the Sikh dress code in any way was court martialled.

The close relationship of the Sikhs with Britain encouraged them to migrate to all parts of the Commonwealth, including Australia."

No-one can doubt the commitment of Sikh Australians living out the basic tenets of their religion. They are model citizens who set a fine example to us all in the Year of the Family. They bring to their chosen vocations a degree of determination and honest endeavour in keeping with their reputation earned as disciplined warriors.

Time expired.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 2.12 a.m. (Wednesday).